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THE NEW TESTAMENT

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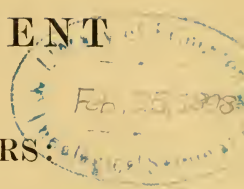
ENGLISH READERS.

VOL. II.

PART II.—THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS,  
THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES, AND THE REVELATION.



THE  
NEW TESTAMENT  
FOR  
ENGLISH READERS.



CONTAINING

THE AUTHORIZED VERSION, WITH A REVISED ENGLISH TEXT;  
MARGINAL REFERENCES;

AND A

CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY COMMENTARY;

BY

HENRY ALFORD, D.D.  
DEAN OF CANTERBURY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

PART II.—THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS,  
THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES, AND THE REVELATION.

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## NOTICE.

IN consequence of some remarks made in critiques on the former part of this Volume, the reader is again reminded, that the differences between the rendering in the text, and that given in the notes, are not accidental, but intentional. The *text* is an English *Version*, conformed to English idiom: while the notes put the reader in possession, as well as our tongue will allow, of the original form of the expression. Thus frequently the rendering in the notes will admit of several senses, of which the *version* is compelled to adopt *only one*.



# CONTENTS OF THE INTRODUCTION,

## PART II.

### CHAPTER XV.

#### THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

SECTION	PAGE
I. Its Authorship . . . . .	135
II. For what Readers it was written . . . . .	185
III. Time and Place of Writing . . . . .	195
IV. Occasion, Object of Writing, and Contents . . . . .	196
V. Language and Style . . . . .	198
VI. Canonicity . . . . .	200

### CHAPTER XVI.

#### THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES.

I. Its Authorship . . . . .	207
II. For what Readers the Epistle was written . . . . .	218
III. The Place and Time of Writing . . . . .	220
IV. Object, Contents, and Style . . . . .	224
V. Its Genuineness, and Place in the Canon . . . . .	227

### CHAPTER XVII.

#### THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

I. Its Genuineness . . . . .	230
II. Its Author . . . . .	234
III. For what Readers it was written . . . . .	239
IV. Time and Place of Writing . . . . .	243
V. Its Object and Contents . . . . .	247
VI. Character and Style . . . . .	250

### CHAPTER XVIII.

#### THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

I. Object, Contents, and Occasion of the Epistle . . . . .	256
II. For what Readers it was written . . . . .	258
III. On the Relation between this Epistle and that of Jude . . . . .	260
IV. Authenticity . . . . .	264
V. Time and Place of Writing . . . . .	273

## CONTENTS OF THE INTRODUCTION.

### CHAPTER XIX.

#### 1 JOHN.

SECTION	PAGE
I. Its Authorship . . . . .	273
II. For what Readers it was written . . . . .	279
III. Its Relation to the Gospel of St. John . . . . .	281
IV. Time and Place of Writing . . . . .	282
V. Contents and Arrangement . . . . .	283
VI. Language and Style . . . . .	289
VII. Occasion and Object . . . . .	292

### CHAPTER XX.

#### 2 AND 3 JOHN.

I. Authorship . . . . .	293
II. For what Readers written . . . . .	296
III. Time and Place of Writing . . . . .	299

### CHAPTER XXI.

#### JUDE.

I. Its Authorship . . . . .	299
II. Authenticity . . . . .	302
III. For what Readers and with what Object written . . . . .	303
IV. Time and Place of Writing . . . . .	304
V. On the Apocryphal Writings apparently referred to in this Epistle . . . . .	305

### CHAPTER XXII.

#### REVELATION.

I. Authorship and Canonicity . . . . .	308
II. Place and Time of Writing . . . . .	334
III. To whom addressed . . . . .	340
IV. Object and Contents . . . . .	344
V. Systems of Interpretation . . . . .	348

## CHAPTER XV.

## THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

## SECTION I.

## ITS AUTHORITY.

1. THE most proper motto to prefix to this section would be that saying of Origen,

“If then any church professes this Epistle as being Paul’s, let it have credit for the circumstance : for not in vain have the ancients handed it down as Paul’s ; but **who wrote<sup>1</sup> the Epistle, God alone knows the truth.**”

2. For these latter words represent the state of our knowledge at this day. There is a certain amount of evidence, both external, from tradition, and internal, from approximation in some points to his acknowledged Epistles, which points to St. Paul as its author. But when we come to examine the former of these, it will be seen that the tradition gives way beneath us in regard of authenticity and trustworthiness ; and as we search into the latter, the points of similarity are overborne by a far greater number of indications of divergence, and of incompatibility, both in style and matter, with the hypothesis of the Pauline authorship.

3. There is one circumstance which, though this is the most notable instance of it, is not unfamiliar to the unbiassed conductor of enquiries into the difficulties of Holy Scripture ; viz. that, in modern times at least, most has been taken for granted by those who knew least about the matter, and the strongest assertions always made by men who have never searched into, or have been unable to appreciate, the evidence. Genuine research has led, in almost every instance, to a modified holding, or to an entire rejection, of the Pauline hypothesis.

4. It will be my purpose, in the following paragraphs, to deal (following the steps of many who have gone before me, and more especially of Bleek) with the various hypotheses in order, as to both their external and internal evidence. It will be impossible in citing the external evidence, to keep these hypotheses entirely distinct : that which is cited as against one will frequently be for another which is not under treatment, and must be referred back to on reaching that one.

<sup>1</sup> On the sense of the word **wrote**, see below, par. 21 and note.

5. As preliminary then to all such specific considerations, we will enquire first into the external and traditional ground, then into that which is internal, arising from the Epistle itself, of the supposition that ST. PAUL was the Author and Writer, or the Author without being the Writer, of the Epistle.

6. Some think that they see an allusion to our Epistle in 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16. But to this there are several objections; among which the principal is, that no passages can be pointed out in our Epistle answering to the description there given. This point has not been much pressed, even by those who have raised it; being doubtless felt to be too insecure to build any safe conclusion upon.

7. The same may be said of the idea that our Epistle is alluded to by St. James, ch. ii. 24, 25. Hug supposes that the citation of Rahab as justified by works is directly polemical, and aimed at Heb. xi. 31. But as Bleek well remarks, even were we to concede the polemical character of the citation, why need Heb. xi. 31 be fixed on as its especial point of attack? Was it not more than probable, that the followers of St. Paul would have adduced this, among other examples, in their oral teaching?

8. We come then to the first undoubted allusions to the Epistle; which occur in the Epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians, dating before the conclusion of the first century. Clement is well acquainted with the Epistles of St. Paul: he quotes by name 1 Cor.; he closely imitates Rom. i. 29—32: he frequently alludes to other passages. But of no Epistle does he make such large and constant use, as of this to the Hebrews: and this is testified by Eusebius,—“in which (i. e. his Epistle to the Corinthians) he brings forward many thoughts out of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and even some passages out of it *verbatim*, thus shewing clearly that the work was no new one in his time.” The same is testified by Jerome also.

9. Now some have argued from this that, as Clement thus reproduces passages of this as well as of other Epistles confessedly canonical, he must have held this to be canonical, and if he, then the Roman church, in whose name he writes; and if canonical, then written by St. Paul. But Bleek well observes, that this whole argument is built on an unhistorical assumption respecting the Canon of the New Test., which was certainly not settled in Clement's time; and that, in fact, his use of this Epistle proves no more than that it was well known and exceedingly valued by him. It is a weighty testimony *for the Epistle*, but says nothing as to its Author<sup>2</sup>.

10. The first notices in any way touching the question of the authorship meet us after the middle of the second century. And it is remark-

<sup>2</sup> See this, and the inference from it, treated more fully below, Sect. vi. par. 2.

able enough, that from these notices we must gather, that at that early date there were the same various views respecting it, in the main, which now prevail; the same doubt whether St. Paul was the author, or some other Teacher of the apostolic age; and if some other, then what part St. Paul had, or whether any, in influencing his argument or dictating his matter.

11. The earliest of these testimonies is that of PANTÆNUS, the chief of the catechetical school in *Alexandria* about the middle of the second century. There is a passage preserved to us by Eusebius from a lost work of Clement of Alexandria, in which the latter says that *the blessed Presbyter* said, that since our Lord was the real Apostle to the Hebrews, St. Paul, out of modesty, and as being himself sent to the Gentiles, did not attach his name to this Epistle<sup>3</sup>.

12. There can be no doubt that by *the blessed Presbyter* here, Clément means Pantænus. Eusebius tells us of Clement, that he in this lost work reported the sayings of his master Pantænus.

13. Nor can there be any doubt, from these words, that Pantænus believed the Epistle to be the work of St. Paul. But as Bleek observes, we have no data to enable us to range this testimony in its right place as regards the controversy. Being totally unacquainted with the context in which it occurs, we cannot say whether it represents an opinion of Pantænus's own, or a general persuasion; whether it is adduced polemically, or merely as solving the problem of the anonymousness of the Epistle for those who already believed St. Paul to be the Author. Nothing can well be more foolish, and beside the purpose, than the reason which it renders for this anonymousness: are we to reckon the assumption of the Pauline authorship in it as a subjectivity of the same mind as devised the other? For aught that this testimony itself says, it may have been so: we can only then estimate it rightly, when we regard it as one of a class, betokening something like consensus on the matter in question.

14. And such a consensus we certainly seem to be able to trace in the writers of the Alexandrian school. CLEMENT himself, both in his works which have come down to us, and in the fragments of his lost works preserved by Eusebius, frequently and expressly cites the Epistle as the work of St. Paul. Nay, his testimony goes further than this. In a well-known passage of Eusebius, he cites from the same lost work of Clement as follows:

“He says that the Epistle to the Hebrews is Paul's, and was written to Hebrews in the Hebrew tongue, and that Luke diligently translated it and published it for the Greeks. From which circumstance it is, that its style has a similarity to that of the Acts. But that Paul very naturally did not prefix ‘Paul the Apostle’ to

<sup>3</sup> See below, par. 71, a very similar sentiment from Jerome.

it, as the Hebrews suspected and disliked him, and so he would not alienate them in the very beginning of his work."

15. Valuable as the above passage is, it fails to point out to us definitely the ground and the extent of the opinion which it expresses. The citations from the Epistle throughout Clement's writings shew us, that his persuasion respecting its having been put into Greek by St. Luke, did not prevent him from every where citing the Greek as the words of St. Paul; either expressly naming him, or indicating him under the words "*the [divine] Apostle.*" But whether the opinion was derived from tradition, or from his own critical research, there is nothing here to inform us. The reference to the similarity of diction to that in the Acts seems rather to point to the latter source. Nor again can we say whether he is representing (1) a general opinion, prevalent as transmitted in the Alexandrian church, or (2) one confined to himself, or (3) one which had spread through the teaching of Pantæus his master. This last is hardly probable, seeing that he gives for the anonymousness of the Epistle a far more sensible reason than that which he immediately after quotes from Pantæus. We can derive from the passage nothing but a surmise respecting the view prevalent in Alexandria at the time. And that surmise would lead us to believe that St. Paul was not there held to have been the writer of the Epistle in its present Greek form, however faithfully that present form may represent his original meaning.

16. We now come to the testimony of ORIGEN; from which, without being able to solve the above historical question, we gain considerably more light on the subject of the tradition respecting the Epistle.

17. In his own ordinary practice in his writings, Origen cites the Epistle as the work of St. Paul, using much the same terms as Clement in so doing: viz. either "*Paul*" or "*the Apostle.*" In the Homilies on Joshua, he distinctly ascribes fourteen Epistles to St. Paul. But in what sense he makes these citations, we must ascertain by his own more accurately expressed opinion on the matter; from which it will appear, how unfairly Origen has been claimed by superficial arguers for the Pauline authorship, as on their side.

18. Before however coming to this, it may be well to adduce two or three passages in which he indicates the diversity of opinion which prevailed. In his Commentary on Matt. xxiii. 27, speaking of the slaying of the prophets, he cites, as from St. Paul, 1 Thess. i. 14, 15, and Heb. xi. 37, 38; and then adds, "*But suppose any one repudiates the Epistle to the Hebrews as not being Paul's.*" And then after a caution against apocryphal works foisted in by the Jews (among which he clearly does not mean to include our Epistle), he adds, "*Still, if any one receives that to the Hebrews as an Epistle of Paul,*" &c.

Again, in his Epistle to Africanus, in the course of removing the



doubt of his friend as to the authenticity of the history of Susanna, he mentions the traditional death of Isaiah, which he says "is testified to by the Epistle to the Hebrews, but is not written in any of the canonical books" (meaning, not that the Epistle was not one of these books, but that the account of Isaiah's martyrdom is not in any canonical book of the Old Test.). Then he adds, "But possibly some who are pressed by this argument may take refuge in the view of those who set aside the Epistle as not written by Paul: and to them we should have to use another argument to shew that the Epistle is Paul's."

It would have been of some interest to know who these *some* were, and whether their *setting aside* of the Epistle arose from the absence of ancient tradition as to the Pauline authorship, or from critical conclusions of their own, arrived at from study of the Epistle itself. But of this Origen says nothing.

19. The principal testimony of his own is contained in two fragments of his lost Homilies on this Epistle, preserved by Eusebius: "In these he observes, that the style of the Epistle is not that characteristic of the Apostle, who declared himself unskilful in style; but is more Greek in its form of diction, as every one who knows how to discriminate styles must confess. On the other hand, any one who reads attentively the Apostolic writings must also confess, that the thoughts are marvellous, and no way inferior to the acknowledged writings of the Apostles. After this, he says that the thoughts appear to him to be those of the Apostle, but the diction and style those of some reporter or paraphraser of the things said by his master."

Then follows the sentence cited by us in par. 1. And afterwards he adds, "The account which has come down to us is divided, some reporting that Clement, who became Bishop of Rome, wrote the Epistle, others that it was Luke, who wrote the Gospel and the Acts."

We learn from these remarkable fragments several interesting particulars: among which may be mentioned;

First, Origen's *own opinion as to the Epistle*, deduced from grounds which he regards as being clear to all who are on the one hand accustomed to judge of style, and, on the other, versed in the apostolic writings; viz. that its Author in its present form is not St. Paul, but some one who has embodied in his own style and form the thoughts of that Apostle. One thing however he leaves in uncertainty; whether we are to regard such disciple of St. Paul, or the Apostle himself, as speaking in the first person throughout the Epistle.

20. Secondly, *the fact that some churches, or church, regarded the Epistle as the work of St. Paul*. But here again the expression is somewhat vague. The words, "*if any church,*" may be an uncertain indication of several churches, or it may be a pointed allusion to one. If the latter, which from what follows, is the more probable, the church

would probably be the Alexandrian, by what we have already seen of the testimonies of Pantæus and Clement. The words "*let it have credit for the circumstance*" must be taken as meaning, "I have no wish to deprive it of this its peculiar advantage:" and the ground, "*for not in vain have the ancients handed it down as Paul's,*" must be his own conviction, that the thoughts of the Epistle proceeded originally from the Apostle. Who "*the ancients*" were, it is impossible for us to say. Possibly, if we confine our view to one church, no more than Pantæus, and Clement, and their disciples. One thing is very plain; that they cannot have been men whose tradition satisfied Origen himself, or he would not have spoken as he has. Be they who they might, one thing is plain; that their tradition is spoken of by him as *not in vain*, not as resting on external matter of fact, but as finding justification in the internal character of the Epistle; and that it did not extend to the fact of St. Paul having written the Epistle, but only to its being, in some sense, his.

21. Thirdly, *that the authorship of the Epistle was regarded by Origen as utterly unknown.* Thus only can we interpret the words, "*but who wrote the Epistle, God only knows the truth.*" For that it is in vain to attempt to understand the word **wrote** of the mere scribe, in the sense of Rom. xvi. 22, is shewn by its use in the same sentence, "*Luke who wrote the Gospel and the Acts.*"

22. This passage further testifies respecting *external tradition*, as it had come down to Origen himself. He speaks of "*the account which has come down to us:*" clearly meaning these words of *historical tradition*, and thereby by implication excluding from that category the tradition of the Pauline authorship. And this historical tradition gave two views: one, that Clement of Rome was the Writer; the other, that St. Luke was the Writer.

23. And this last circumstance is of importance, as being our only clue out of a difficulty which Bleek has felt, but has not attempted to remove. We find ourselves otherwise in this ambiguity with regard to the origin of one or the other hypothesis. If the Pauline authorship was the original historical tradition, the difficulties presented by the Epistle itself were sure to have called it in doubt, and suggested the other: if on the other hand the name of any disciple of St. Paul was delivered down by historical tradition as the writer, the apostolicity and Pauline character of the thoughts, coupled with the desire to find a great name for an anonymous Epistle, was sure to have produced, and when produced would easily find acceptance for, the idea that St. Paul was the author. But the fact that Origen speaks of "*the account which has come down to us,*" not as *for*, but as *against* the Pauline hypothesis, seems to shew that the former of these alternatives was really the case.

24. As far then as we have at present advanced, we seem to have gathered the following as the probable result, as to the practice and state of opinion in the Alexandrine church :

(a) That it was customary to speak of and quote from the Epistle as the work of St. Paul.

(b) That this was done by writers of discernment, and familiarity with the apostolic writings, not because they thought the style and actual writing to be St. Paul's, but as seeing that from the nature of the thoughts and matter, the Epistle was worthy of and characteristic of that Apostle ; thus feeling that it was not without reason that those before them had delivered the Epistle down to them as St. Paul's.

(c) That we nowhere find trace of historical tradition asserting the Pauline authorship : but on the contrary, we find it expressly quoted on the other side <sup>4</sup>.

25. We now pass to other portions of the church : and next, to *proconsular Africa*. Here we find, in the beginning of the third century, the testimony of TERTULLIAN, expressly ascribing the Epistle to Barnabas. "There exists also a writing under the name of Barnabas, addressed to the Hebrews ; a man of sufficient authority, considering that Paul ranked him with himself in the practice of abstinence (1 Cor. ix. 6)." And then he cites Heb. vi. 4—8, as an admonition of Barnabas.

26. From the way in which the Epistle is here simply cited as the work of Barnabas, we clearly see that this was no mere opinion of Tertullian's own, but at all events the accepted view of that portion of the church. He does not hint at any doubt on the matter. But here again we are at a loss, from what source to derive this view. Either, supposing Barnabas really the author, genuine historical tradition may have been its source,—or lacking such tradition, some in the African church may originally have inferred this from the nature of the contents of the Epistle ; and the view may subsequently have become general there. One thing however the testimony shews beyond all doubt : that the idea of a Pauline authorship was wholly unknown to Tertullian, and to those for whom he wrote.

27. If it were necessary further to confirm evidence so decisive, we might do so by citing his charge against Marcion, of falsifying the number of the Epistles of St. Paul : "Yet I am astonished, seeing that he *received* Epistles written to individuals, that he has rejected the two to Timothy, and one to Titus, on the state of the church. He has taken upon him, I fancy, also to falsify the number of the Epistles."

Now seeing that Marcion held *ten* Epistles only of St. Paul, it would

<sup>4</sup> On the phenomenon of the *diversity* of traditions, see below, par. 36 ff.

appear by combining this with the former testimony, that the Epistle to the Hebrews was not here reckoned among them.

28. Among the witnesses belonging to the end of the second and beginning of the third century, none is of more weight than IRENÆUS, a Greek of Asia Minor by birth, and bishop of Lyons in Gaul, and thus representing the testimony of the church in both countries. In his great work against Heresies, he makes frequent use of the Epistles of St. Paul, expressly quoting twelve of them. There is no citation from the Epistle to Philemon, which may well be, from its brevity, and its personal character. But nowhere in this work has he cited or referred to the Epistle to the Hebrews at all, although it would have been exceedingly apposite for his purpose, as against the Gnostics of his time. Eusebius says "that a work of Irenæus was extant in his time, called treatises concerning various matters, wherein he quoted passages from the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Wisdom of Solomon." From this it would seem that Eusebius was unable to find any citations of the Epistle in other works of Irenæus known to him. And he does not even here say that Irenæus mentioned St. Paul as the author of the Epistle.

29. Indeed we have a testimony which goes to assert that this Father distinctly denied the Pauline authorship. Photius cites a passage from Stephen Gobar, a tritheist of the sixth century, in which he says, "that Hippolytus and Irenæus assert the Epistle to the Hebrews, commonly ascribed to Paul, not to be by him." The same is indeed asserted of Hippolytus by Photius himself; but it is strange, if Irenæus had asserted it, that Eusebius should have made no mention of the fact, adducing as he does the citation of the Epistle by him. At the same time, Gobar's language is far too precise to be referred to the mere fact that Irenæus does not cite the Epistle as St. Paul's, as some have endeavoured to refer it: and it is to be remembered, that Eusebius does not pretend to have read or seen all the works of Irenæus then extant. Bleek puts the alternative well, according as we accept, or do not accept, the assertion of Gobar. If we accept it, it would shew that Irenæus had found somewhere prevalent the idea that St. Paul was the author; otherwise he would not have taken the pains to contradict such an idea. If we do not accept it as any more than a negative report, meaning that Irenæus nowhere cites the Epistle as St. Paul's, then at all events, considering that he constantly cites St. Paul's Epistles as his, we shall have the presumption, that he neither accepted, nor knew of, any such idea as the Pauline authorship.

30. If we now pass to *the Church of Rome*, we find, belonging to the period of which we have been treating, the testimony of the presbyter CAIUS. Of him Eusebius relates, "that in a dialogue published by him, he speaks of thirteen Epistles only written by Paul, not numbering

among them that to the Hebrews, because it is even till now (Eusebius's time) thought by some at Rome not to be the Apostle's."

These words can lead only to one of two inferences : that Caius, not numbering the Epistle among those of St. Paul, either placed it by itself, or did not mention it at all. In either case, he must be regarded as speaking, not his own private judgment merely, but that of the church to which he belonged, in which, as we further learn, the same judgment yet lingered more than a century after.

31. Another testimony is that of the fragment respecting the canon of the New Test., first published by Muratori, and known by his name, generally ascribed to the end of the second or the beginning of the third century. In this fragment it is stated that St. Paul wrote Epistles to seven churches ; and his thirteen Epistles are enumerated, in a peculiar order : but that to the Hebrews is not named, unless it be distantly hinted at, which is not probable.

32. As far then as we have advanced, the following seems to be our result. *Nowhere, except in the Alexandrine church, does there seem to have existed any idea that the Epistle was St. Paul's.* Throughout the whole Western Church, it is either left unenumerated among his writings, or expressly excluded from them. That it is wholly futile to attempt to refer this to any influence of the Montanist or Marcionite disputes, has been well and simply shewn by Bleek. The idea of the catholic teachers of the whole Western Church disparaging and excluding an apostolical book, because one passage of it (ch. vi. 4—6) seemed to favour the tenets of their adversaries, is too preposterous ever to have been suggested, except in the interests of a desperate cause : and the fact that Tertullian, himself a Montanist, cites Heb. vi. 4—6 on his side, but without ascribing it to St. Paul, is decisive against the notion that his adversaries so ascribed it at any time : for he would have been sure in that case to have charged them with their desertion of such an opinion.

33. And even in the Alexandrine Church itself, as we have seen, there is no reliable trace of a historical tradition of the Pauline authorship. Every expression which seems to imply this, such e. g. as that much-adduced one of Origen, "*for not in vain have the ancients handed it down as being Paul's,*" when fairly examined, gives way under us. The traditional account, though inconsistent with itself, was entirely the other way.

34. The fair account then of opinion in the latter end of the second century seems to be this : that *there was then, as now, great uncertainty regarding the authorship of our Epistle* : that the general cast of the thoughts was recognized as Pauline, and that *the ancients*, whatever that may imply, had not unreasonably handed it down as St. Paul's : but on what grounds, we are totally unable to say : for ecclesiastical

tradition does not bear them out. In proconsular Africa it was ascribed to Barnabas : by the tradition which had come down to Origen and his fellows, to Luke or Clement ; while the Western Church, even when judged of by Irenæus, who was brought up in Asia, and even including the Church of Rome, the capital of the world, where all reports on such matters were sure to be ventilated, seems to have been altogether without any positive tradition or opinion on the matter.

35. Before advancing with the history, which has now become of secondary importance to us, I will state to what, in my own view, this result points, as regarding the formation of our own conclusion on the matter.

36. It simply leaves us, unfettered by any overpowering judgment of antiquity, to examine the Epistle for ourselves, and form our own opinion from its contents. Even were we to admit the opinion of a Pauline authorship to the rank of an early tradition, which it does not appear in the strict sense to have been, we should then have ancient ecclesiastical tradition broken into various lines, and inconsistent with itself : not requiring our assent to one or other of its numerous variations. Those who are prepared to follow it, and it alone, will have to make up their minds whether they will attach themselves to the catechetical school of Alexandria, and if so, whether to that portion of it (if such portion existed, which is not proved) which regarded the Epistle as purely and simply the work of St. Paul, or to that which, with Clement, regarded the present Epistle as a Greek version by St. Luke of a Hebrew original by St. Paul,—or to the West African Church, which regarded it as written by Barnabas ; or to the “*story*” or “*account*” mentioned by Origen, in its Clementine or its Lucan branch ; or to the negative view of the churches of Europe.

37. For to one or other of these courses, and on these grounds, would the intelligent follower of tradition be confined. It would be in vain for him to allege, as a motive for his opinion, the *subsequent* universal prevalence of one or other of these views, unless he could at the same time shew that that prevalence was owing to the overpowering force of an authentic tradition, somewhere or other existing. That the whole church of Rome believed the Pauline authorship in subsequent centuries, would be no compensation for the total absence of such belief at that time when, if there were any such authentic tradition any where, it must have prevailed in that church. That the same was uniformly asserted and acted on by the writers of the Alexandrine church in later ages, does not tend to throw any light on the vague uncertainty which hangs over the first appearances of the opinion, wherever it is spoken of and its grounds alleged by such earlier teachers as Clement and Origen.

38. And these considerations are much strengthened, when we take into account what strong reasons there were why the opinion of the



Pauline authorship, when once advanced by men of authority in teaching, should gain general acceptance. We see this tendency already prevailing in the writings of Clement of Alexandria and Origen; who, notwithstanding the sentences which have been quoted from them, yet throughout their writings acquiesce for the most part in a conventional habit of citing the Epistle as the work of St. Paul. And as time passed on, a belief, which so conveniently set at rest all doubts about an important anonymous canonical writing, spread (and all the more as the character of the times became less and less critical and enquiring) over the whole extent of the church.

39. It will be well to interpose two cautions, especially for young readers. It has been very much the practice with the maintainers of the Pauline authorship to deal largely in sweeping assertions regarding early ecclesiastical tradition. They have not unfrequently alleged on their side the habit of citation of Clement and Origen, as shewing their belief respecting the Epistle, uncorrected by those passages which shew what that belief really was. Let not readers then be borne away by these strong assertions, but let them carefully and intelligently examine for themselves.

40. Our second caution is one regarding the intelligent use of ancient testimony. Hitherto, we have been endeavouring to trace up to their first origin the beliefs respecting the Epistle. Whence did they first arise? Where do we find them prevailing in the earliest times, and there, why? Now this is the only method of enquiry on the subject which is or can be decisive, as far as external evidence is concerned. In following down the stream of time, materials for this enquiry soon fail us. And it has been the practice of some of the upholders of the Pauline authorship, to amass long lists of names and testimonies, from later ages, of men who simply *swelled the ranks of conformity to the opinion when it once became prevalent*. Let readers distrust all such accumulations as evidence. They are valuable as shewing the growth and prevalence of the opinion, but in no other light. No accretions to the river in its course can alter the situation and character of the fountain-head.

41. We proceed now with the history of opinion, which, as before remarked, is become very much the history of the spread of the belief of a Pauline authorship.

At *Alexandria*, as we might have expected, the conventional habit of quoting the Epistle as St. Paul's gradually prevailed over critical suspicion and early tradition.

42. DIONYSIUS, president of the catechetical school, and afterwards bishop of Alexandria, in the middle of the third century, cites Heb. x. 34 expressly as the words of St. Paul. PETER, bishop (about 300), who suffered under Diocletian, cites Heb. xi. 32 as the Apostle's.

HIERAX or Hieracas, of Leontopolis, who lived about the same time,

and who, although the founder of a heresy, appears not to have severed himself from the church, is repeatedly adduced by Epiphanius as citing the Epistle as "the Apostle's:" and the same Epiphanius says of the Melchisedekites (see on ch. vii. 3), that they attempted to support their view by Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews.

ALEXANDER, bishop about 312, says in an Epistle to Alexander bishop of Constantinople,

"Agreeably to this exclaims also the lofty speaker Paul, saying concerning Him, 'Whom He appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds:'" Heb. i. 2.

ANTONIUS, the celebrated promoter of the monastic life in Egypt, in one of his seven epistles to various monasteries, says, "of whom Paul saith that they, on account of us, have not received the promises" (Heb. xi. 13, 39, 40).

43. But the most weighty witness for the view of the Alexandrine church at this time is ATHANASIUS, in the middle of the fourth century. He enumerates the canonical books which have come down and are believed to be inspired, among which he names fourteen Epistles of St. Paul, and among them our Epistle, without alluding to any doubt on the subject. And in his other writings every where he cites the Epistle as St. Paul's.

44. Belonging to nearly the same time in the same church are three other writers—by all of whom the Epistle is either expressly or implicitly cited as the work of St. Paul.

45. It would be to little purpose to multiply names, in a church which by this time had universally and undoubtingly received the Pauline authorship. Bleek has adduced, with copious citations, DIDYMUS (the teacher of Jerome and Rufinus),—MARCUS EREMITA (about 400),—THEOPHILUS of ALEXANDRIA (about 400),—ISIDORE of PELUSIUM (died 450),—CYRIL of ALEXANDRIA (died 444): concerning which last it is to be observed, that though Nestorius had adduced passages from the Epistle on his side, as being St. Paul's, Cyril, in refuting them, does not make the slightest reference to the formerly existing doubt as to the authorship.

46. And so it continued in this church in subsequent times: the only remarkable exception being found in EUTHALIUS (about 460), who, though he regards the Epistle as of Pauline origin, and reckons fourteen Epistles of St. Paul, yet adduces the old doubts concerning it, and believes it to be a translation made by Clement of Rome from a Hebrew original by the Apostle. This view he supports by the considerations, 1. of its style; 2. of its wanting an address from the writer; 3. on account of what is said ch. ii. 3, 4. For the first, he gives the reason that it was translated from the Hebrew, some say, by Luke, but most, by Clement, whose style it resembles. Then he gives the usual reason for the want of



a superscription, viz. that St. Paul was not the Apostle of the Jews but of the Gentiles, citing Gal. ii. 9, 10: and proceeds, but the Epistle is afterwards seen to be Paul's, by ch. x. 34, in which the (now exploded) reading **with my bonds** is his point: by ch. xiii. 18, 19: by ch. xiii. 23, in which he interprets the word which we render, "*set at liberty*," "*sent forth for the ministry*," which he says no one could do but St. Paul: and then expecting him soon, he promises, as is his custom frequently, a visit from himself with him.

This testimony is valuable, as shewing that in the midst of the prevalence of the now accepted opinion, a spirit of intelligent criticism still survived.

47. If we now turn to *other parts of the Eastern Church*, we find the same acceptation of the Pauline authorship from the middle of the third century onwards. Bleek gives citations from METHODIUS, Bishop of Olympus in Lycia, about 290: from PAUL of SAMOSATA, Bishop of Antioch in 264: from JACOB, Bishop of NISIBIS, about 325: from EPIHEM the SYRIAN (died 378).

48. A separate notice is required of the testimony of EUSEBIUS of Cæsarea, the well-known Church historian. In very many passages throughout his works, and more especially in his commentary on the Psalms, he cites the Epistle, and always as the work of St. Paul, or of "the Apostle," or "the holy Apostle," or "the divine Apostle." In his Ecclesiastical History also he reckons it among the Epistles of St. Paul. In the chapter which treats especially of the canon of the New Test., while there is no express mention of the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is evident, by comparing his words there and in another place, that he reckons it as confessedly one of the writings of St. Paul. For he enumerates among those New Test. books which are '*received by all*,' fourteen Epistles of St. Paul.

Still it would appear from another passage, that Eusebius himself believed the Epistle to have been written in Hebrew by St. Paul and translated by Luke, or more probably by Clement, whose style it resembles.

If such was his view, however, he was hardly consistent with himself: for elsewhere he seems to assume that the Epistle was written in Greek by the Apostle himself; an inconsistency which betrays either carelessness, or change of opinion.

49. Marks of the same inconsistency further appear in another place, where he numbers our Epistle among the doubtful books, saying of Clement of Alexandria, that he cites testimonies from doubtful books, such as that called the Wisdom of Solomon, Jesus the Son of Sirach, and the Epistle to the Hebrews, and those of Barnabas and Clement and Jude. It has been suggested that the inconsistency may be removed by accepting this last as a mere matter of fact, meaning that these books are called in question by some.

50. As we pass downwards, I shall mention but cursorily those writers who uniformly quote the Epistle as St. Paul's; pausing only to notice any trace of a different opinion, or any testimony worth express citation. The full testimonies will be found in Bleek, and most of them in Lardner, vol. ii.

51. Of the class first mentioned in the foregoing paragraph, are Cyril of Jerusalem (died 386); Gregory of Nazianzum (died 389); Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis in Cyprus (died 402); Basil the Great, Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia (died 379); his brother Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa (died about 370); Titus of Bostra (died about 371); Chrysostom (died 407); Theodore of Mopsuestia (died about 428); Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrus in Cilicia (died 457).

52. In the works of this latter Father we find it asserted that the Epistle was written from Rome. Also we find the Arians charged with setting it aside as spurious.

The same accusation is found,—in the Dialogue on the Trinity, ascribed sometimes to Athanasius, sometimes to Theodorët: where the orthodox interlocutor makes the rather startling assertion, “that ever since the Gospel was first preached, the Epistle had been believed to be Paul's;”—and in Epiphanius, Hær. lxi. 14, p. 738, where at the same time he charges them with misusing Heb. iii. 2, **Him that made Him**, for the purposes of their error. From this, and from the Epistle of Arius to Alexander, where he professes his faith, and cites Heb. i. 2, it is plain that the Arians did not reject the Epistle altogether. Nay, they hardly denied its Pauline authenticity; for in that case we should have Athanasius in his polemics against them, and Alexander, defending this authenticity, whereas they always take it for granted. Moreover in the disputation of Augustine with the Arian Gothic Bishop Maximinus, we find the latter twice quoting the Epistle as St. Paul's. So that whatever may have been done by individual Arians, it is clear that as a party they did not reject either the Epistle itself or its Pauline authorship.

53. Correspondent with the spread of the acceptance of the Epistle as St. Paul's was its reception, in the MSS., into the number of his Epistles. It was so received in the character of a recent accession, variously ranked: either at the end of those addressed to churches, or at the end of all.

54. The motives for these differing arrangements were obvious. Some placed it last, as an addition to the Epistles of St. Paul; others, to give it more its proper rank, put it before the Epistles to individuals. But had it been originally among St. Paul's Epistles, there can be no doubt that it would have taken its place according to its importance, which is the principle of arrangement of the undoubted Pauline Epistles in the canon.

55. A trace of a peculiar arrangement is found in the Great Vatican

Manuscript. In that MS., all the fourteen Epistles of St. Paul form one continued whole, numbered throughout by sections. But the Epistle to the Hebrews, which stands after 2 Thess., does not correspond, in the numeration of its sections, with its present place in the order. It evidently once followed the Epistle to the Galatians, that Epistle ending with the 59th section,—Heb. beginning with § 60,—and Eph. (the latter part of Heb. being deficient) with § 70. This would seem to shew that the MS. from which this was copied, or at all events which was at some previous time copied for its text, had Heb. after Gal.; which would indicate a still stronger persuasion that it was St. Paul's. In the Sahidic version only does it appear in that place which it would naturally hold according to its importance: i. e. between 2 Cor. and Gal. But from the fact of no existing Greek MS. having it in this place, we must ascribe the phenomenon to the caprice of the framer of that version.

56. Returning to the Western church, we find that it was some time after the beginning of the third century before the Epistle was generally recognized as St. Paul's; and that even when this became the case, it was not equally used and cited with the rest of his Epistles.

About the middle of the third century flourished in the church of Rome **NOVATIAN**, the author of the celebrated schism which went by his name. We have works of his full of Scripture citations, and on subjects which would have been admirably elucidated by this Epistle. Yet nowhere has he quoted or alluded to it. That he would not have had any feeling adverse to it is pretty clear; for no passage in the New Test. could give such apparent countenance to his severer view concerning the non-readmission of the "lapsd," as Heb. vi. 4—6. Yet he never cited it for his purpose.

57. Contemporary with Novatian, we have, in the West African church, **CYPRIAN**, Bishop of Carthage (died 258). In all his writings, he never cites, or even alludes to, our Epistle; which he would certainly have done for the same reason as Novatian would have done it, had he recognized it as the work of St. Paul; the whole of whose Epistles he cites, with the exception of that to Philemon. In all probability, Tertullian's view was also his, that it was written by Barnabas.

58. A little later we have a witness from another part of the Latin church; **VICTORINUS**, Bishop of Pettau on the Drave, in Pannonia (died about 303). He asserts, in the most explicit manner, that St. Paul wrote only to seven churches; and he enumerates the churches: viz. the Roman, Corinthian, Galatian, Ephesian, Philippian, Colossian, Thessalonian.

We may add to this, that the Epistle to the Hebrews is never quoted in his Commentary on the Apocalypse.

59. About the middle of the fourth century, we find the practice

beginning in the Latin church, of quoting the Epistle as St. Paul's : but at first only here and there, and not as if the opinion were the prevailing one. Bleek traces the adoption of this view by the Latins to their closer intercourse with the Greeks about this time owing to the Arian controversy, which occasioned several of the Western theologians to spend some time in the East, where the Epistle was cited, at first by both parties, and always by the Catholics, as undoubtedly St. Paul's. Add to this the study of the Greek expository writers, and especially of Origen, and we shall have adduced enough reasons to account for the gradual spread of the idea of the Pauline authorship over the West.

60. A fitting example of both these influences is found in HILARY, Bp. of Poitiers (died 368), who seems to have been the first who thus regarded the Epistle. He quotes it indeed but seldom, in comparison with other parts of Scripture, and especially with St. Paul's Epistles ; but when he does, it is decisively and without doubt, as the work of the Apostle.

61. LUCIFER of Cagliari (died 371) also cites the Epistle as St. Paul's, but once only, though he frequently cites Scripture, and especially St. Paul's Epistles. And it is observable of him, that he was exiled by the emperor Constantius, and spent some time in Palestine and the Thebaid.

62. Fabius Marius VICTORINUS belongs to these same times. He was born in Africa, and passed the greater part of his days as a rhetorician at Rome : being baptized as a Christian late in life. Most of his remaining works are against the Arians : and in them he cites our Epistle two or three times, and as St. Paul's ; still, it has been observed (by Bleek), not with such emphasis as the other books of Scripture, but more as a mere passing reference. He is said by Jerome to have written *Commentaries on the Apostle*, i. e. on the Pauline Epistles : yet it would appear, from what Cassiodorus implies in the sixth century, that *up to his time no Latin writer had commented on the Epistle*, that he did not include it among them.

63. Other Latin writers there are of this time, who make no use of our Epistle, though it would have well served their purpose in their writings. Such are,—PHÆBADIUS, Bp. of Agen, in S. W. Gaul (died aft. 392) ;—ZENO, Bp. of Verona (about 360) ;—PACIANUS, Bp. of Barcelona (about 370) ;—HILARY the Deacon, generally supposed to be the author of the Commentary on St. Paul's Epistles found among the works of Ambrose (about 370) <sup>6</sup> ;—OPTATUS, Bp. of Milevi (about 364—375), who wrote on the Donatist schism. All these quote frequently from other parts of the New Test. and from St. Paul's Epistles.

<sup>6</sup> The Epistle is once cited by him, but so that it is distinguished from the writings of St. Paul.

64. On the other hand, AMBROSE, Bp. of Milan (died 397), combating strongly the Arians of his time, and making diligent use of the writings of Origen, Didymus, and Basil, often uses and quotes the Epistle, and always as the work of St. Paul. In one celebrated passage in his treatise on Penitence, where he is impugning the allegation by the Novatians of Heb. vi. 4 ff., he defends the passage from misunderstanding; confesses its apparent inconsistency with St. Paul's conduct to the sinner at Corinth; does not think of questioning the apostolical authority of the passage, but asks, "Could Paul preach against his own act?" and gives two solutions of the apparent discrepancy.

65. We have an important testimony concerning our Epistle from PHILASTRIUS, Bp. of Brescia (died about 387), who while he cites the Epistle as unhesitatingly as his friend Ambrose, in his treatise on Heresies, says, "There is a heresy of some respecting the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews. There are some who assert it not to be his, but say that it was written either by Barnabas the Apostle, or by Clement, Bishop of Rome. And others say it is an Epistle of the Evangelist Luke to the Laodiceans<sup>6</sup>. And because some unbelievers have made additions in it, it is not read in the church; and, if it is read by some, yet it is not read to the people in the church, but only thirteen Epistles of his, and occasionally that to the Hebrews. Also, because it is written in plausible language after a fashion, they think it not to be the work of that Apostle. Also because in it the author says that Christ *was made* (ch. iii. 2), it is not read. And equally for another reason, its saying about penitence (ch. vi. 4 ff.), on account of the Novatians." Then he proceeds to give orthodox explanations of both places.

He has also another remarkable passage, in which he enumerates thirteen Epistles of Paul as canonical, and calls the rest apocryphal, to be read for moral instruction by the perfect, but not by all, as having been tampered with (so he would seem to mean) by heretics.

These testimonies of Philastrius are curious, and hardly consistent with one another, nor with his own usual practice of citing the Epistle as St. Paul's. They seem to lead us to an inference agreeing with that to which our previous enquiries led, viz. that though some controversial writers in the Latin church at the end of the fourth century were beginning to cite the Epistle as St. Paul's, it was not at that time so recognized in that church generally, nor publicly read; or if read, but seldom.

<sup>6</sup> This curious sentence can hardly mean, as Bleek, that they believed the Epistle to the Hebrews to be St. Luke's, as also that apocryphal one which is written to the Laodiceans; but that they believed the Epistle to the Hebrews to be St. Luke's, and that *it* was also written to the Laodiceans, i.e. was the Epistle alluded to under that designation by St. Paul in Col. iv. 16. What follows is very obscure, but does not seem to me to support this rendering of Bleek's.

66. This reluctance on the part of the Latin church to receive and recognize the Epistle was doubtless continued and increased by the use made of some passages in it by the Novatian schismatics. We have seen already, in par. 64, that Ambrose adduces this fact : and Bleek brings several instances of it from other writers. But as time advanced, the intrinsic value of the Epistle itself, and the example of writers of the Greek church, gained for it almost universal reception, and reputation of Pauline authorship in the West. Thus GAUDENTIUS, successor of Philastrius in the see of Brescia in 387, to which he was summoned from travelling in Cappadocia,—and FAUSTINUS, who followed in this, as in other things, the practice of Lucifer of Cagliari,—cite the Epistle without hesitation as St. Paul's. So in general does RUFINUS (died about 411), having spent a long time in Egypt, and being familiar with the writings of Origen. He gives "fourteen Epistles of the Apostle Paul" among the writings "which the fathers had included in the canon : " and in his writings generally cites the Epistle as Pauline without hesitation.

67. I shall close this historical sketch with a fuller notice of the important testimonies of JEROME and AUGUSTINE, and a brief summary of those who followed them.

68. JEROME (died 420) spent a great portion of his life in Egypt, Palestine, and other parts of the East ; was well acquainted with the writings of Origen ; and personally knew such men as Gregory of Nazianzum, Didymus, Epiphanius, and the other Greek theologians of his time. It might therefore have been expected, that he would, as we have seen other Latin writers do, have adopted the Greek practice, and have unhesitatingly cited and spoken of this Epistle as the work of St. Paul. This however is by no means the case. On the whole, his usual practice is, to cite the words of the Epistle, and ascribe them to St. Paul : and in his work on Hebrew names, where he interprets the Hebrew words which occur in Scripture, in the order of the books where they are found, he introduces the Epistle as St. Paul's, after 2 Thessalonians.

69. But the exceptions to this practice of unhesitating citation are many and important : and wherever he gives any account of the Epistle, he is far from concealing the doubts which prevailed respecting it. I shall give some of the most remarkable passages.

In the *Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers*, chap. 5, under *Paul*, he says :

"He wrote nine Epistles, to seven churches ; one to the Romans, two to the Corinthians, one to the Galatians, one to the Ephesians, one to the Philippians, one to the Colossians, two to the Thessalonians ; and besides, to his disciples, two to Timotheus, one to Titus, one to Philemon. But the Epistle addressed to the Hebrews



is not believed to be his, on account of the difference of style and diction, but is thought to be either Barnabas's, according to Tertulian, or Luke the Evangelist's, according to some, or Clement's, afterwards bishop of the Roman church, who is reported to have arranged and adorned Paul's thoughts in words of his own; or at any rate that Paul, in writing to the Hebrews, on account of his unpopularity among them, suppressed the mention of his name in the opening salutation. For he had written as a Hebrew to the Hebrews in Hebrew, i. e. in his own mother tongue, most eloquently, and those things which were written eloquently in Hebrew were still more eloquently turned into Greek: and this is the cause why it seems to differ from the rest of Paul's Epistles."

70. In this passage, while he relates the doubts and hypotheses, his own leaning seems to be, to believe that the fact of St. Paul having written in Hebrew, and having omitted a salutation owing to his unpopularity among the Jews, would be enough to account for the phenomena of the Epistle.

71. But in other places, he gives other reasons for the difficulties of the Epistle and for the doubts respecting it. Thus in his Commentary on Gal. i. 1 he says, that St. Paul does not in it call himself an Apostle, or mention his name, because it would be incongruous, where Christ was going to be called an Apostle (Heb. iii. 1, iv. 14), that Paul should have the same appellation.

Again, on Isa. vi. 9, 10, he says that the Epistle is questioned, because in it Paul, writing to Hebrews, uses testimonies which are not in the Hebrew books.

72. In the prologue to his Commentary on Titus, he severely blames the Marcionites and other heretics for excluding arbitrarily certain Epistles from the number of the Apostolic writings, instancing the Pastoral Epistles and this to the Hebrews. He then proceeds:

"If they gave any reason why they think them not the Apostle's, we might try to make some answer satisfactory to the reader. But since now they pronounce with heretical authority, and say that Epistle is Paul's, this is not, let them take the same kind of authority as their refutation on behalf of the truth, by which they are not ashamed to invent falsehoods."

Still that this strong language does not prove him to have been satisfied as to the Pauline authorship, is shewn by two passages in his commentary on this same Epistle to Titus:

"Pay also particular attention to this, how speaking of the presbyters of one city, he afterwards calls them bishops. If any likes to acknowledge that Epistle which under the name of Paul is written

to the Hebrews, there also the care of the church is divided among many. For he writes to the people, ‘Obey your chief men,’ &c. (Heb. xiii. 17).”

And,

“Read again *the Epistle to the Hebrews by Paul, or by whomsoever else you think it written*; go through that whole catalogue of faith, in which it is written, ‘*By faith Abel offered to God a greater sacrifice than Cain,*’ &c. (Heb. xi. 4—8).”

And again in his Commentary on Ezek. xxviii.,

“And Paul the Apostle says (*if one is to receive the Epistle to the Hebrews*), ‘*Ye are come near to Mount Sion,*’ &c. (Heb. xii. 22).”

In another place, he speaks in almost the same words.

73. The following expressions regarding the Epistle, testifying to the same doubt, occur in his writings:

“The Epistle to the Hebrews, which all the Greeks receive, and some of the Latins.”

“Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews, though many of the Latins are doubtful about it.” . . . . . “But among the Romans to this day it is not accounted the work of Paul the Apostle:”—“which the Latin usage receives not:”—“although the Latin usage does not receive it among the canonical Scriptures,” &c.

74. A passage requiring more express notice is found in his Epistle to Dardanus, where after citing testimonies from Heb. xi. xii., he proceeds:

“Nor does it escape me that the bad faith of the Jews does not receive these testimonies, confirmed as they are by the authority of the Old Testament. This reply we leave to our own people, that this Epistle, which is inscribed to the Hebrews, is received as the Apostle Paul’s, not only by the churches of the East, but by all the old ecclesiastical Greek writers,—although most of them think it to be Barnabas’s, or Clement’s: and that it is of no import whose it is, since it is acknowledged to be the writing of an orthodox (literally, *ecclesiastical*) author, and is daily read in the churches. And if the Latin use does not receive it among the canonical Scriptures, so neither do the Greek churches, using the same liberty of judgment, receive the Apocalypse of St. John: and yet we receive both, in no way following the custom of this time, but the authority of ancient writers, who constantly cite testimonies from both of these books, not as they sometimes do from apocryphal writings (and, but rarely, from Pagan authors also), but as canonical.”

75. There are some points in this important testimony, which seem



to want elucidation. Jerome asserts, for example, that by *all preceding Greek writers the Epistle had been received as St. Paul's*: and yet immediately after, he says that *most of them* think it to be Barnabas's or Clement's<sup>7</sup>: and think it to be of no consequence (whose it is), seeing that it is the production of an "*ecclesiastical author*," and is every day read in the churches. Now though these expressions are not very perspicuous, it is not difficult to see what is meant by them. A general conventional reception of the Epistle as St. Paul's prevailed among the Greeks. To this their writers (without exception according to Jerome: but that is a loose assertion, as the preceding pages will shew) conformed, still in most cases entertaining their own views as to Barnabas or Clement having written the Epistle, and thinking it of little moment, seeing that confessedly it was the work of an "*ecclesiastical author*," and was stamped with the authority of public reading in the churches. The expression "*ecclesiastical author*" seems to be in contrast to an *heretical* one.

76. The evidence here however on one point is clear enough: and shews that in Jerome's day, i.e. in the beginning of the fifth century, the custom of the Latins did not receive the Epistle to the Hebrews among the canonical Scriptures.

77. Jerome's own view, as far as it can be gathered from this passage, is, that while he wishes to look on the Epistle as decidedly canonical, he does not venture to say who the author was, and believes the question to be immaterial: for we cannot but suppose him, from the very form of the clause "*and that it is of no import &c.*," to be giving to this view his own approbation.

78. And consistent with this are many citations of the Epistle scattered up and down among his works: as, e.g., where he speaks of "whoever wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews:"—of "Paul, or some one else who wrote the Epistle;" and adduces the fact of Paul having written to seven churches, "the eighth, to the Hebrews, being by most excluded from the number."

79. And as Bleek has very satisfactorily shewn, no difference in time can be established between these testimonies of his, which should prove that he once doubted the Pauline authorship and was afterwards convinced, or vice versâ. For passages inconsistent with one another occur in one and the same work, e.g., in the Commentary on Isaiah, in which, notwithstanding that he speaks uncertainly as above, yet he repeatedly cites the Epistle as the work of St. Paul. And these Commentaries on the prophets were among his later works.

<sup>7</sup> By no possible ingenuity can these words be made to mean, as Dr. Davidson interprets them, that "the Greeks ascribed the style and language of it to Barnabas or Clement, though the ideas and sentiments were Paul's."

80. We may safely then gather from that which has been said, what Jerome's view on the whole really was. He commonly, and when not speaking with deliberation, followed the usual practice of citing the Epistle as St. Paul's. But he very frequently guards himself by an expression of uncertainty: and sometimes distinctly states the doubt which prevailed on the subject. That his own mind was not clear on it, is plain from many of the above-cited passages. In fact, though quoted on the side of the Pauline authorship, the testimony of Jerome is quite as much against as in favour of it. Even in his time, after so long a prevalence of the conventional habit of quoting it as St. Paul's, he feels himself constrained, in a great proportion of the cases where he cites it, to cast doubt on the opinion, that it was written by the Apostle.

81. The testimony of AUGUSTINE (died 430) is, on the whole, of the same kind. It was his lot to take part in several synods in which the canon of the New Test. came into question. And it is observable, that while in two of these, one held at Hippo in 393, when he was yet a presbyter, the other the 3rd council of Carthage in 398, we read of "*thirteen Epistles of the Apostle Paul: and one of the same to the Hebrews*"—clearly shewing that it was not without some difficulty that the Epistle gained a place among the writings of the Apostle,—in the 5th council of Carthage, held in 419, where Augustine also took a part, we read "*Epistles of Paul the Apostle, in number 14.*" So that during this interval of 25 years, men had become more accustomed to hear of the Epistle as St. Paul's, and at last admitted it into the number of his writings without any distinction.

82. We might hence have supposed that Augustine, who was not only present at these councils, but took a leading part in framing their canons, would be found citing the Epistle every where without doubt as St. Paul's. But this is by no means the case. Bleek has diligently collected many passages in which the unsettled state of his own opinion on the question appears. In one remarkable passage, where he enjoins his reader, in judging of canonical writings, to put those *first* which are received by all Catholic churches, and among those which are not received by all, to prefer those which the principal churches, and those having the highest authority receive, to the others; and having said this, he proceeds to enumerate the canonical books of the Old and New Test., saying how the whole canon of Scripture to which the foregoing consideration applies, is the following, &c.: giving fourteen Epistles of St. Paul, among which he places the Epistle to the Hebrews *last*: which, as we have seen, was not its usual place at that time.

83. Plainer testimonies of the same uncertainty are found in other parts of his writings: e. g., "The Epistle to the Hebrews also, although in the opinion of some it is of doubtful authority, yet as I have read that

some . . . wish to adduce it to support their opinions, and I bow to the authority of the Eastern churches which hold it to be canonical,—let us see how strong testimonies for our view it contains.”

In the beginning of his Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans (written in A.D. 394), he says : “ Except the Epistle which he wrote to the Hebrews, where he is said purposely to have omitted a salutation at the beginning, lest the Jews who never ceased to cry out against him should, by the mention of his name, be offended, or read with a prejudiced mind, or should not care to read at all what he had written for their good. Whence some have been afraid to receive that Epistle into the canon of Scripture. But however that question is to be answered, except this Epistle, all those which are received without doubt by all the churches as St. Paul’s, contain such a salutation,” &c.

In his treatise on the City of God : “ in the Epistle which is inscribed to the Hebrews, which most say is the Apostle Paul’s, but some deny it.”

In that on Faith, Hope, and Charity (A.D. 421) : “ in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which illustrious defenders of the Catholic faith have used as testimony.”

84. Sometimes indeed he cites our Epistle simply with the formulæ,—“ you hear the Apostle’s exhortation :”—“ listen to what the Apostle says :”—sometimes with such words as these, “ whom the Scripture blames, saying ;” “ lastly, on account of what is said.” But much more frequently he cites either merely “ the Epistle to the Hebrews :” or “ the Epistle which is written (or, ‘ which is,’ or, ‘ which is inscribed’) to the Hebrews.” It is certainly a legitimate inference from these modes of quotation, that they arose from a feeling of uncertainty as to the authorship. It would be inconceivable, as Bleek remarks, that Augustine should have used the words “ in the Epistle which is inscribed to the Romans, to the Galatians,” &c.

85. It is of some interest to trace the change of view in the Romish church, which seems to have taken place about this time. In the synod of Hippo, before referred to (par. 81), and in the 3rd council of Carthage (ib.) it was determined to consult “ *the church over the sea*” for confirmation of the canon of Scripture as then settled. And what was meant by this, is more fully explained by a similar resolution of the 5th council of Carthage (ib.) : viz., that St. Boniface, then Bishop of Rome, and other bishops of those parts were to be consulted. Whether these references were ever made, we have no means of knowing ; but we possess a document of the same age, which seems to shew that, had they been made, they would have resulted in the confirmation of the canonical place of the Epistle. Pope Innocent I. in his letter to Exsuperius, Bishop of Toulouse (A.D. 405 ff.), enumerates the books of the New Test.

thus, "Four books of Gospels, fourteen Epistles of the Apostle Paul three Epistles of John," &c.

86. Yet it seems not to have been the practice of the writers of the Roman church at this time to cite the Epistle frequently or authoritatively. That there are no references to it in Innocent's own writings, and in those of his successors Zosimus (417—419) and Bonifacius (419—422), may be accidental: but it can hardly be so, that we have none in those of his predecessor Siricius, who often quotes Scripture: in those of Cælestine I. (422—432), some of whose Epistles are regarding the Nestorian controversy: in the genuine writings of Leo the Great (440—461).

87. Bleek adduces several contemporary Latin writers in other parts of the world, who make no mention of nor citation from our Epistle. Such are Orosius (about 415), Marius Mercator, Evagrius (about 430), Sedulius. Paulinus of Nola (died 431) cites it once, and as St. Paul's. After the middle of the fifth century, the practice became more usual and familiar. We find it in Salvianus (died aft. 495), Vigilius of Tapsus (about 484), Victor of Vite, Fulgentius of Ruspe (died 533), his scholar Fulgentius Ferrandus (died 550), Facundus of Hermiane (about 548), &c. : and in the list of canonical books drawn up in 494 by a council of seventy bishops under Pope Gelasius, where we have "Epistles of the Apostle Paul, fourteen in number;—one to the Romans, &c. &c. . . one to Philemon, one to the Hebrews."

88. In the middle of the sixth century we find Pope Vigilius, who took a conspicuous part in the controversy on the *three chapters*, in his answer to Theodore of Mopsuestia, impugning the reading "*without God*" instead of "*by the grace of God*," Heb. ii. 9 (see on this passage in the Commentary), without in any way calling in question the authority or authenticity of the Epistle.

89. To the same time (about 556) belongs a work of Cassiodorus, who, while he speaks of various Latin commentaries on the Pauline and Catholic Epistles, knew apparently of none on that to the Hebrews, and consequently got Mutianus to make the Latin version of Chrysostom's homilies on it, "lest the continuous order of the Epistles should suddenly be broken by an unfitting termination."

90. Gregory the Great (590—605) treats our Epistle simply as St. Paul's, and lays a stress on the circumstance that the Apostle wrote fourteen canonical Epistles only, though fifteen were reputed his: the fifteenth being the Epistle to the Laodiceans.

91. The testimonies of Isidore of Hispala (Seville: died 636) are remarkable. Citing the Epistle usually without further remark as St. Paul's, and stating the number of his Epistles as fourteen, he yet makes the number of churches to which the Apostle wrote, *seven*, and enume-

rates them, including the Hebrews, not observing that he thus makes them eight.

In two other places, in enumerating the writings of St. Paul, he says, "Paul the Apostle wrote his fourteen Epistles, nine of which he addressed to seven churches, and the rest to his disciples Timotheus, Titus, and Philemon. But his Epistle to the Hebrews is considered doubtful by most of the Latins on account of the dissonance of style, and some suspect that Barnabas compiled it, some that it was written by Clement."

92. After this time the assertors of an independent opinion, or even reporters of the former view of the Latin church, are no longer found, being overborne by the now prevalent view of the Pauline authorship. Thomas Aquinas indeed (died 1274) mentions the former doubts, with a view to answer them: and gives reasons for no superscription or address appearing in the Epistle.

And thus matters remained in the church of Rome until the beginning of the sixteenth century: the view of the Pauline authorship universally obtaining: and indeed all enquiry into the criticism of the Scriptures being lulled to rest.

93. But before we enter on the remaining portion of our historical enquiry, it will be well to gather the evidence furnished by the Greek and Latin MSS., as we have above (par. 53) that by the Greek MSS.

The Claromontane MS. (Cent. VI.) contains indeed the Epistle, but in a later hand: and after the Epistle to Philemon we have an enumeration of the lines in the Old and New Test., which does not contain the Epistle to the Hebrews: thus shewing, whatever account is to be given of it, that the Epistle did not originally form part of the MS.

The Boernerian MS. (Cent. IX.) does not contain our Epistle.

The Augiensian MS. (Cent. IX.) does not contain the Epistle in Greek, but in Latin only.

These evidences are the more remarkable, as they all belong to a period when the Pauline authorship had long become the generally received opinion in the Latin church.

94. We now pass on at once to the opening of the sixteenth century: at which time of the revival of independent thought, not only among those who became connected with the Reformation, but also among Roman Catholic writers themselves, we find the ancient doubts concerning the Pauline authorship revived, and new life and reality infused into them.

95. Bleek mentions first among these LUDOVICUS VIVES, the Spanish theologian, who in his Commentary on Augustine, on the words "in the Epistle which is inscribed to the Hebrews," says, "he signifies, that the author is uncertain:" and on the words, "in the Epistle which is inscribed to the Hebrews which most say is the Apostle's, but some deny it," says, "Jerome, Origen, Augustine, and other of the ancients doubt about this;

before the age of Jerome, this Epistle was not received by the Latins among the canonical ones."

96. A more remarkable testimony is that of CARDINAL CAJETAN, as cited by Erasmus, who says that the Cardinal, both in conversation when alive and in a work of his, cited the Epistle without its writer's name, designating him as "the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews." Bellarmine cites Cajetan as objecting to the idea that St. Paul wrote the Epistle, ch. ix. 4, as inconsistent with 1 Kings viii. 9, and saying, "Therefore either Paul lies, or he did not write this Epistle."

97. ERASMUS gives it as his decided opinion that the Epistle is not written by St. Paul: and alleges at length the principal arguments on which it is founded. The passage is a long one, but important, and will be found quoted entire in the corresponding paragraph of the Prolegomena to my Greek Testament: and other passages to the same effect are cited in Bleek.

98. LUTHER spoke still more plainly. In his introduction to his version of the Epistle, he maintains that it cannot be St. Paul's, nor indeed the writing of any apostle: appealing to such passages as ch. ii. 3; vi. 4 ff.; x. 26 ff.; xii. 17. But whose it is he does not pretend to say, further than that it comes from some scholar of the Apostles, well versed in the Scriptures. And with this view his manner of citation is generally consistent. His well-known conjecture, that the Writer of the Epistle was Apollos, is expressed in his Commentary on Genesis.

99. In one place he seems to imply that others had already conjectured Apollos to be the author. But this does not appear to be so; and he may, as Bleek imagines, be merely referring to opinions of learned men of his own day, who had either suggested, or adopted his own view.

100. CALVIN's opinion was equally unfavourable to the Pauline authorship. While in his Institutes he ordinarily cites the Epistle as the words of "the Apostle," and defends its apostolicity in the argument to his Commentary, yet he sometimes cites the "author of the Epistle to the Hebrews;" and when he comes to the question itself, declares his view very plainly:

"Who composed it, is hardly worth caring about. Some have thought him to be Paul, some Luke, Barnabas, or Clement. I know that in the time of Chrysostom, it was very generally received by the Greeks among St. Paul's; but the Latins thought otherwise, especially those who were nearest to the times of the Apostles. Nothing will induce me to acknowledge St. Paul as its author. For those who say that his name was purposely suppressed because it was odious to the Jews, allege nothing to the point. For if it were so, why should he have made mention of Timothy? By this indication he betrayed himself. But the manner of teaching



and style betoken another than Paul: and the writer confesses himself to have been one of the disciples of the Apostles, ch. ii., which is repugnant in the last degree to the habit of Paul."

And he speaks similarly in his Commentary on ch. ii. 3 itself.

101. Very similar are the comments of BEZA, at least in his earlier editions: for all the passages quoted by Bleek, from his introduction, on ch. ii. 3, xiii. 26, as being in his own edition of Beza 1582, and from Spanheim, as not extant in that edition, are, in the edition of 1590, which I use, expunged, and other comments, favourable to the Pauline origin, substituted for them.

102. And this change of opinion in Beza only coincided with influences which both in the Romish and in the Protestant churches soon repressed the progress of intelligent criticism and free expression of opinion. Cardinal Cajetan was severely handled by Ambrosius Catharinus, who accused him of the same doubts in relation to this Epistle as those entertained by Julian respecting the Gospel of St. Matthew: Erasmus was attacked by the theologians of the Sorbonne in a censure which concludes thus: "Wonderful is the arrogance and the pertinacity of this writer, in that, when so many Catholic doctors, pontiffs, and councils declare that this Epistle is Paul's, and the universal use and consent of the Church approves the same, this writer still doubts it, as being wiser than the whole world." And finally the council of Trent, in 1546, closed up the question for Romanists by declaring, "Of the New Testament, . . . fourteen Epistles of Paul the Apostle: to the Romans, &c. . . . to the Hebrews." So that the best divines of that Church have since then had only that way open to them of expressing an intelligent judgment, which holds the matter of the Epistle to be St. Paul's, but the style and arrangement that of some other person: so Bellarmine: so Estius, in his introduction to the Epistle, which is well worth reading, as a remarkable instance of his ability and candour.

103. In the Protestant churches we find, as might be expected, a longer prevalence of free judgment on the matter. It will be seen by the copious citations in Bleek, that Melancthon remained ever consistent in quoting the Epistle simply as "the Epistle to the Hebrews:" that the Magdeburg Centuriators distinctly denied the Pauline origin: that Brenz, in the Wirtemberg Confession, distinguishes in his citations this Epistle from those of St. Paul.

104. At the same time we find inconsistency on the point in Brenz himself: in the Commentary on the Epistle written by his son, the Pauline authorship is maintained: also by Flacius Illyricus (1557) on *à priori* grounds. In the Concordien-Formel, the Epistle is cited in the original German without any name, whereas in the Latin version we have "the Apostle saith," and the like. And this latter view con-

tinued to gain ground. It is maintained by Gerhard (1641) and Calovius (1676): and since the middle of the seventeenth century has been the prevailing view in the Lutheran Church.

105. In the Calvinistic or Reformed Church, the same view became prevalent even earlier. Of its various confessions, the *Gallican*, it is true, sets the Epistle at the end of those of St. Paul: but the Belgic, Helvetic, and Bohemian Confessions cite and treat it as St. Paul's.

106. The exceptions to this prevailing view were found in certain Arminian divines, who, without impugning the authority of the Epistle, did not bind themselves to a belief of its Pauline origin. Such were Grotius, who inclines to the belief that it was written by St. Luke: Le Clerc, who holds Apollos to have been the Author: Limborch, who holds it to have been written "by some one of Paul's companions with his privity, and taken from his teaching:" and among the Socinians, Schlichting, who says of it, "though it had not Paul himself for its author, yet it came forth, if I may so say, from his manufactory, i. e. was written by some one of his friends and companions, and that by Paul's instigation, and in his spirit."

107. There was also a growing disposition, both in the Romish and in the reformed churches, to erect into an article of faith the Pauline origin, and to deal severely with those who presumed to doubt it. Many learned men, especially among Protestants, appeared as its defenders: among whom we may especially notice Spanheim (the younger, 1659), Braun and D'Outrein in Holland, our own Owen (1667), Mill (1707), Hallet (the younger, 1727), Carpzov (1750), Sykes (1755), J. C. Wolf (1734), and Andr. Cramer (1757), to whom Bleek adjudges the first place among the upholders of the Pauline authorship.

108. Since the middle of the last century, the ancient doubts have revived in Germany; and in the progress of more extended and accurate critical enquiry, have now become almost universal. The first that carefully treated the matter with this view was Semler (1763), in his edition of Baumgarten's Commentary on the Epistle. Then followed Michaelis, in the later editions of his Introduction: in the earlier, he had assumed the Pauline authorship. The same doubts were repeated and enforced by Ziegler, J. E. C. Schmidt (1804), Eichhorn (1812), Bertholdt (1819), David Schulz (who carried the contrast which he endeavours to establish between the Writer of this Epistle and St. Paul to an unreasonable length, and thereby rather hindered than helped that side of the argument), Seyfferth (who sets himself to demonstrate from the Epistle itself, that it cannot have been written by St. Paul, but has no hypothesis respecting the Writer), Böhme (who holds Silvanus to have been the Writer, from similarities which he traces between our Epistle and 1 Peter, the Greek of which he holds also to have proceeded from him), De Wette



(who inclines to Apollos as the author, but sees an improbability in his ever having been in so close a relation to the Jewish Christians of Palestine), Tholuck (whose very valuable and candid enquiry in his last edition results in a leaning towards Apollos as the Writer), Bleek (whose view is mainly the same), Wieseler (who supports Barnabas as the probable Writer), Lünemann (who strongly upholds Apollos), Ebrard (who holds St. Paul to have been the Author, St. Luke the Writer), Delitzsch (who holds St. Luke to have been the Writer).

109. The principal modern upholders of the purely Pauline authorship in Germany have been Bengel (died 1752), Storr (1789), and recently Hofmann.

110. In our own country, the belief of the direct Pauline origin, though much shaken at the Reformation<sup>1</sup>, has recovered its ground far more extensively. The unwillingness to disturb settled opinion on the one hand, and it may be the disposition of our countrymen to take up opinions in furtherance of strong party bias, and their consequent inaptitude for candid critical research on the other, have mainly contributed to this result. Most of our recent Theologians and Commentators are to be found on this side. Among these may be mentioned Whitby, Macknight, Doddridge, Lardner, Stuart (American), Forster (Apostolical Authority of the Epistle to the Hebrews), Conybeare and Howson (Life of St. Paul), Davidson (Introd. to New Test.), and Dr. Wordsworth, in the recently published third vol. of his Greek Testament.

111. I am obliged, before passing to the internal grounds on which the question is to be treated, to lay down again the position in which we are left by the preceding sketch of the history of opinion.

112. It is manifest that with testimony so divided, *antiquity cannot claim to close up the enquiry*: nor can either side allege *its* voice as decisive. In the very earliest times, we find the Epistle received by some as St. Paul's: in the same times, we find it ascribed by others, and those men of full as much weight, to various other authors.

113. I briefly thus restate what has already been insisted on in paragraphs 35—40, because the time has not yet entirely passed by, when writers on the subject regard our speculations concerning the probable author of the Epistle as limited by these broken fragments of the rumours of antiquity: when a zealous and diligent writer among ourselves allows himself to treat with levity and contempt the opinion that Apollos wrote it, simply on the ground that he is a claimant "altogether unnoticed by Christian antiquity<sup>2</sup>." What we require is this: that we of this age should be allowed to do just that which the "ancient men" did

<sup>1</sup> See the opinions of several of the Reformers below, § vi. par. 17 ff.

<sup>2</sup> See Forster's Apostolical Authority of the Epistle to the Hebrews, Dedication, p. ix.

in their age,—examine the Epistle simply and freely for and by itself, and form our conclusion accordingly, as to its Author, readers, and date : having respect indeed to ancient tradition, where we can find it, but not, where it is so broken, and inconsistent with itself, bound by any one of its assertions, or limited in our conclusions by its extent.

114. I now proceed to the latter and more important portion of our enquiry : whether the internal phænomena of the Epistle itself point to St. Paul as its Author and Writer,—or Author without being the Writer,—and if they do not either of these, whom, as an Author, their general character may be regarded as indicating.

115. But as this portion is most important, so has it been most diligently and ingeniously followed out by disputants on both sides. And it is not my intention to enter here on the often-fought battle of comparisons of terms once occurring, and tabular statements of words and phrases. The reader will find these given at great length and with much fairness in Davidson, who holds the balance evenly between previous disputants. And if he wishes to go still further into so wide a field of discussion, he may consult Mr. Forster's large volume, which is equally fertile in materials for both conclusions, often without the writer being conscious that it is so<sup>3</sup>.

116. The various items of evidence on this head can hardly be presented, in their fulness, to the mere English reader. He must in great measure take for granted the results, as presented to the student of the original Greek in the references throughout the Epistle in my Greek Test. It there appears, as indeed in the tables in any of the writers on the subject,—how like, and yet how unlike, the style of our Epistle is to that of the great Apostle : how completely the researches of such books as Mr. Forster's have succeeded in proving the likeness, how completely at the same time they have failed to remove one iota of the unlikeness ; so that the more we read and are borne along with their reasonings, the closer the connexion becomes, in faith and in feeling, of the writer of the Epistle with St. Paul, but the more absolutely incompatible the personal identity : the more we perceive all that region of style and diction to have been in common between them, which men living together, talking together, praying together, teaching together, would naturally range in ; but all that region wherein individual peculiarity is wont to put itself forth, to have been entirely distinct.

117. I need only mention the different tinge given to the same or similar thoughts ; the wholly differing rhythm of sentences wherein perhaps many words occur in common ; the differing spirit of cita-

<sup>3</sup> As e. g. when he alleges, which he often does, the same thought expressed by different words, or different cognate forms of the same root, in Hebrews and the Pauline Epistles, as indicating *identity* of authorship. The conclusion of most examiners of evidence would be in the opposite direction.

tion (to say nothing of the varying mode of citing); the totally distinct mode of arguing; the rhetorical accumulation; the equilibrium, even in the midst of fervid declamation, of periods and clauses; the use of different inferential and connecting particles. All of these great and undeniable variations may be easily indeed frittered down by an appearance of exceptions ranged in tables; but still are indelibly impressed on the mind of every intelligent student of the Epistle, and as has been observed, are unanswerable, just in proportion as the points of similarity are detailed and insisted on<sup>4</sup>.

118. It is again of course easy enough to meet such considerations in either of two ways; the former of which recommends itself to the mind which fears to enquire from motives of reverence, the latter to the superficial and indolent.

119. It may be said, that the Holy Spirit of God, by whose inspiration holy men have written these books of the New Testament, may bring it about, that the same person may write variously at different times, even be that variety out of the limits of human experience: that the same man, for instance, should have written the Epistle to the Romans and the First Epistle of St. John. In answer to which we may safely say, that what the Holy Spirit *may* or *can* do, is not for us to speculate upon: in this His proceeding of inspiration, He has given us abundant and undeniable examples of what He *has done*: and by such examples are we to be guided, in all questions as to the analogy of His proceedings in more doubtful cases. As matter of fact, the style and diction of St. Paul differ as much from those of St. John as can well be conceived. When therefore we find in the sacred writings phenomena of difference apparently incompatible with personal identity in their authors, we are not to be precluded from reasoning from them to the non-identity of such authors, by any vague assertions of the omnipotence of the Almighty Spirit.

120. Again it may be strongly urged, that the same person, writing at different times, and to different persons, may employ very various modes of diction and argument. Nothing can be truer than this: but the application of it to the question of identity of authorship is matter of penetration and appreciation. Details of diversity, which may be convincing to one man, may be wholly inappreciable, from various reasons, by another. As regards the matter before us, it may suffice to say, that the incompatibility of styles was felt in the earliest days by Greeks themselves, as the preceding testimonies from Clement of Alexandria and Origen may serve to shew. Further than this we can say nothing, which will be allowed as of any weight by those who unfortunately fail to appreciate the difference. We can only repeat

<sup>4</sup> See this carried out further below, § v. parr. 9, 10.

our assurance, that the more acumen and scholarship are brought to bear on the enquiry, aided by a fairly judging and unbiassed mind, the more such incompatibility will be felt: and say, in the words of Origen cited above, par. 19, "That the character of the style has not the individual peculiarity of that of the Apostle, every one who knows how to judge of the difference of phrases will acknowledge."

121. I now proceed to consider the principal notices in the Epistle itself, which have been either justly or unjustly adduced, as making for or against the Pauline authorship.

122. In ch. xiii. 23, we read, "**Know ye (or, ye know) that our brother Timotheus is set at liberty: with whom, if he come soon, I will see you.**" This notice has been cited with equal confidence on both sides. The natural inference from it, apart altogether from the controversy, would be, that the Writer of the Epistle was in some other place than Timotheus, who had been recently set free from an imprisonment (for this and no other is the meaning of the participle), and that he was awaiting Timotheus's arrival: on which, if it took place soon, he hoped to visit the Hebrews in his company.

123. It is manifest, that such a situation would fit very well some point of time after St. Paul's liberation from his first Roman imprisonment. Supposing that he was dismissed before Timotheus, and, having left Rome, expecting him to follow, had just received the news of his liberation, the words in the text would very well and naturally express this. It is true, we read of no such imprisonment of Timotheus: and this fact seems to remove the date of the occurrence out of the limits of the chronology of the Pauline Epistles. But if the command of the Apostle in 2 Tim. iv. 9 was obeyed, and Timotheus, on arriving, shared his imprisonment, the situation here alluded to may have occurred not long after.

124. On the other hand, the notice would equally well fit some companion of St. Paul, either St. Luke, or Silvanus, or Apollos, writing after the Apostle's death. All these would speak of Timotheus as *our brother*.

125. On the whole then, this passage carries no weight on either side. I own that the expression, "*I will see you,*" has a tinge of authority about it, which hardly seems to fit either of the above-mentioned persons. But this impression may be fallacious: and it is only one of those cases where, in a matter so doubtful as the authorship of this Epistle, we are swayed hither and thither by words and expressions, which perhaps after all have no right to be so seriously taken.

126. Similar remarks might be made on the notice of ch. xiii. 25, "**They from Italy salute you,**" as carrying no weight either way. As regards its meaning, it is indeed surprising that Bleek should main-

tain, that it *excludes* the supposition of the writer being in Italy, in the face of the classical and New Test. usage of the prepositions of origin. The preposition may doubtless be taken as used with reference to those who were to receive the salutation : it may be the salutation, not the persons, which the preposition brings away from Italy. It may be as if I were to write to a friend, "I have the best wishes for you from Canterbury:" which, although it would not be the most usual way of expressing my meaning, and *might* be said if I were elsewhere, yet would be far from excluding the supposition that I was myself writing from that city<sup>5</sup>.

127. If the words then do not forbid the idea that the Writer was in Italy, I do not see how they can be used for or against the Pauline authorship. As observed before, the Apostle may have been somewhere in that country waiting for Timotheus, when liberated, to join him. And we may say the same with equal probability of any of St. Paul's companions to whom the Epistle has been ascribed. The only evidence which can be gathered from the words, as being exceedingly unlike any thing occurring in the manifold formulæ of salutation in St. Paul's Epistles, is of a slighter, but to my mind of a more decisive kind.

128. The evidence supposed to be derivable from ch. x. 34 in the received text, "*for ye had compassion on my bonds,*" vanishes with the adoption of the reading **ye had compassion on prisoners**, in which almost all the critical editors concur.

129. The notice ch. xiii. 7, **Remember them that have the rule over you, &c.**, will more properly come under consideration when we are treating of the probable readers, and of the date of the Epistle<sup>6</sup>. I may say thus much in anticipation, that it can hardly be fairly interpreted consistently with the known traditions of the death of St. Paul, and at the same time with the hypothesis of his Authorship.

130. The well-known passage, ch. ii. 3, requires more consideration. It stands thus :

**How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by them that heard [Him] ?**

The difficulty, that St. Paul should thus include himself among those who had received the Gospel only at second hand, whereas in Gal. i. 12 he says of it, "*For I received it not from man, neither was taught it, but by revelation of Jesus Christ,*" has been felt both in ancient and modern times. Euthalius, Œcumenius, and Theophylact, Luther, Calvin, and all the moderns, have alleged it, either to press or to explain the difficulty.

<sup>5</sup> That New Test. usage renders the other meaning more probable, does not belong to the argument here in the text, but is maintained below, in § ii. par. 28.

<sup>6</sup> See below § ii. par. 29, 30; § iii. par. 2.

I must own that, in spite of all which has been so ingeniously said by way of explanation by the advocates of the Pauline authorship, the words appear to me quite irreconcilable with that hypothesis.

131. To pass by the ancient explanations, which will hardly be adopted in our own day<sup>7</sup>,—the most prevalent modern one has been, that the Apostle here adopts the figure called *condescension*, by which a writer or speaker identifies himself with his readers or hearers, even though, as a matter of actual fact, that identification is not borne out strictly. Such “condescension” is most commonly found in hortatory passages, but is not confined to them. A writer may, for the purpose of his argument, and to carry persuasion, place himself on a level with his readers in respect of matters of history, just as well as of moral considerations. The real question for us is, whether this is a case in which such a figure would be likely to be employed.

132. And to this the answer must be, it seems to me, unhesitatingly in the negative. That an Apostle, who ever claimed to have received the Gospel not from men but from the Lord Himself,—who was careful to state that when he met the chief Apostles in council they added nothing to him, should at all, and especially in writing (as the hypothesis generally assumes) to the very church where the influence of those other Apostles was at its highest, place himself on a level with their disciples as to the reception of the Gospel from them,—is a supposition so wholly improbable, that I cannot explain its having been held by so many men of discernment, except on the supposition that their bias towards the Pauline authorship has blinded them to the well-known character and habit of the Apostle.

133. And to reply to this, that he thus speaks of himself when his apostolical authority is called in question, as it was in the Galatian church, and partially also in the Corinthian, but does not so where no such slight had been put upon his office, is simply to advance that which is not the fact: for he does the same in an emphatic manner in Eph. iii. 2, 3, in which Epistle, to whomsoever addressed, there exist no traces of any rivalry to his own authority being in his view.

134. Certain other passages have been adduced as bearing out the idea of the figure of *condescension* here. But none of them, when fairly considered, really does so. For to take them one by one:—

In Eph. ii. 3, Col. i. 12, 13, Tit. iii. 3, there is no such figure, but the Apostle is simply stating the matter of fact, and counts himself to have been one of those spoken of.

In 1 Cor. xi. 31, 32, he is asserting that which is true of all Christians equally; himself, as liable to fall into sin and thus to need chastisement, being included.

<sup>7</sup> See them in the note on this par. in my Greek Test.



In 1 Thess. iv. 17,—where see note,—there is no such figure, for the Apostle is merely giving expression to the expectation that he himself should be among them who should be alive in the flesh at the coming of our Lord.

In Jude, ver. 17, there is no such figure. St. Jude, in writing thus, is giving us plain proof that he himself was not one of the Apostles.

135. Much stress has been laid, and duly, on the entire absence of personal notices of the Writer, as affecting the question of the Pauline authorship. This is so inconsistent with the otherwise invariable practice of St. Paul, that some very strong reason must be supposed, which should influence him in this case to depart from that practice. Such reason has been variously assigned. And first, with reference to the omission of any superscription or opening greeting. It has been supposed that he would not begin by designating himself as an Apostle, because the Lord Himself was the Apostle (ch. iii. 1) of the Jewish people (so Pantænus, above, par. 11). Or, because the Jewish Christians in Palestine were unwilling to recognize him as such, only as an Apostle to the Gentiles (so Theodoret, and others). But to this it might be answered, Why then not superscribe himself "*a servant of Jesus Christ,*" or the like, as in Phil. i. 1, Philem. 1, or simply "Paul," as in 1 and 2 Thess.? But a further reply has been given, and very widely accepted: that being in disfavour generally among the Jews, he did not prefix his name, for fear of exciting a prejudice against his Epistle, and so perhaps preventing the reading of it altogether. (So Clement of Alexandria, above, par. 14. So also Chrysostom, iii. p. 371.) But this cannot have been the purpose of the Author throughout, as is sufficiently shewn by such notices as those of ch. xiii. 18, 19, 23, which would have been entirely without meaning, had the readers not been aware who was writing to them. Yet, it is said, these notices do not occur till the end of the Epistle, when the important part of it has already been read through. Are we then to suppose that St. Paul seriously did in this case, that which he ironically puts as an hypothesis in 2 Cor. xii. 16, "*being crafty I caught you with guile*"? And if he did it, how imperfectly and clumsily! Could he not as easily have removed *all* traces of his own hand in the Epistle, as those at the beginning only? And how are we to suppose that the Epistle came to the church to which it was addressed? Did he put it at a window, or over a wall? Must it not have come by the hand of some friend or companion? Must it not have been given into the hand of some that had the rule? How happened it that the question was never asked, From whom does this come? or if asked, how could it be answered but in one way? And when thus answered, how could it fail but the Epistle would thenceforth be known as that of St. Paul?

136. It may be said that these last enquiries would prove too much;

that they would equally apply, whoever wrote the Epistle; and that the name of the Author was, on the view which they imply, equally sure to have been attached to it. But we may well answer, that this, however plausible, is not so in reality. It does not follow, because the name of the great Apostle was sure to be attached to it if he really wrote it, that every other name was equally sure. Many of his disciples and companions, eminent as they were, bore no authority to be compared with his. This is true even of Luke and Barnabas: much more of Titus, Silas, and Clement. And if one of these had been the acknowledged author, there being no notices in the Epistle itself whereby he might be with certainty recognized after the first circumstances of its sending were forgotten, how probable, that a writing, committed to the keeping of a particular church, should have been retained indeed as a sacred deposit by them, but, in the midst of persecutions and troubles, have lost the merely traditional designation which never had become inseparable from it. In the one case, the name of St. Paul would commend the Epistle, and so would take the first, and an inalienable place: in the other, the weight and preciousness of the Epistle would survive the name of its Writer, which would not of itself have been its commendation. The like might have happened to the Gospel, or Acts, of St. Luke, but for the fact, that in this case not one particular church, but the whole Christian world, was the guardian of the deposit, and of the tradition attached to it.

137. Another solution has been suggested by Steudel: that the book has more the character of a treatise than of an Epistle, and therefore was not begun in epistolary form: some letter being probably sent with it, or the customary personal messages being orally delivered. But the postulate may be safely denied. Our Epistle is veritably an Epistle: addressed to readers of whom certain facts were specially true, containing exhortations founded on those facts, and notices arising out of the relation of the writer to his readers; which last sufficiently shew, that no other Epistle could have accompanied it, nor indeed any considerable trusting to the oral supplementing of its notices.

138. Yet another solution has been given by Hug and Spanheim: that in an oratorical style like that of the opening of this Epistle, it was not probable that a superscription would precede. True: but what, when conceded, does this indicate? Is it not just as good an argument to shew that one who never begins his Epistles thus, is not the Writer, as to account for his beginning thus, supposing him the Writer? The reason for our Epistle beginning as it does is, unquestionably, the character of the whole, containing few personal notices of the relation of the Writer to his readers. But granted, as we have sufficiently shewn, that it was not the object of the Author to remain unknown to his readers, I ask any one capable of forming an unbiassed judgment, is it possible that



were St. Paul that author, and any conceivable Hebrew church those readers, no more notices should be found, not perhaps of his Apostleship, but of the revelations of the Lord to him, of his pure intent and love towards them? Any one who can suppose this, appears to me, I own,—however it may savour of presumption to say so,—deficient in appreciation of the phænomena of our Epistle, and still more of the character of the great Apostle himself.

139. In Bleek's Introduction to his Commentary, on which, in the main features, this part of my Introduction is founded, several interesting considerations are here adduced as bearing on the question of the authorship, arising out of the manner in which various points which arise are dealt with, as compared with the manner usual with St. Paul. Such considerations are valuable, and come powerfully in aid of a conclusion otherwise forced upon us: but when that conclusion is not acquiesced in, they are easily diluted away by its opponents. They are rather confirmatory than conclusive: and have certainly not had justice done them by the supporters of the Pauline hypothesis; who, as they seem to themselves to have answered one after another of them, represent each in succession as the main ground on which the anti-pauline view is rested.

140. I would refer my English readers for the discussion of these points to Dr. Davidson's Introduction to the New Test., vol. iii., where they are for the most part treated fairly, though hardly with due appreciation of their necessarily subordinate place in the argument. The idea which a reader, otherwise uninformed, would derive from Dr. Davidson's paragraphs, is that those who allege these considerations make them at least co-ordinate with others, of which they in reality only come in aid.

141. The same may be said of the whole mass of evidence resting on modes of citation, words only once found, style of periods, and the like. It abounds on the one hand with striking coincidences, on the other with striking discrepancies: each of these has been made much of by the ardent fautors of each side,—while the more impartial Commentators have weighed both together. The general conclusion in my own mind derived from these is, that the author of this Epistle cannot have been the same with the author of the Pauline Epistles. The coincidences are for the most part those which belong to men of the same general cast of thought on the great matters in hand: the discrepancies are in turns of expression, use of different particles, different rhythm, different compounds of cognate words, a mode of citation not independent but rather divergent,—and a thousand minor matters which it is easy for those to laugh to scorn who are incapable of estimating their combined evidence, but which when combined render the hypothesis of one and the same author entirely untenable.

142. To the phænomena of citation in our Epistle I shall have occasion to advert very soon, when dealing with the enquiry who the author really was. (See below, parr. 149, 152, 158, 180.) The reader will find them treated at great length in Bleek, Davidson, and Forster.

143. Before advancing to clear the way for that enquiry by other considerations, I will beg the reader to look back with me once more over the *course and bearing of the external evidence as regards the Pauline hypothesis*.

144. The recognition of the Epistle as Pauline begins about the middle of the second century, and, in one portion only of the church—the Alexandrine. Did this rest on an original historical tradition? We have seen reason to conclude the negative. Was it an inference from the subject and contents of the Epistle, which, when once made, gained more and more acceptance, from the very nature of the case? This, on all grounds, is more probable. Had an ancient tradition connected the name of St. Paul with it, we should find that name so connected not in one portion only, but in every part of the church. This however we do not find. We have no trace of its early recognition as Pauline elsewhere than in Alexandria. And even there, the earliest testimonies imply that there was doubt on the subject. Elsewhere, various opinions prevailed. Tertullian gives us Barnabas: Origen mentions two views, pointing to St. Luke and to Clement of Rome. None of these claim our acceptance as grounded on authentic historical tradition. But each of them has as much right to be heard and considered, as the Alexandrine. And the more, because that was so easy a deduction from the contents of the Epistle, and so sure to be embraced generally, whereas they had no such source, and could have no such advantage.

145. But there was one view of our Epistle, which never laboured under the uncertainty and insufficient reception which may be charged against the others: viz., that entertained by the church of Rome. It is true, its testimony is only negative: it amounts barely to this,—“The Epistle is not St. Paul’s.” But this evidence it gives “always, every where, by all.” And its testimony is of a date and kind which far outweighs the Alexandrine, or any other. Clement of Rome, the disciple of the Apostles, refers frequently and copiously to our Epistle, not indeed by name, but so plainly and unmistakeably that no one can well deny it. He evidently knew the Epistle well, and used it much and approvingly. Now, had he recognized it as written by St. Paul,—he might not indeed have *cited* it as such, seeing that unacknowledged centos of New Test. expressions are very common with him,—but is it conceivable that he should altogether have concealed such his recognition from the church over which he presided? Is it not *certain*, that had Clement received it as the work of St. Paul, we should have found that tradition dominant and firmly fixed in the Roman church? But that church is just the

one, where we find no trace of such a tradition : a fact wholly irreconcilable with such recognition by Clement. And if Clement did not so recognize it, are we not thereby brought very much nearer the source itself, than by any reported opinion in the church of Alexandria ?

146. I shall have occasion again to return to this consideration : I introduce it here to shew, that in freely proposing to ourselves the enquiry, "Who wrote the Epistle ?" as to be answered entirely from the Epistle itself, we are not setting aside, but are strictly following, the earliest and weightiest historical testimonies respecting it, and the inferences to be deduced from them. And if any name seems to satisfy the requirements of the Epistle itself, those who in modern times suggested that name, and those who see reason to adopt it, are not to be held up to derision, as has been done by Mr. Forster, merely because that name was not suggested by any among the ancients. The question is as open now as it was in the second century. They had no reliable tradition : we have none. If an author is to be found, it must be by consideration of the subject-matter itself.

147. With these remarks, I come now to the enquiries, 1) What data does the Epistle furnish for determining the Author ? and 2) In what one person do those characteristics meet ?

148. I. a) *The WRITER of the Epistle is also the AUTHOR.* It is of course possible, that St. Paul may have imparted his thoughts to the Hebrew church by means of another. This may have been done in one of two ways : either by actual translation, or by transfusion of thought and argument : setting aside altogether the wholly unlikely hypothesis, that the Epistle was drawn up and sent as St. Paul's by some other, without his knowledge and consent.

149. But first, the Epistle IS NOT A TRANSLATION. The citations throughout, with one exception (noticed below, § ii. par. 35 note), are from the Septuagint Greek version of the Old Test., and are of such a kind, that the peculiarities of that version are not unfrequently interwoven into the argument, and made to contribute towards the result : which would be impossible, had the Epistle existed primarily in Hebrew. Besides, the prevalence of alliterations and plays on words, and the Greek rhythm, to which so many rhetorical passages owe their force, would of themselves compel us to this conclusion<sup>8</sup>.

150. And secondly, there are insuperable difficulties in the way of the hypothesis of any such secondary authorship as has very commonly been assumed, from the time of Origen downwards. Against this militate in their full strength all the considerations derived from those differences of style and diction, which as in this Epistle are inseparably interwoven into the argument : against this the whole arrangement and argumentation of

<sup>8</sup> See this treated more fully below, § v. parr. 1—8.

the Epistle, which are very different from those of St. Paul, shewing an independence and originality which could hardly have been found in the work of one who wrote down the thoughts of another : against this also the few personal notices which occur, and which manifestly belong to the Author of the Epistle. Supposing St. Paul to be speaking by another in all other places, how are we to make the transition in these ? The notices, which on the hypothesis of pure Pauline Authorship, seemed difficult of explanation, appear to me absolutely to defy it, if the secondary authorship be supposed.

151. b) *The Author of the Epistle was a Jew.* This, as far as I know, has never been doubted. The degree of intimate acquaintance shewn with the ceremonial law might perhaps have been acquired by a Gentile convert : but the manner in which he addresses his readers, evidently themselves Jews, is such as to forbid the supposition that he was himself a Gentile. Probability is entirely against such an address being used : and also entirely against the Epistle finding acceptance, if it had been used.

152. c) He was, however, *not a pure Jew*, speaking and quoting Hebrew : but a HELLENIST ; i. e., a Jew brought up in Greek habits of thought, and in the constant use of the Septuagint version. His citations are from that version, and he grounds his argument, or places his reason for citing, on the words and expressions of the Septuagint, even where no corresponding terms are found in the Hebrew text.

153. d) *He was one intimately acquainted with the way of thought, and writings, of St. Paul.* I need not stay here to prove this. The elaborate tables which have been drawn up to prove the Pauline authorship are here very valuable to us, as we found them before in shewing the differences between the two writers. Dr. Davidson, Mr. Forster, or Bleek, in his perhaps more pertinent selections from the mass, will in a few minutes establish this to the satisfaction of any intelligent reader. That our author has more especially used one portion of the writings of the great Apostle, and why, will come under our notice in a following section.

154. e) And, considering the probable date of the Epistle, which I shall by anticipation assume to have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem, such a degree of acquaintance with the thoughts and writings of St. Paul could hardly, at such a time, have been the result of mere reading, but must have been derived from *intimate acquaintance*, as a companion and fellow-labourer, *with the great Apostle himself.* The same inference is confirmed by finding that our author was nearly connected with Timotheus, the son in the faith, and constant companion of St. Paul.

155. f) It is moreover necessary to assume, that the Author of our

Epistle was *deeply imbued with the thoughts and phraseology of the Alexandrian school*. The coincidences in thought and language between passages of this Epistle and the writings of Philo, the Alexandrian Jew, are such as no one in his senses can believe to be fortuitous. These are for the most part noticed in the references, and the Commentary, in my Greek Testament.

156. These coincidences may have arisen from one of two reasons: either merely from the Author being acquainted with the writings of Philo, or from his having been educated in the same theological school with that philosopher, and so having acquired similar ways of thought and expression. The latter of these alternatives is on all grounds, and mainly from the nature of the coincidences themselves, the more probable. By birth or by training, he was an Alexandrian; not necessarily the former, for there were other great schools of Alexandrian learning besides the central one in that city, one of the most celebrated of which was at Tarsus, the birth-place of the apostle Paul. So that this consideration will not of itself fix the authorship on that companion of St. Paul whom we know to have been an Alexandrian by birth.

157. g) The author was *not an Apostle*, nor, *in the strictest sense*, a contemporary of the Apostles, so that he should have seen and heard our Lord for himself. He belongs to the second rank, in point of time, of apostolic men,—to those who heard from eye and ear-witnesses. This will follow from the consideration of the passage, ch. ii. 3, in par. 130—132 above.

158. h) We may add to the above data some, which although less secure, yet seem to be matters of sound inference from the Epistle itself. Of such a character are, e. g., that the author was *not a dweller in or near Jerusalem*, or he would have taken his descriptions rather from the then standing Jewish temple, than from the ordinances in the text of the Septuagint version:—that he was a person of considerable *note and influence with those to whom he wrote*, as may be inferred from the whole spirit and tone of his address to them: that he stood in some position of *previous connexion with his readers*, as appears from the words “**that I may be restored to you,**” ch. xiii. 19: that he *lived and wrote before the destruction of Jerusalem*.

159. 2. It will be impossible to apply the whole of these data to the enquiry respecting individual men, without assuming, with regard to the last two mentioned at least, the result of the two following sections, “For what readers the Epistle was written,” and “The place and time of writing.” I shall therefore suspend the consideration of those tests till the results shall have been arrived at<sup>9</sup>, and meantime

<sup>9</sup> See below, § ii. par. 36, and § iii. par. 4.



apply the others to such persons as are given us by history to choose from.

160. These are the following: Barnabas, Luke, Clement, Mark, Titus, Apollos, Silvanus, Aquila. These are all the companions of St. Paul, who were of note enough to have written such an Epistle: with the exception of Timotheus, who is excluded from the list, by being mentioned in the Epistle (ch. xiii. 23) as a different person from the Author.

161. Of these, TITUS is excluded by the fact mentioned Gal. ii. 3,—that he was a Greek, and not circumcised even at the time when he accompanied St. Paul in his third journey to Jerusalem, Acts xv. 2, 3 ff.

162. It is doubtful, whether a like consideration does not exclude ST. LUKE from the authorship of our Epistle. Certainly the first appearance of Col. iv. 10—14 numbers him among those who were not of the circumcision. Were this so, it would be impossible to allot him more than a subordinate share in the composition. This has been felt, and the hypothesis which takes him to have been the writer has been shaped accordingly. Thus we have seen above Clement of Alexandria held him to have translated the Epistle into Greek<sup>1</sup>: and the idea that he wrote it under the superintendence of St. Paul, incorporating the thoughts of the great Apostle, has been of late revived, and defended with considerable skill, by Delitzsch. And such, more or less modified, has been the opinion of many, both ancients and moderns: of Luculentius, Primasius (Cent. VI.), Haymo (died 853), Rhabanus Maurus (about 847): and of Grotius, Crell, Stein, Köhler, Hug, Ebrard: several of the latter holding the independent authorship of St. Luke, which Delitzsch also concedes to have been possible.

163. And certainly, could we explain away the inference apparently unavoidable from Col. iv. 14, such a supposition would seem to have some support from the Epistle itself. The students of the Commentary in my Greek Test. will very frequently be struck by the verbal and idiomatic coincidences with the style of St. Luke. The argument, as resting on them, has been continually taken up and pushed forward by Delitzsch, and comes on his reader frequently with a force which at the time it is not easy to withstand.

164. Yet, it must be acknowledged, the hypothesis, though so frequently and so strongly supported by apparent coincidences, does not thoroughly approve itself to the critical mind. We cannot feel convinced that St. Luke did really write our Epistle. The whole tone of the individual mind, as far as it appears in the Gospel and Acts, is so essentially different from the spirit of the Writer here, that verbal and idiomatic coincidences do not carry us over the difficulty of supposing the two to be

<sup>1</sup> See par. 14.

written by one and the same. There is nothing in St. Luke of the rhetorical balance, nothing of the accumulated and stately period<sup>2</sup>, nothing of the deep tinge which would be visible even in narrative, of the threatening of judgment. Within the limits of the same heavenly inspiration prompting both, St. Luke is rather the careful and kindly depicter of the blessings of the covenant, our Writer rather the messenger from God to the wavering, giving them the blessing and the curse to choose between: St. Luke is rather the polished Christian civilian, our Writer the fervid and prophetic rhetorician. The places of the two are different: and it would shake our confidence in the consistency of human characteristics under the influence of the Holy Spirit, were we to believe Luke, the beloved physician and Evangelist, to have become so changed, in the foundations and essentials of personal identity, as to have written this Epistle to the Hebrews.

165. If the preceding considerations have any weight, we must regard the coincidences above mentioned as the result of common education and manner of speech, and of common derivation of doctrine from the same personal source. St. Luke had derived his style from the same Alexandrine scholastic training, his doctrine from the same father in the faith, as the Writer of our Epistle.

166. It appears never to have been advanced as a serious hypothesis, that ST. MARK is the Writer of our Epistle. There are no points of coincidence between it and his Gospel, which would lead us to think so. He does not appear, after St. Paul's second missionary journey, ever to have been closely joined for any considerable time in travel or in missionary work with that Apostle: and again, he seems to have been a born Jerusalem Jew (Acts xii. 12: see *Introd. to Vol. I. ch. iii. § 1*), which, by what has been before said, would exclude him.

167. The fact that SILVANUS, or Silas, belonged to the church at Jerusalem (Acts xv. 22), would seem to exclude him also. In other points, our tests are satisfied by him. He was the constant companion of St. Paul: was imprisoned with him at Philippi (Acts xvi. 19 ff.), while Timotheus remained at large: is ever named by the Apostle before Timotheus (Acts xvii. 14, 15, xviii. 5; 2 Cor. i. 19; 1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1): and afterwards is found in close connexion with St. Peter also (1 Pet. v. 12). It must be acknowledged, that as far as mere negative reasons are concerned, with only the one exception above named, there seems no cause why Silvanus may not have written our Epistle. But every thing approaching to a positive reason is altogether wanting. We

<sup>2</sup> This remark especially applies to that portion of St. Luke's writings which would be sure by the merely superficial observer to be cited as furnishing an answer to it; viz. the prologue to his Gospel. No two styles can be more distinct, than that of this preface, and of any equally elaborated passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

know absolutely nothing of the man, his learning, his particular training, or the likelihood that he should have given us such an Epistle as we now possess. His claim is (with that one reservation) unexceptionable : but it must retire before that of any who is recommended by positive considerations<sup>3</sup>.

168. A far stronger array of names and claims is made out for CLEMENT OF ROME, one of the fellow-workers of St. Paul in Phil. iv. 3. We have seen above (par. 19), that his name was one brought down to Origen by the "*account which has come down to us,*" together with that of St. Luke : we have found him mentioned as held by some to be the *translator*, e. g., by Euthalius (par. 46), Eusebius (par. 48) : the author, by Philastrius (par. 65), Jerome (par. 69), &c. This latter has in modern times been the opinion of Erasmus (par. 97), and of Calvin (par. 100).

169. We cannot pronounce with any certainty whether Clement was a Jew by birth or not. The probability is against such a supposition. The advocates of this theory however rest his claim mainly on the fact that many expressions and passages of our Epistle occur in the (undoubtedly genuine) Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians.

170. But to this it has been satisfactorily replied by Bleek and others, that such passages have much more the air of citations, than that of repetitions of the same thought and diction by their original author, and that they in fact in no wise differ from the many other reproductions of passages of the New Test., especially of St. Paul's Epistles, in the same letter of Clement. Bleek has besides directed attention to the great dissimilarity of the two writings, as indicating different authors. Clement's Epistle has nothing of the Alexandrine character, nothing of the speculative spirit, of that to the Hebrews. His style is pure and correct, but wants altogether the march of periods, and rhetorical rhythm, of our Epistle. Another objection is, that had Clement written it, there could hardly have failed some trace of a tradition to that effect in the church of Rome ; which, as we have seen, is not found.

171. The idea that BARNABAS was the author of our Epistle seems to have been prevalent in the African Church, seeing that Tertullian quotes him as such without any doubt or explanation (above, par. 25). But it was unknown to Origen, and to Eusebius : and Jerome, in his Catalog. c. 5, vol. ii. p. 838, says "either of Barnabas according to Tertullian, or of the Evangelist Luke according to some, or of Clement, &c. :"<sup>3</sup> so that

<sup>3</sup> Mynster and Böhme, from different points of view, have held to Silvanus: the former, assuming that our Epistle was sent with that to the Galatians, and to the same churches: the latter, fancying a great resemblance between our Epistle and the first of St. Peter, and holding it to have been written under the superintendence of that apostle: a supposition, I need not say, entirely untenable.



it is probable that he recognized the notion as Tertullian's only. And we may fairly assume that Philastrinus (par. 65) and others refer to the same source, and that this view is destitute of any other external support than that which it gets from the passage of Tertullian<sup>4</sup>.

172. It must then, in common with the rest, stand or fall on internal grounds. And in thus judging of it, we have two alternatives before us. Either the extant Epistle of Barnabas is genuine, or it is not. In the former case, the question is soon decided. So different are the styles and characters of the two Epistles, so different also the view which they take of the Jewish rites and ordinances, that it is quite impossible to imagine them the work of the same writer. The Epistle of Barnabas maintains that the ceremonial commands were even at first uttered not in a literal but in a spiritual sense: finds childish allusions, e. g., in Greek numerals, to spiritual truths: is in its whole diction and character spiritless, and flat, and pointless. If any one imagines that the same writer could have indited both, then we are clearly out of the limits of ordinary reasoning and considerations of probability.

173. But we may take the other and more probable alternative: that the so-called Epistle of Barnabas is apocryphal. Judging then of Barnabas from what we know in the Acts, many particulars certainly seem to combine in favour of him. He was a Levite, not of Judæa, but of Cyprus (Acts iv. 36): he was intimately connected with St. Paul during the early part of the missionary journeys of that Apostle (Acts ix. 27, xv. 41), and in common with him was entrusted with the first ministry to the Gentiles (Acts xi. 22 ff., xv. 12, &c.; Gal. ii. 9, &c.): he was called by the Apostles (Acts iv. 36) by a name which we have seen reason to interpret 'son of exhortation.'

174. These particulars are made the most of by Wieseler, as supporting what he considers the only certain tradition on the subject. But as we have seen this tradition itself fail, so neither will these stand under stricter examination. For Barnabas, though by birth a Cyprian, yet dwelt apparently at Jerusalem (Acts ix. 27, xi. 22): and there, by the context of the narrative, must the field have been situated, which he sold to put its price into the common stock. As a Levite, he must have been thoroughly acquainted with the usages of the Jerusalem temple, which, as before observed, our Writer does not appear to have been. It is quite out of the question to suppose, as Wieseler does, that Barnabas, a Levite who had dwelt at Jerusalem, would, during a subsequent ministration in Egypt, have cited the usages of the temple at Leontopolis rather than those at Jerusalem. If such usages have been cited, it must be by an Egyptian Jew to whom Jerusalem was not familiar.

<sup>4</sup> It has been upheld in modern times by J. E. Chr.-Schmidt, Twesten, Ullmann, Thiersch, Wieseler. On the last of these, see below, par. 174.

175. Perhaps too much has been made, on the other side, of the manifest inferiority of Barnabas to Paul in eloquence, and of the fact that as the history goes on in the Acts, the order becomes reversed, and from "Barnabas and Saul" or "Paul" (ch. xi. 30, xii. 25, xiii. 2, 7) we have "Paul and Barnabas" (ch. xiii. 43, 46, 50, xv. 2 twice, 22, 35, with only occasional intermixture of the old order, ch. xiv. 14, xv. 12, 25): Barnabas gradually becoming eclipsed by the eminence of his far greater colleague. For 1) it is very possible that eloquence of the pen, such as that in our Epistle, might not have been wanting to one who was very inferior to St. Paul in eloquence of the tongue: and 2) it was most natural, that in a history written by a companion of St. Paul, and devoted, in its latter portion at least, to the Acts of St. Paul, the name of the great Apostle should gradually assume that pre-eminence to which on other grounds it was unquestionably entitled.

176. It would appear then, that against the authorship by Barnabas there can only be urged in fairness the one objection arising from his residence at Jerusalem: which on the hypothesis of the Epistle being addressed to the church at Jerusalem, would be a circumstance in his favour with reference to such expressions as **that I may be restored to you**, ch. xiii. 19 and the acquaintance with the readers implied throughout the Epistle. On the whole, it must be confessed, that this view comes nearest to satisfying the conditions of authorship of any that have as yet been treated; and should only be set aside, if one approaching nearer still can be found.

177. It remains that we enquire into the claims of the two remaining apostolic persons on our list, AQUILA, and APOLLOS. The former of these, a Jew of Pontus by birth, was once, with his wife Priscilla, resident in Rome, but was found by St. Paul at Corinth on his first arrival there (Acts xviii. 2), having been compelled to quit the capital by a decree of Claudius. It is uncertain whether at that time he was a Christian; but if not, he soon after became one by the companionship of the Apostle, who took up his abode, and wrought at their common trade of tent-making, with Aquila and Priscilla. After this, Aquila became a zealous forwarder of the Gospel. We find him (Acts xviii. 18) accompanying St. Paul to Ephesus, and in his company there when he wrote 1 Corinthians (1 Cor. xvi. 19): again at Rome when the Epistle to the Romans was written (Rom. xvi. 3): at Ephesus again when 2 Tim. was written (2 Tim. iv. 19).

178. From these places it appears, that Aquila was a person of considerable importance among the brethren: that the church used to assemble in his house: that he and his wife Priscilla had exposed their lives for the Gospel's sake. And from Acts xviii. 26 we find, that they were also well able to carry on the work of teaching, even with such a pupil as Apollos, who was mighty in the Scriptures.

179. It must be owned that these circumstances would constitute a fair *prima facie* case for Aquila, were it not for certain indications that he himself was rather the ready and zealous patron, than the teacher; and that this latter work, or a great share in it, seems to have belonged to his wife, Prisca or Priscilla. She is ever named with him, even Acts xviii. 26, where the instruction of Apollos is described: and not unfrequently her name precedes his (Acts xviii. 18; Rom. xvi. 3; 2 Tim. iv. 19): an arrangement so contrary to the custom of antiquity that some very sufficient reason must have existed for it. At all events, the grounds on which an hypothesis of Aquila's authorship of our Epistle would rest, must be purely of a negative kind, as far as personal capacity is concerned. And it does not appear that any, either in ancient or modern times, have fixed on him as its probable writer.

180. There is yet one name remaining, that of APOLLOS, in whom certainly more conditions meet than in any other man, both negative and positive, of the possible authorship of our Epistle. The language in which he is introduced in the Acts (xviii. 24) is very remarkable. He is there described as "*a certain Jew, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, being mighty in the Scriptures.*" Every word here seems fitted to point him out as the person of whom we are in search. He is a Jew, born in Alexandria: here we have at once two great postulates fulfilled: here we at once might account for the Alexandrian language of the Epistle, and for the uniform use of the Septuagint version, mainly (if this be so) in its Alexandrian form. He is an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures. As we advance in the description, even minute coincidences seem to confirm our view that we are here at last on the right track. He is described as *knowing only the baptism of John*, but being more perfectly taught the way of the Lord by Aquila and Priscilla. No wonder then that a person so instituted should specify **the doctrine of baptisms** as one of the components in the foundation of the Christian life (Heb. vi. 2). It is described as his characteristic, that he *began to speak boldly in the synagogue*: is it wonderful then that he, of all New Test. writers, should exhort, **Cast not away your boldness of speech or confidence** (Heb. x. 35), and (using the same word) declare to his readers that they were the house of Christ **if we hold fast our confidence** (Heb. iii. 6)?

181. Nor, if we proceed to examine the further notices of him, does this first impression become weakened. In 1 Cor. i.—iv., we find him described by inference as most active and able, and only second to St. Paul himself in the church at Corinth. It would be difficult to select words which should more happily and exactly hit the relation of the Epistle to the Hebrews to the writings of St. Paul, than those of 1 Cor. iii. 6, "*I planted, Apollos watered.*" And the eloquence and rhetorical richness of the style of Apollos seems to have been exactly that, wherein

his teaching differed from that of the Apostle. It is impossible to help feeling that the frequent renunciations, on St. Paul's part, of words of excellency or human wisdom, have reference, partly, it may be, to some exaggeration of Apollos' manner of teaching by his disciples, but also to some infirmity, in this direction, of that teacher himself. Compare especially 2 Cor. xi. 3.

182. It is just this difference in style and rhetorical character, which, in this case elevated and chastened by the informing and pervading Spirit, distinguishes the present Epistle to the Hebrews from those of the great Apostle himself. And, just as it was not easy to imagine either St. Luke, or Clement, or Barnabas, to have written such an Epistle, so now we feel, from all the characteristics given us of Apollos in the sacred narrative, that if he wrote at all, it would be an Epistle precisely of this kind, both in contents, and in style.

183. For as to the former of these, the contents and argument of the Epistle, we have a weighty indication furnished by the passage in the Acts: "*For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.*" What words could more accurately describe, if not the very teaching itself, yet the opening of a course of argument likely, when the occasion offered, to lead to the teaching of our Epistle?

184. Again, we seem to have found in Apollos just that degree of dependence on St. Paul which we require, combined with that degree of independence which the writer of our Epistle must have had. Instructed originally in the elements of the Christian faith by Aquila and Priscilla, he naturally received it in that form in which the Great Apostle of the Gentiles especially loved to put it forth. His career however of Christian teaching began and was carried on at Corinth, without the personal superintendence of St. Paul: his line of arguing with and convincing the Jews did not, as St. Paul's, proceed on the covenant of justification by faith made by God with Abraham, but took a different direction, that namely of the eternal High-priesthood of Jesus, and the all-sufficiency of His one Sacrifice. Faith indeed with him occupies a place fully as important as that assigned to it by St. Paul: he does not however dwell on it mainly as the instrument of our justification before God, but as the necessary condition of approach to Him, and of persistence in our place as partakers of the heavenly calling<sup>5</sup>. The

<sup>5</sup> The "*to justify,*" which occurs twenty-eight times in the Epistles of St. Paul, is not once found in the Epistle to the Hebrews: and the citation from Hab. ii. 4, "*the (or, any) just man shall live by faith,*" though it forms the common starting-point for St. Paul, Rom. i. 17, and the Writer of our epistle, eh. x. 38, leads them in totally different directions: St. Paul, to unfold the doctrine of *righteousness by faith*; our Writer, to celebrate the triumphs of the *life of faith*.

teaching of this Epistle is not indeed in any particular inconsistent with, but neither is it dependent on, the teaching of St. Paul's Epistles.

185. We may advance yet further in our estimate of the probability of Apollos having written as we find the Author of this Epistle writing.

The whole spirit of the First Epistle to the Corinthians shews us, that there had sprung up in the Corinthian church a rivalry between the two modes of teaching; unaccompanied by, as it assuredly was not caused by, any rivalry between the teachers themselves, except in so far as was of necessity the case from the very variety of the manner of teaching. And while the one fact, of the rivalry between the teachings and their disciples, is undeniable, the other fact, that of absence of rivalry between the Teachers, is shewn in a very interesting manner. On the side of St. Paul, by his constant and honourable mention of Apollos as his second and helper: by Apollos, in the circumstance mentioned 1 Cor. xvi. 12, that St. Paul had exhorted him to accompany to Corinth the bearers of that Epistle, but that he could not prevail on him to go at that time: he only promised a future visit at some favourable opportunity. Here, if I mistake not, we see the generous confidence of the Apostle, wishing Apollos to go to Corinth and prove, in spite of what had there taken place, the unity of the two apostolic men in the faith: here too, which is important to our present subject, we have the self-denying modesty of Apollos, unwilling to incur even the chance of being set at the head of a party against the Apostle, or in any way to obtrude himself personally, where St. Paul had sown the seed, now that there had grown up, on the part of some in that Church, a spirit of invidious personal comparison between the two.

186. If we have interpreted aright this hint of the feeling of Apollos as regarded St. Paul; if, as we may well suppose in one "*fervent in spirit*," such a feeling was deeply implanted and continued to actuate him,—what more likely to have given rise to the semi-anonymous character of our present Epistle? He has no reason for strict concealment of himself, but he has a strong reason for not putting himself prominently forward. He does not open with announcing his name, or sending a blessing in his own person: but neither does he write throughout as one who means to be unknown: and among the personal notices at the end he makes no secret of circumstances and connexions, which would be unintelligible, unless the readers were going along with a writer personally known to them. And thus the two-sided phenomena of our Epistle, utterly inexplicable as they have ever been on the hypothesis of Pauline authorship or superintendence, would receive a satisfactory explanation.

187. It will be plainly out of place to object, that this explanation would only hold, on the hypothesis that our Epistle was addressed to the Jews at Corinth. The same spirit of modest self-abnegation would



hardly, after such an indication of it, be wanting in Apollos, to whatever church he was writing. But I reserve it for the next section to enquire how far this view is confirmed or impugned by our conclusion as to the church to which the Epistle was, in all probability, originally addressed <sup>6</sup>.

188. The history of the hypothesis that Apollos was the author of our Epistle, has been given by implication, from the time of Luther, its apparent originator, above in parr. 98—108. It may be convenient to give here, in one conspectus, the principal names in its favour: Luther, Osiander, Le Clerc, Heumann (1711), Lorenz Müller (1717), Semler, Ziegler, Dindorf, Bleek, Tholuck, Credner, Reuss, the R.-Catholics Feilmoser and Lutterbeck (the latter with this modification, that he believes St. Paul to have written the 9 last verses, and the rest to have been composed by Apollos in union with St. Luke, Clement, and other companions of the Apostle),—De Wette, Lünemann.

189. The objection which is commonly set against these probabilities is, that we have no ecclesiastical tradition pointing to Apollos: that it is unreasonable to suppose that the church to which the Epistle was sent should altogether have lost all trace of the name of an author who must have been personally known to them. This has been strongly urged, and by some, e. g. Mr. Forster, regarded as a ground for attempting to laugh to scorn the hypothesis, as altogether unworthy of serious consideration <sup>7</sup>.

190. But if any student has carefully followed the earlier paragraphs of this section, he will be fully prepared to meet such an objection, and will not be deterred from the humble search after truth by such scorn. He will remember how we shewed the failure of every attempt to establish a satisfactory footing for any view of the authorship as being the tradition of the church: and proved that, with regard to any research into the subject, we of this day approach it as those of old did in their day, with full liberty to judge from the data furnished by the Epistle itself.

191. And he will also bear in mind, that the day is happily passing away with Biblical writers and students, when the strong language of those, who were safe in the shelter of a long-prescribed and approved opinion, could deter any from humble and faithful research into the various phænomena of God's word itself: when the confession of having found insoluble difficulties was supposed to indicate unsoundness of faith, and the recognition of discrepancies was regarded as affecting the belief of divine inspiration. We have at last in this country begun to learn, that Holy Scripture shrinks not from any tests,

<sup>6</sup> See below, § ii. par. 36.

<sup>7</sup> Apostolical authority of the Epistle to the Hebrews, preface, pp. ix., x.

however severe, and requires not any artificial defences, however apparently expedient.

## SECTION II.

### FOR WHAT READERS IT WAS WRITTEN.

1. That the book before us is an *Epistle*, not a homily or treatise, is too plain to require more than a passing assertion. Its personal and circumstantial notices are inseparable from it, and the language is throughout epistolary, as far as the nature of the subject would permit.

2. And it is almost equally plain, that it is an Epistle *addressed to* JUDÆO-CHRISTIANS. The attempt to dispute this must be regarded rather as a curiosity of literature, than as worthy of serious attention. The evidence of the whole Epistle goes to show, that the readers had been Jews, and were in danger of apostatizing back into Judaism again. Not a syllable is found of allusions to their conversion from the alienation of heathenism, such as frequently occur in St. Paul's Epistles : but every where their original covenant state is assumed, and the fact of that covenant having been amplified and superseded by a better one is insisted on.

3. If then it was written to Judæo-Christians, on whom are we to think as its intended recipients ?

4. *Was it addressed to the whole body of such converts throughout the world?* This view has found some few respectable names to defend it. But it cannot be seriously entertained. The Epistle assumes throughout a local habitation, and a peculiar combination of circumstances, for those who are addressed : and concludes, not only with greetings from "*those from Italy,*" but with an expressed intention of the Writer to visit those addressed, in company with Timotheus ; which would be impossible on this œcumenical hypothesis.

5. If then we are to choose some one church, the first occurring to us is the *mother church at Jerusalem*, perhaps united with the daughter churches in Palestine. And this, in one form or other, has been the usual opinion : countenanced by many phænomena in the Epistle itself. At and near Jerusalem, it is urged, a) would that attachment to the temple-worship be found which seems to be assumed on the part of the readers : there again b) were the only examples of churches almost purely Judaic in their composition : there only c) would such allusions as that to going forth to suffer with Christ "*without the gate*" (ch. xiii. 12), be understood and appreciated.

6. But these arguments are by no means weighty, much less decisive. For a) we do not find any signs in our Epistle that its readers were to be persons who had the temple-service before their eyes ; the Writer

refers much more to his Septuagint, than to any existing practices : and men with their Bibles in their hands might well have been thus addressed, even if they had never witnessed the actual ceremonies themselves. Besides which, all Jews were supposed to be included in the temple-rites, wherever dwelling, and would doubtless be quite as familiar with them as there can be any reason here for assuming. And again, even granting the ground of the argument, its inference is not necessary, for there was another Jewish temple at Leontopolis in Egypt, wherein the Mosaic ordinances were observed.

7. With regard to b), it may well be answered, that such an exclusively Jewish church, as would be found in Palestine only, is not required for the purposes of our Epistle. It is beyond question that the Epistle of St. James was written to Jewish Christian converts ; yet it is expressly addressed to the dispersion *outside* Palestine, who must every where have been mingled with their Gentile brethren. Besides, it has been well remarked<sup>8</sup>, that the Epistle itself leads to no such assumption of an exclusively Jewish church. It might have been sent to a church in which both Jews and Gentiles were mingled, to find its own readers : and such an idea is countenanced by the *exhortation*, ch. xiii. 13, compared with the words “*not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together,*” ch. x. 25. It has been well shown by Riehm, that our Writer’s whole procedure as concerns Gentile Christians can only be accounted for by his regarding the Jewish people—see ch. ii. 17, iv. 9, xiii. 12, ii. 16,—as the primary stock, into which all other men were to be engrafted for the purposes of salvation : as a theocratic rather than a physical development. For that the Lord Jesus tasted death on behalf of every man, is as undeniably his doctrine.

8. The argument c) is evidently not decisive. Wherever there were Jews, priding themselves on their own nationality, and acquainted with the facts of our Lord’s death, such an exhortation might be used. The type is derived from the usage of the tabernacle ; the antitype, from a known historical fact : the exhortation is, as explained by Theodoret (see note on ch. xiii. 13), to come forth out of the then legal polity of Judaism, content to bear the reproach accruing in consequence : all of which would be as applicable any where, as in Palestine, or at Jerusalem.

9. There seems then to be at least *no necessity* for adopting Jerusalem or Palestine as containing the readers to whom our Epistle was addressed. But on the other hand there are reasons against such an hypothesis, of more or less weight. These I will state, not in order of their importance, but as they most naturally occur

<sup>8</sup> By Holzmann, in an article in the *Studien und Kritiken*, 1859, part ii. ; to which I have been indebted for several suggestions on this part of my subject.



10. The language and style of our Epistle, if it was addressed to Jews in Jerusalem or Palestine, is surely unaccountable. For, although Greek was commonly spoken in Palestine, yet on the one hand no writer who wished to obtain a favourable hearing with Jews there on matters regarding their own religion, would choose Greek as the medium of his communication (compare Acts xxii. 2). And the gospel of St. Matthew is no case in point: for whatever judgment we may form respecting the original language of our present gospel, there can be no doubt that the apostolic oral teaching, on which our first three gospels are founded, was originally extant in Aramaic: whereas it is impossible to suppose the Epistle to the Hebrews a translation, or originally extant in any other tongue than Greek. And, on the other hand, not only is our Epistle Greek, but it is such Greek, as necessarily presupposes some acquaintance with literature, some practice not merely in the colloquial, but in the scholastic Greek of the day. And this surely was as far as possible from being the case with the churches of Jerusalem and Palestine.

11. A weighty pendant to the same objection is found in the unvarying use of the Septuagint Greek version by our Writer, even, as in ch. i. 6, ii. 7, x. 5, where it differs from the Hebrew text. "How astonishing is this circumstance," says Wieseler, "if he was writing to inhabitants of Palestine, with whom that version had no authority!"

12. Another objection is, that it is not possible to conceive either of St. Paul himself or of any of his companions, that they should have stood in such a relation to the Jerusalem or Palestine churches, as we find subsisting between the Writer of our Epistle and his readers. To suppose such a relation in the case of the Apostle himself, is to cut ourselves loose from all the revealed facts of his course, and suppose a totally new mind to have sprung up in Jerusalem towards him. And least of all his companions could such a relation have subsisted in the case of Apollos and Timotheus; at least for many years, far more than history will allow, after the speech of St. James in Acts xxi. 20.

13. Connected with this last difficulty would be the impossibility, on the hypothesis now in question, of giving any satisfactory meaning to the notice in ch. xiii. 24, **They from Italy salute you.** If the Writer was, as often supposed, in Rome, how unnatural to specify the *Jews residing there* by this name! if in Italy, how unnatural again that he should send greeting from Christian Jews so widely scattered, thereby depriving the salutation of all reality! If again he was not in Rome nor in Italy, what reason can be suggested for his sending an especial salutation to Jews in Palestine from some present with him who happened to be from Italy? The former of these three suppositions is perhaps the least unlikely: but the least unlikely, how unlikely!

14. Again, the historical notices in our Epistle do not fit the hypothesis in question. The great notice of ch. ii. 3, would be strictly true of any church rather than that of Jerusalem, or those in Palestine generally. At any date that can reasonably be assigned for our Epistle (see below, § iii.), there must have been many living in those churches, who had heard the Lord for themselves. And though it may be said that they had, properly speaking, received the *tidings of salvation* from those that heard Him, yet such a body, among whom Jesus Himself had lived and moved in the flesh, would surely not be one of which to predicate the words in the text so simply and directly. Rather should we look for one of which they might be from the first and without controversy true.

15. Another historical notice is found ch. vi. 10, **who have ministered to the saints, and do minister**, which would be less applicable to the churches of Jerusalem and Palestine, than to any others. For it was they who were the *objects*, not the subjects of this *ministration*, throughout the ministry of St. Paul: and certainly from what we know of their history, their situation did not improve after that Apostle's death. This "*ministration for the saints*" was a duty enjoined by him on the churches of Galatia (1 Cor. xvi. 1; Rom. xv. 26), Macedonia, and Achaia, and doubtless by implication on other churches also (see Rom. xii. 13): the **saints** being *the poor believers at Jerusalem*. And though, as has been replied to this, some of the Jerusalem Christians may have been wealthy, and able to assist their poorer brethren, yet we must notice that the *ministration* here is predicated not of some among them, but of the church, as such, in general: which could not be said of the church in Jerusalem.

16. There are some notices, on which no stress can be laid either way, as for, or as against, the claim of the Jerusalem church. Such are, that found ch. xii. 4, which in the note there we have seen reason to apply rather to the figure there made use of, than to any concrete fact assignable in history: and that in ch. v. 12, which manifestly must not be taken to imply that no teachers had at that time proceeded from the particular church addressed, but that its members in general were behind what might have been expected of them in spiritual knowledge.

17. It may again be urged, that the absence, no less than the presence of historical allusions, makes against the hypothesis. If the Epistle were addressed to the church at Jerusalem, it seems strange that no allusion should be made in it to the fact that our Lord Himself had lived and taught among them in the flesh, had before their eyes suffered death on the Cross, had found among them the first witnesses of His Resurrection and Ascension.

18. If then we cannot fit our Epistle to the very widely spread assumption that it was addressed to the Jewish Christians of Jerusalem and Palestine, we must obviously put to the test, in search of its original

readers, the various other churches which came within the working of St. Paul and his companions. Of many of these, which have in turn become the subjects of hypotheses, it is hardly necessary to give more than a list. Wall believed the Epistle to have been written to the Hebrew Christians of Proconsular Asia, Macedonia, and Greece: Sir J. Newton, Bolten, and Bengel, to Jews who had left Jerusalem on account of the war, and were settled in Asia Minor: Credner, to those in Lycaonia: Storr, Mynster, and Rinck, to those in Galatia: Lyra and Ludwig, to those in Spain: Semler and Nösselt, to those in Thessalonica: Böhme, to those in Antioch: Stein, to those in Laodicea (see the citation from Philastrius in § i. 65, and note); Röth, to those in Antioch: Baumgarten-Crusius, to those at Ephesus and Colossæ.

19. Several of these set out with the assumption of a Pauline authorship; and none of them seems to fulfil satisfactorily any of the main conditions of our problem. If it was to any one of these bodies of Jews that the Epistle was addressed, we know so little about any one of them, that the holding of such an opinion on our part can only be founded on the vaguest and wildest conjecture. To use arguments against such hypotheses, would be to fight with mere shadows.

20. But there are *three churches* yet remaining which will require more detailed discussion: CORINTH, ALEXANDRIA, and ROME. The reason for including the former of these in this list, rather than in the other, is, that on the view that Apollos was the Writer, the church in which he so long and so effectively laboured, seems to have a claim to be considered.

21. But the circumstances of the Jewish portion of the church at CORINTH were not such as to justify such an hypothesis. It does not appear to have been of sufficient importance in point of numbers: nor can the assertion that it was confirmed to us by those that heard [Him], of ch. ii. 3, have been asserted of them, seeing that they owed their conversion to the ministry of St. Paul.

22. ALEXANDRIA is maintained by Schmidt and Wieseler to have been the original destination of the Epistle. There, it is urged, were the greatest number of resident Jews, next to Jerusalem: there, at Leonopolis in Egypt, was another temple, with the arrangements of which the notices in our Epistle more nearly correspond than with those in Jerusalem: from thence the Epistle appears first to have come forth to the knowledge of the church. Add to which, the canon of Muratori (see above, § i. par. 31) speaks of an Epistle to the *Alexandrines*, which may probably designate our present Epistle. Besides all this, the Alexandrine character of the language, and treatment of subjects in the Epistle, and manner of citation, are urged, as pointing to Alexandrine readers.

23. And doubtless there is some weight in these considerations:

enough, in the mere balance of probabilities, to cause us to place this hypothesis far before all others which have as yet been treated. Still there are some circumstances to be taken into account, which rather weaken its probability. One of these is that, various as are the notices of the Epistle from early Alexandrine writers, we find no hint of its having been addressed to their own church, no certain tradition concerning its author. Another arises from the absence of all positive history of the church there in apostolic times, by which we might try, and verify, the few historic notices occurring in the Epistle. Indeed as far as the more personal of those notices are concerned, the same objections lie against Alexandria, as have before been urged against Palestine: the difficulty of assigning a reason for the salutation from *those from Italy*, and of imagining, within the limits which must be set to the date of the Epistle, any such relation of Timotheus to the readers, as is supposed in ch. xiii. 23.

24. These objections would lead us, at all events, to pass on to the end of our list before we attempt to pronounce on the preponderance of probability, and take into consideration the claims of ROME herself. These were in part put forward by Wetstein, and have recently been urged in Holzmann's article in the *Studien u. Kritiken* for 1859.

25. They may be briefly explained to be these: 1) The fact of the church at Rome being just such an one, in its origin and composition, as this Epistle seems to presuppose. It has been already seen (par. 7) that when, as we are compelled, we give up the idea of its having been addressed to a church exclusively consisting of Judæo-Christians, we necessarily are referred to one in which the Jewish believers formed a considerable portion, and that the primary stock and nucleus, of the church. Now this seems to have been the case at Rome, from the indications furnished us in the Epistle to the Romans. "The Jew first, and also the Gentile," is a note frequently struck in that Epistle; and the Church at Rome seems to be the only one of those with which St. Paul had been concerned, which would entirely answer to such a description.

26. 2) The great key to the present question, the historical notice, ch. ii. 3, fits exceedingly well the circumstances of the church of Rome. That church had arisen, not from the preaching of any Apostle among them, but from a confluence of primitive believers, the first having arrived there probably not long after our Lord's Ascension: see Acts ii. 10. In Rom. i. 8, written in all probability in the year 58 A.D., St. Paul states, "*Your faith is spoken of in the whole world:*" and in xvi. 19, "*Your obedience hath come unto all men:*" the inferences from which, and their proper limitation, I have discussed in the *Introd.* to that Epistle. And in Rom. xvi. 7, we find a salutation to Andronicus and Junias, Jews (see note there), "*who are of note among the Apostles,*

*who also were in Christ before me.*" So that here we have a church, the only one of all those with which St. Paul and his companions were concerned, of which it could be said, that the Gospel was confirmed to us by them that heard [Him]: the Apostle himself not having arrived there till long after such *confirmation* had taken place.

27. Again 3) it was in Rome, and Rome principally, that Judaistic Christianity took its further development and forms of error: it was there, not in Jerusalem and Palestine, that at this time the **various and strange doctrines**, against which the readers are warned, ch. xiii. 9, were springing up. "As soon as the gloom of the earliest history begins to clear a little, we find face to face at Rome Valentinians and Marcionites, Praxeas and the Montanists (Proclus), Hegesippus and the Elcesaites, Justin, and Polycarp. Here it was that there arose in the second half of the 2nd century the completest exposition of theosophic Judaism, the Clementines, the literary memorial of a manœuvre which had for its aim the absorption of the whole Roman Church into Judæo-Christianity<sup>9</sup>." We have glimpses of the beginning of this state of Judaistic development even in St. Paul's lifetime, at two distinct periods; when he wrote the Epistle to the Romans, about A.D. 58, compare Rom. xiv. xv. to ver. 13,—and later, in that to the Philippians, about A.D. 63 (see Introd. to that Epistle); and Phil. i. 14—17: again in the bitterness conveyed in "*beware of the concision*," and the following verses, Phil. iii. 2 ff.

28. It is also to be remarked 4) that the personal notices found in our Epistle agree remarkably well with the hypothesis that it was addressed to the Church at Rome. The information respecting Timothy could not come amiss to those who had been addressed in the words, "*Timotheus my fellow-worker saluteth you*," Rom. xvi. 21; who had been accustomed to the companionship of "*Paul and Timotheus*" among them, Phil. i. 1; Col. i. 1; Philem. 1: and the words, **they from Italy salute you**, of ch. xiii. 24, receive a far more likely interpretation than that conceded as possible above, § i. par. 126, if we believe the Writer to be addressing his Epistle from some place where were present with him Christians from Italy, who would be desirous of sending greeting to their brethren at home. If he was writing e. g. at Alexandria, or at Ephesus, or at Corinth, such a salutation would be very natural. And thus we should be giving to the phrase **they from** its most usual New Test. meaning, of persons who *have come from* the place indicated: see Matt. xv. 1; Acts vi. 9; x. 23. Even Bleek, who holds our Epistle to have been addressed to the church in Palestine, takes this view, and assigns as its place of writing, Ephesus or Corinth. But then, what sense would it have, to send greeting to Palestine from **they from Italy**?

• Holzmann.



29. Another set of important notices which this hypothesis will illustrate is found, where past persecution, and the death of eminent men in the church, are alluded to. These have ever presented, on the Palestine view, considerable difficulties. Any assignment of them to known historical occurrences would put them far too early for any probable date of our Epistle: and it has been felt that the deaths by martyrdom of St. Stephen, St. James the Great, and the like, were far from satisfying the expression, **the decease of your leaders**, which they were commanded to imitate: and though the time during which the Epistle must have reached Jerusalem was indeed one of great and unexampled trouble and disorganization, we know of no general persecution of Christians as such, since that which arose on account of Stephen, which was hardly likely to have been in the Writer's mind.

30. But on the Roman hypothesis, these passages are easily explained. About 49 or 50, Claudius, as Suetonius tells us, "expelled from Rome the Jews, who were continually stirring up tumults under the instigation of Chrestus." This time may well be alluded to by the expression, **remember the former days**, in ch. x. 32; for under the blundering expression, "*at the instigation of Chrestus*," it is impossible not to recognize troubles sprung from the rising of the Jews against the Christian converts. Thus also will the fact of the *sympathy with prisoners* receive a natural interpretation, as imprisonments and trials would necessarily have accompanied these "*continual tumults*," before the final step of expulsion took place: and the **taking with joy the spoiling of their goods** may be easily understood, either as a result of the tumults themselves, or of the expulsion, in which they had occasion to test their knowledge that they had for themselves *a better and abiding possession*.

31. It is true there are some particulars connected with this passage, which do not seem so well to fit that earlier time of trouble, as the Neronian persecution nearly fifteen years after. The only objection to taking that event as the one referred to, would be the expression **the former days**, and the implication conveyed in the assertion, that they then suffered affliction **after they were enlightened**: considering that we cannot go beyond the destruction of Jerusalem, at the latest eight years after, for the date of our Epistle. Still it is not impossible that both these expressions might be used. A time of great peril passed away might be thus alluded to, even at the distance of five or six years: and it might well be, that the majority of the Roman Jewish Christians had become converts during the immediately preceding imprisonment of St. Paul, and by his means.

32. On this supposition, still more light is thrown on this passage, and on the general tenor of the martyrology in the eleventh chapter.

Thus the **great fight of afflictions** is fully justified: thus, the **being made a spectacle of in reproaches and tribulations**, which finds almost an echo in the expression of Tacitus, that *mockery was added to the sufferings of the dying Christians*, and is so exactly in accord, when literally taken, with the cruel exposures and deaths in the circus. The *prisoners* and the *spoiling* too, on this supposition, would be matters of course. And I own, notwithstanding the objection stated above, that all this seems to fit the great Neronian persecution, and in the fullest sense, that only.

33. To that period also may we refer the notice in ch. xiii. 7; "Remember your leaders, who spoke to you the word of God, of whom regarding the end of their conversation, imitate their faith." It may be indeed, that this refers simply to a natural death in the faith of Christ: but it is far more probable, from the terms used, that it points to death by martyrdom: **faith** having been so strongly illustrated in ch. xi., as bearing up under torments and death.

34. On this hypothesis, several other matters seem also to fall into place. The **setting at liberty of Timotheus** may well refer to the termination of some imprisonment of Timotheus consequent upon the Neronian persecution, from which perhaps the death of the tyrant liberated him. Where this imprisonment took place, must be wholly uncertain. I shall speak of the conjectural probabilities of the place indicated by the words **if he come shortly**, when I come to treat of the time and place of writing<sup>1</sup>.

35. The use evidently made in our Epistle of the Epistle to the Romans, above all other of St. Paul's<sup>2</sup>, will thus also be satisfactorily accounted for. Not only was the same church addressed, but the Writer had especially before him the matter and language of that Epistle, which was written in all probability from Corinth, the scene of the labours of Paul and Apollos.

36. The sort of semi-anonymous character of our Epistle, already treated of when we ascribed the authorship to Apollos, will also come in here, as singularly in accord with the circumstances of the case, and with the subsequent tradition as regards the Epistle, in case it was addressed to the church in Rome. Supposing, as we have gathered

<sup>1</sup> See below, § iii. par. 4.

<sup>2</sup> This has been noticed by many; and may be established by consulting those Commentators and writers, who have drawn up tables of verbal coincidence with a view of proving the Pauline authorship. There is reason for thinking that the peculiar form of the quotation, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," in ch. x. 30, agreeing neither with the Hebrew text of Deut. xxxii. 35, nor with the Septuagint version there, is owing to its having been taken direct from Rom. xii. 19. And the whole form of exhortation in our ch. xiii. 1—6, reminds us forcibly of that in Rom. xii. 1—21. See also Rom. xiv. 17, as compared with Heb. xiii. 9, in § iv. par. 1, note.



from the notices of Apollos in 1 Cor., that he modestly shrunk from being thought to put himself into rivalry with St. Paul, and that after the death of the Apostle he found it necessary to write such an Epistle as this to the Church in the metropolis, what more likely step would he take with regard to his own name and personality in it, than just that which we find has been taken: viz., so to conceal these, as to keep them from having any prominence, while by various minute personal notices he prevents the concealment from being complete? And with regard to the relation evidently subsisting between the Writer and his readers, all we can say is that, in defect of positive knowledge on this head connecting Apollos with the church at Rome, it is evidently in the metropolis, of all places, where such a relation may most safely be assumed. There a teacher, whose native place was Alexandria, and who had travelled to Ephesus and Corinth, was pretty sure to have been: there many of his Christian friends would be found: there alone, in the absence of positive testimony, could we venture to place such a cycle of dwelling and teaching, as would justify the expression, **restored to you**, of our ch. xiii. 19: in the place whither was a general confluence of all, and where there is ample room for such a course after the decease of St. Paul.

37. And what more likely fate to befall the Epistle in this respect, than just that which did befall it in the Roman Church: viz., that while in that church, and by a contemporary of Apollos, Clement, we find the first use made of our Epistle, and that the most familiar and copious use,—its words are never formally cited, nor is any author's name attached? And was not this especially likely to be the case, as Clement was writing to the Corinthians, the very church where the danger had arisen of a rivalry between the fautors of the two teachers?

38. And as time goes on, the evidence for this hypothesis seems to gather strength, in the nature of the traditions respecting the authorship of our Epistle. While in Africa and the East they are most various and inconsistent with one another, and the notion of a Pauline origin is soon suggested, and gains rapid acceptance, it is in the church of Rome alone, and among those influenced by her, that we find an ever steady and unvarying assertion, that it *was not written by St. Paul*. By whom it *was* written, none ventured to say. How weighty the reasons may have been, which induced silence on this point, we have now lost the power of appreciating. The fact only is important for us, that the few personal notices which occur in it were in course of time overborne, as indications of its author, by the prevalent anonymous character: and that the same church which possessed as its heritage the most illustrious of St. Paul's own epistles, was ever unanimous in disclaiming, on the part of the Apostle of the Gentiles, the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

39. The result of the above enquiry may be shortly stated. As the current of popular opinion in the church has gradually set in towards the Pauline authorship, inferring that a document at first sight so Pauline must have proceeded from the Apostle himself: so has it also set in towards the church at Jerusalem as the original readers, inferring that the title, **to the Hebrews**, must be thus interpreted. But as in the one case, so in the other, the general popular opinion does not bear examination. As the phenomena of the Epistle do not bear out the idea of the Pauline authorship, so neither do they that of being addressed to the Palestine churches. And as in the other case there is *one man*, when we come to search and conjecture, pointed out as most likely to have written the Epistle, so here, when we pursue the same process, there is *one place* pointed out, to which it seems most likely to have been addressed. At Rome, such a Church existed as is indicated in it: at Rome, above all other places, its personal and historical notices are satisfied: at Rome, we find it first used: at Rome only, is there an unanimous and unvarying negative tradition regarding its authorship. To ROME then, until stronger evidence is adduced, we believe it to have been originally written.

### SECTION III.

#### TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING.

1. Almost all Commentators agree in believing that our Epistle was written *before the destruction of Jerusalem*. And rightly: for if that great break-up of the Jewish polity and religious worship had occurred, we may fairly infer, that some mention of such an event would have been found in an argument, the scope of which is to shew the transitoriness of the Jewish priesthood and the Levitical ceremonies. It would be inconceivable, that such an Epistle should be addressed to Jews after their city and temple had ceased to exist.

2. This then being assumed, as our later limit, i. e. A.D. 70, or at the latest assigned date, 72, it remains to seek for an earlier limit. Such would appear to me to be fixed by *the death of St. Paul*: but inasmuch as 1) this would not be recognized either by the advocates of the Pauline authorship, or by those who believe that the Epistle, though possibly written by another, was superintended by the Apostle, and seeing 2) that the date of that event itself is wholly uncertain, it will be necessary to look elsewhere for some indication. And the only traces of one will, I conceive, be found by combining several hints furnished by the Epistle. Such are, a) that the *first generation*, of those who had seen and heard the Lord, was at all events nearly *passed*

away: b) that *the first leaders of the church had died*, probably under the persecution elsewhere alluded to: c) that *Timotheus had been imprisoned*, and was then *set free*, probably in connexion with that same persecution. If these notices are to be taken, as maintained above (§ ii. par. 31 ff.), to apply to the Neronian persecution, then the Epistle cannot have been written till some considerable time after that, in order to justify the expression, **remember the former days**, of our ch. x. 32. Now that persecution broke out in 64, and lasted four years, i.e. till Nero's death in 68. And I may notice, that even those who are far from adopting the views here advocated as to the Author and readers of the Epistle, yet consider, that the liberation of Timotheus may well have been connected with the cessation of the Neronian persecution.

3. If we follow these indications, we shall get the year 68 as our earlier limit, and the *time* of writing the Epistle will be 68—70, i.e. during the siege of Jerusalem by the armies of Titus, to which we may perhaps discern an allusion in ch. xiii. 14, **for we have here no abiding city, but we seek one to come**.

4. With regard to the *place* of writing, we are almost entirely in the dark. Taking the usual New Test. sense, above maintained, for **those from Italy**,—"persons whose home is in Italy, but who are now here,"—it *cannot have been written in Italy*. Nor is Apollos (for when we are left, as now, to the merest conjecture, it is necessary to shape our course by assuming our own hypothesis) likely, after what had happened, again to be found fixed at Corinth. Jerusalem, and indeed Palestine, would be precluded by the Jewish war then raging; Ephesus is possible, and would be a not unlikely resort of Timotheus after his liberation (ch. xiii. 23), as also of Apollos at any time (Acts xviii. 24): Alexandria, the native place of Apollos, is also possible, though the words **if he come shortly**, applied to Timotheus, would not so easily fit it, as on his liberation he would be more likely to go to some parts with which he was familiar than to Alexandria where he was a stranger. In both these cities there may well have been **persons from Italy** sojourning: and this very phrase seems to point to some place of considerable resort. On the whole then, I should incline to **EPHESUS**, as the most probable place of writing: but it must be remembered that on this head all is in the realm of the vaguest conjecture.

## SECTION IV.

### OCCASION, OBJECT OF WRITING, AND CONTENTS.

1. The occasion which prompted this Epistle evidently was, the enmity of the Jews to the Gospel of Christ, which had brought a

double danger on the church : on the one hand that of persecution, on the other that of apostasy. Between these lay another, that of mingling with a certain recognition of Jesus as the Christ, a leaning to Jewish practices and valuing of Jewish ordinances. But this latter does not so much appear in our Epistle, as in those others which were written by St. Paul to mixed churches ; those to the Romans<sup>3</sup>, the Galatians, the Colossians. The principal peril to which Jewish converts were exposed, especially after they had lost the guidance of the Apostles themselves in their various churches, was, that of falling back from the despised following of Jesus of Nazareth into the more compact and apparently safer system of their childhood, which moreover they saw tolerated as a *lawful religion*, while their own was outcast and proscribed.

2. The object then of this Epistle is, to shew them the superiority of the Gospel to the former covenant : and that mainly by exhibiting, from the Scriptures, and from the nature of the case, the superiority of Jesus Himself to both the messengers and the High Priests of that former covenant. This is the main argument of the Epistle, filled out and illustrated by various corollaries springing out of its different parts, and expanding in the directions of encouragement, warning, and illustration.

3. This argument is entered on at once without introduction in ch. i., where Christ's superiority to the angels, the mediators of the old covenant, is demonstrated from Scripture. Then, having interposed (ii. 1—4) a caution on the greater necessity of taking heed to the things which they had heard, the Writer shews (ii. 5—18) why He to whom, and not to the angels, the future world is subjected, yet was made lower than the angels : viz. that He might become our merciful and faithful High Priest, to deliver and to save us, Himself having undergone temptation like ourselves.

4. Having mentioned this title of Christ, he goes back, and prepares the way for its fuller treatment, by a comparison of Him with Moses (iii. 1—6), and a shewing that that antitypical rest of God, from which unbelief excludes, was not the rest of the seventh day, nor that of the possession of Canaan, but one yet reserved for the people of God (iii. 7—iv. 10), into which we must all the more strive to enter, because the word of our God is keen and searching in judgment, and nothing hidden from His sight, with whom we have to do (iv. 11—13).

5. He now resumes the main consideration of his great subject, the

<sup>3</sup> One remarkable trace we have of allusion to this form of error,—in its further development, as appears by the verdict of past experience which is appended, but otherwise singularly resembling a passage in the Epistle to the Romans (xiv. 17), in our ch. xiii. 9, "*For it is good that the heart be established with grace, not with meats, by which they were not profited who walked in them.*"

High Priesthood of Christ, with a hortatory note of passage (iv. 14—16). This subject he pursues through the whole middle portion of the Epistle (v. 1—x. 18), treating it in its various aspects and requirements. Of these we have (v. 1—10) the conditions of High Priesthood: (v. 11—vi. 20) a digression complaining, with reference to the difficult subject of the Melchisedek-priesthood, of their low state of spiritual attainment, warning them of the necessity of progress, but encouraging them by God's faithfulness: (vii. 1—x. 18) the priesthood of Christ after the order of Melchisedek, in its distinction from the Levitical priesthood (see the various steps set forth in the headings in the commentary), as perpetual,—as superior, in that Abraham acknowledged himself inferior to Melchisedek,—as having power of endless life,—as constituted with an oath,—as living for ever,—as without sin,—as belonging to the heavenly sanctuary, and to a covenant promised by God Himself:—as consisting in better ministrations, able to purify the conscience itself, and to put away sin by the one Sacrifice of the Son of God.

6. Having thus completed his main argument, he devotes the concluding portion (x. 19—xiii. 25) to a series of solemn exhortations to endurance in confidence and patience, and illustrations of that faith, on which both must be founded. In x. 19—39, we have exhortation and warning deduced from the facts lately proved, our access to the heavenly place, and our having a great High Priest over the house of God: then by the Pauline citation **the (or, my) just man shall live by faith**, a transition note is struck to ch. xi. which entirely consists in a panegyric of faith and a recounting of its triumphs: on a review of which the exhortation to run the race set before us, and endure chastisement, is again taken up, ch. xii. And the same hortatory strain is pursued to the end of the Epistle; the glorious privileges of the Christian covenant being held forth, and the awful peril of forfeiting them by apostasy;—and those graces, and active virtues, and that stedfastness in suffering shame, being enjoined, which are necessary to the following and imitation of Jesus Christ. The valedictory prayer (xiii. 20, 21), and one or two personal notices and greetings, conclude the whole.

## SECTION V.

### LANGUAGE AND STYLE.

I. Something has already been said, in the previous enquiry into the authorship of our Epistle, respecting the question of its original language<sup>4</sup>. There also the principal passages of the Fathers will be found which bear on this subject. They may be thus briefly summed up:

<sup>4</sup> See above, § i. par. 149.

2. The idea of a Hebrew original is found in Clement of Alexandria (cited above, § i. par. 14), in Eusebius (ib. par. 48), Jerome, Theodoret, Euthalius (above, § i. par. 46), Primasius, John Damascenus, Œcumenius, Theophylact,—in Cosmas Indicopleustes,—in Rhabanus Maurus,—in Thomas Aquinas; in some modern writers, especially Hallet, in an enquiry into the author and language of the Epistle, appended to Peirce's Commentary (1742), and Michaelis.

3. Still such an apparently formidable array of ancient testimony is not to be taken as such, without some consideration. Clement's assertion of a Hebrew original is not reproduced by his scholar Origen, but on the contrary a Greek original is presupposed by his very words (above, § i. par. 19). And this his divergence from Clement of Alexandria is not easy to explain, if he had regarded him as giving matter of history, and not rather a conjecture of his own. Indeed, the passage of Clement seems to bear this latter on the face of it: for it connects the similarity of style between this Epistle and the Acts with the notion of St. Luke being its translator. If we might venture to fill up the steps by which the inference came about, they would be nearly these: "The Epistle must be St. Paul's. But St. Paul was a Hebrew, and was writing to Hebrews: how then do we find the Epistle in Greek, not unlike in style to that of the Acts of the Apostles? What, if the writer of the Greek of that book were also the writer of the Greek of this,—and St. Paul, as was to be supposed, wrote as a Hebrew to the Hebrews, *in Hebrew*, St. Luke translating into Greek?"

4. Again, Eusebius is not consistent in this matter with himself. In another place he clearly implies that the Epistle was written in Greek. And such has been the opinion of almost all the moderns: of all, we may safely say, who have handled the subject impartially and intelligently. The reasons for this now generally received opinion are mainly found in the style of the Epistle, which is the most purely Greek of all the writings of the New Test.: so that it would be violating all probability to imagine it a translation from a language of entirely different rhetorical character. The construction of the periods is such, in distinction from the character, in this particular, of the Oriental languages, that if it is a translation, the whole argumentation of the original must have been broken up into its original elements of thought, and all its connecting links recast; so that it would not be so much a translation, as a re-writing, of the Hebrew Epistle.

5. The plays on words again, and the citations from the Septuagint version being made in entire independence of the Hebrew text, form collectively a presumptive proof, the weight of which it is very difficult to evade, that the present Greek text is the original. Such peculiarities belong to thought running free and selecting its own words, not to the constrained reproduction of the thoughts of another in another tongue.



If our English version be examined in any of those numerous places where St. Paul has indulged in plays on words, no such will be found in the translation. And yet English is much nearer to Greek than Greek to any dialect of the Hebrew.

6, 7. Other arguments, which can hardly be appreciated by the English reader, will be found in this place in my Greek Testament.

8. These considerations, coming in aid of the conviction which must be felt by every intelligent Greek scholar that he is reading an original composition and not a version, induce us to refuse the idea of a Hebrew original, and to believe the Epistle to have been first written in Greek.

9. The style of our Epistle has been already touched upon in our enquiry respecting the authorship, § i. parr. 116 ff. From the earliest times, its diversity from that of the writings of St. Paul has been matter of remark. It is a nearer approach to classical Greek. The main difference for us, which will also set forth its characteristic peculiarity, is, that whereas St. Paul is ever as it were struggling with the scantiness of human speech to pour forth his crowding thoughts, thereby falling into rhetorical and grammatical irregularities, the style of our Epistle flows regularly on, with no such suspended constructions. Even where the subject induces long parentheses, the Writer does not break the even flow and equilibrium of his style, but returns back to the point where he left it.

10. Again, the greatest pains are bestowed on a matter which does not seem to have engaged the attention of the other sacred writers, even including St. Paul himself: viz. rhetorical rhythm, and equilibrium of words and sentences. In St. Paul's most glorious outbursts of eloquence, he is not rhetorical. In those of the Writer of our Epistle, he is elaborately and faultlessly rhetorical. The particles and participles used are all weighed with a view to this effect. The simple expressions of the other sacred writers are expanded into longer words, or into sonorous and majestic clauses.

## SECTION VI.

### CANONICITY.

1. This part of our introduction must obviously be treated quite irrespective of the hypothesis of the Pauline authorship of the Epistle. That being assumed, its canonicity follows. That being denied, our object must be to shew how the Epistle itself was regarded, even by those who were not persuaded of its apostolicity.

2. The earliest testimonies to it are found where we might expect them, in the Church of Rome, and in the writings of one who never cites it as apostolic. It will be important for us to see, in what estimation Clement held it. He makes, as we have already seen, the most frequent



and copious use of it, never citing it expressly, never appealing to it as Scripture, but adopting its words and expressions, just as he does those of other books of the New Testament. It is to be observed, that when in the course of thus incorporating it he refers to *the Scripture*, or uses the expression *it is written*, it is with regard to texts quoted not from it only, but also from the Old Test. By this procedure we cannot say that Clement casts any slight on this Epistle, for it is his constant practice. He frequently quotes Scripture as such, but it is always the Old Test. Two or three times he adduces the sayings of our Lord, but never even this in the form of a citation from our existing gospels, or in agreement with their exact words. All we can gather from Clement is, that, treating this as he does other Epistles<sup>5</sup>, and appropriating largely as he does its words and expressions, he certainly did not rank it below those others: an inference which would lead us to believe that he recognized its canonical authority. But to found more than this on Clement's testimony, would be unwarranted by fair induction.

3. Justin Martyr, amidst a few allusions to our Epistle, makes what can hardly but be called canonical use of it in his first Apology. There, in explaining that the Word of God is also His Son, he adds, "*Moreover, He is called Angel and Apostle.*" Now it appears from his own statement in another place, that the allusion in the words, "*He is called an angel,*" is to Gen. xviii. 2. It would seem therefore, seeing that Heb. iii. 1 is the only place where our Lord is entitled *an apostle*, that the clause meant to embrace under it that passage as a Scripture testimony equipollent with the other.

4. In Clement of Alexandria and Origen, the recognition of our Epistle as canonical depends on its recognition as the work of St. Paul. Where they both cite it as Scripture, it is as written by him: and where Origen mentions the doubt about its being his, he adduces other Scripture testimony, observing that it needs another kind of proof, not that the Epistle is canonical, but that it is St. Paul's.

5. And very similar was the proceeding of those parts of the church where the Pauline authorship was not held. Irenæus, as we have seen, makes no use of the Epistle. The fragment of Muratori, representing the view of the Roman church, probably does not contain it. Tertullian, who regards it as written by Barnabas, the "*companion of the Apostles,*" cites it, not as authoritative in itself, but as recording the sentiments of such a companion of the Apostles.

6. Our Epistle is, it is true, contained in the Syriac version (Peshito) made at the end of the second century: but it is entirely uncertain, whether this insertion in the canon accompanied a recognition of the Pauline authorship, or not. This recognition, which prevailed in that

<sup>5</sup> The only exception is in an express citation in c. 47 from 1 Corinthians, where, writing to the Corinthians, he is appealing to the authority of St. Paul.

part of the church in after times, *may* have at first occasioned its insertion in the canon; but we cannot say that it did.

7. But in the Alexandrine Church the case was different. There, as we have seen, the assumption of Pauline authorship appears early and soon prevails universally: and in consequence we find the canonical authority there unquestioned, and the Epistle treated as the other parts of Scripture.

8. Throughout the Eastern Churches, the canonicity and apostolicity were similarly regarded as inseparably connected. It is true that Eusebius, in numbering it among the controverted books, together with the Epistles of Barnabas and Clement and Jude, and the Wisdom of the Son of Sirach, might seem to attribute to it another authorship, were it not evident from his constant use of it, and his numbering it in his principal passage on the Canon among the acknowledged books, that the doubt must be resolved into that on the Pauline authorship.

9. In the Western Church, where this was not recognized, neither do we find, even down to the middle of the fourth century, any use made of the Epistle as canonical. Even Novatian and Cyprian, who might well have thus used it, have not done so: nor in the controversies on the reception of the lapsed, and on the repetition of heretical baptism, do we ever find it adduced on either side, apposite as some passages are to the subjects in dispute. Only with the assumption, gradually imported from the East, of a Pauline origin, do we find here and there a Western writer citing it as of canonical authority.

10. It is in Jerome first that we find<sup>6</sup> any indication of a doubt whether canonicity and Pauline authorship are necessarily to stand and fall together. The same is found<sup>7</sup> now and then in the writings of Augustine. But soon after this time the general prevalence, and ultimately authoritative sanction, of the view of the Pauline authorship, closed up any chance of the canonicity of the Epistle being held on independent grounds: and it was not till the times of the Reformation, that the matter began to be again enquired into on its own merits.

11. The canonicity was doubted by Cardinal Cajetan, but upheld by Erasmus, in these remarkable words: "Nay, I cannot think that our faith is in peril, if the whole Church is at fault in the title of this Epistle, if only it be acknowledged that the Holy Spirit was the primary Author, which is commonly held by all." In the Roman Catholic Church, however, the authoritative sanction given by the Council of Trent to the belief of the Pauline origin effectually stopped all intelligent enquiry.

12. Among reformed theologians, the canonicity of our Epistle was

<sup>6</sup> See above, § i. parr. 68—80: esp. par. 74 ff.

<sup>7</sup> See § i. par. 81 ff.

strongly upheld, even when the Pauline authorship was not recognized. Calvin says, in his prologue to the Epistle,—“I embrace it without controversy as among the apostolical writings, and doubt not that it arose in former days from the artifice of Satan that some detracted from its authority. For there is none of the sacred books that treats so clearly of Christ’s priesthood, so gloriously extols the force and dignity of the one sacrifice which He offered by His Death, treats so copiously of the use and abrogation of ceremonies, and in a word more fully explains Christ as the end of the law. Wherefore let us not suffer the Church of God and ourselves to be spoiled of such a treasure, but constantly claim its possession. Who composed it, is not much worth caring about.”

13. Beza speaks in the same strain: “What is the use of contending about the author’s name, which he himself wished to conceal? Let it suffice to know this, that it was truly dictated by the Holy Spirit, &c.”

14. Similarly also the Gallican Confession, which, though it divides it off from the Pauline writings, yet includes it without remark among the canonical books. So also the Arminians, e. g. Limboreh, who, believing it to have been written by one of the companions of Paul, with Paul’s knowledge, acknowledges its divine authority, and even prefers it to many of the Apostle’s own writings.

15. Among the early Lutheran divines there were some differences of opinion respecting the place to be assigned to the Epistle; the general view being, that it was to be read, as Jerome first wrote of the Apocryphal Old Test. books, for the edification of the people, but not for the confirmation of ecclesiastical doctrines. In other words, it was set apart,—and in this relegation six other books shared, 2 Pet., 2 and 3 John, James, Jude, and the Apocalypse,—among the Apocryphal writings appended to the New Test. And this order was usually followed in the German Bibles.

16. Soon however after the beginning of the 17th century, this distinction began to be obliterated, and the practice to be introduced of calling these books *deutero-canonical*, i. e. canonical in the second rank, and, although thus called, of citing them as of equal authority, and equally inspired, with the other books. Since that time, the controversies respecting the books of Scripture have taken a wider range, and it has not been so much respecting canonicity, as respecting origin, character, and doctrine, that the disputes of divines have been waged.

17. In our own country, at the time of the Reformation, while the question of authorship was left open, the canonical authority of the Epistle was never doubted. To establish this, it may be enough to cite some testimonies.

In Tyndale’s prologue to the Epistle, he says, having mentioned the objection to the Pauline authorship from ch. ii. 3,

“Now whether it were Paul’s or no, I say not, but permit it to other men’s judgments : neither think I it to be an article of any man’s faith, but that a man may doubt of the author.” Then, having met several objections against its canonicity urged from certain texts in it, as ch. vi. 4 ff., ch. x. 26 ff., ch. xii. 17, he concludes, “Of this ye see that this Epistle ought no more to be refused for a holy, godly, and catholic, than the other authentic Scriptures.” And, speaking of the Writer, he says, “It is easy to see that he was a faithful servant of Christ, and of the same doctrine that Timothy was of, yea and Paul himself was of, and that he was an Apostle, or in the Apostles’ time, or near thereunto. And seeing the Epistle agreeth to all the rest of the Scripture, if it be indifferently looked on, why should it not be authority, and taken for holy Scripture ?”

18. Fulke, in his defence of Translations of the Bible<sup>9</sup>, while defending the omission of the name of St. Paul in the title of the Epistle in the Geneva Bible of 1560, says, “Which of us, I pray you, that thinketh that this Epistle was not written by St. Paul, once doubteth whether it be not of apostolical spirit and authority ? Which is manifest by this, that both in preaching and writing we cite it thus, the Apostle to the Hebrews.”

19. Bp. Jewel again, in his Defence of the Apology, p. 186, where he is speaking of the charge of anonymousness brought against it, says, “The Epistle unto the Hebrews, some say, was written by St. Paul, some by Clemens, some by Barnabas, some by some other : and so are we uncertain of the author’s name.”

20. Whittaker says, “Thus, then, we doubt not of the authority of any book of the New Testament, nor indeed of the author of any, save only the Epistle to the Hebrews. That this Epistle is canonical, all concede in the fullest sense : but it is not equally clear that it was written by the Apostle Paul. . . . We need not be very earnest in this debate ; it is not a matter of necessity, and the question may very well be left in doubt, provided that, in the mean while, the authority of the Epistle be allowed to remain clear and uncontested<sup>10</sup>.”

21. With regard to the question itself, in what light we are to look on our Epistle with respect to canonicity, it is one which it will be well to treat here on general grounds, as it will come before us again more than once, in writing of the remaining books of the New Test.

22. We might put this matter on the ground which Jerome takes in his Epistle to Dardanus, “It makes no matter whose it is, for it is plainly the work of a catholic (ecclesiastical) author :” or on that

<sup>9</sup> Tyndale’s Doctrinal Treatises, &c. Parker Society’s edn., pp. 521, 522.

<sup>9</sup> Parker Society’s edn., pp. 32, 33.

<sup>10</sup> Parker Society’s edn., pp. 106, 107.

which Erasmus takes, when he says that the "*primary Author*" is the Holy Spirit, and so puts by as indifferent the question of the secondary author: thus in both cases resting the decision entirely on the character of the contents of the book itself.

23. But this would manifestly be a wrong method of proceeding. We do not thus in the case of other writings, whose unexceptionable evangelic character is universally acknowledged. To say nothing of later productions, no one ever reasoned thus respecting the Epistle of Barnabas, or that of Clement to the Corinthians, or any of the quasi-apostolic writings. None of the ancients ever dealt so before Jerome, nor did Jerome himself in other passages. More than intrinsic excellence and orthodoxy is wanting, to win for a book a place in the New Test. canon. Indeed any reasoning must be not only in itself insufficient, but logically unsound, which makes the authority of a book which is to set us our standard of doctrine, the result of a judgment of our own respecting the doctrine inculcated in it. Such judgment can be only subsidiary to the enquiry, not the primary line of its argument, which must of necessity be of an objective character.

24. And when we come to proofs of this latter kind, it may well be asked, which of them we are to accept as sufficient. It is clear, we cannot appeal to tradition alone. We must combine with such an appeal, the exercise of our own judgment on tradition. When, for example, the Church of England takes, in her sixth article, the ground of pure tradition, and says, "In the name of the Holy Scripture, we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church," she would by implication, if consistent with herself, exclude from the Canon at the least the Apocalypse, which was for some centuries not received by the Eastern and for the most part by the Greek church, and our Epistle, which was for some centuries not received by the whole Latin church. Nay, she would go even further than this: for even to the present day the Syrian church excludes the Apocalypse, the Epistles of St. Jude, 2 and 3 John, and 2 Peter, from the Canon. It is fortunate that our Church did not leave this definition to be worked out for itself, but, giving a detailed list of Old Test. books, has appended to it this far more definite sentence: "All the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive, and account them Canonical:" thus adopting the list of New Test. books in common usage in the Western Church at the time, about which there could be no difference.

25. If then tradition pure and simple will not suffice for our guide, how are we to combine our judgment with it, so as to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion? It is manifest, that the question of *origin* comes in here as most important. If the *genuineness* of a book be in dispute, as e. g. that of 2 Peter, it suffices to make it reasonably probable that

it was written by him whose name it bears. When this is received, all question of canonicity is at rest. In that case, the name of the Apostle is ample guarantee. And so with our Epistle, those who think they can prove it to be the work of St. Paul, are no longer troubled about its canonicity. This is secured, in shewing it to be of apostolic origin.

26. And so it ever was in the early Church. Apostolicity and Canonicity were bound together. And in the case of those historical books which were not written by apostles themselves, there was ever an effort to connect their writers, St. Mark with St. Peter, St. Luke with St. Paul, so that at least apostolic sanction might not be wanting to them. What then must be our course with regard to a book, of which we believe neither that it was written by an Apostle, nor that it had apostolic sanction?

27. This question must necessarily lead to an answer not partaking of that rigid demonstrative character which some reasoners require for all inferences regarding the authority of Scripture. Our conclusion must be matter of moral evidence, and of degree: must be cumulative, —made up of elements which are not, taken by themselves, decisive, but which, taken together, are sufficient to convince the reasonable mind.

28. First, we have reason to believe that our Epistle was written by one who lived and worked in close union with the Apostle Paul: of whom that Apostle says that he “planted, and Apollos watered, and God gave the increase:” of whom it is elsewhere in holy writ declared, that he was “an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures:” that he “helped much them which had believed through grace:” that he “mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ.”

29. Secondly, having, as we believe, from his pen such an Epistle, we find it largely quoted by one who was himself a companion of the Apostles,—and almost without question appealed to as Scripture by another primitive Christian writer: and both these testimonies belong to that very early age of the Church, when controversies about canonicity had not yet begun.

30. Thirdly, in the subsequent history of the Church, we find the reception of the Epistle into the Canon becoming ever more and more a matter of common consent: mainly, no doubt, in connexion with the hypothesis of its Pauline authorship, but, as we have shewn above, not in all cases in that connexion.

31. Fourthly, we cannot refuse the conviction, that the contents of the Epistle itself are such, as powerfully to come in aid of these other considerations. Unavailing as such a conviction would be of itself, as has been previously noticed, yet it is no small confirmation of the



evidence which probable authorship, early recognition, and subsequent consent, furnish to the canonicity of our Epistle, when we find that nowhere are the main doctrines of the faith more purely or more majestically set forth: nowhere Holy Scripture urged with greater authority and cogency; nowhere those marks in short, which distinguish the first rank of primitive Christian writings from the second, more unequivocally and continuously present.

32. The result of this combination of evidence is, that though no considerations of expediency, nor consent of later centuries, can ever make us believe the Epistle to have been written by St. Paul, we yet conceive ourselves perfectly justified in accounting it a portion of the New Test. canon, and in regarding it with the same reverence as the rest of the Holy Scriptures.

There are other subjects of deep interest connected with our Epistle, such as its relation, in point of various aspects of Christian doctrine, to the teaching of St. Paul, of St. John, of St. James, and of St. Peter: its connexion with, and independence of, the system of Philo: to treat of which would extend this introduction, already long, to the size of a volume. They will be found discussed in the first part of Riehm's "Lehrbegriff des Hebraerbriefes," Ludwigsburg, 1858.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES.

#### SECTION I.

##### ITS AUTHORSHIP.

1. It has been very generally agreed, that among the apostolic persons bearing the name of James (Jacobus), the son of Zebedee, the brother of St. John, cannot well have written our Epistle. The state of things and doctrines which we find in it can hardly have been reached as early as before the execution of that Apostle, related in Acts xii.

2. But when we have agreed on this, matter of controversy at once arises. It would appear from the simple superscription of our Epistle with the name Jacobus, that we are to recognize in its Writer the apostolic person known simply by this name in the Acts,—who was the



president of the church at Jerusalem (Acts xii. 17; xv. 13 ff.; xxi. 18), and is called by St. Paul the brother of our Lord (Gal. i. 19). This also being pretty generally granted, the question arising is: Was this James identical with, or was he distinct from, James the son of Alphæus, one of the Twelve apostles (Matt. x. 3; Mark iii. 18; Luke vi. 15; Acts i. 13)?

3. I have partly anticipated the answer to this question in my note on Matt. xiii. 55, where I have maintained that, consistently with the straightforward acceptation of Scripture data, we cannot believe any of those who are called the brethren of our Lord to have been also of the number of the Twelve. I conceive John vii. 5, as compared with ib. vi. 67, 70 immediately preceding, to be decisive on this point; and since I first expressed myself thus, I have seen nothing in the least degree calculated to shake that conviction<sup>1</sup>. And, that conclusion still standing, I must of course believe this James to be excluded from the number of the Twelve, and if so, distinct from the son of Alphæus.

4. Still, it will be well to deal with the question on its own ground. And first, as to the notices in Scripture itself which bear on it. And these, it must be acknowledged, are not without difficulty. As, e. g., those which occur in St. Luke, who must have been well aware of the state of matters in the church at Jerusalem. He names, up to Acts xii., but two persons as James: one, whom he always couples with John (Luke v. 10; vi. 14; viii. 51; ix. 28, 54 [Acts i. 13]), and in Acts xii. 2 relates, under the name of "*the brother of John*," to have been slain with the sword by Herod: the other, whom he twice introduces as "*Jacobus (James) the (son) of Alphæus*" (Luke vi. 15; Acts i. 13). Besides, in accordance with the usage of the Greek idiom, the genitive of the name, "*of Jacobus*" (James), is thrice mentioned by him as designating by relationship other persons: in Luke vi. 16; Acts i. 13, we read of *Judas the (brother?) of Jacobus (James)*, and in Luke xxiv. 10, of *Mary the (mother?) of Jacobus (James)*: interpreting which latter expression by Matt. xxvii. 56; Mark xv. 40, 47, and xvi. 1, and by John xix. 25, we shall infer that the Mary here mentioned being the wife

<sup>1</sup> Nothing can be lamer than the way in which Lange (in Herzog's Encycl. art. *Jacobus*) endeavours to escape the conclusion. I subjoin it as the latest specimen of what ingenuity can do against plain matter of fact: "The kind of unbelief here predicated of our Lord's Brethren is parallel with that of Peter, Matt. xvi. 22, 23, and of Thomas, John xx. 25. John is evidently speaking, not of unbelief in the ordinary sense, which rejected the Messiahship of Jesus, but of that unbelief, or that want of trust which made it difficult for our Lord's disciples, His Apostles, and even His Mother, to reconcile themselves to His way of life, or to His concealment of Himself." Against this finessing I would simply set 1) the usage of the term *to believe in Him*, John ii. 11; iv. 39; vii. 31, 39, 48; viii. 30; ix. 36; x. 42; xi. 45, 48; xii. 37 (with "*not*"), 42: and 2) the "*not even*," following on the unbelief of the Jews ver. 1, with which the "*did His brethren believe in Him*" is introduced.

of Alphæus (or Clopas), the ellipsis must be filled up by the word *mother*, and “*Jacobus*” (James) in this place designates James the son of Alphæus. And as regards “*Judas the (brother?) of Jacobus*” (James), we may well suppose that the same person is designated by the genitive, however difficult it may be to fill in the ellipsis. We have a Judas, who designates himself “*the brother of Jacobus*” (James), Jude 1 : but whether these are to be considered identical, must be determined by the result of our present investigation.

5. The question for us with regard to St. Luke, is the following : In Acts xii. 17, and in the subsequent parts of that book, we have a person mentioned simply as “*Jacobus*” (James), who is evidently of great authority in the church at Jerusalem. Are we to suppose that St. Luke, careful and accurate as his researches were, was likely to have introduced thus without previous notice, a new and third person bearing the same name ? Does not this testify strongly for the identity of the two ?

6. The best way to answer this question will be, to notice St. Luke’s method of proceeding on an occasion somewhat analogous. In Acts i. 13, we find “*Philip*” among the Apostles. In ib. vi. 5, we find a “*Philip*” among the seven, appointed to relieve the Apostles from the daily ministrations of alms. In ib. viii. 5, we read that “*Philip*” went down to a city of Samaria and preached. Now as there is nothing to identify this part of the narrative with what went before, or to imply that this was not a missionary journey of one of the Apostles, distinct from the *dispersion* from which they were excepted above, ver. 1, it is not at the first moment obvious which Philip is meant. It is true, that intelligent comparison of the parts of the narrative makes it plain to us : but the case is one in point, as shewing, that St. Luke is in the habit of *leaving it to such comparison to decide*, and not of inserting notices at the mention of names, to prevent mistake. This would be much more in the practice of St. John, who writes, xiv. 22, “*Judas, not Iscariot :*” see also xi. 2. It seems then that the practice of St. Luke will not decide for us, but our enquiry must still be founded on the merits of the question itself.

7. And in so doing, we will make first the hypothesis of the *identity* of James the son of Alphæus with James the Lord’s brother. Then, besides the great, and to me insuperable difficulty in John vi. 70, vii. 5, we shall have the following circumstances for our consideration : 1) In Matt. xxvii. 56, and Mark xv. 40, we read of Mary the mother of James and Joses : and in Mark, the epithet “*the small*” or “*less*” is attached to “*Jacobus*” (James). Now on the hypothesis of James, the brother of the Lord, being identical with the son of Alphæus, there were *four such sons*, Matt. xiii. 55 ; James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas : and of these four, two, James and Judas, were Apostles. So that, leaving out of the question for the moment the confusion of the names Joses and

Joseph, we should thus have Mary the wife of Clopas designated as the mother of James, who *was an apostle*, and of Joses, who *was not an apostle*, to the exclusion of her son Judas, who was also an apostle. Is not this, to say the least, extremely improbable ?

8. And besides this, let us review for a moment the epithet "*the small*," attached to "*Jacobus*" (James) by St. Mark. Beyond question, at the time when this Gospel was written, James the son of Zebedee had long ago fallen by the sword of Herod<sup>2</sup>. And as certainly, at this time James the Lord's brother was at the head of the mother church at Jerusalem, one of the three pillars (Gal. ii. 9) of the Christian body. Was it likely that at such a time (for the notice and epithet is one whose use must be sought at the time of the publication of the Gospel, not at that of the formation of the apostolic oral history, seeing that it does not occur in the parallel place in Matthew) the epithet "*the small*" would be attached to this James by way of distinguishing him from that other, long since martyred ? Is it not much more probable that the epithet, for whatever reason, was attached to James the son of Alphæus to distinguish him from this very James the brother of the Lord ?

9. If James the son of Alphæus, the Apostle, were the head of the mother church at Jerusalem, and a man of such distinction among the Jewish Christians, how comes it, that when an Apostle of the circumcision is to be named, over against St. Paul, St. Peter, and not he, is dignified by that title ?

10. There is another more general consideration, which, however much it may be disallowed by some, yet seems to me not without weight. It hardly consists with the mission of the Twelve, that any of them should be settled in a particular spot, as the president or Bishop of a local church. Even granting the exceptional character of the Jerusalem church, it does not seem likely that the chief presbyter there would be one of those to whom it was said, "*Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature*:" and of whom all that we read in the Acts of the Apostles, and all that primitive tradition relates to us, assures us that they fulfilled this command.

11. If we compare this hypothesis with early tradition, its first notices present us with a difficulty. Speaking of James the brother of the Lord, Eusebius quotes Hegesippus, an immediate successor of the Apostles, as saying that "James, the brother of the Lord, succeeded to the church of Jerusalem with the Apostles, and was of all men named the Just from the Lord's time even to our own; for there were many who bore this name of James."

12. This passage seems most plainly to preclude all idea of James the Lord's brother being one of the Twelve. However we understand the

<sup>2</sup> See Introd. Vol. I. ch. iii. § iv.

not very perspicuous words "*with the Apostles*;" whether we boldly suppose with Jerome, on account of the verb "*succeeded to*," that they are a mistake for "*after the Apostles*," or take them as they stand, and as is most likely from comparison with St. Paul's narrative in Gal. ii.,—of joint superintendence with the Apostles; on either, or any view, they expressly exclude James from the number of the Apostles themselves.

13. And entirely consistent with this is the frequently misunderstood other testimony from Hegeippus, cited by Eusebius: the straightforward interpretation of which passage is, that "after James the Just had been martyred, as was the Lord also for the same cause, next was appointed bishop Symeon, the son of Clopas, the offspring of his (James's, not the Lord's, as Lange and others have most unfairly attempted to make it mean) uncle, whom all agreed in preferring, being, as he was, second of the cousins of the Lord." That is, Joseph and Clopas (Alphæus) being brothers, and one son of Alphæus, James, being an Apostle, his next brother Symeon (Josès may have been dead ere this) being thus "*second of the cousins of our Lord*," and born of his (James's) *uncle*, succeeded James the Just in the bishopric of Jerusalem. I submit that on the hypothesis of Symeon being James's *own brother*, such a sentence is simply unaccountable.

14. It is true that in this, as in so many other matters, ancient tradition is not consistent with itself. For Euseb., H. E. ii. 1, quotes from Clement of Alexandria, "The Lord delivered the (traditional) knowledge to James the Just and John and Peter after the Resurrection. These delivered it to the other Apostles: and the rest of the Apostles to the Seventy, of whom was also Barnabas. Now there were two named James, one the Just, who was thrown from the pinnacle, and struck to death by a fuller with his club, and the other the one who was beheaded." And in the same chapter he speaks of Clement as reporting that Stephen was the first martyr, "and then James, who was called the brother of the Lord, whom men of old called the Just, first bishop of Jerusalem."

15. Compare with this Eusebius: "And then they say He appeared to James, who was one of those commonly reputed disciples of the Lord, yea, and His brothers:" and the Apostolical Constitutions, where after the enumeration of the Twelve Apostles, we have named "James the brother of the Lord and bishop of Jerusalem, and Paul the teacher of the Gentiles." Thus it appears, that the assumption of the identity encounters several difficulties, both from Scripture itself (even supposing the crowning one of John vii. 5 got over), and from primitive tradition. It nevertheless became very prevalent, as soon as the setting in of asceticism suggested the hypothesis of the perpetual virginity of the Mother of our Lord. This is found from Jerome downwards; and all kinds of

artificial explanations of the relationship of the brethren to our Lord have been given, to escape the inference from the simple testimony of Holy Scripture, that they were veritably children of Joseph and Mary, younger than our Lord.

16. Let us now follow the other hypothesis, that James the brother of the Lord and James the son of Alphæus were *different persons*. Against this many objections have been brought, the principal of which seems to be, that thus we have so considerable a repetition of names among the family and disciples of our Lord. But this cannot on any hypothesis be got rid of. The undoubted facts of the Gospel history give us the following repetitions of names: a) we have under the name SIMON, 1) Simon Peter: 2) Simon the Cananæan or Zelotes, the Apostle: 3) Simon, the brother of the Lord, Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3: 4) Simon, the father of Judas Iscariot, John vi. 71 and elsewhere: 5) Simon the leper, in Bethany, Matt. xxvi. 6; Mark xiv. 3: 6) Simon of Cyrene, who bore the cross after our Lord, Matt. xxvii. 32 and parallels: 7) Simon Magus: 8) Simon the tanner: besides 9) Simon the Pharisee, in whose house our Lord was anointed by the woman who was a sinner, Luke vii. 40.

b) Under the name JUDAS, 1) Judas Lebbæus or "*of James*," the Apostle: 2) (?) Judas, the brother of the Lord: 3) Judas Iscariot: 4) Judas Barsabas, Acts xv. 22: if not also 5) the Apostle Thomas, "the twin" ("*Thomas who was also called Judas*," Eusebius), so called by way of distinction from the two other Judases among the Twelve.

c) Under the name MARY, 1) the Mother of our Lord: 2) the mother of James and Joses, Matt. xxvii. 56: 3) Mary Magdalene: 4) Mary, the sister of Lazarus: 5) Mary, the mother of John Mark.

17. Besides these, we have d) at least four under the name JOSEPH, viz. 1) the reputed father of our Lord: 2) Joseph of Arimathea: 3) Joseph Barnabas, Acts iv. 36: 4) Joseph Barsabas, Acts i. 23: if not two more, a brother of our Lord, Matt. xiii. 55, and according to some MSS., a son of Mary and brother of James, Matt. xxvii. 56.

This being so, it really is somewhat out of place to cry out upon the supposed multiplication of persons bearing the same name in the New Testament.

18. The improbability of there being in each family, that of Joseph and that of Alphæus (Clopas), two sets of four brothers bearing the same names, is created by assuming the *supplement* of "*Judas of James*," Luke vi. 16; Acts i. 13, to be "*brother*," which, to say the least, is not necessary. The sons of Alphæus (except Levi [Matthew] who appears to have been the son of another Alphæus, but has been most unaccountably omitted from all consideration by those who object to the multiplication of those bearing the same name) are but two, James the less the Apostle, and Joses. We have not the least trace in Scripture, or even in tradition rightly understood, indicating that Simon Zelotes was

a son of Alphæus. What is the improbability, in two brethren of our Lord bearing the same names as two of their cousins? Cannot almost every widely-spread family even among ourselves, where names are not so frequently repeated, furnish examples of the same and like coincidences?

19. No safe objection can be brought against the present hypothesis from St. Paul's words, "*Other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother,*" Gal. i. 19. For 1) the usage of the word "*apostle*" by St. Paul is not confined to the Twelve, and Christian antiquity recognized in Paul himself and this very James, two supplementary Apostles besides the Twelve<sup>3</sup>; and 2) it has been shown by Fritzsche, Neander, and Winer, and must be evident to any one accustomed to the usage of "*some*" or "*except*" in the New Test., that it need not necessarily qualify "*other*" here, but may just as well refer to the whole preceding clause.

20. The objection of Lange that it is impossible to imagine the growth of an apocryphal Apostleship, by the side of that founded by our Lord, entirely vanishes under a right view of the circumstances of the case. There would be no possibility, on Lange's postulates, of including St. Paul himself among the Apostles. There was nothing in the divine proceeding towards him, which indicated that he was to bear that name: still less was there any thing designating Barnabas as another apostle, properly so called. These two, on account of their importance and usefulness in the apostolic work, were received among the apostles as of apostolic dignity. Why may the same not have been the case, with a person so universally noted for holiness and justice as James the brother of the Lord?

21. Again, Lange objects, that "real Apostles thus altogether vanish from the field of action, and are superseded by other Apostles introduced afterwards." I would simply ask, what can be a more accurate description, than these words furnish, of the character of the history of the book which is entitled the *Acts of the Apostles*? Is it not, in the main, the record of the journeyings and acts of a later introduced Apostle, before whom the work of the other Apostles is cast into the shade? Besides, what do we know of the actions of any of the Apostles, except (taking even Lange's hypothesis) of Peter, James, John, and James the son of Alphæus? Where shall we seek any record of the doings of St. Matthew, St. Thomas, St. Philip, St. Jude, St. Bartholomew, St. Andrew, St. Simon, St. Matthias? In Acts xv. 22, a certain *Judas* appears as a "*man of note,*" or "*a leading person among the brethren:*" but he is not St. Jude the Apostle. In Acts viii. we hear much of the missionary work of *Philip*: but he is not St. Philip the Apostle.

<sup>3</sup> See the citation from the Apostolic Constitutions, above, par. 15.



22. It seems to me from the above considerations, far the more probable inference from Scriptural and traditional data, that James the brother of the Lord, the Bishop of Jerusalem, the presumed Author of our Epistle, was distinct from James the son of Alphæus, one of the Twelve Apostles. And assuming this, I shall now gather up the notices which we find of this remarkable person.

23. It is certain, from John vii. 3—5, that he was not a believer in the Messiahship of Jesus at the period of His ministry there indicated. And from our Lord, when on the Cross, commending His mother to the care of St. John, the son of Zebedee, and probably His cousin after the flesh, we may infer that neither then did his brethren believe on Him. It would appear, however, from our finding them expressly mentioned in Acts i. 13, as assembled in the upper room with the Apostles and with the Mother of our Lord, and the believing women, that they were then believers, having probably been, from a half-persuaded and wavering faith, fixed, by the great events of the Passion and Resurrection, in a conviction of the divine mission of Jesus.

24. And of these the Lord's brethren, let us now fix our attention on JAMES, who seems, from his being placed first in the enumeration, Matt. xiii. 55 and the parallel place in Mark, to have been the eldest among them.

25. The character which we have of him, as a just and holy man, must in all probability be dated from before his conversion. And those who believe him to have been not by adoption only, but by actual birth a son of our Lord's parents, will trace in the appellation of him as "*the Just*," the character of his father (Matt. i. 19), and the humble faith and obedience of his mother (Luke i. 38). That the members of such a family should have grown up just and holy men, is the result which might be hoped from the teaching of such parents, and above all from the presence ever among them of the spotless and bright example of Him, of whom his cousin according to the flesh, yet not *knowing* Him to be the Messiah, could say, "I have need to be baptized of Thee" (Matt. iii. 14).

26. The absence in the Holy Family of that pseudo-asceticism which has so much confused the traditions respecting them, is strikingly proved by the notice, furnished by St. Paul in 1 Cor. ix. 5, that "the brethren of the Lord" were married men. At the same time there can be no doubt from the general character of St. James's Epistle, and from the notices of tradition, confirmed as they are by the narrative in the Acts, ch. xxi. 17 ff., and by Gal. ii. 11 ff., that he was in other matters a strong ascetic, and a rigid observer of the ceremonial Jewish customs. In the testimony of Hegesippus, quoted by Eus. H. E. ii. 23, we read, "This man was holy from his mother's womb. He drank no wine nor strong drink, and ate no animal food. No razor came upon his head, he anointed not himself with



oil, and never used a bath. He only was licensed to enter into the holy places, for he wore not woollen, but linen only. And he was wont to enter alone into the temple, and was often found on his knees supplicating forgiveness for the people; so that his knees grew hard like those of a camel, on account of his evermore kneeling in worship to God asking remission for the people; and because of the abundance of his righteousness he was called the Just, and Oblias<sup>4</sup>." And without taking all this as literal fact, it at least shows us the character which he bore, and the estimation in which he was held.

27. That such a person, when converted to the faith of Jesus, should have very soon been placed in high dignity in the Jerusalem church, is not to be wondered at. The very fact of that church being in some measure a continuation of the apostolic company, would, in the absence of Him who had been its centre beforetime, naturally incline their thoughts towards one who was the most eminent of His nearest relatives according to the flesh: and the strong Judaistic tendencies of that church would naturally group it around one who was so zealous a fautor of the Law.

28. This his pre-eminence seems to have been fully established as early as the imprisonment of St. Peter, Acts xii.<sup>5</sup>: i. e. about A.D. 44: which would allow ample time for the reasonable growth in estimation and authority of one whose career as a disciple did not begin till the Ascension of our Lord, i. e. 14 years before<sup>6</sup>.

29. From this time onward, James is introduced, and simply by this name, as the president, or bishop, of the church at Jerusalem. In the apostolic council in Acts xv. (A.D. 50), we find him speaking last, after the rest had done, and delivering, with his "*I, for my part, adjudge . . .*" (ver. 19), that opinion, on which the act of the assembly was grounded. On St. Paul reaching Jerusalem in Acts xxi. (A.D. 58), we find him, on the day after his arrival, entering in "*to James,*" and it is added, "and all the elders were present:" shewing that the visit was a formal one, to a man in authority.

30. Thenceforward we have no more mention of James in the Acts. In Gal. i. 19, St. Paul relates, that at his first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion he saw "*James the brother of the Lord:*" but without any

<sup>4</sup> The interpretation of this word is quite uncertain.

<sup>5</sup> Thus—for we can hardly suppose it to have been a sudden thing—we should have it already subsisting during the lifetime of the greater James, the son of Zebedee: one additional argument for distinguishing this James from James the less, the son of Alphaeus.

<sup>6</sup> For these dates, see the Chronological Table in the Introduction to the Acts. It has been objected, that it would be unlikely that one who at the Ascension was not a believer, should so soon after be found in the dignity of an Apostle. But the objectors forget, that less than half the time sufficed to raise one, who long after the Ascension was a persecutor and injurious, to the same dignity.

mark, unless the title "*apostle*," there given him, is to be taken as such, that he had then the pre-eminence which he afterwards enjoyed. The date of this visit I have set down elsewhere as A.D. 40<sup>7</sup>.

31. In the same apologetic narrative in the Epistle to the Galatians, St. Paul recounts the events, as far as they were germane to his purpose, of the apostolic council in Acts xv. And there we find James ranked with Cephas and John as "*pillars*" of the church. At some shortly subsequent time, probably in the end of A.D. 50 or the beginning of 51, we find, from the same narrative of St. Paul, that "*certain from James*" came down to Antioch, of whose Judaistic strictness Peter being afraid, prevaricated, and shrunk back from asserting his Christian liberty. This speaks for the influence of James, as it does also for its tendency.

32. At the time when we lose sight of James in the Acts of the Apostles, he would be, supposing him to have been next in the Holy Family to our Blessed Lord, and proceeding on the necessarily somewhat uncertain<sup>8</sup> inference deducible from the plain sense of Matt. i. 25, about sixty years of age.

33. From this time we are left to seek his history in tradition. We possess an account in Josephus of his character and martyrdom: "Ananus (the high priest) thinking that he had a convenient opportunity, Festus being dead and Albinus not yet arrived, summons an assembly of the judges: and bringing before it the brother of Jesus who was called Christ, James by name, and some others, he accused them of having broken the laws, and delivered them over to be stoned."

34. Further particulars of his death are given us from Hegesippus, by Eusebius: but they do not seem to tally with the above account in Josephus. According to Hegesippus, whose narrative is full of strange expressions, and savours largely of the fabulous, some of the seven sects of the people (see Eus. H. E. iv. 22) asked James, "*what was the door of Jesus?*" And by his preaching to them Jesus as the Christ, so many of them believed on Him, that "many even of the rulers believing, there was a tumult of the Jews and Scribes and Pharisees, saying that the whole people was in danger of receiving Jesus as the Christ." On this they invited James to deter the people from being thus deceived, standing on the "*pinnacle of the temple*" at the Passover, that he might be seen and heard by all. But, the story proceeds, when he was set there,

<sup>7</sup> See the Chronological Table, as above.

<sup>8</sup> Because there were also *sisters* of our Lord, and more than two, or the word "*all*" could not have been used of them, Matt. xiii. 55.

<sup>9</sup> On this expression, Valesius says, "*Door*, in this place, means, introduction or institution and initiation. Thus the door of Christ is nothing else than faith in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, &c." But this seems doubtful, and the expression enigmatical.

and appealed to by them to undeceive the people, he “answered with a loud voice, ‘Why ask ye me concerning Jesus the Son of man? For He sitteth at the right hand of the Supreme Power, and will one day come on the clouds of heaven.’” On this, many were confirmed in their belief, and glorified God for his testimony, and cried Hosanna to the Son of David. Whereat the Scribes and Pharisees said to one another, “‘We did foolishly in giving occasion for such a testimony to Jesus: but let us go up and cast him down, that the people may be struck with fear and not believe him.’ And they cried out, saying, ‘O, O, the Just one is deceived.’” So they went up, and cast him down: and said to one another, “‘Let us stone James the Just.’ And they began to stone him: for the fall had not killed him, but he turned and knelt and said, ‘I pray Thee, O Lord God the Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing.’” And while they were stoning him, a priest, one of the sons of Rechab, cried out, “‘What are ye doing? the Just one is praying for you.’ And one of them from among the fullers taking the club with which he beat clothes, with it struck the Just one on the head. And thus he suffered martyrdom. And they buried him on the spot, and his pillar yet remains by the temple.”

35. This last sentence seems wholly inexplicable, considering that long before it was written both city and temple were destroyed. And the more so, as Hegesippus proceeds to say, that immediately upon St. James’s martyrdom, Vespasian formed the siege of the city. He adds, “James was so wonderful a man, and so renowned for his righteousness among all men, that the thoughtful among the Jews believed that this was the cause of the siege of Jerusalem immediately after his martyrdom, and that this happened to them for no other reason than the crime which was perpetrated against him.” And he quotes from Josephus, “Now these things happened to the Jews in vengeance for James the Just, who was brother to Jesus which was called Christ: because he was a very righteous man, and was slain by the Jews:” but no such passage as this latter is now found in Josephus.

36. The character of St. James is sufficiently indicated in the foregoing notices. He appears to have been a strong observer of the law, moral and ceremonial: and though willing to recognize the hand of God in the Gentile ministry of Paul and Barnabas, to have remained himself attached to the purely Judaistic form of Christianity. “Had not,” observes Schaff, in his Church History, “a Peter, and above all a Paul, arisen as supplementary to James, Christianity would perhaps never have become entirely emancipated from the veil of Judaism and asserted its own independence. Still there was a necessity for the ministry of James. If any could win over the ancient covenant people, it was he. It pleased God to set so high an example of Old Test. piety in its purest form among the Jews, to make conversion to the Gospel,

even at the eleventh hour, as easy as possible for them. But when they would not listen to the voice of this last messenger of peace, then was the measure of the divine patience exhausted, and the fearful and long-threatened judgment broke forth. And thus was the mission of James fulfilled. He was not to outlive the destruction of the holy city and the temple. According to Hegesippus, he was martyred in the year before that event, viz. A.D. 69."

37. If we adopt the above hypothetical calculation (par. 32), he would be, at the date of his martyrdom, about 71 years of age. The various particulars of his connexion with our present Epistle will be found in the following sections.

## SECTION II.

### FOR WHAT READERS THE EPISTLE WAS WRITTEN.

1. It is evident from the contents of the Epistle, that it was written for *Christian* readers. The Writer calls himself "*a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ,*" and addresses the readers throughout as his "*brethren.*" In ch. i. 18 he says that God has begotten *us* by the word of truth: in ch. ii. 1 he addresses them as having the faith of Jesus Christ the Lord of glory: in id. ver. 7, he speaks of the "*worthy Name*" by which they were called: and in ch. v. 7, he exhorts them to patience on the ground that the coming of the Lord was near. Besides which, the whole passage, ch. ii. 14, proceeds on the manifest supposition that writer and readers had one and the same faith.

2. At the same time, the address of the Epistle, "*to the twelve tribes which are in the dispersion,*" which will not bear a spiritual meaning, but only the strictly national one, quite forbids us from supposing that Christians *in general* were in the Writer's view. Believing Jews, and they only, were the recipients of the Epistle. Not the words of the address, but the circumstances of the case, and the language of the Epistle, exclude those who did not believe.

3. This Judaistic direction of the letter is evident from ch. ii. 2, where the word "*synagogue*" is used to denote the place of assembly: from ib. 19, where monotheism is brought forward as the central point of faith: from ch. v. 12, where in the prohibition of swearing, the formulæ common among the Jews are introduced: from ib. ver. 14, where anointing with oil is mentioned. And not only so, but all the ethical errors which St. James combats, are of that kind which may be referred to carnal Judaism as their root.

4. Luther, from whom I have taken the foregoing paragraphs of this section, remarks that the argument against faith alone without works is no objection to the last-mentioned view, but is rather in refutation

of this same Jewish error, which was the successor of the Pharisæical confidence in the fact of possessing the law, without a holy life: see Rom. ii. 17 ff. Justin Martyr says of the Jews: "They say that even if they be sinners, but know God, He will never impute sin to them." There is indeed no trace in the Epistle of an anxious and scrupulous observance of the Mosaic ritual on the part of the readers: but this may be because in the main on this point the Writer and his readers were agreed. And we do find in it traces of an erroneous estimate of the value of mere "*religious service*" (ch. i. 22 ff.): and a trace of fanatical zeal venting itself by "*wrath*."

5. The situation of these Judæo-Christian churches or congregations, as discernible in the Epistle, was this. They were tried by manifold trials, ch. i. 2. We are hardly justified in assuming that they were entirely made up of poor, on account of ch. ii. 6, 7: indeed, the former verses of that chapter seem to shew, that rich men were also found among them. However, this probably was so for the most part, and they were oppressed and dragged before the judgment-seats by the rich, which trials they did not bear with that patience and humility which might have been expected of them as Christians, nor did they in faith seek wisdom from God concerning them: but regarded Him as their tempter, and their lowliness as shame, paying carnal court to the rich, and despising the poor.

6. As might have been expected, such worldliness of spirit gave rise to strifes and dissensions among them, and to a neglect of self-preservation from the evil in the world, imagining that their Christian faith would suffice to save them, without a holy life.

7. There is some little difficulty in assigning a proper place to the rich men who are addressed in ch. v. 1 ff. They can hardly have been altogether out of the pale of the Christian body, or the denunciations would never have reached them at all: but it is fair to suppose that they were unworthy professing members of the churches.

8. It must be owned that the general state of the churches addressed, as indicated by this Epistle, is not such as any Christian teacher could look on with satisfaction. And it is extremely interesting to enquire, how far this unsatisfactory state furnishes us with any clue to the date of our Epistle: an enquiry which we shall follow out in our next section.

9. The designation "*in the dispersion*" need not necessarily limit the readers to the Jewish churches *out of* Palestine: but the greater circumference may include the lesser; the term "*dispersion*" may be vaguely used, regarding Jerusalem as the centre; and as in Acts viii. 1, where we read "*and they all were dispersed throughout the lands of Judæa and Samaria*,"—the exception being the Apostles, who remained in Jerusalem,—may comprehend Palestine itself.

## SECTION III.

## THE PLACE AND TIME OF WRITING.

1. As regards the place of writing, if the general opinion as to the author be assumed, there can be but one view. His fixed residence, and centre of influence, was JERUSALEM. There we find him, at every date in the apostolic period. If he wrote the Epistle, it was written from the holy city.

2. And with this the character of the Epistle very well agrees. Most of the Judæo-Christians addressed in it would be in the habit of coming up to Jerusalem from time to time to the feasts. There St. James, though at a distance, might become well acquainted with their state and temptations, and exercise superintendence over them.

3. It has been pointed out also<sup>1</sup>, that the physical notices inserted in the Epistle are very suitable to this supposition. The writer appears to have written not far from the sea, ch. i. 6, iii. 4: it was a land blessed with figs, oil, and wine, iii. 12. Wide as these notices may be, we have others which seem to come nearer to Palestine. Salt and bitter springs are familiar to him, iii. 11, 12: the land was exposed to drought, and was under anxiety for fear of failure of crops for want of rain, v. 17, 18: it was burnt up quickly by a hot wind (*Kausôn*, i. 11), which is a name not only belonging to West Asia, but especially known in Palestine. "Another phenomenon," says Hug, "which was found where the Writer was, decides for that locality: it is, the former and latter rain, which he names, ch. v. 7, as they were known in Palestine."

4. With regard to the date of the Epistle, opinions are more divided. That it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, will follow as matter of course from what has already been said. But there are two other termini, with reference to which it is important that its place should be assigned. These are, 1) the publication of the doctrine of St. Paul respecting justification by faith only: and 2) the Apostolic council in Jerusalem of Acts xv.

5. A superficial view will suggest, that it cannot be till after the doctrine of justification by faith had been spread abroad, that ch. ii. 14 ff. can have been written. And this has been held even by some whose treatment of the Epistle has been far from superficial<sup>2</sup>. But I believe that a thorough and unbiassed weighing of probabilities will lead us to an opposite conclusion. It seems most improbable that, supposing ch. ii. 14 ff. to have been written after St. Paul's teaching on the point was known, St. James should have made no allusion either to St. Paul

<sup>1</sup> By Hug, *Einleitung*, edn. 4, p. 438 f.

<sup>2</sup> e. g. Wiesinger.



rightly understood, or to St. Paul wrongly understood. Surely such a method of proceeding, considering what strong words he uses, would be, to say the least, very ill-judged, or very careless: the former, if he only wished to prevent an erroneous conception of the great Apostle's doctrine,—the latter, if he wished to put himself into direct antagonism with it.

6. It is much more probable, that all which St. James says respecting works and faith has respect to a former and different state and period of the controversy; when, as was explained above<sup>3</sup>, the Jewish Pharisaic notions were being carried into the adopted belief in Christianity, and the danger was not, as afterwards, of a Jewish law-righteousness being set up, antagonistic to the righteousness which is by the faith of Christ, but of a Jewish reliance on exclusive purity of faith superseding the necessity of a holy life, which is inseparably bound up with any worthy holding of the Christian faith.

7. The objection brought against this view is, that the examples adduced by St. James are identical with those which we find in the Epistles of St. Paul, and even in that to the Hebrews: and that they presuppose acquaintance with those writings. But we may well answer, what right have we to make this, any more than the converse assumption? Or rather, for I do not believe the converse to be any more probable, why should not the occurrence of these common examples have been due in both cases to their having been the ordinary ones cited on the subject? What more certain, than that Abraham, the father of the faithful, would be cited in any dispute on the validity of faith? What more probable than that Rahab, a Canaanite, and a woman of loose life, who became sharer of the security of God's people simply because she believed God's threatenings, should be exalted into an instance on the one hand that even a contact with Israel's faith sufficed to save, and that the Apostle on the other should shew that such faith was not mere assent, but fruitful in practical consequences?

8. Again it is urged that, owing to several expressions and passages in our Epistle, we are obliged to believe that St. James had read and used the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians. Wiesinger says that any unbiassed reader will see in ch. i. 3, iv. 1, 12, allusions to Rom. v. 3, vi. 13, vii. 23, viii. 7, xiv. 4. Of these certainly the first is a close resemblance: but that in the others is faint, and the connecting of them together is quite fanciful. And even where close resemblance exists, if the nature of the expressions be considered, we shall see how little ground there is for ascribing to the one writer any necessary knowledge of the other. The expressions are, "*the proof of your faith worketh*

<sup>3</sup> Section ii. par. 4.

*patience,*" James i. 3: "*tribulation worketh patience,*" Rom. v. 3. Now what could be more likely than that a "*faithful saying*" like this, tending to console the primitive believers under afflictions which were coeval with their first profession of the Gospel, should have been a commonplace in the mouths of their teachers? And accordingly we find a portion of St. James's expression, viz. "*the proof of your faith,*" again occurring in 1 Pet. i. 7: a circumstance which may or may not indicate an acquaintance with the contents of our Epistle.

9. A similar inference has been drawn from the use by St. James of such terms as "*to be justified,*" "*by faith,*" "*by works:*" which, it is urged, no New Test. writer except St. Paul, or, in the case of the verb, St. Luke, under influence of St. Paul, has used. But here again it is manifest that the inference will not hold. The subject, as argued by St. Paul, was no new one, but had long been in the thoughts and disputes of the primitive believers<sup>4</sup>.

10. With regard to the other question, as to whether our Epistle must be dated before or after the council in Acts xv., one consideration is, to my mind, decisive. We have no mention in it of any controversy respecting the ceremonial observance of the Jewish law, nor any allusion to the duties of the Judæo-Christian believers in this respect. Now this certainly could not have been, after the dispute of Acts xv. 1 ff. If we compare what St. Paul relates in Gal. ii. 11 ff. (see the last note) of the influence of certain from James, and the narrative of Acts xxi. 18—25, with the entire absence in this Epistle of all notice of the subjects in question, we must, I think, determine that, at the time of writing the Epistle, no such question had arisen. The obligation of observing the Jewish ceremonial law was as yet confessed among Jewish Christians, and therefore needed no enforcing.

11. But here again various objections are brought against assigning so early a date to our Epistle as before the Jerusalem council, principally derived from the supposed difficulty of imagining so much development at that time in the Judæo-Christian congregations. We find, it is alleged, *elders* or *presbyters* of an assembly (*ecclesia*), which is not the mere Jewish synagogue used in common by both, but a regularly organized congregation.

12. Now we may fairly say, that this objection is unfounded. The Christian "*ecclesia*" is mentioned by our Lord Himself in Matt. xviii. 17, and was so easy and matter-of-course a successor of the synagogue, that it would be sure to be established, wherever there was a Christian community. We find that the different varieties of Jews had their separate synagogues, Acts vi. 9: and the establishment of a separate

<sup>4</sup> As a proof of this, see Gal. ii. 16, a speech which was made certainly a very short time after the council in A.D. 50, and in consequence of a message from James.

organization and place of worship would be the obvious and immediate consequence of the recognition of Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. In such a congregation, *elders* (*presbyters*) would be a matter of course.

13. It is also objected, that in the Epistle the readers are treated as mature in the belief and doctrines of the Gospel: that it exhorts, but does not teach<sup>5</sup>. Witness, it is said, the allusions to their knowledge, and exhortations to perfection, ch. i. 3; iii. 1; iv. 1. But in those passages there is nothing which might not well apply to the primitive Jewish believers: nothing which, from their knowledge of the O. T., and of the moral teaching of our Lord, they might not well have been aware of.

14. Yet again it is said, that the character of the faults here stigmatized in the Christian congregations is such as to require a considerable period for their development<sup>6</sup>: that they are those which arise from relaxation of the moral energy with which we must suppose the first Jewish converts to have received the Gospel. In answer to this, we may point to the length of time which may well be allowed as having elapsed between the first Pentecost sermon and the time of writing the Epistle, and to the rapidity of the dissemination of practical error, and the progress of moral deterioration, when once set in. We may also remind the reader of the state of the Jewish church and the heathen world around, as shewing that it must not be supposed that all these evils sprung up within the Christian communities themselves: rather we may say, that the seed fell on soil in which these thorns were already sown,—and that, even conceding the position above assumed, § i. 1, a very short time,—less than the 20 years which elapsed between the first Pentecost and the Jerusalem council,—would have sufficed for the growth of any such errors as we find stigmatized in this Epistle.

15. "Where," asks Wiesinger, "shall we look for the Judæo-Christian churches out of Palestine, which will satisfy the postulates of the Epistle?" I answer, in the notice of Acts ii. 5—11, in following out which, we must believe that Christian churches of the dispersion were very widely founded at a date immediately following the great outpouring of the Spirit. Such a persuasion does not compel us to believe that our Epistle was addressed principally to the church at Antioch, or to those in Syria and Cilicia, but leaves the address of it in all the extent of its own words, "*to the twelve tribes which are in the dispersion.*"

16. The notice of Acts xi. 19 ff., will amply provide for such Christian congregations, consisting mainly or entirely of Jewish believers, as the purposes of this Epistle require. And that notice may surely be regarded as a record of that taking place with increased energy nearer home, which must have been long going on far and wide, owing to the agency of the first Pentecostal believers. We find traces of this in the

<sup>5</sup> Wiesinger, p. 38.

<sup>6</sup> Wiesinger, as above.

first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas, where in several cases we have, besides the new converts made, an implied background of "*disciples*," naturally consisting mainly of Jews; and it appears to have been at and by this visit chiefly that the enmity of the Jews every where against the Gentile converts, and against the Gospel as admitting them, was first stirred up.

17. These things being considered, I cannot agree with Wiesinger and Schmid in placing our Epistle late in the first age of the church; but should, with the majority of recent Commentators, and historians, including Schneckengerber, Theile, Neander, Thiersch, Hofmann, and Schaff, place it before, perhaps not long before, the Jerusalem council: somewhere, it may be, about the year 45 A.D.

## SECTION IV.

### OBJECT, CONTENTS, AND STYLE.

1. The object of the Epistle has been already partially indicated, in treating of its readers. It was ethical, rather than didactic. They had fallen into many faults incident to their character and position. Their outward trials were not producing in them that confirmation of faith, and that stedfastness, for which they were sent, but they were deteriorating, instead of improving, under them. St. James therefore wrote his hortatory and minatory Epistle, to bring them to a sense of their Christian state under the Father of wisdom and the Lord of glory, subjects as they were of the perfect law of liberty, new-begotten by the divine word, married unto Christ, and waiting in patience for His advent to judgment.

2. The letter is full of earnestness, plain speaking, holy severity. The brother of Him who opened His teaching with the Sermon on the Mount, seems to have deeply imbibed the words and maxims of it, as the law of Christian morals. The characteristic of his readers was the lack of living faith: the falling asunder, as it has been well called, of knowledge and action, of head and heart. And no portion of the divine teaching could be better calculated to sound the depths of the treacherous and disloyal heart, than this first exposition by our Lord, who knew the heart, of the difference between the old law, in its externality, and the searching spiritual law of the Gospel<sup>7</sup>.

3. The main theme of the Epistle may be described as being the

<sup>7</sup> The connexion between our Epistle and the Sermon on the Mount has often been noticed: and the principal parallels will be found pointed out in the reff. and commentary. I subjoin a list of them: ch. i. 2, Matt. v. 10-12; ch. i. 4, Matt. v. 48; ch. i. 5, v. 15, Matt. vii. 7 ff.; ch. i. 9, Matt. v. 3; ch. i. 20, Matt. v. 22; ch. ii. 13, Matt. vi. 14, 15, v. 7; ch. ii. 14 ff., Matt. vii. 21 ff.; ch. iii. 17, 18, Matt. v. 9; ch. iv. 4,

“*perfect man*,” in the perfection of the Christian life: the “*doer of the perfect law* :” and his state and duties are described and enforced, not in the abstract, but in a multitude of living connexions and circumstances of actual life, as might suit the temptations and necessities of the readers.

4. St. James begins by a reference to their “*temptations*,” exhorting them to consider them matter of joy, as sent for the trial of their faith and accomplishment of their perfection, which must be carried on in faith, and prayer to God for wisdom, without doubt and wavering. The worldly rich are in fact not the happy, but the subjects of God’s judgment: the humble and enduring is he to whom the crown of life is promised (ch. i. 1—12).

5. Then he comes to treat of a “*tempting*” which is not from God, but from their own lusts. God on the contrary is the Author of every good and perfect gift, as especially of their new birth by the word of His truth. The inference from this is that, seeing they have their evil from themselves, but their good from Him, they should be eager to hear, but slow to speak and slow to wrath, receiving the word in meekness, being thoroughly penetrated with its influence, in deed and word, not paying to God the vain “*religious service*” of outward conformity only, but that of acts of holy charity and a spotless life.

6. The second chapter introduces the mention of their special faults: and as intimately connected with ch. i. 27, first that of respect of persons in regard of worldly wealth (ii. 1—13); and then that of supposing a bare assensive faith sufficient for salvation without its living fruits in a holy life (ii. 14—26). Next, the exhortation of ch. i. 19, “slow to speak, slow to wrath,” is again taken up, and in ch. iii. 1—18, these two particulars are treated, in the duties of curbing the tongue and the contentious temper.

7. This last leads naturally on in ch. iv. 1—12 to the detection of the real source of all contention and strife, viz. in their lusts, inflamed by the solicitations of the devil. These solicitations they are to resist, by penitence before God, and by curbing their proud and uncharitable judgments. Then he turns (iv. 13—v. 6) to those who live in their pride and worldliness, in assumed independence on God, and severely reproves the rich for their oppression and defrauding of the poor, warning them of a day of retribution at hand.

8. Then, after an earnest exhortation to patient endurance (ch. v. 7—11) and to abstain from words of hasty profanity (v. 12), he takes occasion in prescribing to them what to do in adversity, prosperity and

Matt. vi. 24; ch. iv. 10, Matt. v. 3, 4; ch. iv. 11, Matt. vii. 1 f.; ch. v. 2, Matt. vi. 19; ch. v. 10, Matt. v. 12; ch. v. 12, Matt. v. 33 ff.; and from other discourses of our Lord, ch. i. 14, Matt. xv. 19; ch. iv. 12, Matt. x. 28. Compare also the places where the rich are denounced with Luke vi. 24 ff.



sickness, and as to mutual confession of sin, to extol the efficacy of prayer (v. 13—18), and ends with pronouncing the blessedness of turning a sinner from the error of his way.

9. The character of the Epistle is thus a mixed one: consolatory and hortatory for the believing brethren; earnest, minatory, and polemical, against those who disgraced their Christian profession by practical error. Even in ch. ii. 14—26, where alone the Writer seems to be combating doctrinal error, all his contention is rather in the realm of practice: he is more anxious to shew that justification cannot be brought about by a kind of faith which is destitute of the practical fruits of a Christian life, than to trace the *ultimate ground*, theologically speaking, of justification in the sight of God.

10. As regards the style and diction of our Epistle, Huther has well described it as being “not only fresh and vivid, the immediate outflowing of a deep and earnest spirit, but at the same time sententious, and rich in graphic figure. Gnome follows after gnome, and the discourse hastens from one similitude to another: so that the diction often passes into the poetical, and in some parts is like that of the Old Test. prophets. We do not find logical connexion, like that in St. Paul: but the thoughts arrange themselves in single groups, which are strongly marked off from one another. We every where see that the author has his object clearly in sight, and puts it forth with graphic concreteness. Strong feelings, as Kern remarks, produce strong diction: and the style acquires emphasis and majesty by the climax of thoughts and words ever regularly and rhetorically arrived at, and by the constantly occurring antithesis.”

11. The introduction and putting forth of the thoughts also is peculiar. “The Writer ever goes at once into the midst of his subject; and with the first sentence which begins a section,—usually an interrogative or imperative one,—says out at once fully and entirely that which he has in his heart: so that in almost every case the first words of each section might serve as a title for it. The further development of the thought then is regressive, explaining and grounding the preceding sentence, and concludes with a comprehensive sentence, recapitulating that with which he began.”

12. The Greek of our Epistle is peculiar. It is comparatively free from Hebraisms; the words are weighty and expressive: the constructions for the most part those found in the purer Greek. It does not sound, in reading, like the rest of the New Test. There is only a slight link or two, connecting the speech of James in Acts xv. with it, which serves somewhat to identify its language with that. Such is “*Hear, my beloved brethren,*” ch. ii. 5, compared with “*Brethren, hear me,*” Acts xv.

13. We trace his hand also in the only two places where in a Christian Epistle the ordinary Greek greeting occurs, Acts xv. 23; James i. 1. The



Greek style of this Epistle must ever remain, considering the native place and position of its Writer, one of those difficulties with which it is impossible for us now to deal satisfactorily.

## SECTION V.

## ITS GENUINENESS, AND PLACE IN THE CANON.

1. The previous enquiry, in § i., regarding the authorship of our Epistle, proceeded on assuming that the commonly received superscription rightly designates the Epistle as the work of some apostolic person bearing the name of James. It remains for us now to enquire, how far such an assumption is justified.

2. And here we have before us a question not easily settled, and on which both the ancients and moderns have been much divided. The sum of ancient testimony is as follows :

3. The intimate connexion admitted to subsist between it and the first Epistle of St. Peter, while it is valueless as an evidence of priority on either side, may fairly be taken into account as an element in our enquiry<sup>8</sup>. The places cited in the note cannot be for a moment fairly called imitations. The case stands much as that between the common passages in 2 Peter and Jude. It may legitimately be supposed, that the writers of the two Epistles were accustomed to hold the same language and exhort much in the same strains ;—were employed in the apostolic work together : and that thus portions of that teaching in the Spirit, which they had long carried on in common at Jerusalem, found their way into their writings also. I cannot but regard this circumstance as a weighty evidence for the Epistle being written in the apostolic age, and by one who was St. Peter's friend and companion at Jerusalem in its earlier periods.

4. If this were so, it surprises us to find the Epistle so little used or referred to by the Apostolic Fathers. Several more or less distant and uncertain allusions have been pointed out in the writings of Clement of Rome<sup>9</sup>, Hermas<sup>1</sup>, and Irenæus<sup>2</sup>. Of these the two former are very

<sup>8</sup> Compare especially James i. 2 f. with 1 Pet. i. 6, 7 ; i. 10 f. with 1 Pet. i. 24 ; i. 21, with 1 Pet. ii. 1 f. ; iv. 6, 10, with 1 Pet. v. 5 f. ; v. 20, with 1 Pet. iv. 8.

<sup>9</sup> "Abraham, who was called the Friend, was found faithful, in becoming obedient to the commands of God:" compare James ii. 21, 23. And again: "For her faith and hospitality Rahab the harlot was saved:" compare James ii. 25.

<sup>1</sup> "The devil can wrestle against us, but he cannot wrestle us down: if then thou resist him, he will be conquered and flee from thee in disgrace:" compare James iv. 7.

<sup>2</sup> "Abraham . . . . believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness, and he was called the Friend of God:" compare James ii. 23.

doubtful indeed : the latter would seem as if Irenæus was acquainted with our Epistle, seeing that two particulars not conjoined, and one of them not perhaps even mentioned by the Septuagint<sup>3</sup>, are coupled by him as they are in this Epistle. Still, for this citation we have not the Greek of Irenæus, but only his Latin interpreter.

5. It is difficult to believe, notwithstanding the precariousness of the phrases cited to prove it, but that Hermas was acquainted with our Epistle. The whole cast of some passages resembles its tone and tenor exceedingly. This is especially so in a passage, where he treats of *double-mindedness*, and in fact expands the thoughts and words of St. James : e. g., “Cast out of thyself double-mindedness, and be not double-minded in any thing in thy petitions from God . . . . for God is not, as men, mindful of grudges, but Himself incapable of bearing malice, and is merciful over His creatures . . . . but if thou doubt in thine heart, thou shalt receive nothing of thy petitions. For those who doubt in their approaches to God, these are as it were double-minded and receive nothing at all of their petitions. But those who are perfect in the faith ask all things, trusting in God, and receive them because they ask without doubting, not double-minded in any thing. For every double-minded man if he repent not, shall with difficulty be saved.” Compare this with our ch. i. 5—7, and it is hardly possible to believe the two entirely independent of one another.

6. The first Father who has expressly cited the Epistle is Origen. In his Commentary on John we read, “For if faith be predicated, but be without works, such faith is dead, as we have read in the current Epistle of James.” And in another work, “Wherefore also it has been said, that God is untempted by evil,” James i. 13. And in several other places in Rufinus’s Latin version we have similar citations : “The Apostle James says,” &c.

7. Eusebius says, “Now of those books which are disputed, but still well known to the Christian public, we have that attributed to James, and that to Jude, and the second Epistle of Peter, and the second and third of John, be it of the Evangelist or of some other of the same name.” And again in H. E. ii. 23, after relating the death of St. James, he says, “Such was the history of James, whose is said to be the first of the Epistles called catholic : but it is to be noted that it is accounted spurious : and but few of the ancients have mentioned it, as neither have they that which goes by the name of Jude, which is also one of the seven called catholic. Yet we know that these with the rest are publicly read in most churches.” In this passage it can hardly be that “*it is accounted spurious*” expresses Eusebius’s own opinion as to the fact,—

<sup>3</sup> See note, James ii. 23.

“it is spurious:”—but it simply announces the fact, that some so think of it.

8. Eusebius says of Clement of Alexandria, “that he wrote short expositions of all the books of the (Old and ?) New Testament, not even passing over the disputed ones, the Epistle of Jude, and the rest called catholic, and that of Barnabas, and the book called the Apocalypse of Peter.” But it is manifest, that even were we to take this as fact, its testimony, when taken with the last clause, is very feeble as regards the canonicity of our Epistle.

9. Hippolytus, Bishop of Portus near Rome, quotes our Epistle apparently as Scripture, but not by name: “Your lamps are dark by reason of your want of compassion: depart from me, for judgment shall be without mercy to him who shewed no mercy” (James ii. 13).

10. Jerome says, “James, who is called the brother of the Lord, sur-named the Just . . . . wrote one Epistle only, which is among the seven catholic ones, which is moreover said to have been published by some one else under his name, although by degrees, as time went on, it has gained authority.”

11. Against these somewhat equivocal testimonies of the early Fathers, may be set the fact, that the Peschito, or primitive Syriac version, contained our Epistle from the first, although it omitted the second and third of John, Jude, and the Apocalypse. And this fact has the more weight, because the Syrian church lay so near to the country whence the Epistle originated, and to those to which it was, in all probability, principally addressed. And, as might be expected, we find it received and cited by the Syrian church as the Epistle of James the Lord’s brother. So Ephrem Syrus, and other writers of that church.

12. In the Western church also it soon, though gradually, rose into general acceptance and canonical authority. It was recognized by the council of Carthage in 397. From that time onward, we find it universally received: and indeed the great company of illustrious Greek Fathers of the fourth century all quote it as canonical Scripture: Athanasius, both the Cyrils, Gregory of Nazianzum, Epiphanius, Philastrius, Chrysostom, the author of the Synopsis, &c.

13. Various reasons might be assigned for the delay in receiving the Epistle, and the doubts long prevalent respecting it. The uncertainty about the personal identity and standing of its Writer: the fact, that it was addressed entirely to Jewish believers: the omission in it of most of the particulars of distinctively Christian doctrine: its seeming opposition to the doctrine of justification as laid down by St. Paul: all these would naturally work together to indispose the minds of Gentile Christians towards it. But as Thierseh and Wiesinger have rightly remarked, so much the more valuable are those recognitions of its genuineness and canonicity which we do meet with.

14. At the time of the Reformation, the doubts which once prevailed concerning the Epistle, were again revived. Erasmus, Cardinal Cajetan, Luther, Grotius, Wetstein, shared more or less in these doubts: and their example has been followed by several of the modern Commentators, e. g. Schleiermacher, De Wette, Reuss, Baur, Schwegler, Ritschl. The opinions of all these and their grounds will be found fairly set forth in Davidson's Introduction to the New Test., vol. iii. pp. 339—345.

15. On the whole, on any intelligible principles of canonical reception of early writings, we cannot refuse this Epistle a place in the canon. That that place was given it from the first in some part of the church; that, in spite of many adverse circumstances, it gradually won that place in other parts; that when thoroughly considered, it is so consistent with and worthy of his character and standing whose name it bears; that it is marked off by so strong a line of distinction from the writings and epistles which have not attained a place in the canon: all these are considerations which, though they do not in this, any more than in other cases, amount to demonstration, yet furnish when combined a proof hardly to be resisted, that the place where we now find it in the New Test. canon is that which it ought to have, and which God in His Providence has guided His Church to assign to it.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

#### SECTION I.

##### ITS GENUINENESS.

1. THE First Epistle of St. Peter was universally acknowledged by the ancient church as a part of the Christian Scriptures. The earliest testimony in its favour is found in the Second Epistle of Peter (iii. 1), a document which, even if we were to concede its spuriousness as an Apostolic Epistle, yet cannot be removed far in date from the *age* of the Apostles.

2. The second witness is POLYCARP: of whom Eusebius writes, "Polycarp, in the above-mentioned still current work of his to the Philippians, uses certain testimonies from the former Epistle of Peter." These testimonies are too numerous to be cited at length. In ch. ii., he cites 1 Pet. i. 13, 21; iii. 9; in ch. v., 1 Pet. ii. 11; in ch. vi., 1 Pet. iv. 7; in ch. viii., 1 Pet. ii. 21—24; in ch. x., 1 Pet. ii. 17, 12. Eusebius also

says of PAPIAS, II. E. iii. 39, "The same uses testimonies from the former Epistle of John, and that of Peter also."

3. None of the above testimonies from Polycarp mention the Epistle expressly; but IRENÆUS does so, more than once: e. g.:

"And Peter says in his Epistle: 'Whom not seeing ye love: in whom though ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable'" (1 Pet. i. 8).

And again:

"And for this reason Peter says, that 'we have not our liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but for proof and manifestation of our faith'" (1 Pet. ii. 16).

4. CLEMENT of ALEXANDRIA also quotes it expressly:

"Wherefore also the admirable Peter says, 'Beloved, I beseech you as strangers,' &c." (1 Pet. ii. 11 ff., 15 f.)

And again:

"And Peter in his Epistle says the like, 'So that your faith and your hope,' &c."

And similarly in several other places, given in the Prolegomena to my Greek Test.

5. Besides these express citations, he several times quotes without mentioning the name.

6. It is to be noted likewise that the heretic Theodotus, in the tract commonly printed among the works of Clement of Alexandria, twice expressly quotes our Epistle.

7. ORIGEN bears, expressly and often, the same testimony. In the passage on the canou, reported by Eusebius, he says:

"And Peter, on whom the church of Christ is built, over which the gates of hell shall not prevail, has left one universally received Epistle: and perhaps a second; for it is doubted."

Again:

"Peter also sounded with the two trumpets of his Epistles."

And in many other places: see as above.

8. TERTULLIAN testifies to the same point:

"Peter, writing to the inhabitants of Pontus, says, 'For what glory is it if when ye are punished [not] as delinquents, ye endure it?' &c." (1 Pet. ii. 20 f.)

And again:

"For Peter had said that the king is to be honoured" (1 Pet. ii. 17).

9. The opinion of Eusebius, as gathered from those before him, is this:

"One Epistle of Peter, that called his first, is universally received: this Epistle the elders of old in their writings have used as undoubted."

10. This Epistle is also found in the Peschito or ancient Syriac version, which contains three only of the Catholic Epistles. It is true, it is not mentioned in the fragment on the canon known by the name of Muratori. But the passage is not easily understood. The simplest interpretation of the sentence is, "we receive also only the Apocalypses of John and Peter, which (latter) some of our brethren refuse to have read in the church."

11. It is inferred from a passage of Leontius of Byzantium (died about 610) that Theodore of Mopsuestia rejected the Epistle: but the inference is not a safe one, the words being too general to warrant it.

12. It is said, in a passage of Petrus Siculus, that the Paulicians rejected it:

"But the two Catholic Epistles of Peter the prince of the Apostles they reject, being strongly set against him."

13. So that, with one or two insignificant exceptions, we have the united testimony of antiquity in its favour. It would be superfluous to go on citing later testimonies on the same side.

14. The first doubt in modern times was thrown on its authenticity by Cludius, on the ground that its thoughts and expressions are too like those of St. Paul, to have been written by the Apostle whose name it bears.

15. This was taken up by Eichhorn, and expanded into the hypothesis, that some one wrote the Epistle who had been long with St. Paul, and had adopted his ideas and phrases: and as this will not fit St. Peter, he supposes that St. Peter found the material, but it was worked up by John Mark. This hypothesis is rejected by Bertholdt, but taken up in another form: viz. by adopting the idea hinted at by Jerome and formally announced by Baronius, that the Epistle was originally written in Hebrew (so Baronius), or Aramaic, and rendered into Greek by Mark (so Baronius) or Silvanus. But, as Huther well remarks, this hypothesis is as arbitrary as the other: and the whole diction of the Epistle and its modes of citation protest against its being thought a translation.

16. De Wette finds reason to doubt the genuineness, but on grounds entirely derived from the Epistle itself. He thinks it too deficient in originality, and too much made up of reminiscences from other epistles. This ground of objection will be examined, and found untenable, in treating of the character and style of the Epistle.

17. It was to be supposed, that the Tübingen school, as represented by Baur and Schwegeler, would repudiate this, as they have done so many other Epistles. The arguments on which the latter of these founds his rejection are worth enumerating, admitting, as most of them do, of a ready and satisfactory answer. They are<sup>4</sup>, 1) *the want of any*

<sup>4</sup> I have taken this statement mainly from Huther.



*definite external occasion, and the generality of the contents and purpose.* But it may be replied, it is surely too much to expect that an Apostle should be confined to writing to those churches with which he has been externally connected, and in which an assignable cause for his writing has arisen: and besides, it will be found below, in treating on the occasion and object of the Epistle, that these, though of a general nature, are perfectly and satisfactorily assignable.

2) *The want of a marked individual character both in composition and in theology.* But on the one hand this is not conceded *in toto*, and on the other it is manifestly unreasonable to require that in one man's writing it should be so plainly notable as in that of another: in St. Peter, as in St. Paul and St. John.

3) *The want of close connexion and evolution of thought.* But, it may be answered, the purpose and character of the Epistle itself forbids us to require such a connexion: and we may notice that even in St. Paul's Epistles Schwegler professes not to be able to find it<sup>5</sup>.

4) *The impossibility that Peter, labouring in the far East, could have become acquainted with the later Epistles of St. Paul so soon (assuming their genuineness) after their composition.* But, it is replied, there is no trace in our Epistle of acquaintance with the latest, viz. that to Titus and 2 Timothy. The only possible difficulty is the apparent (?) acquaintance with 1 Timothy: but this may have come to St. Peter through John Mark.

5) *The impossibility, on the assumption of the Epistle being written in Babylon (see below, § iv., on the time and place of writing), of bringing together the Neronian persecution which is alluded to in it, and the death of St. Peter by martyrdom during that very persecution.* But it is a pure assumption that the persecution alluded to in the Epistle is that under Nero; and another, that the Apostle suffered martyrdom under Nero at that time.

18. It is also not without interest, to discuss the reasons which Schwegler adduces for believing the Epistle to be a production of the post-apostolic age under Trajan. They are, 1) the tranquil unimpassioned tone of the Epistle, contrasted with the effect on the Christians of the Neronian persecution: 2) the circumstance that under the Neronian persecution the Christians were involved in a charge of a definite crime, viz. the setting fire to the city, whereas in our Epistle they suffer "*as Christians*," on account of the general suspicion of a bad life (*as evil doers*): 3) the improbability that the Neronian persecution extended beyond Rome: 4) the assumption in the Epistle of regular legal processes, whereas the persecution under Nero was more of a tumultuary act: 5) the state of Christianity in Asia Minor as depicted

<sup>5</sup> See on this below, § vi. par. 9.

by the Epistle, answering to that which we find in the letter of Pliny to Trajan.

19. But to these reasons it has been well replied by Huther, 1) that the tranquillity of tone is no less remarkable, as under the later persecution, than under the earlier, and that any other tone would have been unworthy of an Apostle: 2) the suffering of Christians, *as Christians*, did not begin in Trajan's persecution, but was common to the earlier ones likewise: 3) even if the Neronian persecution did not extend beyond Rome, the Christians in the provinces were always liable to be persecuted owing to the same popular hatred: 4) there is in reality no trace of judicial proceedings in our Epistle: 5) the features of persecution in the Epistle *do not* agree with those in Pliny's letter: there, the Christians are formally put to death as such: here, we have no trace of such a sentence being carried out against them.

20. The hypothesis of Schwegler, that the purpose of the Epistle is to be detected in ch. v. 12, as one of reconciliation of the teachings of St. Peter and St. Paul by some disciple of the former who was inclined also to the latter, is well treated by Huther as entirely destitute of foundation.

21. So that, whether we consider external evidence, or the futility of internal objections, we can have no hesitation in accepting the Epistle as the undoubted work of the Apostle whose name it bears.

## SECTION II.

### ITS AUTHOR.

1. The Apostle Peter, properly called Simon or Simeon (Acts xv. 14, 2 Pet. i. 1), was born at Bethsaida on the sea of Galilee (John i. 45), the son of one Jonas (Matt. xvi. 17) or John (John i. 43, xxi. 15), with whom, and with his brother Andrew, he carried on the trade of a fisherman at Capernaum, where he afterwards lived (Matt. viii. 14, iv. 18, and parallels, Luke v. 3), with his wife's mother, being a married man<sup>6</sup> (1 Cor. ix. 5).

2. He became very early a disciple of our Lord, being brought to Him by his brother Andrew, who was a disciple of John the Baptist, and had followed Jesus on hearing him designated by his master as the

<sup>6</sup> His wife is variously named Concordia or Perpetua by the legends. Clement of Alexandria relates, "They say that St. Peter, beholding his wife led out to death, was rejoiced at her calling of the Lord, and her reception to her heavenly home, and cried out encouragingly and exhortingly, addressing her by name: O thou, remember the Lord." And elsewhere he says, "Peter and Philip were fathers of families." On the question whether Mark was his son, see note on 1 Pet. v. 13.

Lamb of God (John i. 35—43). It was on this occasion that Jesus, looking on him and foreseeing his disposition and worth in the work of His Kingdom, gave him the name Cephas, in Greek Petros, a stone or Rock (John i. 43 &c. Mark iii. 16). He does not however appear to have attached himself finally to our Lord till after two, or perhaps more, summons to do so (compare John, as before : Matt. iv. 18, and parallel in Mark : Luke v. 1 ff. and notes), and to have carried on his fishing trade at intervals.

3. It would be beside the present purpose to follow St. Peter through the well-known incidents of his apostolic life. His forwardness in reply and profession of warm affection, his thorough appreciation of our Lord's high Office and Person, the glorious promise made to him as the Rock of the Church on that account (Matt. xvi. 16 and note), his rashness, and over-confidence in himself, issuing in his triple denial of Christ and his bitter repentance, his reassurance by the gentle but searching words of his risen Master (John xxi. 15 ff.),—these are familiar to every Christian child : nor is there any one of the leading characters in the Gospel history which makes so deep an impression on the heart and affections of the young and susceptible. The weakness, and the strength, of our human love for Christ, are both mercifully provided for in the character of the greatest of the Twelve.

4. After the Ascension, we find St. Peter at once taking the lead in the Christian body (Acts i. 15 ff.), and on the descent of the Holy Spirit, he, to whom were given the keys of Christ's kingdom,—who was to be the stone on which the church was to be built, first receives into the door of the church, and builds up on his own holy faith, three thousand of Israel (Acts ii. 14—41) : and on another occasion soon following, some thousands more (Acts iv. 4).

5. This prominence of St. Peter in the church continues, till by his specially directed ministry the door into the privileges of the gospel covenant is opened also to the Gentiles, by the baptism of Cornelius and his party (Acts x.). But he was not to be the Apostle of the Gentiles : and by this very procedure, the way was being made plain for the ministry of another, who was now ripening for the work in the retirement of his home at Tarsus.

6. From this time onward, the prominence of St. Peter wanes behind that of St. Paul. The "first to the Jew" was rapidly coming to its conclusion : and the great spreading of the feast to the Gentile world was henceforward to occupy the earnest attention of the apostolic missionaries, as it has done the pages of the inspired record. Only once or twice, besides the notices to be gathered from this Epistle itself, do we gain a glimpse of St. Peter after this time. In the apostolic council in Acts xv. we find him consistently carrying out the part which had been divinely assigned him in the admission of the Gentiles into the church ;

and earnestly supporting the freedom of the Gentile converts from the observance of the Mosaic law.

7. This is the last notice which we have of him, or indeed of any of the Twelve, in the Acts. But from Gal. ii. 11, we learn a circumstance which is singularly in keeping with St. Peter's former character: that when at Antioch, in all probability not long after the apostolic council, he was practising the freedom which he had defended there, but being afraid of certain who came from James, he withdrew himself and separated from the Gentile converts, thereby incurring a severe rebuke from St. Paul (ib. vv. 14—21).

8. From this time, we depend on such scanty hints as the Epistles furnish, and upon ecclesiastical tradition, for further notices of St. Peter. We may indeed, from 1 Cor. ix. 5, infer that he travelled about on the missionary work, and took his wife with him: but in what part of the Roman empire, we know not. If the Babylon of ch. v. 13 is to be taken literally, he passed the boundaries of that empire into Parthia.

9. The best text, and starting-point, for treating of the traditions respecting St. Peter, is the account given by Jerome, after others:

“Simon Peter, the first (*princeps*) of the Apostles, after being bishop of Antioch and preaching to the dispersion of the believers of the circumcision, in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, in the second year of Claudius, went to Rome to combat Simon Magus, and there held the sacerdotal seat for twenty-five years, even to the last year of Nero, that is, the fourteenth. By this emperor he was crucified and crowned with martyrdom, his head being turned towards the earth and his feet in the air, protesting that he was unworthy to be crucified as his Lord was. He was buried at Rome in the Vatican by the side of the triumphal way, and is honoured with the veneration of the whole city.”

10. In this account, according to Luther, we have the following doubtful particulars:

1) The episcopate of St. Peter at Antioch. This is reported also by Eusebius, who makes St. Peter *found* the church at Antioch, in contradiction to Acts xi. 19—22.

2) His personal work among the churches of Asia Minor, which seems to be a mere assertion founded on Origen's conjecture that “Peter seems to have preached to the dispersed Jews in Pontus,” &c., grounded upon 1 Pet. i. 1<sup>7</sup>.

3) His journey to Rome to oppose Simon Magus: which, as Eusebius appeals to Justin Martyr for it, appears to be founded on Justin's story of the statue found at Rome, see note on Acts viii. 10: which is now known to have been a statue of the Sabine god Semo Sancus.

<sup>7</sup> This is granted even by the R.-Cath. Windischmann.

4) The twenty-five years' bishopric of St. Peter at Rome. This has been minutely examined by Wieseler, and shewn on chronological grounds to have been impossible, and to be inconsistent with Gal. ii. 7—9, according to which Peter, who by this hypothesis had been then for many years bishop of Rome, and continued so for many years after, was to go to the circumcision as their Apostle.

5) The peculiar manner of his crucifixion, which seems to have been an idea arising from Origen's expression, which it has been suggested, might import no more than *capital punishment*. I have shewn in my Greek Test. that this cannot be, and that the words must be taken literally.

11. The residuum from this passage, which is worth our consideration and elucidation, is, the death of the Apostle by martyrdom, and that in Rome. This seems to be the concurrent testimony of Christian antiquity. I subjoin the principal testimonies.

12. First we have John xxi. 19, which, whether a notice inserted after the fact, and referring to it, or an authoritative exposition of our Lord's words to Peter, equally point to the fact as having been, or about to be, accomplished.

13. Clement of Rome says, "Peter, by reason of unrighteous zeal against him, endured, not one or two, but numerous persecutions, and thus suffering martyrdom, went to his deserved place of glory."

Here indeed there is no mention of Rome; but the close juxtaposition of the celebrated passage about St. Paul (cited in this Introduction, ch. x. § ii. 20) seems to point to that city as the place of Peter's martyrdom. Besides, I would suggest that these words, "he went to his deserved place of glory," are a reminiscence of Acts xii. 17, "*and he went out and departed to another place,*" which by the advocates of the twenty-five years' Roman bishopric was interpreted to mean Rome.

14. Dionysius of Corinth is cited by Eusebius, as saying in an Epistle to the Romans, that Peter and Paul together founded the church of Corinth, and then went to Italy where they founded the Roman church, taught, and suffered martyrdom.

15. Tertullian says that Peter and Paul left the Gospel to the Romans signed with their blood. And in another place he speaks of Rome as

"That happy church to whom the Apostles poured forth their whole doctrine with their blood, where Peter equalled the passion of the Lord, where Paul was crowned with the death of John [i. e. the Baptist], whence the Apostle John, after being dipped in fiery oil and taking no harm, was banished to an island."

16. Caius the presbyter of Rome is reported as saying,

"But I can shew you the trophies of the Apostles: for if you will go to the Vatican or to the Ostian road, you will find the trophies of those who founded this church."

This passage can mean nothing else than that Peter and Paul suffered at Rome, and that either their graves or some memorials of their martyrdom were to be seen on the spot.

17. To these testimonies we may add that of Eusebius himself, who says in more than one place that

“Nero was at last uplifted to murder the Apostles, and that Paul is related to have been beheaded at Rome, and Peter to have been crucified also under Nero.”

18. And that of Lactantius :

“When now Nero reigned, Peter came to Rome, and by working certain miracles by the power granted him of God, converted many to righteousness, and confirmed and established the church of God, which being told to Nero, when he found that not only at Rome, but every where, multitudes were daily falling off from the worship of idols, and going over to the new religion in contempt of antiquity; execrable and noxious tyrant as he was, he determined to destroy the heavenly church, and to abolish righteousness; and first of all men becoming persecutor of God’s servants, he crucified Peter, and slew Paul.”

19. In this report later testimonies concur.

In forming an estimate of its trustworthiness, some discrimination is necessary. The whole of that which relates to the earlier visits under Claudius, and the controversy with Simon Magus, fails us, as inconsistent with what we know, or are obliged to infer, from Scripture itself. This being so, is the rest, including the martyrdom at Rome, so connected with this fabulous matter, that it stands or falls with it? When we find in this, as in other matters, that the very earliest Christian writers might and did fall into historical errors which we can now plainly detect and put aside,—when we find so prevalent a tendency even in early times to concentrate events and memorials of interest at Rome, how much are we to adopt, how much to reject, of this testimony to St. Peter’s martyrdom there?

20. These are questions which it would far exceed the limits of this Introduction to discuss, and which moreover do not immediately belong even to collateral considerations regarding our Epistle. They have been very copiously treated, and it seems almost impossible to arrive at even reasonable probability in our ultimate decision upon them. Their own data are perplexing, and still more perplexing matters have been mixed up with them. On the one hand, ancient tradition is almost unanimous: on the other, it witnesses to particulars in which even its earliest and most considerable testimonies must be put aside as inconsistent with known fact. Then again we have on the one hand the patent and unscrupulous perversion of fact to serve a purpose, which has ever been the characteristic of the church of Rome, in her desperate shifts to establish a succession to the fabulous primacy of St. Peter, and on the other the



exaggerated partisanship of Protestant writers, with whom the shortest way to save a fact or an interpretation from abuse has been, to demolish it.

21. So that on the whole it seems safest to suspend the judgment with regard to the question of St. Peter's presence and martyrdom at Rome. That he was not there before the date of the Epistle to the Romans (about A.D. 58), we are sure: that he was not there during any part of St. Paul's imprisonment there, we may with certainty infer; that the two apostles did not together found the churches of Corinth and Rome, we may venture safely to affirm: that St. Peter ever was, in any sense like that usually given to the word, Bishop of Rome, is we believe an idea abhorrent from Scripture and from the facts of primitive apostolic history. But that St. Peter travelled to Rome during the persecution under Nero, and there suffered martyrdom with, or nearly at the same time with, St. Paul, is a tradition which does not interfere with any known facts of Scripture or early history, and one which we have no means of disproving, as we have no interest in disproving it.

22. It may be permitted us on this point, until the day when all shall be known, to follow the cherished associations of all Christendom—to trace still in the Mamertine prison and the Vatican the last days on earth of him to whom was committed especially the feeding of the flock of God: to “witness beside the Appian way the scene of the most beautiful of ecclesiastical legends<sup>8</sup>, which records his last vision of his crucified Lord: to overlook from the supposed spot of his death<sup>9</sup> the city of the seven hills: to believe that his last remains repose under the glory of St. Peter's dome<sup>1</sup>.”

### SECTION III.

#### FOR WHAT READERS IT WAS WRITTEN.

1. The inscription of the letter itself has on this point an apparent precision: “to the elect sojourners of the dispersion of Pontus, Galatia,

<sup>8</sup> Stanley, Sermons and Essays on the Apostolic Age, p. 96. The legend referred to is that related by Ambrose, that St. Peter not long before his death, being overcome by the solicitations of the faithful to save himself, was flying from Rome, when he was met by our Lord, and on asking, “Lord, whither goest thou?” received the answer, “I go to be crucified afresh.” On this the Apostle returned and joyfully went to martyrdom. The memory of this legend is yet preserved in Rome by the Church called “Domine, quo vadis?” on the Appian way.

<sup>9</sup> “The eminence of S. Pietro in Montorio on the Janiculum.” Stanley, note ib.

<sup>1</sup> “The remains of St. Peter, as is well known, are supposed to be buried immediately under the great altar in the centre of the famous basilica which bears his name.” Stanley, ib. See in the same work an interesting account of the Judaizing party which gathered round the person of Peter, p. 96 ff.

*Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.*" This would seem to include the Christians dwelling in those very provinces where St. Paul and his companions had founded churches.

2. But it has been attempted, both in ancient days and in modern, to limit this address to the *Jewish* Christians resident in those provinces.

3. Still, there is nothing in the words to warrant such a limitation. The term "*sojourners*" is sufficiently explained in the Epistle itself, in ch. ii. 11, as used in a spiritual sense, strangers and pilgrims on earth: and the term "*dispersion*" following may well designate the ingrafting of Gentile converts into, and their forming a part of, God's covenant people, who already, according to the flesh, were thus dispersed.

4. With this view well-known facts, both external to the Epistle and belonging to it, agree. These churches, as we learn from the Acts, were composed mainly of Gentile converts: and it would be unreasonable to suppose that St. Peter, with his views on the Christian relation of Jew and Gentile, as shewn in Acts xi. and xv., should have selected out only the Jewish portion of those churches to address in his Epistle. Rather, if one object of the letter were that which I have endeavoured to establish in § v., would he be anxious to mingle together Jew and Gentile in the blessings and obligations of their common faith, and though himself the Apostle of the circumcision, to help on the work and doctrines of the great Apostle of the uncircumcision.

5. And this is further evident from many passages in the Epistle itself. Such is the "*not being conformed to the former lusts in your ignorance*" (ch. i. 14), words which would hardly be addressed to Jews exclusively, cf. Eph. ii. 1 ff., where the Jews are indeed included in "*we all,*" but Gentiles are mainly addressed: such "*those who once were not a people, but are now the people of God*" (ii. 10)<sup>2</sup>, as compared with ver. 9, "*who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light,*" and with Rom. ix. 25: such the words, "*whose (Sarah's) children ye have become*" (iii. 6), implying adoption into the (spiritual) family of Abraham: such the words, "*for the time past may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, walking in . . . abominable idolatries*" (iv. 3), which words are addressed to the readers, and not to be supplied with "*us:*" and seem decisive as to Gentiles in the main, and not Jews, being

<sup>2</sup> It has been argued that this passage, being originally written by Hosea of the rejected people of God, must be so understood here. But this is mere arbitrary assertion. The context here must determine in what sense the Apostle adopts the words of the Prophet: and I have no hesitation in saying with Augustine and Bede, "this was once spoken by Hosea of the ancient people of God, and is now rightly used by Peter to the Gentiles." The express citation of the same passage by St. Paul in Rom. ix. 25, as applying to Gentiles, should have prevented Weiss at all events from speaking here with his usual overweening positiveness.

designated. The expression of ch. i. 18, "*not with corruptible things, silver or gold, were ye redeemed out of your foolish behaviour handed down from your fathers,*" may seem ambiguous, and has in fact been quoted on both sides: but it seems to me to point the same way as those others: the Apostle would hardly have characterized all that the Jew left to become a Christian by such a name.

6. Steiger has given a list of such churches as would be comprehended under the address in ch. i. 1, Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia. The provinces here named proceed in order from N.E. to S. and W.: a circumstance which will be of some interest in our enquiry as to the place of writing<sup>3</sup>. The first of them, PONTUS, stretched from Colchis and Lesser Armenia to the mouth of the river Halys, and was rich both in soil and in commercial towns. It was the country of the Christian Jew Aquila. Next comes GALATIA, to which St. Paul paid two visits (Acts xvi. 6, Gal. iv. 13 ff.: Acts xviii. 23, xix. 1 ff.), founding and confirming churches. After him, his companion Crescens went on a mission there (2 Tim. iv. 10). Its ecclesiastical metropolis was in after time Ancyra. Further particulars respecting it will be found in the Introduction to the Epistle to the Galatians, § ii.

7. Next in order comes CAPPADOCIA, south but returning somewhat to the E., where in after times the towns of Nyssa and Cæsarea gave the church a Gregory and a Basil, and whence (see Acts ii. 9) Jews came up to the feasts in Jerusalem, who might well have carried back the knowledge of Christianity, and have founded churches. Next, going southward and westward, we have proconsular ASIA, including Mysia, Lydia, Caria, Phrygia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia,—containing the churches of Iconium where Paul and Barnabas preached (Acts xiv. 1 ff.), Lystra, the birthplace of Timothy, where St. Paul was stoned by the Jews (Acts xiv. 8—19, xvi. 1, 2; 2 Tim. iii. 11),—Derbe, the birthplace of Caius, where many were made disciples (Acts xiv. 20 f.; xx. 4),—Antioch in Pisidia, where St. Paul converted many Gentiles, but was driven out by the Jews (Acts xiii. 14 ff., 48 ff.): returned however, and confirmed the churches (ib. xiv. 21—23),—then Miletus, on the Carian coast, where from Acts xx. 17, 2 Tim. iv. 20, there must have been Christian brethren,—Phrygia, where St. Paul preached on both his journeys to Galatia (Acts xvi. 6, xviii. 23),—then along the banks of the Lycus, Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colossæ, celebrated Christian churches, to which he wrote his Colossian Epistle, whose leaders Archippus and Epaphras,—whose member Onesimus are well known to us (Col. i. 7, iv. 9, 12 f., 17; Philem. 2, 10),—where erroneous doctrines and lukewarmness in the faith soon became prevalent (Col. ii., Rev. iii. 14—22).

<sup>3</sup> See below, § iv. par. 17.

8. Then passing westward, we find in Lydia at the foot of the Tmolus, Philadelphia, known to us favourably from Rev. iii. 7 ff., and Sardis the capital (Rev. iii. 1 ff.), and Thyatira, blamed in Rev. ii. 18 ff. as too favourably inclined towards false teachers: then on the coast the famous Ephesus, where first St. Paul (Acts xviii. 19), then perhaps Aquila and Priscilla, then Apollos (Acts xviii. 24—28), taught, then St. Paul returned and remained “*a whole three years*” building up the church with such success (Acts xx. 17: xix. 1 ff., 8—10, 17),—a church well known and loved by every Christian reader of the Epistle to the Ephesians, but grieved over when we read (Rev. ii. 4) that it had deserted its first love. Then northwards we have Smyrna, known favourably to us from Rev. ii. 8 ff., and in Mysia, Pergamus (Rev. ii. 12 ff.); and lastly Alexandria Troas, whence St. Paul was summoned over by a vision to preach in Europe, where afterwards he preached, and raised Eutychus to life (Acts xx. 6 ff., 2 Cor. ii. 12), and where he was on a subsequent occasion entertained by Carpus (2 Tim. iv. 13).

This closes the list of churches known to us, BITHYNIA containing none whose names are handed down in Scripture.

9. The enquiry as to the then state of these Christian congregations is one which must be here conducted simply on grounds furnished by the Epistle itself. Its effect on the conclusion to which we must come as to the date of the Epistle will be dealt with in a subsequent section.

10. From the Epistle itself then we gather, that in external form and government they were much in the same state as when St. Paul exhorted the Ephesian elders at Miletus in Acts xx. Here (ch. v. 1 ff.), as there, the elders are exhorted to tend the church or flock of God: and no other officers in either place appear.

11. It was manifestly during a time of persecution that the Apostle thus addressed them. His expressions, especially those in ch. iii. 17, iv. 12—19, can hardly be interpreted of the general liability of Christians to persecutions, but must necessarily be understood of some trial of that kind then pressing on them<sup>4</sup>.

12. It would seem by ch. iv. 4, 5, that some of these trials had befallen the Christians on account of their separating themselves from the licentious shows and amusements of the heathen. And the same passage will shew that it was from heathens, rather than from unbelieving Jews, that the trials came.

13. We may gather, from hints dropped in the course of the Epistle, that there were in the internal state of the churches some tendencies which required repression, as e. g., the disposition to become identified with the heathen way of living (ch. ii. 11, 12, 16 al.),—that to greed and

<sup>4</sup> The bearing of this consideration on the date of the Epistle is treated below, § iv. par. 1.

ambition and self-exaltation on the part of the presbyters (v. 2, 3),—that to evil thoughts and evil words towards one another (ii. 1; iii. 8—12; iv. 9).

## SECTION IV.

### TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING.

1. The former of these enquiries is very closely connected with that of the last section. Many Commentators have fancied that the state of the readers implied in the Epistle points at the persecution under Nero as the time when it was written: others, that the persecution under Trajan is rather indicated. But to both of these it has been sufficiently replied, that the passages relied on do not warrant either inference: that the *defence* (apology) to be rendered (ch. iii. 15), is not necessarily, nor indeed well can be at all, a public defence in court, seeing that they are to be ready to make it “*to every one that asketh,*” &c.: that the suffering as evil doers cannot be well connected with the expression *malefactors* in Tacitus, because in the Epistle the readers are exhorted to *live down* the ill repute, which, had it consisted in the mere name of Christian, they could not have been. Again it is answered that we have no proof of the Neronian persecution having extended itself into the Asiatic provinces.

2. On the whole it seems to me that we are not justified in connecting the Epistle with either of these persecutions, but are rather to take its notices as pointing to a time when a general dislike of the Christians was beginning to pass into active tyranny, and in some cases into infliction of capital punishment. As Davidson remarks, “The trials were not yet excessive. They were alarming in the future. A severe time was *approaching*. Judgment was soon to begin at the house of God. The terrible persecutions and sufferings which the Christians were about to endure, were impending.”

3. These remarks are favoured by the tone in which suffering is spoken of, as by no means a matter of course: not sure, nor even likely, to follow upon a harmless Christian life: compare ch. iii. 13, 14, where, by “*who shall harm you if ye be imitators of that which is good?*” it seems as if the good liver was in general likely to be let alone; and by what follows, “*but even if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye,*” it is implied that in some exceptional cases, Christians might be hunted out by zealous enemies and made to suffer *quoad* Christians.

4. So that I should be disposed, judging from the internal notices given of the state of the readers, to place the writing of the Epistle during the later years of Nero, but before the persecution related by Tacitus broke out. The “*hatred of all mankind*” which justified that victimizing of the Christians, was gathering and producing its

anticipatory fruits here and there, wherever' circumstances were favourable.

5. And with this agree the personal notices in our Epistle, and inferences to be gathered from it. We must conclude from passages in it that St. Peter was acquainted with the Epistles of St. Paul; not only with his earlier ones, but with those written during his first Roman imprisonment<sup>5</sup>. If now St. Paul was set free from that imprisonment in the year 63 (see Introduction to the Pastoral Epistles, § ii. 24), this Epistle cannot well have been written before the end of that year.

6. Another personal notice also agrees with this date. By ch. v. 13 we find that Mark was, at the time of its writing, with the Apostle in Babylon, which I here by anticipation assume to be the well-known city in Chaldea. Now from Coloss. iv. 10, we learn that Mark was at the time of writing that Epistle (61—63) with St. Paul in Rome, but intending to journey into Asia Minor: and from 2 Tim. iv. 11 (67 or 68), we find that he was in Asia Minor, and was to be brought with Timothy to Rome. Now one of two contingencies is possible. Mark may either have spent some of the interval between these two notices with St. Peter in Babylon, or have betaken himself to that Apostle after the death of St. Paul.

7. Of these two alternatives, it is urged by the advocates of the usual view taken of our Epistle that the latter is the more probable. This Epistle is addressed to churches mostly founded by St. Paul: is it probable that St. Peter would have thus addressed them during the great Apostle's lifetime? When we consider St. Paul's own rule, of not encroaching on other men's labours (Rom. xv. 20), and put together with it the fact of the compact made between the two Apostles as related in Gal. ii. 9, it seems difficult to imagine that such an Epistle should have been written before St. Paul was withdrawn from his labours; which latter took place only at his death. That event, and the strengthening of the influences adverse to St. Paul's doctrine consequent on it, might well agree with the testimony to that doctrine which we find in this Epistle, and especially in ch. v. 12.

8. According to this view, we must place the Epistle late in the second apostolic period. We have seen in the Introduction to the Pastoral Epistles, that it is not easy to assign a date for the death of St. Paul before the last year of Nero, i. e. 67 to 68. If we suffer ourselves to be guided by these considerations, we should say, that in the latter part of that year, or the beginning of the next, our Epistle may have been written.

9. But these considerations, forcible as they seem, bring us into a

<sup>5</sup> See this shewn below, § vi. par. 2 note.



greater difficulty than that of believing the Epistle to have been written during St. Paul's lifetime. They leave absolutely no room for the journey of St. Peter to, and martyrdom at, Rome: none for the writing of the second Epistle, which clearly must not be rejected on such grounds alone. We must therefore adopt the other alternative, and suppose the writing to have taken place during a temporary withdrawal of the great Apostle to some other and distant scene of missionary action between the years 63 and 67.

10. Next as to the place, whence it was written. If words are to be taken literally, this is pointed out with sufficient plainness in the Epistle itself (ch. v. 13), where we read, "*She that is elected together with you in Babylon saluteth you,*" as being BABYLON.

And there does not appear to be any reason to depart from the *primâ facie* impression given by this notice, that St. Peter was at that time dwelling and working at the renowned Babylon on the Euphrates.

11. It is true, that from very early times the name has suggested other interpretations. Eusebius quotes with "*they say,*" and alleges for it generally the authority of Papias and Clement of Alexandria, "that Peter mentions Mark in his first Epistle, which they say he wrote in Rome itself, and that he signifies this by calling that city, figuratively, Babylon." And so also Œcumenius, assigning however a very insufficient reason: "He calls Rome Babylon on account of its eminent notoriety, which Babylon also possessed for a long time." And Jerome, in the same words as Eusebius above; and elsewhere, commenting on Isa. xlvii., he says that Babylon here is thought by some to mean Rome, as in the Apocalypse of St. John, and in the Epistle of Peter. So also Isidore of Seville. And this has been a very general opinion among not only Roman-Catholic but also other Commentators.

12. But there seems to be no other defence for this interpretation than that of prescription. And it is now pretty generally recognized among Commentators that we are not to find an allegorical meaning in a proper name thus simply used in the midst of simple and matter-of-fact sayings. The personal notice too, conveyed in "*she that is elected together with you,*" will hardly bear the violence which many have attempted to put upon it, in supplying a *church* for the subject. No such word has been mentioned: nor is the Epistle addressed to the *churches* of the dispersion, but to the *elect sojourners* of the dispersion. And as those are individual Christians, so it is but reasonable to believe that this is an individual also, the term being strictly correlative with that other: and if an individual, then that "*sister-wife*" whom, as we know from 1 Cor. ix. 5, St. Peter carried about in his missionary journeys.

13. And this being so, I can see no objection arising from "*in Babylon*" being inserted. The Apostle, in ch. i. 1, had seen fit to *localize* the Christians whom he was addressing: and he now sends

them greeting from one whom indeed he does not name, but designates by an expression also local. To the elect Christians of the dispersion of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, he sends greeting from their sister, an elect Christian woman in Babylon: There might obviously be a reason why he should thus designate her, rather than by her name and relation to himself: but no reason whatever why he should go out of his way to make an enigma for all future readers, if he meant the Church at Rome by these words.

14. But even when we have taken the words literally, we have not yet got their full solution. Some contend, that an insignificant fort in Egypt, called Babylon, is intended. This appears to be the tradition of the Coptic Church, and it is supported by Le Clerc, Mill, Pearson, Calovius, Pott, Burton, and Greswell. The ground seems mainly to be this; that as it is believed that St. Mark preached, after St. Peter's death, in Alexandria and the parts adjacent, so it is likely that those same parts should have been the scene of his former labours with the Apostle.

15. Others again have supposed it to be Ctesiphon on the Tigris, the winter residence of the Parthian kings; or Seleucia, both of which seem to have borne the name of Babylon after the declension of the older and more famous city. So (as regards Seleucia) Michaelis, who however adduces no proof that it was thus called in the apostolic age.

16. With regard to the probability or otherwise of St. Peter having laboured in the Assyrian Babylon at this time, we may notice, that that city in its decayed state, and its neighbourhood, were inhabited by Jews, long after other inhabitants had deserted it: that, which is sufficient for us, Josephus and Philo describe it as thus inhabited in their time. It is true that in the last years of Caligula, who died in A.D. 41, there was a persecution of the Jews there, in consequence of which very many of them migrated to the new and rising Seleucia; and five years after, a plague further diminished their number. But this does not preclude their increase or return during the twenty years, at least, which intervened between that plague and the writing of our Epistle.

17. It is some corroboration of the view that our Epistle was written from the Assyrian Babylon, to find, that the countries mentioned in the address are enumerated, not as a person in Rome or in Egypt would enumerate them, but in an order proceeding, as has already been noticed, from East to West and South: and also to find that Cosmas Indicopleustes, in the sixth century, quotes the conclusion of our Epistle as a proof of the early progress of the Christian religion without the bounds of the Roman Empire: by which therefore we perceive that by Babylon he did not understand Rome.

18. With regard to any *journey* of St. Peter to Babylon, as recorded

or implied by antiquity, we are quite unfurnished with any other evidence than that deduced from the passage under consideration. And the difficulties which beset the conjunction of the various notices respecting our Apostle remain much the same in amount, whichever way we attempt their solution: whether by forcing the words "*in Babylon*" to some far-fetched and improbable sense, as has been very generally done, or with Weiss and others assigning an early date to our Epistle, contrary to the plain sense of his own words, and the common-sense inferences from the indications furnished by it. That St. Peter wrote this Epistle to churches in Asia Minor mainly consisting of Gentile converts: that those churches had been previously the scene of the labours of St. Paul and his companions: that he wrote from Babylon in Assyria, and at a time subsequent to St. Paul's missionary agency: these are points which can hardly be controverted, consistently with the plain acceptation of language in its obvious and ordinary meaning. That the same Apostle visited Rome and suffered martyrdom there, we would fain believe as the testimony of Christian antiquity. It is difficult to believe it: difficult to assign the time so as to satisfy its requisitions: but in the uncertainty which rests over all the later movements of the great Apostles, it would be presumption for us to pronounce it impossible. There may be means of reconciling the two beliefs, of which we are not aware. And since this may be so, we are not unreasonable in retaining both, both being reasonably attested.

19. One personal notice has not been mentioned in the foregoing paragraphs, viz. that of Silvanus having been the bearer of the Epistle (ch. v. 12). And the reason for its omission has been, that it is far too uncertain to found any argument on as to date or locality. Even assuming him to be the same person as the Silas of Acts xv. 22, 32, 40; xvi. 19, 25; xvii. 4, 10, 14; xviii. 5, or the Silvanus of 1 Thess. i. 1, 2 Thess. i. 1, 2 Cor. i. 19,—we know absolutely nothing of his history subsequently to that period of his companionship with St. Paul, and all that is founded on any filling up of the gap in his history can only tend to mislead, by giving to baseless conjecture the value of real fact.

## SECTION V.

### ITS OBJECT AND CONTENTS.

1. The object of the Epistle is plainly enough announced by the Apostle himself at its conclusion:

*"By Silvanus . . . . I have written in few words, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand."*

2. But this apparently simple declaration is not easy to track to its

meaning in detail. The "*exhorting*" portion of it involves no difficulty. The frequent exhortations in the Epistle, arising out of present circumstances, are too evident to be missed as being referred to by this word. And when we come to the "*testifying*" portion, our difficulty is not indeed to find matter in the Epistle to which this may refer, but to identify the meaning of **this**, to which, as being the "*true grace of God*," the Apostle's testimony is given. The *testimonies* in the Epistle are plainly those constant references of practice to Christian doctrine with which every exhortation terminates: being sometimes Old Test. citations, sometimes remindings of facts in the evangelic history, sometimes assertions of the great hope which is reserved for God's elect.

3. Here there can be but little doubt: *exhortation* and *testimony* alternate with and interpenetrate one another throughout the whole. It is only when we come to assign a meaning to the word **this**, further specified as it is by the expression "*in which ye stand*," that the real definition of the object of the Epistle comes before us, and with it, all its uncertainty and difficulty. What is this grace of God in which the readers were to stand—or rather, into which they had been introduced as their safe standing ground? Obviously in the answer to this question is contained the Apostle's motive for writing.

4. And as obviously, this answer is not to be found within the limits of the Epistle itself. For no such complete setting forth of Christian doctrine is found in it, as might be referred to in such terms: only a continual reminding, an *additional testimony* (so the word literally means), a bearing testimony to something previously known, received, and stood in, with such expressions as "*knowing that*," and such assertions as "*whom not having seen ye love*," and frequent repetitions of **because** and **for**, as falling back on previously known truths.

5. And this is further shewn by the words "*in which ye stand*," referring to a body of doctrinal teaching in which the readers had been grounded. Compare the parallel, which surely is not fortuitous, in 1 Cor. xv. 1: "*The Gospel which I preached unto you, which ye also received, in which ye also stand*,"—and our assurance that such a reference is intended will be further confirmed.

6. But to what body of doctrine does the Apostle refer? Clearly not to one imparted by himself. There is not the remotest hint in the Epistle of his ever having been among the "*elect sojourners*" whom he addresses. As clearly again, not to one fortuitously picked up here and there: the allusions are too marked, the terms used throughout the Epistle too definite for this to be the case. It was not merely the Pentecostal message in its simplicity which these readers had received, nor are they to be sought in the earlier and less definite times of Christian teaching,—nor was the object of writing only general edification: there had been a previous building of them up, a general type of Chris-

tian doctrine delivered to them: and it was to confirm this mainly that the Apostle writes to them, exhorting them to holy practice, and “stirring up their pure minds by way of remembrance.”

7. It is hardly needful, after what has been already said respecting the churches addressed, to repeat, that this body of Christian teaching I believe to have been that delivered to them by St. Paul and his companions, and still taught among them after his decease by those who had heard him and were watering where he had planted. All the acuteness of such writers as Weiss, who maintain the negative to this, has only the more convinced me that the view is the right and only tenable one.

8. That St. Peter follows out the object not in a spirit dependent on St. Paul’s teaching; that he uses, not the expressions and thoughts of that Apostle, but his own, is no more than we should expect from his standing, and personal characteristics; and is not for a moment to be adduced as against the view here maintained, that his object was to build up and establish those churches which had been founded and fostered under the Apostle of the Gentiles. This will be further elucidated in the next section.

9. The contents of the Epistle are summarily but lucidly given by Steiger; which he prefaces by this remark: “It is not easy to give a logically arranged table of the contents, in a case where the Writer himself does not lay down an abstract division of his subject with a main and subordinate plan, but goes from one idea to another, not indeed with violent transitions, but still not according to logical connexion, only according to that of the subjects themselves. Besides, the changes are in general so imperceptibly made, that we can hardly tell when we are approaching them.”

10. He then gives the following table:

	ch.	ver.
Address to the elect of the triune God . . . . .	i.	1, 2.
Preciousness of that mercy of God which has thus chosen them to salvation . . . . .		3—5;
manifested even in their temporal trials . . . . .		6—9.
Salvation of which prophets spoke, and which angels desire to look into . . . . .		10—12.
Therefore the duty of enduring hope, and of holi- ness in the fear of God . . . . .		13—17:
[considering the precious blood paid as the price of their ransom] . . . . .		18—21;
and of self-purification [as begotten of God’s eter- nal word] . . . . .		22—25;
and of growth in the Truth . . . . .	ii.	1—3;
and of building up on Christ as a spiritual priest- hood . . . . .		4, 5:

	ch.	ver.
Who is to the faithful precious, but to the disobedient a stone of stumbling . . . . .	6—	10.
The duty of pure conversation among the heathen . . . . . of obedience to authorities . . . . .	13—	17;
. . . . . to masters, even when innocently suffering at their hands . . . . .	18—	20
[for such is the calling of those, for whom Christ suffered innocently] . . . . .	21—	25
. . . to husbands . . . . . iii.	1—	6
[reciprocal duty of husbands] . . . . .		7
. . . all, to one another, being kind and gentle; and even to enemies . . . . .	8—	17;
. . . for Christ so suffered and so lives, for the living and the dead . . . . .	18—	20:
and through His resurrection and exaltation saves us by Baptism . . . . . iii.	20—	22.
Thus then die to sin and live to God, for Christ is ready to judge all . . . . . iv.	1—	7:
. . . watching, edifying one another, and glorifying God . . . . .	8—	11:
. . . submitting to trial as the proof of your participation in Christ's sufferings . . . . .	12—	19.
Elders, tend His flock, for His sake . . . . . v.	1—	4:
younger, be subject: all, be humble . . . . .	5,	6:
full of trust: watchful: resisting the devil . . . . .	7—	9:
and may He who has graciously called you, after short suffering, strengthen and bless you . . . . .	10,	11.
The bearer and aim of the Epistle: salutations; concluding blessing . . . . .	12—	14.

## SECTION VI.

## CHARACTER AND STYLE.

1. Some Commentators who have impugned the genuineness of our Epistle, have objected to it a want of distinctive character, and have alleged that it is less the work of an individual mind than a series of compilations from the works of others, mainly St. Paul and St. James.

2. This however has been distinctly, and as it seems to me successfully denied by others, and especially by Weiss in his work on the Epistle. It is hardly possible for an unprejudiced person to help tracing in the character of it, marks of individuality, and a peculiar type of apprehension of Christian doctrine. That St. Peter was well acquainted with St.



Paul's teaching is certain, not from this Epistle only, but from the latter Apostle's own declaration in Gal. ii. 2, where he says, "*I imparted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those of note,*" of whom St. Peter certainly was one. That he had seen, and was familiar with, many of St. Paul's Epistles, is equally undeniable<sup>6</sup>. The coincidences in peculiar expression and sequence of thoughts are too marked to be accounted for by any participation in common forms of teaching and thinking, even had this latter been the case, which it was not. The coincidences now before us are of an entirely different nature from those in the Epistle to the Hebrews, with the exception perhaps of that one where an Old Test. citation is apparently taken from the Epistle to the Romans.

3. If we seek for tokens of individual character and independence, we shall find them at every turn. Such are, for instance, the designation of the whole Christian revelation as "*the grace of God,*" and treatment of it as such, which prevails throughout the Epistle. Compare ch. i. 3, where it is described as the power of regeneration: i. 10, where it is the salvation promised by the prophets: ii. 19, where it breaks forth even in sufferings: iv. 10, where it is distributed in spiritual gifts: v. 10, where it is the pledge of continued divine help: iii. 7, where it is itself the inheritance of life: i. 13, where it is the material of the revelation of Christ at His coming. And connected with this same, is the way in which 1) *God's acts of grace* are ever brought forward: e. g. i. 20, His foreordination of Christ: v. 10, i. 15, ii. 9, His call of His people: i. 3, 23, His new-begetting of them by His word through Christ's Resurrection: iv. 14, the resting of His Spirit on them: iv. 11, i. 5, v. 6, 10, His care for them in ministering strength to them, and guarding them by His power to salvation: and 2) *the connexion between God and His people* insisted on: e. g., ii. 9, 10; iv. 17, v. 2, generally: iii. 21, where Baptism is "*an enquiry towards God:*" ii. 19, where "*conscience of God,*" an expression nowhere else found, is a motive for enduring sufferings: iv. 11, where His glory is the ultimate motive of Christian action.

4. And in accordance with this constant setting forth of the reciprocal relation of God and His people, we find our Blessed Lord ever introduced as the *Mediator*: e. g. of things objective, as i. 3, of Regeneration;

<sup>6</sup> The following are a few of the most remarkable parallel passages: The address, as compared with that of Rom., 1 Cor., 2 Cor., &c.: ch. i. 5, with Gal. iii. 23: i. 21, with Rom. iv. 24: ii. 1, with Col. iii. 8 (James i. 21): ii. 6, with Rom. ix. 33 (x. 11): ii. 13, 14, with Rom. xiii. 1—4: ii. 16, with Gal. v. 13: ii. 18, with Eph. vi. 5, Col. iii. 22: ii. 21, with Rom. vi. 18: iii. 1 ff., with Eph. v. 22, 1 Tim. ii. 9, 1 Thess. iv. 4: iii. 8, 9, with Rom. xii. 10 ff.: iii. 22, with Rom. viii. 34, Eph. i. 21, 22: iv. 1, 2, with Rom. vi. 7: iv. 10, 11, with Rom. xii. 6—8: v. 1, with Rom. viii. 18: v. 8, with 1 Thess. v. 6: v. 10, 11, with (Heb. xiii. 20, 21) Phil. iv. 19, 20: v. 14, with Rom. xvi. 16, 1 Cor. xvi. 20, 1 Thess. v. 26.

iii. 21, of Baptism: of things subjective, as i. 21, of faith and hope; ii. 5, of acceptable works for God; iv. 11, of the power to glorify God. The central point of this mediatorial work is His Resurrection, i. 3, iii. 21; in subordination to which the other facts of Redemption are introduced, even where they occur without any necessary reference to it, as e. g., i. 11, 19—21, iii. 18, ii. 24, 25. And those particulars of Christ's agency are principally brought forward, which are connected with the Resurrection; e. g., His preaching to the imprisoned spirits, iii. 19 ff.; His Ascension, iii. 22; His lordship over His people, ii. 25; His future Revelation, i. 7, 13, and that with judgment, iv. 5. Every where it is less the historical Christ, than the exalted Christ of the present and of the future, that is before the Apostle; the Eternal One, i. 11, ii. 25. Even where His sufferings are mentioned, it is ever "*Christ*," or "*the Christ*:" not so much the humiliated One, as the glorified and anointed One of God, ii. 21; iii. 18 f.; iv. 1, 13. And this, partly because their present belief on Him, not their past experience or knowledge of Him, is that which is emphasized, i. 8; partly for the reason next to be noticed.

5. Another original and peculiar feature of our Epistle is, its constant reference and forward look to the *future*. This has been indeed by some exaggerated: as, e. g., Mayerhoff. Huther and Luthardt have considered *hope* as the central idea and subject of the Epistle: and Weiss adopts for St. Peter the title of *the Apostle of hope*. But the fact itself is not to be denied. Wherever we consult the Epistle, it is always the future to which the exhortations point: whether we regard the sufferings of Christ Himself, as pointing on to future glory, i. 11, iv. 13; or those of His followers, i. 6, 7, 9. Salvation itself is "*the end of faith*," i. 9; is the object of living (i. 3) and certain (i. 13) hope, i. 3, 13, 21, iii. 15. The same expectation appears as expressed in "*honour*," ii. 7; "*life*," iii. 10 (compare i. 3); "*glory*," v. 4, 10: and as a constantly present motive, ii. 2; v. 4. The nearness of this future blessedness throws the present life into the background, so that God's people are "*strangers*" and "*sojourners*," i. 1, 17; ii. 11. This is ever before the Apostle; both in reference to his readers, iv. 13, and to himself, v. 1.

6. Brückner, from whom in the main the foregoing remarks have been adopted, and who goes much further into detail in following out the same, lays stress on several interesting points of individual peculiarity, even where the modes of speech of St. Paul appear to be adopted by St. Peter; e. g., in the comparison of our ch. ii. 24 with Rom. vi. 8—14, where St. Paul's "*living to God*" would have been equally available for St. Peter, who uses "*living to righteousness*," which on account of the close comparison with Christ in St. Paul, would not have been so apposite for him: where again the "*dying to sin*" (a different word) of St. Paul is not adopted by St. Peter, though quite as well adapted to his purpose as

"to cease-to-live to sin," which he has used. In St. Paul, the death to sin is more a consequence of our union with Christ: in St. Peter, of Christ's having done away sin. The latter, as in other places, approaches nearer to St. John's form of thought and diction.

7. He shews the same with regard to the idea of the Christian *calling of God*: to that of "*hope*;" of "*obedience*;" of Christian liberty, as in the one Apostle (Gal. v. 13) the *occasion*, in the other the *cloke* of sin (ch. ii. 16), and besides found in James i. 25, ii. 12, and in John viii. 36: to that of the *spiritual gifts*; of the Christian reward; and several other cases which at first sight seem alike. In all these there is reason to believe that our Apostle, though speaking sometimes exceedingly like St. Paul and possibly from reminiscence of his Epistles, yet drew from another fountain within himself, and had a treasure of spiritual knowledge and holy inspiration distinct from that of St. Paul, incorporated with his own individual habits of thought.

8. And this is confirmed by observing, that it is not with St. Paul only that such affinities are found, but as before observed, with St. John, and with other of the New Test. writers<sup>7</sup>. And by seeing, that in many expressions St. Peter stands quite alone.<sup>8</sup> Add to which, that in several glimpses, which in the course of treatment of other subjects he gives us, of things mysterious and unknown, we evidently see that such revelations come from a storehouse of divine knowledge, which could reveal much more, had it seemed good to Him by whom the hand and thoughts of the Apostle were guided<sup>9</sup>.

9. As regards the *style* of our Epistle it has an unmistakable and distinctive character of its own<sup>1</sup>, arising very much from the mixed

<sup>7</sup> Compare ch. i. 23 with 1 John iii. 9: i. 22 (ii. 2) with 1 John iii. 3: ii. 24 with 1 John iii. 7: iii. 13 with 3 John 11: v. 2 with John x. 16: iii. 18 with 1 John ii. 1, iii. 7: i. 19 with John i. 29: iv. 2 with 1 John ii. 16 f.: ii. 24 with Heb. ix. 28, 1 John iii. 5: i. 2 with Heb. xii. 24: v. 4 with Heb. xiii. 20: iii. 18 with Heb. ix. 28: ii. 5 with Heb. xiii. 15. In almost all of the supposed imitations of St. James, Old Test. citations are the material which forms ground common to both Apostles. This is the case with i. 6 f. compared with James i. 2: i. 24 with James i. 10: v. 5 with James i. 6, 10: iv. 8 with James v. 20.

<sup>8</sup> As e. g. "*gone to heaven*," ch. iii. 22: "*a kiss of love*," v. 14: "*conscience of God*," ii. 19: "*living hope*," i. 3: "*an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, unfading*," ib. 4. See a copious list given in Davidson, p. 386.

<sup>9</sup> See ch. i. 10, 11; iii. 10, 21; iv. 6, 17; v. 1, 8.

<sup>1</sup> The similarity between the diction of the Epistle and St. Peter's recorded speeches in the Acts, has been often noticed. Compare 1 Pet. ii. 7 with Acts iv. 11: i. 12 with Acts v. 32: ii. 24 with Acts v. 30, x. 39: v. 1 with Acts ii. 32, iii. 15: i. 10 with Acts iii. 18, x. 43: i. 21 with Acts iii. 15, x. 40: iv. 5 with Acts x. 42: i. 21 with Acts iii. 16: ii. 24 with Acts iii. 19, 26. In connexion of sentence with sentence also (see below par. 10) there is great similarity: compare Acts iii. 21, "*Christ Jesus, whom it behoves . . . of all things which He spoke . . .*" besides the same spirit, and view of the Gospel facts and announcements, being manifest throughout. Compare

nature of the contents, and the fervid and at the same time practical rather than dialectical spirit of its Writer. There is in it no logical inference, properly so called: no evolving of one thought from another. The word "*wherefore*" occurs only in connexion with imperatives introducing practical inferences: "*because*" only as substantiating motives to Christian practice by Scripture citation or by sacred facts: "*for*" mostly in similar connexions. The link between one idea and another is found not in any progress of unfolding thought or argument, but in the last word of the foregoing sentence, which is taken up and followed out in the new one<sup>2</sup>.

10. It has been noticed that the same thought is often repeated again, and in nearly the same words. This is consistent with the fervid and earnest spirit of the Apostle: which however, as might be expected from what we know of him, was chastened by a sense of his own weakness and need of divine upholding grace. There is no Epistle in the sacred Canon, the language and spirit of which come more directly home to the personal trials and wants and weaknesses of the Christian life. Its affectionate warnings and strong consolation have ever been treasured up close to the hearts of the weary and heavy-laden but onward-pressing servants of God. The mind of our Father towards us, the aspect of our blessed Lord as presented to us, the preparation by sufferings for our heavenly inheritance, all these as here set forth, are peculiarly lovely and encouraging. And the motives to holy purity spring direct out of the simple and childlike recognition of the will of our Heavenly Father to bring us to His glory.

11. All who have worthily commented on the Epistle have spoken in similar strains of its character and style. "Wonderful is the gravity and alacrity of Peter's discourse, most agreeably holding the reader's attention," says Bengel. "This Epistle has the vehemence agreeable to the disposition of the chief of the Apostles," says Grotius. And Erasmus calls it "an Epistle quite worthy of the chief of the Apostles, full of apostolical authority and dignity, sparing in words, fertile in thoughts, &c." And recently Wiesinger sums up thus his characteristic of the Epistle: "Certainly, it entirely agrees in tone and feeling with what we have before said of the character of the Apostle. His warm self-devotion

e. g. the summary of that part of his first speech which is not recorded, "*save yourselves from this crooked generation,*" Acts ii. 40, with the frequent exhortations in our Epistle to separation from the heathen world.

<sup>2</sup> See e. g. ch. i. ver. 4, "*you*" . . . ver. 5, "*who are*" . . . ver. 8, "*whom*" . . . ver. 9, "*salvation*" . . . ver. 10, "*of which the prophets*" . . . ver. 12, "*unto whom*" . . . &c., &c. And so we might proceed through the Epistle.

<sup>3</sup> Compare ch. iii. 1 with iii. 16, and with ii. 1: iv. 3 with i. 14 and ii. 11: iv. 12 with i. 6—9: iv. 14 with iii. 14, 17, and with ii. 20: v. 8 with iv. 7, and with i. 13.

to the Lord, his practical piety and his active disposition, are all reflected in it. How full is his heart of the hope of the revelation of the Lord! With what earnestness does he exhort his readers to lift their eyes above the sufferings of the present to this future glory, and in hope of it to stand firm against all temptation! He who in loving impatience cast himself into the sea to meet the Lord, is also the man who most earnestly testifies to the hope of His return:—he who dated his own faith from the sufferings of his Master, is never weary in holding up the suffering form of the Lord before the eyes of his readers to comfort and stimulate them:—he before whom the death of a martyr is in assured expectation, is the man who most thoroughly, and in the greatest variety of aspects, sets forth the duty and the power, as well as the consolation, of suffering for Christ. If we had not known from whom the Epistle comes, we must have said, It must be a Rock of the church who thus writes: a man whose own soul rests on the living Rock, and who here, with the strength of his testimony, takes in hand to secure the souls of others, and against the harassing storm of present tribulation to ground them on the true Rock of ages.” The whole may be summed up by saying, that the entire Epistle is the following out of our Lord’s command to its Writer, “And thou, when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”

It will be observed that I have throughout this chapter abstained from introducing considerations and comparisons of the Second Epistle of St. Peter. I have done this, because I wished to keep the first Epistle clear of all the doubt and difficulty which surround the treatment of the other, which I have reserved entire for the following chapter.

<sup>4</sup> I cannot forbear, as caring above all for the spiritual life in God of the students of His holy word, recommending to them most strongly the commentary of our own Archbishop Leighton, as a devotional subsidiary to their critical and exegetical studies of this Epistle. To the mere scholar, it may not present much matter of interest; but to one who wishes that the mind of God’s Spirit, speaking in the Apostle, may live and grow within his own breast, no writer on Scripture that I know furnishes a more valuable help than Leighton.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

## SECTION I.

## OBJECT, CONTENTS, AND OCCASION OF THE EPISTLE.

1. I THINK it best to approach the difficult question of the genuineness of this Epistle, by a consideration of the internal characteristics of the writing itself.

2. Its general object is nowhere so distinctly declared, as that of 1 Peter in v. 12 (ch. iii. 1, 2 being *special*). But the two concluding verses contain in them the double aim which has been apparent through the whole. In iii. 17 we read, "*Knowing before, take heed lest ye being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness,*" and in iii. 18, "*Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*" These two, the prohibitory and the hortatory, are the objects of the Epistle. The former is the introduction to the latter, which, as might be expected, is the main and ultimate aim.

3. And this ultimate aim is apparent from the very beginning. Ch. i. 1—11 is devoted to fervent enforcing of it. Then i. 12—21, laying down the grounds on which the "*knowledge*" rests, viz. apostolic testimony and prophetic announcement, forms a transition to the description, ch. ii., of the false prophets and teachers who were even then coming in, and should wax onward in activity and influence. Then in ch. iii., the further error of false teachers in scorning and disbelieving the promise of the coming of the Lord is stigmatized and refuted, and the Epistle concludes with a general reference to the Epistles of St. Paul, as teaching these same truths, and as being perverted like the other Scriptures by the ignorant and unstable.

Throughout all, one purpose and one spirit is manifest. The "*knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*" is ever the condition of salvation (ch. i. 8; ii. 20; iii. 18). Sometimes we have it on the side of knowledge of the Father who hath called us (i. 2, 3), sometimes on that of knowledge of the gospel as the way of righteousness (ii. 21: compare ii. 2). This **knowledge** is the central point of the Christian life, both theoretically and practically considered: it is the vehicle of the divine agency in us, and so of our highest participation of God (i. 3, 4): it is the means of escape from the pollutions of the world (ii. 20),—the crowning point of Christian virtues (i. 8),—the means of access into Christ's kingdom (i. 11).



And the side of our Lord's own Person and Office on which attention is fixed is not so much His historical life, as His "*might*" and "*authority*" in His exalted state of triumph (i. 16). The promises which are introduced refer to His second coming and kingdom (i. 4; iii. 4, 13).

4. And in this peculiar setting forth of the Christian life must we look for the necessary bringing out of the dangers of seduction by false teachers, and the placing of this knowledge and these promises over against it. The "*false teachers*" (ii. 1; "*lawless men*," iii. 17) are described partly theoretically, as denying the lordship of our glorified Saviour which He has won by Redemption (ii. 1, contrasted with His *might*, i. 16), and His promise of coming again (iii. 1 ff., contrasted with His *presence*, i. 16),—partly practically,—as slandering God's way of righteousness (ii. 2) and His majesty (ii. 10 ff.),—as disgracing their profession of Christian freedom (ii. 19),—as degraded by a vicious life (ii. 13),—full of lust and covetousness (ii. 14),—speaking swelling words (ii. 18), deserters of the right way (ii. 15 f.), traitors (ii. 17), seducing the unstable (ii. 14, 18),—the objects of God's inevitable judgment (ii. 3—9, 17),—preparing destruction for themselves (ii. 12, 19), and the more so, because their guilt is increased by the sin of apostasy (ii. 20—22).

5. In strong contrast and counterpoise against both sides of this heretical error stands their *knowledge*: against the former of them, in its theoretical aspect, as the right knowledge of the power and coming of Christ (i. 16: see above): against the latter, in its practical, as insight into the *way of righteousness*. This latter contrast is ever brought up in the description of the false teachers in ch. ii. Noah, as *an herald of righteousness*, is excepted from the judgment of the Flood (ii. 5): Lot, as "*righteous*," from that of Sodom (ii. 7, 8): God knows how to punish the "*unrighteous*," and rescue the "*godly*" (ii. 9): the heretics are described as having left the "*straight way*" (ii. 15), and the example of Balaam applied to them (ii. 15, 16). And accordingly it is the "*knowledge of Jesus Christ*" which is to preserve the readers from "*corruption*" (i. 4; cf. ii. 12), and from falling away (i. 10).

6. This main subject of the Epistle, which not only occasions the minute depiction of the adversaries, but also keeps together the whole, is, notwithstanding the parenthetical allusions and polemical digressions, in close coherence. The later portions are all based on the earlier. Thus ch. i. 16 ff. is the foundation of ii. 1 ff., iii. 1 ff.: thus the conclusion is in intimate connexion with the opening, the same union of "*knowledge*," "*grace*," and "*peace*," being found in both (i. 2; iii. 14, 18): thus the words, "*that ye fall not from your own stedfastness*," iii. 17, refer back to i. 10, 12: thus the conditioning clause, "*having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust*," i. 4, is remembered in the warning "*beware lest, being led away together with the error*"

of the wicked," &c., iii. 17; and the more detailed exhortation of i. 5—8 is compressed together in the shorter "*but grow in grace,*" &c., of iii. 17. Thus also the qualifying expression, "*in the righteousness,*" ch. i. 1, is borne in mind in ii. 21 and iii. 13. So again, iii. 1 takes up again i. 13, and the words "*by the holy prophets*" of iii. 2, refer back to i. 19. In fact, the contents of this short Epistle are bound together by the closest and most intimate connexion and coherence.

7. The above notices will make sufficiently plain the occasion of the Epistle. It was, the prompting of a holy desire to build up and confirm the readers, in especial reference to certain destructive forms of error in doctrine and practice which were then appearing and would continue to wax onward.

8. If we seek to fix historically the heretics here marked out, we find the same difficulty as ever besets similar enquiries in the apostolic Epistles. They are rather the germs of heresies that are described, than the heresies themselves as known to us in their ripeness afterwards. These germs ever found their first expansion in the denial of those distinctive doctrines of the Gospel which most closely involve Christian practice and ensure Christian watchfulness. First came the loosening of the bands which constrained man by the love of Christ and waiting for Him; then when true liberty was lost, followed the bondage of fanciful theological systems and self-imposed creeds. The living God-man vanished first out of the field of love and hope and obedience, and then His place was taken by the great Tempter and leader captive of souls.

9. So that when we enquire to which known class of subsequent heretics the description in our Epistle applies,—whether to the Carpocratians as Grotius believed, or to the Sadducees, as Bertholdt, or to the Gnostics, or Nicolaitans, as others, the reply in each case must be, that we cannot identify any of these precisely with those here described: that the delineation is both too wide and too narrow for each in succession: but that (and it is an important result for the question of the date of our Epistle) we are here standing at a point higher up than any of these definite names of sects: during the great moral ferment of the first fatal apostasy, which afterwards distributed itself into various divisions and sects.

## SECTION II.

### FOR WHAT READERS IT WAS WRITTEN.

1. The readers are nowhere expressly defined. By ch. iii. 1, it would appear that they are identical with at all events a portion of those to whom the first Epistle was addressed. And to this the expression of

ch. i. 15, "on each occasion which offers," seems also to point: besides appearing to refer to some previous personal connexion of the Writer with his readers. This latter has frequently been assumed from ch. i. 16; but without necessity; see note there. All that is there assumed is that which is also stated in ch. i. 1, the delivery of the truths and faith of the Gospel to them by competent eye-witnesses, of whom the Writer (in office, but not necessarily in connexion with themselves) had been one.

2. The address, ch. i. 1, is more general than that of the first Epistle: the words of warning and exhortation are for all who bore the Christian name. The dangers described were imminent throughout the then Christian world. And the expressions, whether of praise and encouragement, or of caution, must be taken as generally applicable to all believers in Christ, rather than as descriptive of the peculiar situation of any circle of churches at any one time.

3. Of necessity, the same general view must not be taken of the enemies of the faith here depicted. The city of God, with its bulwarks and towers, is ever the same: this was a special attack beginning to be made on it by a body of foes of a special character. The firmness and watchfulness which seem to be predicated of the readers (ch. i. 12, iii. 17, i. 19) are rather assumptions, certain to be true of true believers, than statements of objective matter of fact: whereas the depravities and errors of the heretics, as far as spoken of in the present, were things actually occurring under the Apostle's notice. This must be borne in mind, or we shall be liable to go wrong in our inference respecting those addressed.

4. On the other hand it must be borne in mind, that the Apostle's field of view, as he looked over the church, would naturally be bounded by the lines which marked out the cycle of his own observation: that those to whom he had before written would be on this second occasion nearest to his thoughts: and by consequence, that when he seems to address these readers as in the main identical with those, this inference must not be carried too far, but allowance made for the margin which may fairly be granted to each Epistle: for expanding the apparent limited character of the former address towards that more general reference which was sure to have been in the Apostle's mind: and for contracting the very wide address of this one merely by believing that in writing he would fix his thoughts on those whom he knew and especially cared for.

5. If it be said, as it has been, that we find no trace, in the former Epistle, of the peculiar kind of adversaries of the faith of whom so much is here said, and on the other hand nothing in this Epistle of the persecutions, which bore so considerable a part in the matters treated in the former one: the answer to both these is exceedingly easy. A very

short time would suffice for the springing up, or for the becoming formidable, of these deadly forms of error. As the Apostles were one by one removed by death, on the one hand their personal influence in checking evil tendencies was withdrawn, on the other that coming of Christ, of which they had once confidently spoken as to be in their own time, became in danger of being disbelieved. This would be a sufficient reason for the one supposed difficulty: and as regards the other, it is quite answer enough to say, that this second Epistle being written on a special occasion and for a special object, is, as we have seen, coherently and consistently devoted to that object, and does not, in its course, travel out of its way to speak of things with which the first Epistle was concerned. It is obvious that, supposing the two to have been written by the same person, he is not likely to have dwelt again in his second letter on things already brought forward in his first.

6. Besides, it has been not unjustly thought that we *can* discover traces in our Epistle of the same characteristics as those which marked the readers of the former one, or of others which would be probably subsequent to them. We have there the caution to take care that none of them suffer as an evil doer, "*a murderer,*" "*a thief,*" "*an evil doer,*" "*a busybody in other men's matters*" (iv. 15); which seems to contain in it the seed of that further development of evil among Christians, which we find actual in this Epistle. Again the neglect of the caution there, "*gird up the loins of your mind, being sober: hope fervently for the grace that is being brought unto you in the revelation of Jesus Christ*" (i. 13), would lead exactly to the dissolute lives here described of those who had ceased to hope for his coming. There is close connexion between 1 Pet. ii. 16, "*as free, and not as using your liberty for a cloke of your maliciousness*" . . . and 2 Pet. ii. 19, "*promising them liberty, while they themselves are the slaves of corruption:*" between the cautions there given against pride (v. 5—7), and the "*speaking great swelling words of vanity*" of our ch. ii. 18. And the same analogies might be carried yet further, shewing that from the circumstances of the readers which respectively underlie the one and the other Epistle, this may well have been a sequel to, and consequent on, the former.

### SECTION III.

#### ON THE RELATION BETWEEN THIS EPISTLE AND THAT OF JUDE.

1. It is well known that, besides various scattered resemblances, a long passage occurs, included in the limits Jude vv. 3—19, 2 Peter ii. 1—19, describing in both cases the heretical enemies of the Gospel, couched in terms so similar as to preclude all idea of entire independence. If considerations of human probability are here, as every where

else, to be introduced into our estimate of the Sacred Writings, then either one saw and used the text of the other, or both drew from a common document, or a common source of oral apostolic teaching.

2. Setting aside the supposition of a common documentary source, as not answering to the curious phenomena of concurrence and divergence, no one can say that the latter alternative *may not* have been the case: that a portion of oral teaching spoken originally in the power of the Spirit, may not, in its reproduction, have become deflected as we here see. Were the case in strict analogy with that of the three Gospels, we should have no hesitation in adopting this hypothesis. But the cases are not similar. For we have first to add to the phenomena of this passage the remarkable coincidences elsewhere, where no such common portion of teaching could have been concerned: and then to observe, that the coincidences and divergences in the passage itself do not entirely bear out the hypothesis. There is an intent and consistent purpose plainly visible in them, which is altogether absent, unless the wildest fancies be allowed to come into play, from the common text of passages in the three Gospels.

3. We have then to fall back on the supposition, that one of the Sacred Writers saw and used the text of the other. And if this is to be so, there can be but little hesitation in answering the enquiry, on which side the preference lies as to priority and originality. The grounds of that answer have indeed been amplified and exaggerated, beyond what we can fairly concede: but still in the main they are irrefragable. We cannot see, with De Wette and others, that St. Peter is less fresh or individual in his expressions and turns of thought than St. Jude: but, conceding to both Writers originality and individuality of thought, it is then for us to ascertain by inspection, which text bears the air of being the free outflow of the first thought, which the working up of the other for a purpose slightly differing.

4. The portion of the common matter which will best serve us for this purpose is that in which the traditional and historical examples are adduced, 2 Pct. ii. 1—16; Jude 4—11. In this passage the object of St. Jude is to set forth the “**ungodly** men who turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and deny the only Master, and our Lord Jesus Christ.” The persons described by St. Peter are not the same, in however many common points the characters coincide. With him they are **false teachers**, answering to the “*false prophets among the people*” of old: like the others, they are described as “denying the Master [that bought them],” with the words in brackets characteristically inserted. In Peter (ii. 1) we have merely a reminiscence of the first historical notice in Jude (ver. 5), consisting in his specifying the false *teachers* as answering to the false *prophets* among the people, as contrasted with the true ones of whom he has been speaking (i. 19—21). It was not to his

purpose to mention the destruction of the *unbelieving* (Jude 5), and therefore he slightly passes this example with a mere allusion. I submit that this will not bear the converse hypothesis: that the weighty and pregnant sentence in St. Jude could not be the result of the passing hint "*among the people*" of St. Peter, nor can that hint be accounted for except as a reminiscence of St. Jude.

5. Passing to the next example, that of the sinning angels, we find the same even more strikingly exemplified. St. Jude is writing of apostates, and sets forth their fate by that of the angels, "*which kept not their proper dignity, but left their own habitation:*" in allusion (see note there) to Gen. vi. 2, their going after strange flesh, a sin after the manner of which Sodom and Gomorrah also sinned in after time (Jude 6, note). This special notice, so apposite to St. Jude's subject, is contracted in St. Peter into the mere mention of "*the angels which sinned.*" Here it is most natural to suppose, that the special notice preceded the general.

6. The next example in St. Peter is one exactly to the point for which he is adducing the whole series, viz., to shew God's power both to punish and to deliver, but, on one side at least, inapposite to St. Jude's purpose. It is found in St. Peter alone. But the reason why I adduce it here is, to remark, that, had St. Peter's been the original, St. Jude would have hardly failed to insert in his examples that portion of this one which so exactly tallied with his purpose, "*He spared not the old world, . . . bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly.*"

7. The next example, that of Sodom and Gomorrah, is found in St. Jude in strict connexion and analogy with that which has immediately preceded it, viz. that of the angels. This connexion is broken in St. Peter, no such particular as that on which it depends being found in his mention of the angels' sin. These cities are adduced only as an example to those who intended to be ungodly, and, which is again noteworthy, the mention of the rescue of Lot is appended, conformably with that which we remarked in the preceding paragraph.

8. It is further to be noticed with respect to this same example, that St. Jude describes the cities as "*for an example, suffering the just punishment by eternal fire,*" whereas St. Peter has resolved this, which might seem to imply the eternity of the fire which consumed those cities, into a fuller and historical account, retaining the feature of their being a warning to the impious: "*burning them to ashes, condemned them to be overthrown, laying down an example of those that should in after time live ungodly.*" Here again I submit that the converse hypothesis is inconceivable.

9. Again, in the description which follows in St. Peter (ver. 9), we have a characteristic continuation of his main subject, the rescue of the righteous united with the punishment of the wicked, and then, with



“*but chiefly,*” he returns to the particular characters here under description, and takes up the two traits which form the main subject in St. Jude, ver. 8; so that we have the original “*In like manner nevertheless these dreamers also defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities,*” represented by “*but chiefly them that go after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous, self-willed, they are not afraid to rail at dignities:*” where again I submit that none can doubt for a moment which sacred Writer preceded the other.

10. The next example even more strikingly shews the same. St. Jude cites at length from some apocryphal book, probably that called the *taking up or ascension of Moses*, an instance of the different conduct of mighty angels in contending with God’s adversaries. St. Peter (ver. 11) merely asserts generally that such is the conduct of mighty angels, but gives no hint of an allusion to the fact on which the general assertion is based; nor does the great Adversary appear in his sentence, but in his stead are substituted these heretics themselves; “*whereas angels, though they be greater in strength and might, bring not railing judgment against them.*” This, standing as it does thus by itself, would constitute, were it not for the original in St. Jude being extant, the most enigmatical sentence in the New Testament.

11. I shall not treat at length every separate verse, but shall only remark, that as we pass on through 2 Pet. ii. 12 ff., while this view of the priority of St. Jude is at every step confirmed, we derive some interesting notices of the way in which the passage in our Epistle has been composed: viz. by the Apostle having in his thoughts the passage in St. Jude, and adapting such portions of it as the Spirit guided him to see fit, taking sometimes the mere sound of St. Jude’s words to express a different thought, sometimes, as we saw above, contracting and omitting, sometimes expanding and inserting, as suited his purpose. Thus while in St. Jude we have the comparison “*as the irrational animals*” simply introduced with reference to certain things which the persons under description know naturally and use corruptly, in St. Peter it is the heretics themselves who are “*as irrational animals,*” the additional point of comparison is introduced, that they are born naturally for capture and destruction, and the *are corrupted* of St. Jude is made to serve a very different purpose,—“*shall even perish in their corruption.*” So in 2 Pet. ii. 13, in the reminiscence of the passage, rocks (*spilades*) of Jude 12 becomes spots (*spiloi*) and blemishes,—“*in your love-feasts*” (*agapais*) of St. Jude becomes “*in their deceits*” (*apatais*). So in 2 Pet. ii. 17, we have somewhat similar figures to those in Jude 13, but whereas originally it was “*waves of the sea foaming out their own shame,*” and “*wandering stars, for whom the blackness of darkness is reserved for ever,*” in the latter text it becomes, more suitably to St. Peter’s purpose of depicting

false teachers, “wells without water,” and “mists driven by a whirlwind;” for whom “the blackness of darkness is reserved.”

12. In ver. 11, St. Jude, fervidly borne along in his impassioned invective, collects together three instances of Old Test. transgressors, to all of whom he compares those whom he is stigmatizing. They were murderers like Cain, covetous like Balaam, rebellious like Korah. But out of these St. Peter, dealing with *false teachers*, whom he is comparing with the *false prophets* of old, selects Balaam only, and goes at length (vv. 15, 16) into his sin and his rebuke. Can any one persuade us that in the impetuous whirlwind of St. Jude’s invective he adopted and abridged the example furnished by St. Peter, prefixing and adding those of Cain and Korah?

## SECTION IV.

### AUTHENTICITY.

1. As regards the external grounds for or against the authenticity of this Epistle, we have very various opinions. Dietlein<sup>5</sup> finds traces of its use in the earliest apostolic Fathers; in Polycarp, in Ignatius, in the Epistle of Barnabas, in Clement of Rome. Most of these however are very shadowy and fanciful: some of them even absurd. The explanation of the coincidence in these cases is generally to be sought in the fact that these writers had the same sources to draw from, in the main, as the Apostle, viz. Old Test. prophecy, and the common-places of Christian teaching: and this being so, it would be strange indeed if we did not find such coincidence in insulated words and occasional phrases.

2. A few however of the instances adduced from the Apostolic Fathers are worth notice: not as by any means proving the use by them of this Epistle, but as remarkable in connexion with the question before us. Such are 1) Hermas, in the work called “The Shepherd:” “Listen to the weight of both, delicate living and torment. Of delicate living and of self-deception the time is one hour: but of torment the hours each have the force of thirty days. If then a man live delicately, and deceive himself one day, and be tormented one day, &c.,” as compared with “*counting as pleasure that delicate living which is but for a day*,” 2 Pet. ii. 13, where see note: 2) Clement of Rome: “Noah preached repentance;” and again, “Noah, being found faithful, preached, by his ministration, regeneration to the world:” and again, in speaking of Lot’s deliverance out of Sodom, “The Master made it evident, that He does not desert those who hope in Him, but appoints the

<sup>5</sup> In his work on the 2nd Epistle of Peter, Berlin, 1851, with which I have been much disappointed, in point both of scholarship and logic.

backsliders to punishment and torment . . . that it may be known to all that the double-minded and doubters about God's power are for condemnation and for an example to all generations."

3. Neither the Epistle of Barnabas, nor Justin Martyr, nor Theophilus of Antioch, nor Irenæus, can be fairly adduced as citing or alluding to our Epistle. This assertion may surprise the reader who is acquainted with the strong assertions and easy assumptions of Dietlein. But let him take them one by one and examine them strictly and impartially, and he will find them all in succession prove worthless, except as shewing that primitive Christianity had a Greek vocabulary of its own to express its doctrines and convey its exhortations, which the Apostles and their immediate successors used in common. Neither does the ancient fragment known as the canon of Muratori make any mention of our Epistle. Neither does Tertullian, nor Cyprian, nor Clement of Alexandria in any of his extant works.

4. There is a passage in Hippolytus on Antichrist, which seems to be an amplification of 2 Pet. i. 21;—speaking of the prophets, he says: "For they spoke not out of their own strength, nor did they proclaim what things they themselves would, but first of all by means of the divine word they reasoned correctly, and then by means of visions they foretold future events rightly, and then with their persuasion they said the things which were revealed to them by God, but hidden from other men." Still, striking as the similarity is, we cannot venture to affirm that the inference is really a sound one, any more than in the case of that place in Theophilus of Antioch: "But men of God, being spiritually borne on by the Holy Spirit, and becoming prophets, inspired and gifted with wisdom by God Himself, were taught of God."

5. Eusebius reports of Clement of Alexandria, "that he in his book called *Hypotyposes*, made short expositions of all the canonical Scriptures; not passing over even the disputed books, such as that of Jude, and the rest of the Catholic Epistles, and that of Barnabas, and that called the Apocalypse of Peter." And so also says Cassiodorus, who however seems to assert, in another passage, that these expositions were only of 1 Peter, 1 and 2 John, and James.

6. The judgment between these conflicting testimonies must apparently be given on the side of Eusebius, and Cassiodorus's first assertion. For Eusebius mentions expressly the Epistle of Jude, as one of those on which Clement commented, whereas by the last-cited statement of Cassiodorus it is excluded. Still even thus we have no express mention of our Epistle, but can only include it by inference among the *disputed books* of which Eusebius speaks.

7. The testimony of Origen appears somewhat ambiguous.

Eusebius reports it thus: "Peter, on whom the Church of Christ is built, over which the gates of hell shall not prevail, has left one

acknowledged Epistle: perhaps also a second; for it is doubted about."

On the other hand, in those works which are extant only in a Latin version, Origen again and again quotes our Epistle as Scripture: e.g. in his Homily on Joshua,—“For Peter sounds with the two trumpets of his Epistles:” on Leviticus,—“And again Peter says, ‘Ye are made partakers of the divine nature’” (2 Pet. i. 4): on Numbers,—“As Scripture saith in a certain place (2 Pet. ii. 16), ‘The dumb animal speaking with human voice convicted the madness of the prophet.’”

8. Perhaps the solution of this is to be found, not by supposing that the translator Rufinus interpolated the passages, but by remembering the loose way in which both Origen himself and others were found to cite the Epistle to the Hebrews: ordinarily, and in course of writing, speaking of it as St. Paul’s, but whenever they wrote deliberately, giving expression to their doubts respecting its authorship. We have only to believe that Origen acted similarly with regard to 2 Peter, and the mystery is at once solved.

In Origen’s extant Greek works, it is true, we nowhere find the Epistle quoted. Nay, it is more than once by implication excluded from the number of the Catholic Epistles. Thus in his Commentary on John, cited above, ch. iii. § i. 7, he cites 1 Pet. iii. 18—21, as being “in the Catholic Epistle:” and in his passage on the Canon: “Secondly, that according to Mark, as Peter dictated to him: wherefore also he acknowledges him as his son in his Catholic Epistle.”

9. Firmilian, bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, a disciple of Origen (died 270), certainly alludes to our Epistle, if his words are rightly given in the Latin version in which only we now have them:

“The blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, who in their Epistles execrated heretics, and admonished us to avoid them.”

Nothing is proved here by “*their Epistles*,” as to two Epistles of St. Peter being meant: but by the fact mentioned, this second Epistle must be intended, seeing that it is in this only that heretics are inveighed against by St. Peter.

10. The testimony of Didymus, whose commentary on the Epistle is extant in a Latin version only, is given at the end of his remarks on this Epistle:

“We must not therefore forget, that this Epistle is accounted spurious, and, although it is currently published, yet is not in the canon.”

Here the Latin expressions cause some little uncertainty, and can only be interpreted by conjecturing what they represent in the original Greek. Undue stress has been laid on the “therefore,” as if it were a ratiocinative conclusion from something preceding. But in all proba-

bility the sentence was a mere concluding notice, and “*therefore*” was only a rounding off of what had gone before.

11. Eusebius says, “One Epistle of Peter, that which is called the first, is received: this the ancient presbyters use as undoubted in their writings. But that which is called his second we have received as not indeed among the New Testament writings; but yet, appearing useful to many, it has come to be revered with the other Scriptures:” and afterwards, “So many are the writings which are called Peter’s; of which I know only one Epistle as genuine, and confessed by the ancient presbyters.” And again: “Of those books which are disputed, but notwithstanding generally known, is that Epistle called James’s, and that of Jude, and the second of Peter<sup>6</sup>.”

12. Jerome says of St. Peter, “He wrote two Epistles, which are named catholic, of which the second is by most denied to be his, on account of the dissonance of its style from the former Epistle.”

“Paul therefore had Titus for his interpreter, as the blessed Peter had Mark, whose Gospel was composed with Peter as narrator, and himself as writer. And the two Epistles which are ascribed to Peter are discrepant in style and character and structure of words; by which we understand that from necessity of circumstances he used different interpreters.”

13. After the time of Eusebius, the Epistle appears to have been very generally received as canonical. We have however the statement of Gregory of Nazianzum, “that some held seven, some only three catholic Epistles;” and of Cosmas Indicopleustes, “that among the Syrians only three were found, those of James, Peter, and John.” It confirms this notice to find, that this Epistle is not contained in the Peshito, or early Syriac version. Ephrem Syrus notwithstanding received the whole seven catholic Epistles, and so the Philoxenian, or later Syriac version. Leontius of Byzantium says that Theodore of Mopsuestia rejected our Epistle.

14. In the middle ages the Epistle was generally recognized and accounted canonical. At the time of the Reformation, the ancient doubts revived. Both Erasmus and Calvin express them. Cajetan, Grotius, Scaliger, Salmasius, question its genuineness. And in modern times, Semler, Neander, Credner, De Wette, Reuss, Mayerhoff, have ranged themselves on the same side.

15. On the other hand, there have not been wanting in our own days many defenders of the genuineness of the Epistle. The principal of these have been Michaelis, Pott, Augusti, Storr, Flatt, Dahl, Hug, Schmid, Lardner, Guericke, Windischmann, Thiersch. The same result

<sup>6</sup> See the testimony of Philastrius of Brescia in favour of our Epistle, above, ch. i. § i. 65.

is evidently to be supplied at the end of Brückner's notices, though he himself hesitates to affirm it. From what has already been said of Dietlein's book, it will be readily believed, that it is hardly worth quoting on this side.

16. If we now come to review the course of ancient testimony, we shall find its tendency to be very much the same as we found it respecting the Epistle of St. James, with which indeed our Epistle is often classed among the disputed books. And as far as this portion of the subject of our present section is concerned, we might append to it the same conclusion as that with which we terminated the corresponding section on that Epistle, ch. xvi. § v. 15.

17. But another department of evidence in this case requires consideration. Weighty objections have, and that from early times<sup>7</sup>, been brought against the Epistle on internal grounds. Some of these I have already dealt with by anticipation, in speaking on its occasion and object,—on the probability as to the same readers being partly in view as those in the former Epistle,—on the kind of use made of the Epistle of St. Jude. If our preceding remarks, which I have endeavoured to make fairly, and not in the spirit of a partisan, have been warranted by fact, then on all these points we have been gathering reasons by which those objections to its genuineness from supposed internal disqualification may be so far met.

18. But they extend to several other points besides those above mentioned. For instance, it is said, that the kind of mention of the coming of our Lord in the two Epistles could not have proceeded from the same person. In the former Epistle it is simply introduced as one of the great comforting assurances for God's persecuted people: in the latter, it is defended against cavil and unbelief. Now would it not have been more just in this case to say, that the circumstances and persons in view cannot be the same, rather than that the Writers cannot? For surely there is nothing in this Epistle shewing a belief, on the part of the Writer himself, inconsistent with that professed in the other. Nay, it is evidently shewn by such passages as ch. iii. 8, 10, that the firm persuasion expressed in 1 Pet. iv. 5 was that of our Writer also.

19. It is said, that the peculiarities with regard to certain uncommon points which we find in the first Epistle (e. g. iii. 19, iv. 6, iii. 6, 21) are not found reproduced in the second. But, as Brückner has well observed, the very fact, that it was characteristic of St. Peter to adduce these mysterious and outlying points, would also account in some measure for their appearing, not always, but in a scattered and irregular manner, as illustrations by the way: just as they do appear in this second Epistle also (e. g. iii. 5, 10). So that this is rather an argument for, than against

<sup>7</sup> Compare Jerome, above, par. 12.



the identity of the Writers. Besides which, it halts in two essential points. For 1) it is not altogether correct in its statement. We do find the Writer's view of ancient prophecy continued from one Epistle (1 Pet. i. 10—12) to the other (2 Pet. i. 19—21 ; iii. 2) :—the new birth by the divine word, which in the first Epistle is alleged as a motive for putting off worldly lusts and passions (i. 22—ii. 2), reappears in the second in i. 4: the “virtues” of Him who hath called them, 1 Pet. ii. 9, reappear in the same peculiar form, 2 Pet. i. 3: if we read, 1 Pet. iv. 17, that judgment is beginning at the house of God, and will proceed on to the disobedient, we read of the deceivers in the second Epistle, 2 Pet. ii. 3, that their judgment is not idle. Other instances might be and have been produced, shewing that the allegation will not hold. And 2) it is forgotten by the objectors, that it would be only in a spurious Epistle imitating the first, that we should find such reproductions carefully carried out: the occasion and object of a second genuine Epistle being totally different, forms a very sufficient reason why they should not be found to any considerable extent.

20. It is again objected, that whereas in the former Epistle the sufferings and death and resurrection of Christ were brought forward frequently and insisted on,—in this, these facts of Redemption are altogether put into the background, and only the exalted Christ is in the view of the Writer. But it is to be remembered that 1) in that first Epistle we found the exalted Person of our Lord mainly before the Apostle's eyes<sup>8</sup>: that 2) the differing occasion and object would tend to produce just the diversity found here, where there is no longer any purpose of comforting under persecution, but only of warning against error and building up in knowledge: that 3) in the first Epistle, where “salvation” was so conspicuous with its facts and consequences, our Lord is commonly found as “Christ” simply (i. 11, 19; ii. 21; iii. 15, “the Lord Christ”), or “Jesus Christ” (i. 1, 2, 3, 7, 13; ii. 5; iii. 21; iv. 11), or “Christ Jesus” (v. 10); whereas in the second, where “salvation” hardly appears (iii. 15), He is ordinarily “our Lord” (or God?) “and Saviour Jesus Christ” (i. [1,] 11; ii. 20; iii. 18), or “our Lord Jesus Christ” (i. 2 [“Jesus our Lord”], 8, 14, 16): but never simply “Christ,” “Jesus Christ,” or “Christ Jesus.” This, which has been also alleged as against the identity of writers, is, I submit, strikingly characteristic of the different realms of thought of the two Epistles. In the first, it is community of suffering and glorification with Him, which is to give encouragement: His lordly and glorious titles are dropped, and his office (“Christ”) or combined Person and office (“Jesus Christ,” or “Christ Jesus”) is ever brought forward. But in this second, where warning, and caution against rebellion are mainly in view, we are ever reminded of His lordship by “Lord,”

<sup>8</sup> See above, ch. xvii. § vi. 4.

and of what He did for us by “*Saviour* :” and without the former, or both titles, He never appears.

21. Another objection has been found in the apparent anxiety of the Writer to shew that he is the Apostle Peter, thereby betraying that he was not that Apostle. But here again, we may surely say just as fairly, that this is in manifest consistency with the character and design of the Epistle, which cautions against, and stigmatizes, false teachers. Thus we find St. Paul, in those Epistles where his object is the same, most strongly asserting his Apostleship, and his personal qualification as a teacher and ruler of the church. Were the Epistle genuine, this is just what we might expect.

22. The supposed objection, that in the reference to an apostolic command, ch. iii. 2, the Writer seems to sever himself from the Apostles, loses all weight by the reflection, that the words most naturally mean, as explained in the note on the passage, *the Apostles who preached to you*, much as in 1 Pet. i. 12: the Writer himself forming one only of that class, and thus preferring to specify it as a class<sup>9</sup>. Besides, I submit that such an objection is suicidal, when connected with that last mentioned. If the object of the (apocryphal) Writer was, elaborately to represent himself as St. Peter, how can the same view of the Epistle be consistent in finding in it a proof, by his own deliberate shewing, that he is not an Apostle? Forgers surely do not thus designedly overthrow their own fabrics.

23. The last objection which I shall notice is, the reference to St. Paul’s Epistles, in ch. iii. 15, 16, as indicating a later date than is consistent with the genuineness of our Epistle. They are there evidently adduced as existing *in some number* : and as *forming part of the recognized Scriptures*. No doubt, these undeniable phænomena of our Epistle are worthy of serious consideration ; and they present to us, I am free to confess, a difficulty almost insuperable, if the common traditions respecting the end of St. Peter’s life are to be received as matters of fact. But we are not bound by those traditions, though inclined to retain them in deference to ancient testimonies : we are at all events free to assume as great a latitude in their dates as the phænomena of the sacred writings seem to require. All therefore that we can say of this reference to the writings of St. Paul, is that, believing on other grounds this Epistle to be written by St. Peter, this seems to require for it a later date than is consistent with the usually received traditions of his death, and that our reception of such traditions must be modified accordingly.

24. At the same time it must be borne in mind, that it is an entirely unwarranted assumption, to understand by “*all Epistles*” here, an entire collection of St. Paul’s Epistles as we now have them, seeing that the

<sup>9</sup> See also note on Jude 17, 18.

words can only represent as many of them as the Writer had seen<sup>1</sup>: and that it is equally unjustifiable to gather from what follows, that the sacred canon of the New Test. was at that time settled. Those words cannot imply more, than that there were certain writings by Christian teachers, which were reckoned as on a level with the Old Test. Scriptures, and called by the same name (see note there). And that that was the case, even in the traditional lifetime of St. Peter, it would be surely unreasonable to deny.

25. The diversity of style in the two Epistles has been frequently alleged<sup>2</sup>. But on going through all that has been said, I own I cannot regard it, considerable as it undoubtedly is, as any more than can well be accounted for by the total diversity of subject and mood in the two Epistles, and by the interweaving into this second one of copious reminiscences from another Epistle. Some of the differences we have already spoken of, when treating of the titles and names of our Lord appearing in the two Epistles; and have found them amply accounted for by the above reasons. The same might be said of the terms used for the coming of our Lord,—“*revelation*” and “*revealing*” in the first Epistle, “*presence*,” “*day of the Lord*,” “*day of judgment*” in this<sup>3</sup>: the same again of the prevalence of “*hope*” in the former Epistle, and of “*knowledge*” in this. Some of the objections adduced on this head are without foundation in fact, e. g. that which Davidson admits, that whereas “in the first Epistle the Writer makes considerable use of the Old Test., incorporating its sentiments and diction into his own composition; in the second there is hardly a reference to the Jewish Scriptures.” What then are we to say of ch. i. 19—21; ii. 1, 5, 6, 7 f., 15 f., 22; iii. 2, 4, 5 f., 8, 13? May not it be said that although the second Epistle, from the nature of the case, does not require so many references to the new-begetting word, yet the mind of the Writer was equally full of its facts and sentiments?

26. Some of the points of resemblance between the two Epistles have been very fairly stated by Davidson and by Brückner: and the latter writer has corrected the over-statements of Dietlein. Of these coincidences, “*virtue*,” as applied to God, has been already noticed. Others

<sup>1</sup> See note on the place.

<sup>2</sup> See Jerome, above, par. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Davidson, p. 433, treats this answer as insufficient, “because the phraseology is not confined to that part of the Epistle which is directed against the false teachers, and the Epistle was not wholly or chiefly written to threaten the enemies of the truth with the dreadful day of the Lord. It was the writer’s object to establish and comfort, as well as to terrify.” But surely we may fairly say, that the spirit in which the Writer set himself to compose his Epistle, which is evident from the ruling tone of it being warning and denunciatory, would of necessity modify the terms in which he introduced those doctrines and expectations which formed the ground of his exhortation or prophecy.

are, "*without blemish and without spot,*" 1 Pet. i. 19, compared with "*without spot and blameless,*" 2 Pet. iii. 14; which is the more striking from its independence in the connexion, being used in an entirely different reference. The sound of these two words again occurs in the midst of the adaptation from St. Jude, ii. 13. Other similarities there are which cannot be represented to the English reader, but will be found in the corresponding part of the Prolegomena to my Greek Testament.

27. It may be allowed us to remark some notes of genuineness which are found in our Epistle, which, though at first sight of small import, and lying beneath the surface, yet possess considerable interest. In ch. i. 17, 18, we have a reference to the presence of the Writer at the transfiguration of our Lord. It is a remarkable coincidence, that close to that reference, and in the verses leading on to it, two words should occur, both of which are connected with the narrative of the Transfiguration in the Gospels. In ver. 13 we have "*as long as I am in this tabernacle:*" let us remember that it was Peter who at the Transfiguration said, "*Let us make three tabernacles.*" In ver. 15, "*after my departure (exodus).*" At the Transfiguration Moses and Elias "*spoke of His decease (exodus) which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.*"

28. We have also very noticeable coincidences of another kind. Compare, among them, the use of "*godliness,*" ch. i. 3, 6, 7, with Acts iii. 12, where, in Peter's speech, it is only found, except in the Pastoral Epistles: "*lawless deeds,*" ch. ii. 8, with "*by lawless hands,*" Acts ii. 23: "*godly,*" ch. ii. 9, with Acts x. 2, 7, an account doubtless derived from St. Peter, —the only places where the word occurs in the New Test.: "*being punished,*" *ibid.*, with Acts iv. 21, another Petrine account, and also the only places where the Greek word occurs: "*the day of the Lord,*" ch. iii. 10, with the citation Acts ii. 20, where only it occurs, except 1 Thess. v. 21. Such things are not to be despised, in estimating the probability of our Epistle being a supposititious document.

29. Our general conclusion from all that has preceded must be in favour of the genuineness and canonicity of this second Epistle: acknowledging at the same time, that the subject is not without considerable difficulty. That difficulty however is lightened for us by observing that on the one hand, it is common to this Epistle with some others of those called Catholic, and several of the later writings of the New Testament: and on the other, that no difference can be imagined more markedly distinctive, than that which separates all these writings from even the earliest and best of the post-apostolic period. Our Epistle is one of those latter fruits of the great outpouring of the Spirit on the Apostles, which, not being entrusted to the custody of any one church or individual, required some considerable time to become generally known: which when known, were suspected, bearing as they necessarily did traces of their late origin, and notes of polemical argument:

but of which, as apostolic and inspired writings, there never was, when once they became known, any general doubt; and which, as the sacred Canon became fixed, acquired, and have since maintained, their due and providential place among the books of the New Testament.

## SECTION V.

## TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING.

1. These can only be set down conjecturally, in accordance with views and considerations previously advanced. Assuming the genuineness of the Epistle, St. Peter wrote it in his old age, when he was expecting his death<sup>4</sup>. This, agreeably to what was said on the first Epistle, would be somewhere about the year 68 A.D., and the place of writing would be Rome, or somewhere on the journey thither from the East.

2. But all this is far too uncertain, and too much beset with chronological difficulties, to be regarded as any thing more than a hypothetical corollary, contingent on our accepting the tradition of St. Peter's Roman martyrdom.

3. Several matters, which have formed the subject of sections in our other chapters, such as the character and style of the Epistle, have been already incidentally discussed.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## 1 JOHN.

## SECTION I.

## ITS AUTHORSHIP.

1. THE internal testimony furnished by this Epistle to its Author being the same with the Author of the fourth Gospel is, it may well be thought, incontrovertible. To maintain a diversity of Authorship would betray the very perverseness and exaggeration of that school of criticism which refuses to believe, be evidence never so strong.

<sup>4</sup> This inference is not made from the word "*shortly*," in ch. i. 14 (see note there), but from the general spirit of that passage.

2. It will be well however not to assume this identity, but to proceed in the same way as we have done with the other books of the New Testament, establishing the Authorship by external ecclesiastical testimony.

Polycarp, in his Epistle to the Philippians, writes : "For every one who confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is antichrist." Seeing that this contains a plain allusion to 1 John iv. 3, and that Polycarp was the disciple of St. John, it has ever been regarded as an indireet testimony to the genuineness, and so to the Authorship of our Epistle.

3. It is said of Papias by Eusebius, "The same (Papias) uses testimonies from the former Epistle of John, and in like manner from that of Peter." And be it remembered that Irenæus says of Papias that he was "a hearer of John, and companion of Polycarp."

4. Irenæus frequently quotes this Epistle, as Eusebius asserts of him. In his work against heresies, after citing John xx. 31, with the words, "as John the disciple of the Lord confirms, saying," . . . he proceeds, "For which reason also in his Epistle he thus testified to us : 'Little children, it is the last time,' &c." (1 John ii. 18 ff.). Again, he says, "Whom both the Lord forewarned us to beware of, and His disciple John in the forementioned Epistle ordered us to shun, saying, 'Many seducers are gone out,' &c." (2 John 7, 8 : so that "*in the fore-mentioned Epistle*" seems to be a lapse of memory): "And again in his Epistle he says, 'Many false prophets are gone out,' &c." (1 John iv. 1—3).

And just after, he proceeds, "Wherefore again in his Epistle he says, 'Every one who believeth that Jesus is the Christ, hath been begotten of God,' &c." (1 John v. 1).

5. Clement of Alexandria repeatedly refers to our Epistle as written by St. John. In one place he says : "Moreover John, in his greater Epistle, seems to teach different degrees of sin, in these words : 'If any man see his brother sinning,' &c." (1 John v. 16).

In another he quotes 1 John i. 6 f. with "John says in his Epistle." And similarly in other places.

6. Tertullian says, "As John the Apostle, who says that antichrists had already gone forth into the world, spirits precursors of antichrist, denying that Christ has come in the flesh, and breaking up Jesus" (1 John iv. 1 ff.). "And again : 'That which we have seen,' says John, 'which we have heard,' &c." (1 John i. 1). And so in several other places : citing ch. ii. 22 ; iv. 2 ; v. 1 ; i. 7.

7. Cyprian writes : "John the Apostle also, mindful of the commandment, afterwards writes in his Epistle : 'In this we understand that we know Him, if we keep His commandments,' &c." (ch. ii. 3, 4). And he cites also ch. ii. 15—17 ; i. 8 ; ii. 6.



8. Muratori's fragment on the canon states, "Two Epistles of John are held to be in Catholic Scripture."

9. The Epistle is found in the Peschito, or ancient Syriac version, whose canon in the Catholic Epistles is so short.

10. Origen, beginning the sentence, "Why should I speak of John, who lay upon the breast of Jesus". . . , and proceeding as cited in the *Introd. to the Apocalypse*, § i. par. 12, says, "Moreover he has left an Epistle of very few lines: perhaps also a second and a third,—for all do not confess these to be genuine: but both are not a hundred lines in length." And he continually cites the Epistle as St. John's: e. g. "Our God is a consuming fire: but in John He is light; for 'God,' says he, 'is light, and darkness in Him is none.'"

11. Dionysius of Alexandria, the scholar of Origen, recognizes the genuineness of the Gospel and Epistle as being written by the Apostle John, by the very form of his argument against the genuineness of the *Apocalypse*. For (see his reasoning at length in the *Introduction to the Revelation*, § i. par. 48) he tries to prove that it was not written by St. John, on account of its diversity in language and style from the Gospel and Epistle: and distinctly cites the words of our Epistle as those of the Evangelist: "The Evangelist did not even prefix his name to the Catholic Epistle, but without waste of words began from the mystery itself of the divine manifestation: 'That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes.'"

12. Eusebius says, "of the writings of John, in addition to the Gospel, the former of the Epistles is confessed undoubtedly both by those now living, and by the ancients." And again, having enumerated the four Gospels and Acts and the Epistles of Paul, he says, "In order after which we must definitely place the current former Epistle of John."

13. After the time of Eusebius, general consent pronounced the same verdict. We may terminate the series of testimonies with that of Jerome, who in his catalogue of Ecclesiastical writers says of St. John, "He wrote also one Epistle, of which the opening is, 'That which was from the beginning, &c.,' which is received by all ecclesiastical and learned men."

14. The first remarkable contradiction to this combination of testimony is found in the writings of Cosmas Indicopleustes, in the sixth century. He ventures to assert, that none of the earlier Christian writers who have treated of the canon, makes any mention of the Catholic Epistles as canonical: "For most persons hold them not to be written by the Apostles, but by some other simpler men among the elders." He then proceeds in a somewhat confused way to state that Irenæus does mention

1 Peter and 1 John, as apostolic, "but others do not even acknowledge them as coming from Apostles, but from the elders: for a first, and second, and third of John have been written, making evident shew of being the work of one person." But it is evident from the chain of testimonies given above, that Cosmas can have been but ill informed on the subject.

15. It is probable that the Alogi, mentioned by Epiphanius as rejecting the Gospel and Apocalypse, included the Epistles in this rejection. Still Epiphanius does not assert it; he only says, "Perhaps also the Epistles; for they agree in sense with the Gospel and the Apocalypse." But their repudiation of the Epistle would be of no account.

16. Its rejection by Marcion is of equally little consequence. He excluded from the canon all the writings of St. John, as not suiting his views.

17. Lücke closes his review of ancient authorities, which I have followed and expanded, by saying, "Incontestably then our Epistle must be numbered among those canonical books which are most strongly upheld by ecclesiastical tradition."

18. But the genuineness of the Epistle rests not, as already observed, on external testimony alone. It must remain an acknowledged fact, until either the Gospel is proved not to be St. John's, or the similarity between the two is shewn to be only apparent. Lücke has well observed, that neither Gospel nor Epistle can be said to be an imitation: both are original, but both the product of the same mind: so that considered only in this point of view, we might well doubt which was written first.

19. However, its genuineness has been controverted in modern times. First we have a rash and characteristic saying of Jos. Scaliger's: "The three Epistles of John are not by John the Apostle." The first who deliberately and on assigned grounds took the same side, was S. Gottlieb Lange: who, strange to say, receiving the Gospel and the Apocalypse, yet rejected the Epistle.

20. His argument, as reported by Lücke, is as follows: The entire failure in the Epistle of any individual, personal, and local notices, betrays an author unacquainted with the personal circumstances of the Apostle, and those of the churches where he taught. The close correspondence of the Epistle with the Gospel in thought and expression begets a suspicion that some careful imitator of John wrote the Epistle. Lastly, the Epistle, as compared with the Gospel, shews such evident signs of enfeeblement of spirit by old age, that if it is to be ascribed to John, it must have been written at the extreme end of his life, after the destruction of Jerusalem; whereas, from no allusion being made to that event even in such a passage as ch. ii. 18, the Epistle makes a shew of having been written before it. The only solution in

Lange's estimation is that some imitator wrote it, as St. John's, it may be a century after his time.

21. To this Lücke replies that Lange is in fourfold error. For 1, it is not true that the Epistle contains no individual and personal notices. These it is true are rather hinted at and implied than brought to the surface: a characteristic, not only of a catholic epistle as distinguished from one locally addressed, but also of the style of St. John as distinguished from that of St. Paul. As to the fact, the Writer designates himself by implication as an apostle, and seems to allude to his Gospel in ch. i. 1—4: in ch. ii. 1, 18, he implies an intimate relation between himself and his readers: in ch. ii. 12—14, he distinguishes his readers according to their ages: in ch. ii. 18, 19, iv. 1—3, the false teachers are pointed at in a way which shews that both Writer and readers knew more about them: and the warning, ch. v. 21, has a local character, and reminds the readers of something well known to them.

22. Secondly, it is entirely denied, as above remarked, that there is the slightest trace of slavish imitation. The Epistle is in no respect the work of an imitator of the Gospel. Such a person would have elaborated every point of similarity, and omitted no notice of the personal and local circumstances of the Apostle: would have probably misunderstood and exaggerated St. John's peculiarities of style and thought. All such attempts to put off one man's writing for that of another carry in them the elements of failure as against a searching criticism. But how different is all we find in this Epistle. By how wide a gap is it separated from the writings of Ignatius, Clement, Barnabas, Polycarp. Apparently close as it is upon them in point of time, what a totally different spirit breathes in it. This Epistle written after them, written among them, would be indeed the rarest of exceptional cases—an unimaginable anachronism, a veritable "*hysteron proteron*."

23. Thirdly: it is certainly the strangest criticism, to speak of the weakness of old age in the Epistle. If this could be identified as really being so, it would be the strongest proof of authenticity. For it is altogether inconceivable, that an imitator could have had the power or the purpose to write as John might have written in his old age. But where are the traces of this second childishness? We are told, in the repetitions, in the want of order, in the uniformity. Certainly there is an appearance of tautology in the style: more perhaps than in the Gospel. Erasmus, in the dedication of his paraphrase of St. John's Gospel, characterizes the style of the Gospel as a "kind of speech so interwoven as it were with points of connexion mutually cohering, consisting sometimes of contraries, sometimes of things like, sometimes of the same things again repeated,—that each member of the argument

so enters and takes it up as that the end of a former part is also the beginning of that which follows." The same style prevails in the Epistle. It is not however an infirmity of age, but a peculiarity, which might belong to extreme youth just as well.

24. The greater amount of repetition in the Epistle arises from its being more hortatory and tender in character. And it may also be attributed to its more Hebraistic form, in which it differs from the Grecian and dialectic style of St. Paul: abounding in parallels and apparent arguings in a circle. The epistolary form would account for the want of strict arrangement in order, which would hardly be observed by the youngest any more than by the oldest writer.

25. And the appearance of uniformity, partly accounted for by the oneness of subject and simplicity of spirit, is often produced by want of deep enough penetration of the sense to discover the real differences in passages which seem to express the same. Besides, even granting these marks of old age, what argument would they furnish against the genuineness? St. John was quite old enough at and after the siege of Jerusalem for such to have shewn themselves: so that this objection must be dealt with on other grounds, and does not affect our present question.

26. Fourthly, it is quite a mistake to suppose that if the Epistle was written after the destruction of Jerusalem, that event must necessarily have been intimated in ch. ii. 18. It cannot be proved, nor does it seem likely from the notices of the coming of the Lord in the Gospel, that St. John connected the "*last hour*" with the destruction of Jerusalem. It does not seem likely that, writing to Christians of Asia Minor, who probably from the first had a wider view of our Lord's prophecy of the end, he should have felt bound to make a corrective allusion to the event, even supposing he himself had once identified it with the time of the end. *They* would not require to be told, why the universal triumph of Christianity had not followed it, seeing they probably never expected it to do so.

27. So that Lange's objections, which I have reported freely from Lücke, as being highly illustrative of the character of the Epistle, certainly do not succeed in impugning the verdict of antiquity, or the evidence furnished by the Epistle itself.

28. The objections brought by Bretschneider, formed on the doctrine of the *logos* (Word), and the antidocetic tendency manifest both in the Epistle and the Gospel, and betraying both as works of the second century, have also been shewn by Lücke to be untenable. The doctrine of the Word, though formally enounced by St. John only, is in fact that of St. Paul in Col. i. 15 ff., and that of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews i. 1 ff., and was unquestionably prepared for Christian use long before, in the Alexandrine Jewish theology. And though Docetism

itself may have been the growth of the second century, yet the germs of it, which are opposed in this Epistle, were apparent long before. A groundless assumption of Bretschneider is, that seeing the three Epistles are by the same hand, and the writer of the second and third, where there was no ground for concealing himself, calls himself "*the elder*" ("*presbyter*"),—the first Epistle, where, wishing to be taken for the Apostle, he does not name himself, is also by John the Presbyter. The answer to which is, that we can by no means consent to the assumption that the so-called Presbyter John was the author of the second and third Epistles : see the Introduction to 2 and 3 John, § i. 2, 12 ff.

29. The objections brought against our Epistle by the modern Tübingen school are dealt with at considerable length by Düsterdieck. It is not my purpose to enter on them here. For mere English readers, it would require an introduction far longer than that which Düsterdieck has devoted to it, at all to enable them to appreciate the nature of those objections and the postulates from which they spring. And when I inform such English readers that the first of those postulates is the denial of a personal God, they will probably not feel that they have lost much by not having the refutation of the objections laid before them. Should any regret it, they may find some of them briefly noticed in Dr. Davidson's Introduction, vol. iii. pp. 454 ff. : and they will there see how feeble and futile they are.

30. Whether then we approach the question of the authorship of this Epistle (and its consequent canonicity) from the side of external testimony, or of internal evidence, we are alike convinced that its claim to have been written by the Evangelist St. John, and to its place in the canon of Scripture, is fully substantiated.

## SECTION II.

### FOR WHAT READERS IT WAS WRITTEN.

1. This question, in the case of our Epistle, might be very easily and briefly dealt with, were it not for one apparent mistake, which complicates it.

In Augustine we read, "Agreeable to this opinion is also that which is said by John in the Epistle to the Parthians;" and then follows 1 John iii. 2. This appears to be the only place in Augustine's writings where he thus characterizes it. The inscription "To the Parthians" has found its way into some of the Benedictine editions in the title of the Tractates on the Epistle : but it seems not to have been originally there. It has been repeated by some of the Latin fathers.

2. Some, but very few writers, have assumed as a fact that the Epistle

was really written to the Parthians. Paulus and Baur made use of the assumption to impugn the apostolicity of the Epistle. Grotius, who was followed by Hammond, and partially by Michaelis and Baumgarten-Crusius, gives a curious reason, in connexion with this idea, for the omission of all address and personal notices: "The Epistle was anciently called that to the Parthians, i. e. those Jews professing Christianity who lived under the rule not of the Romans, but of the Parthians in the parts beyond the Euphrates, where there was a great multitude of Jews, as at Nearda, Nisibis, and other places. And I imagine this to be the reason why this Epistle contains neither the name and title of an Apostle in its opening, nor salutations after the apostolic manner at its close, because the Epistle was to be sent by Ephesian merchants into lands hostile to the Romans, and it might have been very damaging to the Christians if this epistolary commerce, though innocent, had been detected." This is absurd enough, especially as the Epistle is evidently not addressed to Jews at all as such, but mainly to Gentile readers: see below, par. 5. And ecclesiastical tradition knows of no mission of St. John to the Parthians, St. Thomas being supposed to have carried the Gospel to them.

3. This being so, it would appear, as hinted before, that the supposed address "*to the Parthians*" rests upon some mistake. But if so, on what mistake? A conjecture is quoted from Serrarius that in the original text of Augustine it stood "*to the Patmians*." Other conjectures are enumerated in my Greek Test., among which the most probable is that the Greek word "*parthenos*," a virgin, either as a title of those addressed, or a name of the Apostle himself, has somehow produced the mistake.

4. At all events we may fairly assume, that the Epistle was not written to the Parthians. Nor is there more probability in the notion of Benson that it was addressed to the Jewish Christians in Judæa and Galilee, who had seen the Lord in the flesh: nor in that of Lightfoot, who sends it to the church at Corinth, supposing the Gaius to whom the third Epistle is addressed, identical with him of Acts xix. 29 and 1 Cor. i. 14, and the fact alluded to in 3 John 9 to refer to this first Epistle.

5. Setting aside these, and falling back on the general opinion, we believe the Epistle to have been written not to any one church, but to a cycle of churches, mainly consisting of Gentile converts. This last seems shewn by the warning of ch. v. 21, combined with the circumstance that so little reference is made to Old Test. sayings or history.

6. It evidently also appears, that the Apostle is the spiritual teacher of those to whom he is writing. He knows their circumstances and various advances in the faith: the whole tone is that of their father in the faith. Such a relation, following as we surely must the traces fur-



nished by ancient tradition, can only be found in the case of St. John, by believing the readers to have been members of the churches at and round Ephesus, where he lived and taught.

7. The character of the Epistle is too general to admit a comparison between it and the Ephesian Epistle in the Apocalypse, which some have endeavoured to institute. Our Epistle contains absolutely no materials on which such a comparison can proceed.

### SECTION III.

#### ITS RELATION TO THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN.

1. As introductory to this enquiry, it will be well to give an account of opinions respecting the *epistolary form* of this canonical book.

2. This was always taken for granted, seeing that definite readers and their circumstances are continually present, and that the first and second persons plural are constantly used<sup>5</sup>,—until Michaelis<sup>6</sup> maintained that it is rather a treatise, or a book, than a letter; and only so far a letter, as any treatise may be addressed to certain readers, e.g. the Acts to Theophilus. Accordingly, he holds this to be a second part of the Gospel.

3. As Lücke remarks, it is of great importance whether we consider the writing as an Epistle or not. Our decision on this point affects both our estimate of it, and our exposition. Surely, however, the question is not difficult to decide. We may fairly reply to the hypothesis which supposes the Epistle to be a second part of the Gospel, that the Gospel is complete in itself and requires no such supplement; see John xx. 30, 31, where the practical object also of the Gospel is too plainly asserted, for us to suppose this to be its practical sequel.

4. To view it again as a preface and introduction to the Gospel, as Hug, seems not to be borne out by the spirit of either writing. The Gospel requires no such introduction: the Epistle furnishes none such. They do not in a word stand in any external relation to one another, such as is imagined by every one of these hypotheses.

5. Hug fancied he found a trace of the Epistle having once been appended to the Gospel, in the Latin version attached to Beza's great MS. now at Cambridge. There, on the back of the leaf on which the Acts of the Apostles begin, the copyist has written the last column of 3 John, with this subscription: "Here end the three Epistles of

<sup>5</sup> Compare ch. ii. 1, 7, 13, 14, 18, 28; iii. 18, 21; iv. 1, 7, 11, &c.

<sup>6</sup> Introd. to New Test., Marsh's translation, vol. iv. p. 400.

John: here beginneth the Acts of the Apostles." But first, this proves too much, seeing that all three Epistles of St. John are included, and surely Hug does not suppose the second and third Epistles to have been also sequels to the Gospel: and secondly, this very circumstance, the inclusion of all three Epistles, shews the reason of the arrangement, viz., to place together the writings of the same Apostle.

6. The writing then is to be regarded as an Epistle, as it usually has been: and no closer external relation to the Gospel must be sought for.

But, this being premised, a very interesting question follows. The two writings are internally related, in a remarkable manner. Do the phenomena of this relation point out the Gospel, or the Epistle, as having been first written?

7. And to this question there can I think be but one answer. The Epistle again and again assumes, on the part of its readers, an acquaintance with the facts of the Gospel narrative. Lücke well remarks, that "as a rule, the shorter, more concentrated expression of one and the same writer, especially when ideas peculiar to him are concerned, is the *later*, while the more explicit one, which first unfolds and puts in shape the idea, is the earlier one." And he finds examples of this in the abbreviated formulæ of ch. i. 1, 2, as compared with John i. 1 ff.; iv. 2, compared with John i. 14.

8. Other considerations connected with this part of our subject will be found treated in the next section.

## SECTION IV.

### TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING.

1. On both of these, opinions have been much divided: no sure indications being furnished by the Epistle itself. If however we have been right in assigning to it a date subsequent to that of the Gospel, we shall bring that date, by what has been said in the Introduction to Vol. I. ch. v. § iv. (where fifteen years, A.D. 70—85, are shewn to have marked the probable limits of the time of the writing of the Gospel), within a time not earlier than perhaps about the middle of the eighth decade of the first century: and extending as late as the traditional age of the Apostle himself.

2. Some have imagined that the Epistle betrays marks of the extreme old age of the writer. But such inferences are very fallacious. Certainly the repeated use of "*little children*," more frequently than any other term of endearing address, seems to point to an aged writer: but even this is insecure.

2. Again it has been fancied that the words, "*it is the last time,*" ch. ii. 18, furnish a note of time; and must be understood of the approaching destruction of Jerusalem. But as Lücke replies, this expression is used simply in reference to the appearance of antichristian teachers, and the apprehension thence arising that the coming of the Lord was at hand. So that we have no more right to infer a note of time from it, than from similar expressions in St. Paul, e. g. 1 Tim. iv. 1; 2 Tim. iii. 1.

4. As to the place of writing, we are just as much in uncertainty. The Gospel (Vol. I. Introd. ch. v. § iv.) is said by Irenæus to have been written at Ephesus. And ancient tradition, if at least represented by the subscriptions to the Epistle, seems to have placed the writing of the Epistle there also. Further, it is impossible to say.

## SECTION V.

### CONTENTS AND ARRANGEMENT.

1. This Epistle, from its aphoristic and apparently tautological character, is exceedingly difficult to arrange as a continuous contextual whole. Some indeed from this have been induced to believe that there is no such contextual connexion in the Epistle. So Calvin, Episcopus, and others. And this seems, up to the beginning of the last century, to have been the prevailing view. About that time, Sebastian Schmid, in his commentary on the Epistle, maintained, but only tentatively and timidly, that there is a logical and contextual arrangement. The same side was taken up with more decision by Oporinus of Göttingen.

2. But the principal advocate of this view in the last century was Bengel. In his note on the famous passage, ch. v. 7, he gives his contextual system of the Epistle<sup>7</sup>. This arrangement is made in the interest of the disputed verse, and tends to give it an important place in the context of the Epistle. It is moreover highly artificial, and the Trinitarian character, which is made to predominate in it, is certainly far from the obvious key to the real arrangement, as given us by the Epistle itself.

3. Nearer to our own time, differing arrangements of the Epistle have been proposed, by Lücke, De Wette, and Düsterdieck. I shall take these three in order.

4. Lücke holds the proper theme of the Epistle, the object, ground, and binding together of all its doctrinal and practical sayings, to be this proposition: "As the ground and root of all Christian fellowship is, the

<sup>7</sup> Cited in the note on this part of the Introd. in my Greek Test.

fellowship which each individual has with the Father and the Son in faith and in love, so this latter necessarily unfolds and exhibits itself in that former, viz. in the fellowship with the brethren." Having laid this down, he divides the Epistle into many sections, all unfolding in various ways this central truth. Thus, e. g., ch. i. 5—ii. 2, speaks of fellowship with God through Jesus Christ. God is light: fellowship with Him is walking in light: all pretence to it without such walking, is falsehood. And striving after such purity is the condition under which only Christian fellowship subsists, and under which the blood of Christ cleanses from sin. For even the Christian state is a striving, and not free from sin, but proceeding ever in more detection and confession of it: which leads not to a compromise with sin, but to its entire annihilation.

5. This may serve for a specimen of Lücke's setting forth of the connexion of the Epistle: in which, as Düsterdieck observes, he does not attempt to grasp the master thoughts which account for the development, but merely follows it step by step. For this, however, Lücke does not deserve the blame which Düsterdieck imputes to him. His is obviously the right way to proceed, though it may not have been carried far enough in his hands: far better than the *à priori* assumption of a Trinitarian arrangement by Bengel. He has well given the sequence of thought, *as it stands*: but he has not *accounted for it*. The complete statement of the disposition of the matter of the Epistle must tell us not only *how* the train of thought proceeds, but *why* it thus proceeds.

6. A nearer approximation to this has been made by De Wette. His plan may be thus described. The great design of the Epistle is to confirm the readers in the Christian life as consisting in purity (love) and faith, and to this end to waken and sharpen the moral conscience by reminding them of the great moral axioms of the Gospel, by reminding them also of the inseparableness of morality and faith, to keep them from the influence of those false teachers who denied the reality of the manifestation of Jesus Christ in the flesh, and to convince them of the reality of that manifestation. The Epistle he arranges under 1. An introduction, ch. i. 1—4: 2. Three exhortations; *a*) i. 5—ii. 28, begins with reminding them of the nature of Christian fellowship, as consisting in walking in light, in purity from sin and keeping of God's commandments (i. 5—ii. 11): then proceeds by an earnest address to the readers (ii. 12—14), a warning against the love of the world (ii. 15—17), against false teachers, and an exhortation to keep fast hold of Christ (ii. 18—27), and concludes with a promise of confidence in the day of judgment.

*b*) He again reminds them of the fundamental moral axioms of the Gospel. The state of a child of God rests on the conditions of righteousness and purity from sin: he who commits sin belongs to the devil.

Especially is the distinction made between those who belong to God and those who belong to the devil, by Love and Hate: and therefore must we ever love in deed and in truth (ii. 29—iii. 18). The Apostle adds a promise of confidence towards God and answer to prayer, and exhorts them to add to love, faith in the Son of God (iii. 19—24): which leads him to a second express warning against the false teachers (iv. 1—6).

c) In this third Exhortation, the Apostle sets out with the simple principle of Love, which, constituting the essence of God Himself, and being revealed in the mission of Christ, is the condition of all adoption into God's family and all confidence towards God (iv. 7—21). But a co-ordinate condition is faith in the Son of God, as including in itself Love, and the keeping of God's commandments, and the strength requisite thereto. And the voucher for this faith is found in the historical facts and testimonies of baptism, of the death of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, and in eternal life which He gives (v. 1—13). At the conclusion of the exhortation, we have the repeated promise of confidence towards God and the hearing of prayer, in this case intercessory prayer for a sinning brother, yet with a limitation, and a reminding that strictly speaking, Christians may not sin: ending with a warning against idolatry (v. 14—21).

7. To this division Düsterdieck objects, that the terms *exhortation*, *reminding*, &c., are of too superficial a kind to suffice for designating the various portions of the Epistle, and that De Wette is in error in supposing a new train of thought to be begun in ch. iv. 7—21: rather does the leading axiom of ch. ii. 29 proceed through that portion, and in fact even further than that.

8. His own division, which has been in the main followed in my Commentary, is as follows. Regarding, as the others, ch. i. 1—4 as the Introduction, in which the writer lays down the great object of apostolic preaching, asserts of himself full apostolicity, and announces the purpose of his writing,—he makes *two* great divisions of the Epistle: the first, i. 5—ii. 28, the second, ii. 29—v. 5: on which follows the conclusion, v. 6—21.

9. Each of these great divisions is ruled and pervaded by one master thought, announced clearly in its outset; which we may call its *theme*. These themes are impressed on the readers both by positive and negative unfolding, and by polemical defence against erroneous teachers: and, this being done, each principal portion is concluded with a corresponding promise. And both principal portions tend throughout to throw light on the great subject of the whole, viz. FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD THE FATHER AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

10. The theme of the *first* portion is given ch. i. 5, "*God is Light*, and in Him is no darkness." Consequently, fellowship with Him, on

which depends our joy in Christ (i. 3, 4), belongs only to him who walks in light (i. 6). To walk thus in light as God is light (i. 6 ff., ii. 8 ff.), and to flee from darkness, in which there can be no fellowship with God (ii. 11 ff.), forms the first subject of the Apostle's Exhortation. To this end, after shewing the relation which this proposition, "God is light," has to us in regard of our fellowship with God and with one another through Jesus Christ (i. 6, 7), he unfolds first *positively* (i. 8—ii. 11) *wherein* our walking in light *consists*: viz. in free recognition and humble confession of our own sinfulness: the knowledge and confession of our own darkness being in fact the first breaking in on us of the light, in which we must walk: viz. fellowship with God through Christ, whose blood is to cleanse us from all our sin.

11. This our walking in light, whose first steps are the recognition, confession, and cleansing of sin, further consists in keeping the commandments of God, which are all summed up in one great commandment of *Love* (ii. 3—11). Hence only we know that we know God (ii. 3), that we love Him (ii. 5), that we are and abide in Him (ii. 6), in a word that we have fellowship with Him (cf. i. 3, 5 ff.), when we keep His commandments, when we walk (ii. 6, cf. i. 6) as "He," i. e. Christ, walked.

12. This summing up of all God's commands in love by the example of Christ as perfect love (John xiii. 34) brings in the *negative* side of the illustration of the proposition "God is light." Hate is darkness: is separation from God: is fellowship with the world. So begins then a polemical designation of and warning against the love of and fellowship with the world (ii. 15—17), and against those false teachers (ii. 18—26), who would bring them into this condition: and an exhortation to abide in Christ (ii. 24—28). All this is grounded on the present state and progress of the various classes among them in fellowship with God in Christ (ii. 12—14, 27). See each of these subdivisions more fully specified in the Commentary.

13. The *second* great portion of the Epistle (ii. 29—v. 5) opens, as the other, with the announcement of its theme: "*God is righteous*" (ii. 29), and "he who doeth righteousness, is born of Him." And as before, "God is Light" made the condition of fellowship with God to be, walking in light as "He" walked in light, so now, "God is righteous" makes the condition of "sonship" on our part to be that we be righteous, as "He," Christ, was holy. And as before also, so now: it must be shewn wherein this righteousness of God's children consists, in contrast to the righteousness of the children of the world and of the devil. And so we have in this second part also a twofold exhortation, a *positive* and a *negative*: the middle point of which is the fundamental axiom "God is righteous, and therefore we His children must be righteous:" and thus it also serves the purpose of the Epistle announced in



i. 3 f. to confirm the readers in fellowship with the Father and the Son, and so to complete their joy: for this fellowship is the state of God's children.

14. This, however, as on the one side it brings in all blessed hope and our glorious inheritance (iii. 2, 3), so on the other it induces the moral necessity of that righteousness on which our fellowship with the Father and the Son, our abiding in Him, rests, grounded on His Love (iii. 8, 9, 10 ff.: iv. 7 ff. &c.). Both sides of the birth from God, that which looks forward and that which looks backward, are treated together by the Apostle. Because we are born of God, not of the world, because we are God's children, not the devil's (because we know Him,—because we are of the truth,—because His Spirit is in us,—which are merely parallel enunciations of the same moral fact), therefore we sin not, therefore we practise righteousness, as God our Father is just and holy: and thus sanctifying ourselves, thus doing righteousness, thus abiding in Him and in His love, as His children, even thus we may comfort ourselves in the blessed hope of God's children to which we are called, even thus we overcome the world.

15. It will be well to examine more in detail the order in which the exhortation proceeds in this second portion of the Epistle.

16. First, after the enunciation of the theme in ii. 29, the Apostle takes up the *forward* side of the state of God's children, that hope which is full of promise (iii. 1, 2); then proceeds to the condition of this hope, purifying ourselves even as "He" is pure (iii. 3). This purifying consists in fleeing from sin, which is against God's command (iii. 4), and presupposes abiding in Him who has taken away our sins (iii. 5, 6): the Apostle thus grounding sanctification in its condition, justification.

17. Having laid down (iii. 7) the positive axiom, "*He that doeth righteousness is righteous even as 'He' is righteous,*" he turns to the other and negative side (iii. 8 ff.), contrasting the children of God and the children of the devil. And this leads us to an explanation how the abiding in the love of God necessarily puts itself forth in the love of the brethren (iii. 11—18). Hate is the sure sign of not being from God (iii. 10): love to the brethren a token of being from Him (iii. 18, 19), and being of the truth (ib.): and is a ground of confidence towards God (iii. 20, 21), and of the certainty of an answer to our prayers (iii. 22).

18. This confidence towards Him is summed up in one central and decisive pledge—the Spirit which He has given us (iii. 24): and thus the Apostle is led on to warn us against false spirits which are not of God (iv. 1 ff.), and to give us a certain test whereby we may know the true from the false. He sets the two in direct opposition (iv. 1—6), and designates the false spirit as that of antichrist: making its main

characteristic the denial of Christ having come in the flesh. This he concludes with a formula parallel to that in the first part, iii. 10 : “ *Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.*”

19. After this (iv. 7 ff.) follows a fuller positive description of that which is born of God. Its very essence is love: for God is Love: Love to God grounded on His previous love to us (iv. 7—21) in sending His Son: love to one another, resting on the same motive, and moreover (v. 1—5) because our brethren, like ourselves, are born of Him. And seeing that our love to God and to one another is grounded on God having given us His Son, we come to this, that faith in the Son of God is the deepest ground and spring of our love in both its aspects: and is the true test of being born of God as distinguished from being of the world (iv. 1—6), the true condition of life (iv. 9: cf. v. 13, i. 3, 4), of blessed confidence (iv. 14 ff.), of victory over the world (iv. 4, v. 4 f.). And thus the Apostle’s exhortation converges gradually to the one point against which the lie of antichrist is directed, viz. true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ manifested in the flesh (v. 5). On this faith rests the righteousness of those who are born of God, as on the other hand the antichristian character of the children of the world consists in the denial of Christ having come in the flesh. For this faith works by righteousness and sanctification, as God the Father, and as the Lord Jesus Christ, is righteous and holy: seeing that we, who are born of and abide in the love with which God in Christ hath first loved us, keep His commandments, viz. to practise love towards God and towards the brethren.

20. So that we see on the one side the simple parallelism of both parts, suggested by the nature of the subject: and on the other, how both parts serve the general purpose of the whole work. The righteousness of those that are born of God, who is righteous, is simply the walking in light as God is light: the keeping God’s commandments which all converge into one, the commandment of *love*. And this love has its ground and its source in a right faith in the Son of God manifested in the flesh. On our fellowship therefore with this our Lord, depends our fellowship with the Father and with one another (i. 3, 7, ii. 23, iii. 23, iv. 7 ff.), and consequently our joy (i. 4), our confidence (ii. 28), our hope (iii. 3), our life (iii. 15, v. 13: cf. i. 2), our victory over the world (ii. 15 ff., iii. 7 ff., v. 5).

21. The CONCLUSION of the Epistle begins with v. 6. It is in two portions, v. 6—12 and v. 13—21. Both of these serve to bring the subject of the whole to its full completion, and, so to speak, to set it at rest. “Jesus is the Son of God.” This is the sum and substance of the apostolic testimony and exhortation. In the opening of the Epistle it was rested on the testimony of eye and ear witnesses: now, it is rested on witness no less secure, viz. on the religious life and experience of the readers themselves. Between these two testimonies comes in the

Epistle itself with all its teaching, exhortation, and warning. This last testimony that Jesus is the Son of God is threefold: the water of baptism, the blood of reconciliation, the Spirit of sanctification (v. 6—8). These, in threefold unity, form God's own witness for His Son (v. 9). Only in faith on the Son of God (v. 10) do we receive and possess this witness of God, the true substance of which is eternal life, bestowed on us in Christ through water, blood, and the Spirit. So that he that hath the Son hath life.

22. And thus we have reached the true goal of all the Apostle's exhortation: the words, "*these things have I written*" (v. 13), answering to the "*these things write we*" of i. 4. And it is this—that our fellowship with the Father, and with one another, rests on our fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God; on which also depends our confidence, our hope, our joy, seeing that we have eternal life in faith in the Son of God. As in ch. iii. 22, so here again he illustrates this confidence by its exercise with regard to the answer of our prayers. And of this he takes occasion to adduce one particular example, viz. intercession for a sinning brother; and to place it in its true moral light, viz., as then availing when the sin in question has not excluded him totally from the family of life and from holy fellowship with God. Then follow a few solemn sentences, gathering up the whole instruction of the Epistle: the living contrast between the sinner and the child of God: between the family of God and the world: the consciousness on the part of God's children of their standing and dignity in Christ, the true God and life eternal. And he ends by summing up in one word all his warnings against falsehood in doctrine and practice, "*Little children, keep yourselves from idols.*"

23. Such is a free rendering of the account given by Düsterdieck of his division of the Epistle: which, for the reason stated above, I have inserted here almost at length. The points wherein I have differed from it will be easily recognized in the Commentary.

24. It has this decided advantage over the others, that it not only arranges, but accounts for the arrangement given: and without any straining of the material of the Epistle to suit a preconceived view, brings to light its inner structure and parallelisms in a way which leaves on the mind a view of it as an intelligently constructed and interdependent whole.

## SECTION VI.

### LANGUAGE AND STYLE.

1. The questions of language and style, which in other sections of the

Introduction have required independent treatment, have in this case been already discussed by implication under other heads. Still it will be well to devote a few paragraphs to the separate consideration of these.

2. The style of the Epistle has been often truly described as aphoristic and repetitive. And in this is shewn the characteristic peculiarity of St. John's mode of thought. The connexion of sentence with sentence is slightly, if at all, pointed out. It depends, so to speak, on roots struck in at the bottom of the stream, hidden from the casual observer, to whom the apophthegms appear unconnected, and idly floating on the surface. Lücke well describes this style as indicating a contemplative spirit, which is ever given to pass from the particular to the general, from differences to the unity which underlies them, from the outer to the inner side of Christian life. Thus the Writer is ever working upon certain fundamental themes and axioms, to which he willingly returns again and again, sometimes unfolding and applying them, sometimes repeating and concentrating them; so that we have side by side the simplest and clearest, and the most condensed and difficult sayings: the reader who seeks merely for edification is attracted by the one, and the "scribe learned in the Scriptures" is satisfied, and his understanding surpassed and deepened by the other.

3. The logical connexion is not as in the Epistles of St. Paul, indicated by the whole superficial aspect of the writing, nor does it bear onward the thoughts till the conclusion is reached. The logic of St. John moves, as Düsterdieck has expressed it, rather in circles than straight onward. The same thought is repeated as seen from different sides: is transformed into cognate thoughts, and thus put into new lights, is unfolded into assertion and negation, and the negation again closed up by the repeated assertion (ch. i. 6 f., 8 f., ii. 9 f., &c.). Thus there arise numerous smaller groups of ideas, all, so to speak, revolving round some central point, all regarding some principal theme; all serving it, and circumscribed by the same bounding line. Thus the Writer is ever close to his main subject, and is able to be ever reiterating it without any unnatural forcing of his context: the train of thought is ever reverting back to its central point.

4. Now if we regard the actual process of the Epistle with reference to these characteristics, we find that there is one great main idea or theme, which binds together the whole and gives character to its contents and aim; viz. that fellowship with God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, in which our joy is complete; in other words, that right faith in the Son of God manifest in the flesh, in which we overcome the world, in which we have confidence in God, and eternal life.

5. This idea, which pervades the whole Epistle, is set forth in two great circles of thought, which have been already described as the two

portions of the Epistle. These two, both revolving round the one great theme, are also, in their inner construction, closely related to each other. God is light:—then our fellowship with Him depends on our walking in the light: God is righteous:—then we are only manifested as children of God, abiding in His love and in Himself, if we do righteousness. But for both—our walking in light, and our doing righteousness, there is one common term,—Love: even as God is Love, as Christ walked in Love, out of Love became manifest in the flesh, out of Love gave Himself for us. On the other side,—as the darkness of the world, which can have no fellowship with God, who is Light, denies the Son of God and repudiates Love,—so the unrighteousness of the children of the world manifests itself in that hatred which slays brethren, because love to brethren cannot be where the love of God in Christ is unknown and eternal Life untasted.

6. Such a style and character of the Epistle, not bound by strict dialectic rules, not hurrying onward to a logical conclusion, but loving to tarry, and to repeat, and to limit itself in smaller circles of thought, shews us the simple heart of a child, or rather the deep spirit of a man who, in the richest significance of the expression, has entered the kingdom of heaven as a little child, and, being blessed in it himself, yearns to introduce his brethren further and further into it, that they may rejoice with him. In his Epistle Christian truth, which is not dialectic only, but essentially moral and living, is made to live and move and feel and act. When he speaks of knowledge and faith, it is of a moral existence and possession: it is of love, peace, joy, confidence, eternal life. Fellowship with God and Christ, and fellowship of Christians with one another in faith and love, each of these is personal, real; so to speak, incarnate and embodied.

7. And this is the reason why our Epistle appears on the one hand easily intelligible to the simplest reader, if only his heart has any experience of the truth of Christ's salvation,—and on the other hand unfathomable even to the deepest Christian thinker: but at the same time equally precious and edifying to both classes of readers. It is the most notable example of the foolishness of God putting to shame all the wisdom of the world.

8. But as the matter of our Epistle is rich and sublime, so is it fitted, by its mildness, and consolatory character, to attract our hearts. Such is the power of that holy love, so humble and so gentle, which John had learned from Him in whom the Father's love was manifested. He addresses all his readers, young and old, as his little children: he calls them to him, and with him to the Lord: he exhorts them ever as his brothers, as his beloved, to that love which is from God. The Epistle itself is in fact nothing else than an act of this holy love. Hence the

loving, attracting tone of the language; hence the friendly character and winning sound of the whole. For the Love which wrote the Epistle is but the echo, out of the heart of a man, and that man an Apostle, of that Love of God which is manifested to us in Christ, that it may lead us to the everlasting Fount of Love, of joy and of life.

9. I may conclude this description, so admirably worked out by Düs-terdieck, with the very beautiful words of Ewald, which he also cites: speaking of the "unruffled and heavenly repose" which is the spirit of the Epistle, he says, "It appears to be the tone, not so much of a father talking with his beloved children, as of a glorified saint, speaking to mankind from a higher world. Never in any writing has the doctrine of heavenly Love, of a love working in stillness, a love ever unwearied, never exhausted, so thoroughly proved and approved itself, as in this Epistle."

## SECTION VII.

### OCCASION AND OBJECT.

1. The Apostle himself has given us an account of the object of his Epistle: "*These things write we, that our joy may be full,*" ch. i. 4: and again at the close, v. 13: "*These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even to you that believe on the name of the Son of God.*" In almost the same words does he sum up the main purpose of his Gospel, John xx. 31. He assumes readers who believe on the Son of God: he writes to them to certify them of the truth and reality of the things in which they believe, and to advance them in the carrying out of their practical consequences, in order that they may gain from them confidence, peace, joy, life eternal.

2. This, and no polemical aim, is to be assigned as the main object of the Epistle. As subservient to this main object, comes in the warning against those persons who, by denying that Jesus Christ was come in the flesh, imperilled all these blessed consequences, by seducing men from the faith on which they rested.

3. The fact of these false teachers having come forward in the church was most probably the occasion which suggested the writing of the Epistle. Such seems to be the reference, hinted at in the background by the repeated "*because*" in ch. ii. 12—14. The previous instruction, settlement, and achievements in the faith of the various classes of his readers, furnished him with a reason for writing to each of them:



it being understood, that some circumstances had arisen, which made such writing desirable. And what those circumstances were, is not obscurely pointed at in the verses following, ii. 18—25: compare especially ver. 21.

## CHAPTER XX.

### 2 & 3 JOHN.

#### SECTION I.

##### AUTHORSHIP.

1. THE question of the authorship of both Epistles is one which will require some discussion. On one point however there never has been the slightest doubt: viz., that both were written by one and the same person. They are, as it has been said, like twin sisters: their style and spirit is the same: their conclusions agree almost word for word. I shall therefore treat of them together in all matters which they have in common.

2. *Were the two Epistles written by the author of the former and larger Epistle?* This has been answered in the affirmative by some critics who do not believe St. John to have written the first Epistle: e. g. by Bretschneider and Paulus. Their arguments for the identity of the Writer of the three will serve, for us who believe the apostolicity of the former; a different purpose from that which they intended. But the usual opinion of those who have any doubts on the Authorship has taken a different form. Ascribing the first Epistle to St. John, they have given the two smaller ones to another writer; either to the Presbyter John, or to some other Christian teacher of this name, otherwise unknown to us. Another exception is found to this in the modern critics of the Tübingen school, Baur and Schwegler, whose method of proceeding I have briefly noticed in the Introduction to the former Epistle (§ i. par. 29), and need not further characterize.

3. It will now be my object to enumerate the ancient authorities, and to ascertain on which side they preponderate; whether for, or against, the authorship by the Apostle John.

Irenæus says: "John the disciple of the Lord urged their condemnation, willing that we should not even say good speed to them: for,

he says, he that biddeth them good speed partaketh, &c." (2 John 10, 11.)

And in another place, already cited (ch. xix. § i. par. 4), he quotes 2 John 7, 8, supposing it to be taken from the first Epistle: but this very circumstance shews him to have had no suspicion that the two were written by different persons.

4. Clément of Alexandria, in a passage already cited above (ch. v. § i. par. 5), cites the first Epistle thus, "John, in his greater Epistle," . . . thereby shewing that he knew of more Epistles by that Apostle.

And again in the fragments of the Adumbrations, ed. Potter, p. 1011, he says, "The second Epistle of John, which is written to virgins, is most simple: it was written to a certain Babylonian lady named Electa."

5. Dionysius of Alexandria, in a passage quoted at length below in the Introduction to the Apocalypse (§ i. par. 48), noting that John never names himself in his writings, says, "Not even in the current second and third of John, though they are short Epistles, is John manifestly named, but is signified anonymously under the title '*the presbyter*' (*elder*)." Whence it appears that Dionysius found no offence in the appellation "*the presbyter*," but rather a trace of St. John's manner not to name himself. No argument can be raised on the expression "*current*" that Dionysius doubted the genuineness of the two Epistles. Eusebius calls the first Epistle "the current first of John." All we can say of the expression is, that it gives the general sense of tradition.

Alexander of Alexandria cites 2 John 10, 11, with "as the blessed John ordered." And the subsequent Alexandrian writers shew no doubt on the subject.

Cyprian, in relating the opinions of the various bishops in the council at Carthage, relates that one Aurelius quoted from "John the Apostle in his Epistle," the words "If any come to you, &c.," 2 John 10.

He does not in his own writings cite either Epistle, nor does Tertulian. But the above testimony shews that they were received as apostolic and canonical in the North African church.

6. The Muratorian fragment on the canon speaks enigmatically, owing partly to some words in the sentence being corrupt: "The Epistle of Jude and two superscribed 'Of John' are held among catholic Scripture, and 'Wisdom,' written by friends of Solomon in his honour."

Lücke, Huther, and others, find here a testimony *for* the Epistles: Düsterdieck on the contrary understands the sentence as meaning that they were not written by John, just as the Wisdom was not written by Solomon.

Most probably the Peschito, or ancient Syriac version, did not contain either Epistle. Cosmas Indicopleustes (Cent. vi.) says that in his time the Syrian church acknowledged but three catholic Epistles, 1 Peter,

1 John, and James. Still, Ephrem Syrus quotes the second Epistle, as also 2 Peter (see Introduction to 2 Pet. § iv. 13) and Jude: possessing them probably, as he did not understand Greek, in another Syriac version.

7. Eusebius reckons both Epistles among the disputed books: saying, "Among the disputed books are . . . that named the second, and third of John, whether they belong to the Evangelist, or to some one else of the same name."

Still, Eusebius's own opinion may be gathered from another passage, where he says of St. John, "In his Epistles he does not even make mention of his own name, or calls himself presbyter (elder), but never Apostle or Evangelist." Whence it would appear that he received the two smaller Epistles as genuine.

8. Origen mentions them with a similar expression of doubt.

9. Theodore of Mopsuestia, if we are thus to interpret Leontius of Byzantium (see above, ch. iii. § iv. 11), rejected these in common with the other catholic Epistles.

10. Theodoret makes no mention of them.

11. In a Homily on Matt. xxi. 23 ascribed to Chrysostom, but written probably by some Antiochene contemporary of his, we read, "But the second and the third the fathers exclude from the canon."

12. Jerome says, "John wrote one Epistle which is approved by all ecclesiastical and learned men; but the other two, of which the beginning is 'the elder,' are ascribed to John the Presbyter, whose tomb, besides that of St. John, is to this day shewn at Ephesus."

13. In the middle ages there seems to have been no doubt on the authenticity of the Epistles, till Erasmus revived the idea of their being the work of John the Presbyter. This view, grounded on the fact that the Writer names himself "the Presbyter," has been often maintained since: e. g. by Grotius, Beck, Fritzsche, and others.

14. If we take into strict account the import of this appellation, it will appear, as Lücke, Huther, and Düsterdieck have maintained, to make rather for than against the authorship by St. John. For in the first place, assuming, which is very doubtful, the existence of such a person as John the Presbyter, this name could only have been given him by those who wished to distinguish him from the Apostle, and would never have been assumed by himself as a personal one, seeing that he bore it in common with many others his co-presbyters.

15. Again, such an appellation is not without example as used of Apostles, and might bear two possible senses, either of which would here be preferable to the one just impugned. In the very fragment of Papias from which the existence of the presbyter John is inferred, he several times uses the term *presbyter* of Apostles and apostolic men as a class. He tells of "the things which he had learned from the presbyters

(elders):” he says that if he met with any one who had conversed with “the presbyters” (“elders”), he enquired about “the sayings of the presbyters” (“elders”). Here it is certain that the term “*presbyter*” must not be taken officially, but of priority in time and dignity: it bears that meaning from which its official sense was derived, not that official sense itself.

16. And this leads us to the other meaning, that of the old age of the Writer<sup>8</sup>. St. Paul in Philem. 9, calls himself “Paul the aged” (*presbytés*) in this sense: and “*presbyteros*” is but another form of the same word, though a form carrying a different possible meaning.

17. It is impossible to decide for which of these reasons the Apostle might choose thus to designate himself, or whether any other existed of which we are not aware. But we may safely say that inasmuch as St. Peter (1 Pet. v. 1), writing to the *presbyters*, calls himself their *fellow-presbyter*, there was no reason why St. John might not thus have designated himself. And we may hence lay down that the occurrence of such a word, as pointing out the Writer of these Epistles, is no reason against their having been written by that Apostle.

18. On the whole then we infer, from the testimony of the ancient Fathers, and from the absence of sufficient reason for understanding the title “*presbyter*” of any other person than the Apostle himself, that these two smaller Epistles were written by St. John the Apostle and Evangelist.

## SECTION II.

### FOR WHAT READERS WRITTEN.

1. The third Epistle leaves no doubt on this question. It is addressed to one Gaius (Caius). Whether this Caius is identical with Gaius of Macedonia (Acts xix. 29), with Gaius of Corinth (1 Cor. i. 14; Rom. xvi. 23), or with Gaius of Derbe (Acts xx. 4), it is impossible to say. The name was one of the commonest: and it is possible, as Lücke remarks, that the persons of St. John’s period of apostolic work in Asia may have been altogether different from those of St. Paul’s period. A Caius is mentioned in the Apostolic Constitutions as bishop of Pergamus: and Mill and Whiston believe this person to be addressed in our Epistle.

2. It is not so plain to whom the *second* Epistle was written. The

<sup>8</sup> This is taken by Piscator, Erasm.-Schmid, Hermann, G. C. Lange, Wolf, Rosenmüller, Benson, Carpov, Augusti, and others. Some of the above, and Aretius and Guericke, unite the two.

address is in the Greek to "*eclecté Kyria and her children:*" "*thy children*" are mentioned in ver. 4: *Kyria* in the vocative occurs ver. 5: "*the children of thine elect sister*" are mentioned as sending greeting, ver. 13.

3. On these data the following doubts arise. Is it an individual lady who is addressed? And if so, is either of the two words a proper name, *Eclecté* or *Kyria*, and which? Or is it a church, thus called figuratively? And if so, is it some particular body of Christians, or the Church universal?

4. These questions were variously answered even in ancient times. The Scholiast says, "Either to a church, or to some woman ruling her house spiritually by the evangelic commandments." We have also in Ecumenius and Theophylact, as a comment on the last verse of the Epistle, "Some maintain on this account that the Epistle is written not to a woman, but to a church: which matter we do not wish to dispute." The *individual* hypothesis has been held in its various forms by numerous Commentators: there is a tradition that she was named Drusia or Drusiana: and a conjecture that she was Martha the sister of Lazarus and Mary. Another conjecture has been, that she was Mary, the mother of our Lord.

5. On the other hand, the *ecclesiastical* hypothesis has been held by Jerome, taking the words as meaning the whole Christian church:—so also apparently Clement of Alexandria, as cited above, ch. v. § i. par. 5: "Some wish on this account to prove that the Epistle was not written to a woman, but to a church." Some have carried conjecture so far as to designate the particular church addressed: e. g., Serrarius, supposing the Caius of the third Epistle to have belonged to this church, and that it consequently was at Corinth: Whiston, arguing for Philadelphia: Whitby, for Jerusalem, as being the Lady, the mother of all churches: Augusti, for the same, as being founded by our Lord Himself.

6. In now proceeding to examine these various opinions, I have maintained in the corresponding place in the Prolegomena to my Greek Test., that no argument can fairly be founded on grammatical considerations, which suit one hypothesis as well as the other.

7. In weighing the probability of either hypothesis, the following considerations are of importance. It would seem, as I have remarked in my note on ver. 13, as if the salutation there rather favoured the idea of a church being addressed, because we have no mention there of the elect sister herself, but only of her children. But then we must set against this the fact, that in the process of the Epistle itself, the *Kyria* (lady) herself does distinctly appear and is personally addressed. It would be, to say the least, strange, to address the whole church in the one case, and not to send greeting from the whole church in the other.

8. Again, would it have been likely that the salutation should have run, "*The children of thy elect sister greet thee,*" if the *Kyria* had been a mere abstraction? Does not this personal address, as well as that in ver. 5, "*And now I beseech thee, Kyria,*" imply personal reality of existence?

9. Let us, again, compare the address of this Epistle with that of the third, confessedly by the same Writer. The one runs, "*The elder [to Gaius the beloved], whom I love in the truth.*" The other, "*The elder [to *Eclecté Kyria* and her children], whom I love in the truth.*" Can any one persuade us that the well-known simplicity of St. John's character and style would allow him thus to write these two addresses, word for word the same, and not to have in the words enclosed in brackets a like reference to existing persons in both cases?

10. Besides, as Lücke has well observed, we are not justified in thus attributing to St. John a mystic and unaccountable mode of expression, not found in any other writer of the apostolic age, nor indeed even in the apocryphal writings which followed it.

11. St. Peter's expression, "*She that is elected with you in Babylon,*" 1 Pet. v. 13, even if understood of a church, which I have questioned in my note at the place, would not justify a like interpretation of "*Kyria*" here: though in the use of "*elect*" the passages are closely connected. If a person be addressed here, it is highly probable that we must understand a person there also: if a church be conceded to be addressed there, we have still the strange and unaccountable "*Kyria*" to deal with here<sup>9</sup>.

12. On all these grounds I believe that an individual and not a church is addressed. And if so, first, is *either* of the words "*Eclecté*" or "*Kyria*" a proper name? We may safely answer this in the affirmative, for a reason deduced from the construction in the Greek.

13. Then if so, *which* of the two words is the proper name? Here again there can be little doubt, if we compare "*Eclecté Kyria*" with "*thy sister who is Eclecté.*" Both sisters were *elect*: but both had not the same name. Hence it would appear, that *Eclecté* is not the name, but an epithet. And if so, then *KYRIA* is the name, and ought perhaps to be substituted for the rendering "*lady*" in the notes. The name is elsewhere found. We have an inscription mentioning "*Phenippus and his wife Kyria,*" and other examples of its occurrence.

14. This *Kyria* then appears to have been a Christian matron generally known and beloved among the brethren, having children, some of whom the Apostle had found (at a previous visit to her?) walking in

<sup>9</sup> It appears certain that Clem.-Alex. must have confused the two passages in his memory, when he stated (see above, § i. par. 4) that this Epistle was written "to a certain Babylonian lady, Electa by name."



the truth. She had a sister, also a Christian matron, whose children seem to have been with the Apostle when he wrote this Epistle.

15. In the third Epistle, mention is made of Demetrius with praise, and of Diotrephes with blame, as a turbulent person, and a withstander of the Apostle's authority. But it is quite in vain to enquire further into the facts connected with these names. We know nothing of them, and conjectures are idle.

16. On the occasion and object of these Epistles, it is hardly needful to remark. Both are too plainly declared in the letters themselves, to require further elucidation.

### SECTION III.

#### TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING.

1. It is impossible to lay down either of these with any degree of certainty. From the similarity in style of both Epistles, it is probable that the times of writing were not far apart. The journeys mentioned in 2 John 12 and 3 John 10, 14, may be one and the same. Eusebius relates that the Apostle, "when he returned from his exile in the island after Domitian's death, . . . made a journey by invitation to the neighbouring Gentiles, in some places to appoint bishops, in others to set in order whole churches, in others again to ordain some one of them pointed out by the Spirit." It may have been in prospect of this journey that he threatens Diotrephes in 2 John 10. If so, both Epistles belong to a very late period of the Apostle's life: and are probably subsequent to the writing of the Apocalypse. See below in the Introduction to that book, § ii. par. 7.

2. With regard to the *place* of writing, probability points to Ephesus: especially if we adopt the view suggested by the passage of Eusebius just cited.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### JUDE.

#### SECTION I.

##### ITS AUTHORSHIP.

1. THE author of this Epistle calls himself, in ver. 1, "*servant of Jesus Christ,*" and "*brother of James.*" The former of these appella-

tions is never thus barely used, in an address of an epistle, to designate an Apostle. It is true that in Phil. i. 1 we have "*Paul and Timotheus servants of Jesus Christ:*" but a designation common to two persons necessarily sinks to the rank of the inferior one. In every other case where an Apostle names himself "*servant,*" it is in conjunction with "*Apostle;*" see Rom. i. 1; Tit. i. 1; 2 Pet. i. 1<sup>1</sup>. That I see no exception to this in James i. 1, is plain to the readers of my Introduction to that Epistle.

2. That an Apostle *may* have thus designated himself, we of course cannot deny; but we deal with analogy and probability in discussing evidence of this kind.

3. The second designation, "*brother of James,*" still further confirms the view that the Writer is not an Apostle. Whoever this *James* may be, it is extremely improbable, that an Apostle of the Lord should have put forward in the opening of an Epistle of solemn warning and exhortation, not his exalted commission from Christ himself, but his mere earthly relationship to one who was better known than himself.

4. But this is met by some with the allegation, that we have elsewhere the Apostle Judas called [the brother] of James, "*Jude of James,*" Luke vi. 16; Acts i. 13. Even were this so (and it is uncertain whether we are making the right supplement; see note on Matt. x. 2), that designation must stand on its own independent ground, and being mere matter of conjecture, cannot claim to enter as evidence here. If the considerations arising from this Epistle itself tend to shew that the Jude who wrote it was not an Apostle, then either we must 1) otherwise fill up the ellipsis in that expression, or 2) leave that difficult appellation in entire uncertainty. From the nature of the case, this must rule that other, not that other, this.

5. The question for us is, How would the probability arise, that any one should call himself "*brother of James?*" and the reply to this will depend somewhat on the personal dignity of the James here mentioned. If this person be assumed to be the well-known bishop of the church at Jerusalem, then there will be no difficulty in the Writer of this Epistle thus designating himself.

6. And this has been the general supposition. Those who see in that James, the Apostle James, son of Alphæus, regard our Writer as the Apostle Jude, also the son of Alphæus: the "*Judas not Iscariot*" of John xiv. 22. Those, on the other hand, who see in that James, not one of the Twelve, but the actual (maternal) brother of our Lord, the son of Joseph and Mary, regard our Writer as the Judas of Matt. xiii. 55, another brother of our Lord, and a younger son of Joseph and Mary.

<sup>1</sup> St. Paul in Philem. 1 calls himself merely "*prisoner of Jesus Christ,*" but obviously both the name and the circumstances are widely different.

7. The reader will at once gather from what has been said in the Introduction to the Epistle of James, that this latter is the view here taken. The other seems to me to be beset with insuperable difficulties: involving us as it does in the wholly unjustifiable hypothesis, that those who are called in Scripture the brethren of our Lord were not his brethren, but his cousins, sons of Alphæus (Clopas).

8. It may be asked, if this Writer were indeed the brother of James, and thus the brother of the Lord Himself, should we not rather expect that he would give himself this high character, stating his relationship to Jesus, rather than that to James? But surely such a question would shew great ignorance of the true spirit of the apostolic writers. It would be the last thing I should expect, to find one of the brethren of the Lord asserting this relationship as a ground of reception for an Epistle. Almost all agree that the Writer of the Epistle of James was the person known as the brother of the Lord. Yet there we have no such designation. It would have been in fact altogether inconsistent with the true spirit of Christ (see Luke xi. 27, 28), and in harmony with those later and superstitious feelings with which the next and following ages regarded His earthly relatives. Had such a designation as "*brother of the Lord*" been found in the address of an Epistle, it would have formed a strong à priori objection to its authenticity.

9. I have before remarked in the Introduction to 2 Peter that such expressions as that in our ver. 17, "*Remember the words which were before spoken by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ,*" cannot be fairly alleged as evidence of the apostolicity or non-apostolicity of a writer<sup>2</sup>.

10. Of this Judas, one of the Lord's brethren, we know nothing from early ecclesiastical tradition. The only trace of him is found in an interesting story which Eusebius gives from Hegesippus, of Domitian, in jealousy of the survivors of the family of David, sending for and examining two grandsons of this Judas, and dismissing them, on finding that they were poor working men, and hearing that the kingdom of Christ which they expected was not to be in this present world.

11. In this defect of our knowledge of the personal history of the Writer, we can only say that he, like his greater brother St. James, did not believe on our Lord during his ministry, but became a convert after the resurrection, and as in Acts i. 14, consorted usually with the Apostles and followers of Jesus. All else respecting him is left to be gathered from the spirit and style of this Epistle: and will be found treated in the section devoted to that part of our subject.

<sup>2</sup> See above, *Intro. to 2 Pet.* § iv. 22: also the notes, and on 2 Pet. iii. 2.

## SECTION II.

## AUTHENTICITY.

1. Eusebius reckons our Epistle, as indeed all the Catholic Epistles except 1 John and 1 Peter, among the disputed books: "Among the disputed books, but still known to most, are the so-called Epistle of James and that of Jude" . . . .

And again: "Not many of the ancients have mentioned it, as neither that called the Epistle of Jude, which is also one of the seven so-called catholic: but yet we know that these are publicly read with the rest in most of the churches."

2. Tertullian however cites it as authentic, and attributes it to the Apostle Jude: "Enoch has a testimony in the writing of the Apostle Jude."

3. Clement of Alexandria gives citations from it as from Scripture: "With regard to these and the like heresies I believe Jude in his Epistle to have spoken prophetically" . . . (citing our vv. 8, 17).

And again: "'For I wish you to know,' says Jude, 'that God having saved the people out of the land of Egypt'" . . . (vv. 5, 6).

And Eusebius says of Clement, "that he made expositions of the whole canonical Scripture, not even omitting the disputed books, I mean that of Jude and the other catholic Epistles, and that of Barnabas, and that which is called the Apocalypse of Peter."

4. The Muratorian fragment speaks of the Epistle as genuine and canonical.

5. Origen says: "Jude wrote an Epistle of few lines, but full of speeches strong in heavenly grace; and he says in his prologue, '**Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.**'"

And he refers to it in several places as Scripture; calling the Writer in one place, "Jude the Apostle."

6. Jerome says: "Jude the brother of James has left a short Epistle, which is one of the seven catholic ones. And because he adduces a testimony from the book of Enoch, which is apocryphal, the Epistle is, by most, rejected; still it has gotten authority by long usage, so as to be reckoned among the other Scriptures."

7. In the older copies of the Peschito, or ancient Syriac version, the Epistle is wanting; but Ephrem Syrus recognized its authenticity.

8. In later times, the Epistle has been generally received as authentic. The circumstance that the Writer does not call himself an Apostle, has ensured for it a more favourable reception than some other books of the New Test., with those who are fond of questioning the genuineness of the Epistles. Even De Wette thinks there is no reason why we should

suspect it to be spurious. He is willing to pass over the phenomena in it which have appeared stumbling-blocks to others: its citation of the book of Enoch, its probable acquaintance with the Epistle to the Romans, its difficult but apparently Greek style.

9. Schwegler, on the other hand, though acknowledging its very simple and undeveloped character in point of doctrine, yet draws from vv. 17, 18 a proof that it belongs to the post-apostolic times. He thinks that the forger prefixed the name of Jude, brother of James, in order to give to his writing the weight of connexion, in point of doctrine and spirit, with this latter great name.

10. But as Huther well remarks, had this been so;—in other words, for so the hypothesis seems to imply, had the Epistle been written in the interests of Judaizing Christianity against Pauline, we should surely have found more indications of this in it: and as to the superscription we may reply, that a forger would hardly have attributed his composition to a man otherwise so entirely unknown as Jude was.

11. The fact that doubts were entertained respecting the authenticity of the Epistle in early times, and that we do not find many traces of its use in the primitive Fathers, may easily be accounted for from its shortness, from its special character, from its presumed reference to apocryphal sources, from its apparently not being written by an Apostle.

### SECTION III.

#### FOR WHAT READERS AND WITH WHAT OBJECT WRITTEN.

1. The readers are addressed merely as Christians: perhaps, as De Wette suggests, because the matters mentioned in the Epistle are little to their credit. The evil persons stigmatized in it do not seem to have been heretical teachers, as commonly supposed, but rather *libertines*, practical unbelievers (vv. 4, 8), scoffers (ver. 18), whose pride and wantonness (vv. 8, 10, 12 f.), whose murmuring, and refractory and party spirit (vv. 11, 16, 19), threatened to bring about the destruction of the church. In 2 Peter, as I have already observed above, ch. iv. § iii. 4, these persons are developed into false teachers: one of the circumstances from which I have inferred the posteriority of that Epistle.

2. It is mainly to warn his readers against these, that St. Jude writes the Epistle: “to exhort them that they should contend earnestly for the faith once,” and once for all, “delivered to the saints.”

3. When we come to ask whether the readers formed a circumscribed circle of Christians, and if so, where, we find ourselves left to mere speculation for an answer. There does certainly appear to be a spe-

ciality about the circumstances of those addressed, but it is difficult exactly to define it. They seem to have been Jews, from the fact of the altogether Judaic spirit of the Epistle : from its appeal to Jewish traditions, and perhaps to Jewish books. They evidently dwelt among an abundant and a wicked population, probably of a commercial character. Hence some have thought of Corinth as their abode : some of Egypt, to which land it is said the physical phænomena are suitable (vv. 12 ff.) : some of a commercial city in Syria, seeing that Palestine, where St. Jude dwelt, must at the time of writing the Epistle have been in a state of commotion, to which there is no allusion in it.

## SECTION IV.

### TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING.

1. On the former of these it is impossible to speak with any degree of certainty. Our principal indications are, the state of the church which may be inferred from the Epistle, the apparent use made in it of the apocryphal book of Enoch, and the reference made to the previous teaching of the Apostles.

2. The state of the church indicated is one not far advanced in historical development. Those errors which afterwards expanded into heresies were as yet in their first stage. The evil men were as yet mixed with the church, rocks of danger in their feasts of love. They had not yet been marked off and stigmatized : for this very purpose the Epistle is written, that they might no longer be latent in the bosom of the church. All this points to an early date.

3. The datum furnished by the apparent allusion to the apocryphal book of Enoch, guides us to no certain result. It is even yet matter of uncertainty, when that book was written<sup>3</sup>. So that this consideration brings us no nearer to our desired result.

4. The fact that St. Jude (ver. 17) refers his readers to previous teaching by the Apostles, is hardly of more value for our purpose. On the one hand the imperfect tense (ver. 18) seems to speak of the Apostles as if their work was done and they were passed away,—“they used to tell you :” on the other, it might fairly be used of men who were dispersed and carrying on their work in other parts. Then again, the language seems necessarily to imply that the readers had for themselves heard the Apostles. No safe inference can be drawn from the words that they were written *after* the apostolic age : nay, the natural inference is rather the other way. They appear to point to a time

<sup>3</sup> See below, § v. par. 8.



when the agency of the Apostles themselves had passed away from the readers, but the impress of their warning words had not faded from their memories.

5. Another note of time has been imagined to lie in the circumstance, that the destruction of Jerusalem is not mentioned in the Epistle. It has been replied, that there was no reason why any allusion should have been made to that event, as the immediate subject before the Writer did not lead him to it. Still I cannot help feeling that the reply is not wholly satisfactory. Considering that St. Jude was writing to Jews, and citing signal instances of divine vengeance, though he may not have been led to mention the judgment of the Flood,—I can hardly conceive that he would have omitted that which uprooted the Jewish people and polity.

6. So that on the whole, as De Wette, himself often sceptical on the question of the genuineness and antiquity of the New Test. writings, confesses, there is no reason why we should place our Epistle later than the limit of the apostolic age. That it was anterior to the second Epistle of Peter, I have already endeavoured to prove (see above, ch. iv. § iii. 3 ff.).

7. Of the place where this Epistle was written, absolutely nothing is known. From its tone and references, we should conjecture that the Writer lived in Palestine: but even thus much must be uncertain.

## SECTION V.

### ON THE APOCRYPHAL WRITINGS APPARENTLY REFERRED TO IN THIS EPISTLE.

1. In ver. 14 we have a reference to a prophecy of Enoch, the seventh from Adam. This has by many been supposed to indicate an acquaintance on the part of the Writer with the existing apocryphal "book of Enoch." It becomes desirable therefore that we should briefly put the student in possession of the history and nature of that document. In so doing I shall take my matter partly from Mr. Westcott's article in Dr. Smith's Biblical Dictionary, partly from a notice by Professor Volkmar (see below): to which sources the reader is referred for further details.

2. The book appears to have been known to the early fathers, Justin, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, and we have numerous references to it in the "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs." Tertullian quotes it as a book not admitted into the Jewish canon, but profitable, and indeed to be received by Christians on the ground that "nothing is to be altogether rejected which has reference to ourselves," and

that "we read that all Scripture (or, every writing) fit for edification is divinely inspired." Augustine was acquainted with it, as also was an anonymous writer whose work is printed among those of Jerome: but during the middle ages it was known to the Western Church only through the (presumed) quotations in our Epistle. The Eastern Church possessed considerable fragments of it, incorporated into the *Chronographia* of Georgius Syncellus (about 792).

3. About the close of the last century, the traveller Bruce brought from Abyssinia the Æthiopic translation of the entire book. An English version of this translation was published by Archbishop Lawrence in 1821; and the Æthiopic itself in 1838. Since then a more complete edition has been published in Germany (by Dr. A. Dillmann, Leipzig, 1853), which is now the standard one, and has given rise to the Essays, among others, of Ewald and Hilgenfeld.

4. The Æthiopic version appears to have been made from the Greek; as, though wanting a considerable passage quoted by Syncellus, it yet agrees in the main with the citations found in the early Fathers. But it is probable that the Greek itself is but a version of a Hebrew original. The names of the angels and of the winds betray an Aramaic origin: and a Hebrew book of Enoch was known and used by the Jews as late as the thirteenth century.

5. The book consists of revelations purporting to have been given to Enoch and to Noah: and its object is, to vindicate the ways of Divine Providence: to set forth the terrible retribution reserved for sinners, whether angelic or human: and to "repeat in every form the great principle that the world, natural, moral and spiritual, is under the immediate government of God."

6. "In doctrine," says Mr. Westcott in the article above mentioned, "the book of Enoch exhibits a great advance of thought within the limits of revelation in each of the great divisions of knowledge. The teaching on nature is a curious attempt to reduce the scattered images of the Old Test. to a physical system. The view of society and man, of the temporary triumph and final discomfiture of the oppressors of God's people, carries out into elaborate detail the pregnant images of Daniel. The figure of the Messiah is invested with majestic dignity as 'the Son of God,' 'whose name was named before the sun was made,' and who existed 'aforetime in the presence of God.' And at the same time his human attributes as 'the son of man,' 'the son of woman,' 'the elect one,' 'the righteous one,' 'the anointed,' are brought into conspicuous notice. The mysteries of the spiritual world, the connexion of angels and men, the classes and ministries of the hosts of heaven, the power of Satan, and the legions of darkness, the doctrines of resurrection, retribution, and eternal punishment, are dwelt upon with growing earnestness as the horizon of speculation was extended by intercourse with Greece. But

the message of the book is emphatically one of faith and truth: and while the Writer combines and repeats the thoughts of Scripture, he adds no new element to the teaching of the prophets. His errors spring from an undisciplined attempt to explain their words, and from a proud exultation in present success. For the great characteristic by which the book is distinguished from the later apocalypse of Esdras is the tone of triumphant expectation by which it is pervaded."

7. The date of the book has been matter of great uncertainty. Abp. Lawrence, and Hofmann, suppose it to have been compiled in the reign of Herod the Great: and with this view Gfrörer, Wieseler, and Gieseler agree. Lücke goes very fully into the question, and determines that it consists of an earlier and a later portion: the former written early in the Maccabæan period, the latter in the time of Herod the Great. It is from the former of these that the quotation in our Epistle is taken.

8. But the whole question of the date has been recently discussed by Prof. Volkmar, of Zurich. He undertakes to prove the book a production of the time of the sedition of Barchochebas (A.D. about 132), and to have been written by one of the followers of Rabbi Akiba, the great upholder of that impostor. And certainly, as far as I can see, his proof seems not easy to overthrow. In that case, as he remarks, the book of Enoch was not only of Jewish, but of distinctly antichristian origin. But this one point in the progress of his argument seems to me debatable. He assumes that the words cited in our Epistle as a prophecy of Enoch are of necessity taken from the apocryphal book, and regards it as an inevitable sequence, that if the book of Enoch is proved to be of the first half of the second century, the Epistle of Jude must be even later. In order however for this to be accepted, we need one link supplied, which, it seems to me, Prof. Volkmar has not given us. We want it shewn, that the passage cited is so interwoven into the apocryphal book as necessarily to form a part of it, and that it may not itself have been taken from primitive tradition, or even from the report of that tradition contained in our Epistle.

9. The account of the matter hence deduced would be, that the book, in its original groundwork, is of purely Jewish origin, but that it has received numerous Christian interpolations and additions. "It may be regarded," remarks Mr. Westcott, "as describing an important phase of Jewish opinion shortly before the coming of Christ." If we accept the later date, this must of course be modified accordingly.

There never has been in the church the slightest doubt of the apocryphal character of the book of Enoch. The sole maintainer of its authority seems to have been Tertullian: it is plainly described as apocryphal by Origen, Augustine, and Jerome, and is enumerated among the apocryphal books in the Apostolical Constitutions.

10. The other passage in our Epistle which has been supposed to come from an apocryphal source, viz. the reference to the dispute between the archangel Michael and the devil concerning the body of Moses, has been discussed in the notes on the place, and held more likely to have been a fragment of primitive tradition.

11. But it yet remains that something should be said concerning the fall of the angels spoken of vv. 6, 7. In the notes on those verses, I have mentioned the probability, in my view, that the narrative in Gen. vi. 2 is alluded to. This impression has been since then much strengthened by a very able polemical tract by Dr. Kurtz, the author of the "History of the Old Testament," in which he has maintained against Hengstenberg the view taken by himself in that work. It seems to me that Dr. Kurtz has gone far to decide the interpretation as against any reference of Gen. vi. 2 to the Sethites, or of our vv. 6, 7 to the fall of the devil and his angels. The exposition of Hengstenberg and those who think with him depends on the spiritual acceptation, in this case, of the word "*fornication*," which Kurtz completely disproves. The facts of the history of the catastrophe of the cities of the plain render it quite out of the question: and the usage of the Septuagint, which Hengstenberg cites as decisive on his side, is really against him. And this point being disposed of, the whole fabric falls with it.

12. That the particulars related in 2 Pet. and our Epistle of the fallen angels are found also in the book of Enoch, is again no proof that the Writers of these Epistles took them from that book. Three other solutions are possible: 1, that the apocryphal Writer took them from our Epistles: 2, that their source in each case was ancient tradition: 3, that the book of Enoch itself consists of separate portions written at different times.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### REVELATION.

#### SECTION I.

##### AUTHORSHIP AND CANONICITY.

1. THE Author of this book calls himself in more places than one by the name John, ch. i. 1, 4, 9, xxii. 8. The general view has been, that this name represents St. John the son of Zebedee, the Writer of the Gospel and the three Epistles, the disciple whom Jesus loved.

2. This view rests on external, and on internal evidence. I shall first specify both these, and then pass on to other views respecting the authorship. And in so doing, I shall at present cite merely those testimonies which bear more or less directly on the *authorship*. The most ancient are the following :

3. Justin Martyr, in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew (written between A.D. 139 and 161): "And . . . among us a certain man named John, one of the Apostles of Christ, in the Apocalypse which was made to him prophesied that those who have believed in our time shall spend a thousand years in Jerusalem, and after this the universal and in a word eternal resurrection and judgment of all together shall take place."

We may mention by the way, that this testimony of Justin is doubly important, as referred to by Eusebius, himself no believer in the apostolic authorship: "Justin has made mention of the Apocalypse of John, plainly stating it to be by the Apostle."

The authenticity and value of the passage of Justin has been discussed at considerable length and with much candour by Lücke. He, himself a disbeliever in St. John's authorship, confesses that it is a genuine and decided testimony in its favour.

4. Melito, bishop of Sardis (died about 171), is said by Eusebius to have written treatises on the devil, and on the Apocalypse of John. It is fairly reasoned that Eusebius would hardly have failed to notice, supposing him to have seen Melito's work, any view of his which doubted the apostolic origin: and that this may therefore be legitimately taken as an indirect testimony in its favour.

5. Of a similar indirect nature are the two next testimonies. Theophilus, bishop of Antioch (died about 180), is said by Eusebius to have written a book entitled "Against the heresy of Hermogenes," in which he uses testimonies from the Apocalypse of John.

6. And similarly Eusebius says of Apollonius, who flourished in Asia Minor at the end of cent. ii., and wrote *against* the Montanists, thereby making his testimony more important: "He also uses testimonies from the Apocalypse of John: and he relates that a dead man was raised miraculously by John himself in Ephesus." From this latter sentence there can be no doubt that Apollonius regarded the Apocalypse as the work of John the Apostle.

7. We now come to the principal second century witness, Irenæus (died about 180). Respecting the value of his testimony, it may suffice to remind the student that he had been a hearer of Polycarp, the disciple of St. John. And this testimony occurs up and down his writings in great abundance, and in the most decisive terms. "John the Disciple of the Lord," is stated by him in four places to have written the Apocalypse, —and "John" in two places. And this John can be no other than the Apostle: for he says, "*John the Disciple of the Lord* (as above), who

lay upon His breast, himself published the gospel when he resided in Ephesus of Asia." But the most remarkable testimony, and one which will come before us again and again during the course of this Introduction, is in a passage, where, having given certain reasons for the number of Antichrist's name being 666, he proceeds, "Now this being so, and this number being found in all the good and ancient copies, and being testified to by those very men who have seen John face to face . . . ." Then after some remarks, and stating two names current as suiting the number, he concludes, "We indeed do not venture positively to demonstrate concerning the name of Antichrist. For if it had been fitting for his name to be openly revealed to this age, it would have been declared by him who saw the Apocalypse. **For it was seen not long ago, but close upon our own generation, near the end of the reign of Domitian.**"

This is beyond question the most important evidence which has yet come before us. And we may observe that it is in no way affected by any opinion which we may have formed respecting Irenæus's merits as an expositor, nor by any of his peculiar opinions. He here merely asserts what, if he were a man of ordinary power of collecting and retaining facts, he must very well have known for certain.

8. Keeping at present to the direct witnesses for the authorship by St. John, we next come to Tertullian (died about 220). His testimonies are many and decisive.

"For also the Apostle John in the Apocalypse describes a sword proceeding out of the mouth of our Lord:" and again, "This (celestial city) Ezekiel was acquainted with, and the Apostle John saw." And similarly in six other places.

9. The fragment on the Canon called by the name of Muratori, and written about 200, says, "And John in the Apocalypse, though he writes to seven churches, yet speaks to all . . .," where the context shews that the Apostle John must be intended.

10. Hippolytus, bishop of Ostia (Porto), about 240, in his writings very frequently quotes the Apocalypse, and almost always with the words, "John says." Whom he meant by John is evident from one passage: "Tell me, blessed John, Apostle and Disciple of the Lord, what thou sawest and heardest concerning Babylon." And then he proceeds to quote ch. xvii. 1—18. Multitudes of other citations also occur. And one of his principal works, as specified in the catalogue found inscribed on his statue, was a defence of the Gospel and Apocalypse of John: mentioned also by Jerome.

11. Clement of Alexandria (about 200) says of the faithful presbyter, "Their presbyter . . . shall sit on the twenty-and-four thrones, as John says in the Apocalypse." And elsewhere he fixes this name as meaning the Apostle, by saying, "Hear a story,—not a story but a true history,—



delivered down respecting the Apostle John . . . for when at the death of the tyrant he moved from the island Patmos to Ephesus . . . :” and then he proceeds to tell the well-known story of St. John and the young robber.

12. Origen, the scholar of Clement (died about 233), who so diligently enquired into and reported any doubts or disputes about the canonicity and genuineness of the books of the New Test., appears not to have known of any which regarded the Apocalypse. He says, “Why should we speak of him who lay on the breast of Jesus, namely John, who has left us one Gospel, and confesses that he might have made so many, that the world could not hold them? He wrote also the Apocalypse, and was ordered to be silent and not to write the voices of the seven thunders.”

We have also this remarkable testimony of his: “And the sons of Zebedee were baptized with the baptism: for Herod killed James the brother of John with the sword: and the king of the Romans, as tradition teaches us, condemned John, a martyr for the word of the truth, to the island of Patmos, and John tells us about his martyrdom, not saying who condemned him, declaring in his Apocalypse thus, ‘I John,’ &c. (Rev. i. 9), and what follows. He seems to have seen the Apocalypse in this island.”

And Origen again repeatedly cites the Apocalypse without the least indication of doubt as to its author. His procedure in this case forms a striking contrast to that in the case of the Epistle to the Hebrews: see this Introduction, ch. xv. § i. 16—23.

13. Still keeping to those Fathers who give definite testimony as to the *authorship*, we come to Victorinus, bishop of Pettau in Pannonia, who suffered martyrdom under Diocletian in 303. His is the earliest extant commentary on the Apocalypse. On ch. x. 4, he says that “John, himself an Apostle, was forbidden, when he was going to write what the seven thunders had said.”

And afterwards, on the words “thou must prophesy again,” he says, “When John saw this, he was in the island Patmos, condemned to the mines by the Emperor Domitian. There he saw the Apocalypse: and when he in his old age expected to receive his entrance (to glory) by martyrdom, Domitian was slain and all his decrees were abrogated, and John being set free from the mines, thus afterwards delivered down the Apocalypse which he had received.”

14. Ephrem Syrus (died about 378), the greatest Father in the Syrian church, repeatedly in his numerous writings cites the Apocalypse as canonical, and ascribes it to John. In the Greek translation of his works, we read in the second Homily on the Second Advent of the Lord, “as we hear the Apostle saying,” and then he quotes Rev. xxi. 4, 5.

Now these citations are the more remarkable, because the old Syriac

or Peschito version does not contain the Apocalypse: as neither indeed apparently did the later or Philoxenian version originally, nor its republication by Thomas of Charkel. It may fairly be asked then, How came Ephrem by his Syriac version of the Apocalypse (for he seems not to have been acquainted with Greek)? And, How came the Peschito to want the Apocalypse, if it was held to be written by the Apostle?

15. It would exceed the limits of this Introduction to enter into the answers to these questions, which have been variously given: by Hug and Thiersch, that the Peschito originally contained the book, and that it only became excluded in the fourth century through the influence of the schools of Antioch and Nisibis: by Walton and Wichelhaus, that the Peschito was made in the first century, when as yet the Apocalypse had not won its way among the canonical books: by Hengstenberg, that the Peschito was not made till the end of the third century, after the objections against the apostolicity of the book had been raised by Dionysius of Alexandria<sup>4</sup>.

16. These answers are all discussed by Lücke, and severally rejected. His own solution is by no means satisfactory as to the former of the two questions,—how Ephrem came by his Syriac version. The latter he answers by postponing the date of the reception of the Apocalypse into the canon till after the publication of the Peschito, i. e. as now generally acknowledged, the end of the second century.

17. Epiphanius, bishop of Salamis in Cyprus at the end of the fourth century, cites the Apocalypse as written by the Apostle. In combating the Alogi, who rejected the gospel of John and the Apocalypse, he speaks much and warmly of that book, and says among other things, “The holy Prophets and the holy Apostles, among whom the holy John, by his Gospel and his Epistles and his Apocalypse, imparted of the same holy gift of grace:” and having cited 1 Cor. xv. 52, he proceeds, “Since then the Apostle agrees with the holy Apostle John in the Apocalypse, what controversy is left?”

18. Basil the Great (died 378) says, “That which was spoken to you by the Holy Spirit through the blessed John, ‘In the beginning was the Word, &c.,’ and afterwards, the Evangelist himself shews us the meaning of this **was** in another work, saying ‘He that is and **was** and the Almighty,’” Rev. i. 8.

19. Hilary of Poitiers (died 368) says, “Thus we are taught by the Apocalypse of blessed John: ‘And to the angel of the church of Philadelphia write.’” And similarly in two other places.

20. Athanasius (died 373) cites John i. 1, and then says, “And in the Apocalypse he says thus, ‘He that is, and was, and is to come.’”

<sup>4</sup> See below, par. 47.

21. Gregory of Nyssa, brother of Basil the Great (died 395), cites Rev. iii. 15, as said by the Evangelist John.

22. Didymus (died 394) says, "And in the Apocalypse John (the writer of the Epistle, from the context) is often called a prophet."

23. Ambrose (died 397) constantly cites the Apocalypse as the work of the Apostle John.

24. Augustine (died 430) uses every where the Apocalypse as a genuine production of the Apostle and Evangelist John.

25. Jerome (died 420) speaks of the Apostle John as also being a prophet, "for he saw in the island Patmos, to which he had been banished by the Emperor Domitian, on account of his testimony to the Lord, the Apocalypse, containing infinite mysteries of future things."

We shall have to adduce Jerome again in treating of the canonicity. And now that we have arrived at the beginning of the fifth century, the latter question becomes historically the more important of the two, and indeed the two are henceforth hardly capable of being treated apart.

26. Before we pass to the testimonies *against* the authorship by the Apostle and Evangelist St. John, let us briefly review the course of evidence which we have adduced in its favour. It will be very instructive to compare its character with that of the evidence for the Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews, as collected in the Introduction to that Epistle.

27. There we found that, while there prevailed in the great majority of the more ancient Fathers a habit, when they are speaking loosely, or *ad populum*, of citing the Epistle as the work of St. Paul,—on the one hand, all attempts fail to discover any general ecclesiastical tradition to this effect: and on the other, the greatest and ablest of these writers themselves, when speaking guardedly, throw doubt on the Pauline authorship, while some of them set it aside altogether. In course of time, we there also found, the habit of citing the Epistle as St. Paul's became more general: then sprung up assertion, more and more strong, that it veritably was his: till at last it was made an article of faith to believe it to be so. So that the history of opinion in that case may be described as the gradual growing up of a belief which was entirely void of general reception in the ancient church.

28. We are not yet prepared to enter on the whole of the corresponding history of opinion in this case: but as far as we have gone, it may be described as the very converse of the other. The apostolic authorship rests on the firmest traditional ground. We have it assured to us by one who had companied with men that had known St. John himself: we have it held in continuous succession by Fathers in all parts of the church. Nowhere, in primitive times, does there appear any counter tradition on the subject. We have nothing corresponding

to the plain testimonies, of Tertullian in favour of Barnabas, or of Origen that there was an *account* come down that Clement of Rome or St. Luke had written the Epistle. In subsequent paragraphs we shall see how variation of opinion was first introduced, and why.

29. But before doing so, it will be well to complete this portion of our enquiry, by mentioning those early writings and Fathers which, though they do not expressly state who was the author of the book, yet cite it as canonical, or at all events shew that they were acquainted with and approved it.

30. Among these the very earliest have been matter of considerable question. The supposed allusions in Polycarp, for instance, though strongly maintained by Hengstenberg, are really so faint and distant, that none but an advocate would ever have perceived them<sup>5</sup>.

31. The passages which Hengstenberg brings from the Epistle of the Church of Smyrna on the martyrdom of Polycarp, are even more uncertain and far-fetched. Such advocacy is much to be lamented: it tends to weaken instead of strengthening the real evidence.

32. But the next testimony produced is however of a very different kind. It is that of Papias, of whom Irenæus, in adducing the traditional words of our Lord respecting the millennial abundance of the earth, says, "These things Papias, having been a hearer of John, and companion of Polycarp, an ancient man, testifies in writing in the fourth of his books; for there are five compiled by him." It is well known that Eusebius attempts to set aside this *hearer of John* by citing from Papias himself his assertion that he set down in his work what he had heard as the sayings of the Apostles, naming St. John among them. But there is nothing to prevent his having united both characters,—that of a hearer, and that of a collector of sayings: and Irenæus, the scholar of Polycarp, is hardly likely to have been mistaken on such a point. Now regarding Papias as a witness for the Apocalypse, we have a note of Andreas, of Cappadocia, at the end of the fifth century, at the beginning of the commentaries on the Apocalypse: "Concerning the inspiration of the book we think it superfluous to enlarge, when the blessed men, Gregory the Theologian and Cyril, and besides, the more ancient men, Papias, Irenæus, Methodius, and Hippolytus, have given credible testimony to it; from whom we also, having taken many proofs, have arrived at the same conclusion, as we have set forth in certain places." And accordingly, on Rev. xii. 7—9, he expressly cites Papias's work.

33. There seems to be ample proof here that Papias did maintain, as from what we otherwise know we should expect, the inspiration, i. e. the canonicity of the book. All that has been argued on the other side seems to me to fail to obviate the fact, or to weaken the great import-

<sup>5</sup> See them discussed in the corresponding place in my Greek Test.

ance of this early testimony. See the whole discussed at length in Stuart, pp. 250—254: Lücke, pp. 524—546: Hengstenberg, pp. 101—116. I may be permitted to say, that both the last-mentioned Commentators have suffered themselves to be blinded as to the real worth of the evidence by their zeal to serve each his own hypothesis.

34. The Epistle of the churches of Lyons and Vienne to the churches of Asia and Phrygia concerning the persecution which befell them under Marcus Aurelius, A.D. 177, is preserved by Eusebius. The citations in it from the Apocalypse are unmistakeable. In speaking of the martyr Vettius Epagathus, they say, "For he was and is a true martyr of Christ, following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth" (Rev. xiv. 4). They account for the rage of the Pagans against the Christians by its being the fulfilment of Rev. xxii. 11, "That the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He that is lawless, let him be lawless still, and he that is righteous let him be righteous still.'" They call Christ "the faithful and true Witness," and, "the Firstborn from the dead," expressions manifestly taken from Rev. i. 5, iii. 14.

35. The testimony of Polycrates of Ephesus, in Euseb. H. E. v. 24, concerning the burial of St. John in Ephesus, has been pressed by Hengstenberg into the service of the canonicity of the Apocalypse, but is far too uncertain in meaning to be fairly introduced. See Hengstenberg, pp. 125—129.

36. Cyprian (about 250) repeatedly refers to the Apocalypse, and unhesitatingly treats it as part of Holy Scripture. He says, "chiefly when it is written, 'Remember whence thou hast fallen and repent,'" Rev. ii. 5. He cites the Apocalypse as on a level with the Gospels: "By the trumpet of His Gospel the Lord excites us, saying, 'He that loveth father, &c.' . . . and again, 'Blessed are they that shall be persecuted, &c.' . . . and, 'To him that overcometh will I give to sit upon my throne, &c.," Rev. iii. 21. And similarly in several other places, given in my Greek Test.

37. Athanasius<sup>6</sup> (died about 373) gives a list of the books of the sacred canon, dividing them into three classes: the first of these being the *canonical*, which are the sources of salvation: in which only is the true doctrine of religion declared, to which no man can add, and from which none can take away: the second *ecclesiastical*—such as may be read in the church for edification, but are not inspired: the third, *apocryphal*, written by heretics, and supposititious. In the first class he places the Apocalypse: and in his writings accordingly he refers to it frequently.

38. In Chrysostom's own works we have no comments on the Apocalypse, nor any distinct references to it as Scripture. That he was

<sup>6</sup> See above, par. 20.



acquainted with it, plainly appears from such passages as that where in speaking of the heavenly city, he says, "Let us then notice its foundations, its gates composed of sapphire and pearls."

Suidas says, "Under the word 'John,' Chrysostom receives his three Epistles, and his Apocalypse."

39. I recur again to Jerome's testimony<sup>7</sup>. In his letter to Paulinus, he gives the whole sacred canon. And in including the Apocalypse in it, he remarks, "The Apocalypse of Johu has as many mysteries as words. I have said but little in proportion to the merit of the book. All praise is too little. In every word are hidden manifold wise senses." In his Commentary on Ps. cxlix. he says, "We read in the Apocalypse of John, which is read and received in the churches, for it is not reckoned among the apocryphal books, but among the canonical (ecclesiastical)."

In his Epistle to Dardanus we have the passage cited at length in the Introduction to the Epistle to the Hebrews, § i. par. 74, which see.

40. It is hardly worth while to cite later and less important authorities on this side. They will be found enumerated in Stuart, Introduction, p. 276 : Davidson, p. 545 : and still more at length in Lücke, pp. 638 ff. Of the general tendency of later tradition I shall speak below, parr. 63 ff.

41. I now come to consider those ancient authorities which impugn the apostolicity and canonicity of the book.

42. First among these in point of time, though not of importance, are the Antimontanists or Alogi of the end of the second and beginning of the third century, who rejected the writings of St. John. "Men like these," says Epiphanius, "are not ashamed to be up in arms against the sayings of the holy John, trying whether they cannot overthrow the truth itself; . . . and against the Apocalypse they bring these wanton charges. . . ." Then follow their objections against the book, which are entirely of a subjective character: "What is the use to me of the Apocalypse of John, talking about seven angels and seven trumpets?" and again, "There is no church of Christians in Thyatira. How then could he write to what never existed?" &c. To these apparently Dionysius of Alexandria, presently to be cited, alludes, when he says, "Some of those before me have set at nought and pulled to pieces the book in every way, examining it through every chapter, and shewing it to be obscure and unintelligible. And they say that the title is false, for it is not John's, and is not even a revelation at all, seeing that it is covered with a heavy and thick cloud of obscurity; and that not only none of the Apostles, but not even of men of the Catholic church, was the writer of the composition; but Cerinthus, who established the heresy called by

<sup>7</sup> See above, par. 25.



his name, put the name, wishing to gain credit for his own composition. For that this was a doctrine of his, that the kingdom of Christ should be on this earth: and being himself a gross person and altogether carnal, he denied that future blessedness would consist in things of this kind."

43. I have considered it important to quote this passage at length, as giving an account of the earliest opponents to the authenticity of the Apocalypse, and of the reason of their opposition. These Alogi have been very lightly passed over by Lücke (p. 582) and others, who are not willing that their procession of opponents to the apostolic authorship should be led by persons whose character is so little creditable. But the fair enquirer will not feel at liberty thus to exclude them. They were perhaps more outspoken and thorough, perhaps also less learned and cautious than those who follow: but their motives of opposition were of the same kind; and it is especially to be noted, as a weighty point in the evidence, that, being hostile to the authority of the writings commonly received as those of the Apostle John, they in their time conceived it necessary to destroy the credit of the Apocalypse as well as that of the Gospel.

44. The Roman presbyter Caius, a very learned man according to Eusebius, who lived in the Episcopate of Zephyrinus (i. e. 196—219), wrote a polemical dialogue against the Montanist Proclus, of which a fragment has been preserved by Eusebius speaking out still more plainly, and saying that Cerinthus forged revelations in the name of a great Apostle, and pretended them to have been received from an angel, saying that after the resurrection there would be a kingdom of Christ upon earth, and that the flesh would again dwell in Jerusalem, and be subject to lusts and pleasures: and that he being an enemy to the Scriptures of God, and wishing to deceive men, introduces a thousand years as the term of the marriage festivity.

45. Some have in vain endeavoured to persuade us that some other book is here meant, and not the Apocalypse of John. No such work is to be traced, though we have very full accounts of Cerinthus from Irenæus and Epiphanius: and neither the plural "*revelations*" (which is also used by Dionysius, as cited below, of *our* apocalyptic visions), nor the exaggerated account of the earthly Kingdom as promised (see the same in the objections of the Alogi as cited by Dionysius above) can have the least weight in inducing us to concur in such a supposition.

46. When Lücke sets aside Caius in the same category as the Alogi, as having equally little to do with ecclesiastical tradition, we cannot help seeing again the trick of a crafty partisan wishing to get rid of an awkward ally.

47. Undoubtedly the weightiest objector to the canonicity of the Apocalypse in early times is DIONYSIUS, the successor next but one to Origen in the presidency of the catechetical school of Alexandria, and

afterwards bishop of that see (A.D. 247). This worthy scholar of Origen remained ever attached to him, loving and honouring him: and wrote him a letter of consolation when he was thrown into prison in the Decian persecution. This Dionysius, as he himself tells us, had become a believer in the Gospel by a course of free investigation, and unbiassed examination of all known systems: and after his conversion, he remained true to this principle as a Christian and as a public teacher. He read and examined without bias all the writings of heretics, and did not reject them until he was thoroughly acquainted with them, and was in a situation to confute them with valid arguments. While he was thus employed, one of the presbyters of his church warned him of the harm which his own soul might take by so much contact with their impure doctrines. Of this danger, he says, he was himself too conscious: but while pondering on what had been said to him he was determined in his course by a heavenly vision: and a voice distinctly said to him, "Read every thing that comes into thy hands: for thou art well able to judge and prove them all: indeed such was at the first the source of thine own faith." And, he says, "I received the vision as agreeing with the apostolic saying, which says to the strong, '*Be prudent money-changers.*'"

48. The notices left us of Dionysius in the seventh book of Eusebius, entirely correspond with the above. And the judgment which he passes on the Apococalypse is characterized by sound discretion and moderation. I give it at length in the corresponding place in the Prolegomena to my Greek Testament.

49. The general sense of it is, that, while on the one hand he separates himself from those who disparaged the book and ascribed it to Cerinthus, on the other he distinctly repudiates all literal interpretations of it as impossible, and approaches the enquiry with a strong anti-millennial bias. This more especially appears, from a previous chapter of the same book of Eusebius, in which is detailed the proceeding of Dionysius with regard to the schism of Nepos, an Egyptian bishop, of millennial views.

50. With regard to the whole character of Dionysius's criticism, we may make the following remarks:

a) its *negative* portion rests upon grounds common to him and ourselves, and respecting which a writer in the third century, however much we may admire his free and able treatment of his subject, has no advantage at all over one who writes in the nineteenth. It is as open to us as it was to him, to judge of the phænomena and language of the Apococalypse as compared with the Gospel and Epistles of St. John.

b) the *positive* result of his argument, if fairly examined, is worth absolutely nothing. The writer to whom he ascribes the book, a second John who is reputed to have lived at Ephesus, is even to himself entirely

unknown: more unknown than Silvanus as a conjectural author of the Epistle to the Hebrews: more unknown than even Aquila. The very existence, in his mind, of the other John, who wrote the Apocalypse, depends on the very shadowy words, "Since they say that there were two tombs in Ephesus, and that each is said to belong to John."

51. And this latter consideration is very important. It shows us that at all events, the idea of John the Presbyter having written the Apocalypse was, in the middle of the third century, wholly unknown to ecclesiastical tradition in the church of Alexandria: or else we should never have found this seeking about and conjecturing on the matter.

52. I shall treat, further on, the question raised by this criticism of Dionysius as to the internal probability of the authorship by the Apostle John. At present I advance with notices of those who impugned or doubted it in ancient times.

53. And of those we next come to Eusebius of Cæsarea, the well-known ecclesiastical historian. His opinion on the question is wavering and undecided. Having asserted the genuineness of St. John's Gospel and First Epistle, and placed the other two Epistles among the disputed books, he proceeds, "But of the Apocalypse the character is among most men even now pulled both ways." But he professes that he will judge it by the testimonies of the ancients. Again in the next chapter, in giving a list of the *universally received Scriptures*, when he has mentioned the four Gospels and Acts and one Epistle of St. John and one of St. Peter, he says, "To these we may add, if it seem good, the Apocalypse of John, concerning which we will give our opinion at the proper time." And a little below, when he is speaking of the spurious books, he says, "And besides, as I said, the Apocalypse of John, if it seem good, which some, as I said, reject, and others number among the books received."

54. In adducing the well-known passage of Papias, "If any one came who had been conversant with the ancients, I enquired of him the sayings of the ancients; what Andrew or what Peter said, or what Philip or Thomas, or John, or Matthew, or any other of the disciples of the Lord, also what Aristion and John the presbyter, the disciples of the Lord, say," he says, "where it is worth while to notice that he twice enumerates the name of John, the former of which persons he ranges with Peter and James and Matthew and the rest of the Apostles, clearly meaning the Evangelist; but the other John he places with others outside the number of the Apostles, putting Aristion before him: and he plainly calls him presbyter. So that by this is shewn to be true the account of those who say that there were two of this name in Asia, and two tombs in Ephesus, and that each is to this day said to belong to John; and we are obliged to believe these persons. For it is likely that the second, unless any prefer the first, saw the Apocalypse current under the name of John."

55. The student will observe how entirely conjectural, and valueless as evidence, is this opinion of Eusebius. Certainly Lücke is wrong in his very strong denunciations of Hengstenberg for describing Eusebius as studiously leaving the question open. For what else is it, when he numbers the book on one side among the undoubted Scriptures with an "*if it seem so*," and then on the other among the spurious writings with an "*if it seem so*" also: while at the very moment of endorsing Dionysius's conjecture that the second John saw its visions, he interposes "*unless any prefer the first?*" That a man with the anti-millenarian leanings of Eusebius concedes thus much, makes the balance of his testimony incline rather to, than away from, the canonicity of the book. I would not press this, but simply take it as indicating that in Eusebius's time, as well as in that of Dionysius, there was no ecclesiastical tradition warranting the repudiating it as the work of the Evangelist. Adverse opinion there was, which found its fair and worthier employ in internal criticism, and issued in vague conjecture, resting on the mere fact of two persons named John having existed in Ephesus. Who and what the second John was, whether he had any right to speak of himself as the writer of the Apocalypse does, or to address with authority the seven churches of Asia,—on these and on all such questions we are wholly in the dark.

56. Cyril of Jerusalem (died 386) is a more decided witness for the exclusion of the Apocalypse from the Canon. Having prefaced the account of the twenty-two canonical books of the Old Test. with, "Do not have any thing to do with the apocryphal writings," he enumerates the canonical books of the New Test., the four Gospels, Acts, seven catholic Epistles, fourteen of St. Paul, and concludes, "But put all the rest in the second rank. And as many as are not read in the churches, neither do thou read in private, as thou heardest." And it is to be observed that he appeals for this arrangement to ancient authorities: for he says to his catechumen, in the words alluded to in the last-cited clause, "These only do thou earnestly study, which we openly read in the churches. The Apostles and the ancient bishops, who presided over the church, and handed down these books, were far wiser and more careful than thou."

57. Cyril nowhere mentions the Apocalypse by name. But he seems to use it, and even where he by inference repudiates it, to adopt its terms unconsciously. An instance of the former is found, where he says to his catechumen, speaking of his baptism, "Thou art planted in the spiritual paradise: thou receivest a new name," Rev. ii. 7, 17. Of the latter, where, professing to get his particulars respecting Antichrist from Daniel, and having said, "After them shall arise another king, who shall surpass in evil deeds all before him," he proceeds, "and he shall humble three kings, clearly from among the ten former ones, and

from these ten humbling the three, he shall reign the eighth;" this last particular being from Rev. xvii. 11. And similarly in other places.

58. Thus Cyril presents to us remarkable and exceptional phenomena: familiarity with the language of the book, so as to use it unconsciously as that of prophecy, combined with a repudiation of it as canonical, and a prohibition of its study. It would appear that there had been at some time a deliberate change of opinion, and that we have, in these evident references to the Apocalypse, instances of slips of memory, and retention of phrasology which belonged to his former, not to his subsequent views.

59. In the sixtieth canon of the synod of Laodicea, held between 343 and 381, an account of the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments is given, in which the Apocalypse is omitted. The genuineness of this canon has been doubted, but apparently without reason: see Hefele, *Conciliengeschichte*, i. pp. 749 ff. We next come to the testimony of Gregory of Nazianzen (died 390), who, in his poem, "concerning the genuine books of the inspired Scriptures," gives the same canon as Cyril, and adds, "You have all: if any be beside these, it is not among the genuine books." But here again, as in Cyril's case, we are met by the phenomenon of reference to the book and citation of it as of theological authority. He says, speaking of the angels presiding over churches, "I think that some preside over one church, some over another, as John teaches me in the Apocalypse."

Lücke suggests in explanation of this, that possibly the churches of Asia Minor, especially that of Cappadocia, had excluded the Apocalypse from public reading in the church, on account of the countenance which it had been made to give to the errors of Montanism, and placed it among the apocryphal books. This may have been so: but I cannot think his inference secure, that *therefore* we may infer the general fact, that the book rested on no secure ecclesiastical tradition.

60. In a work printed as Gregory's, ascribed by some to Gregory himself, but more usually to Amphilochius of Iconium, we have the Apocalypse mentioned by name: "The Apocalypse of John again some count Scripture, but most reckon it spurious."

But it is to be noticed, that in the scholium of Andreas cited above, par. 32, he enumerates Gregory among those who recognized the canonicity of the Apocalypse.

61. After this, it will be sufficient to give a general view of the antagonism to the authority of the book. It was maintained chiefly in the Eastern church; the Western, after the fifth century, universally recognizing the Apocalypse. It is remarkable that Sulpicius Severus says the Apocalypse is "by most, either foolishly or impiously," rejected. But as Lücke observes, he must have found these "most" in the Greek,



not in the Latin church. Pope Gelasius, in his decree, concerning "what books were to be received" (500), gives the book its place in the Canon of the Catholic Church, between the Epistles of St. Paul and the Catholic Epistles. Primasius and Cassiodorus, in the sixth century, expound it as apostolic and canonical. But Junilius the African, the friend of Primasius, says, that only seventeen books, viz. the Old Test. prophets and the book of Psalms, contain the Scripture prophecy: "but," he continues, "concerning the Apocalypse of John there is much doubt among the Orientals." This he had learned from Paulus, a Persiau, of the school of Nisibis: and he consequently seems inclined not to place it among the "books of complete authority."

62. The fourth synod of Toledo (633) in its seventeenth canon, decrees that, seeing the Apocalypse is by many councils and Popes sanctioned as a work of the Apostle John, and as canonical, it should, under pain of excommunication, be preached on in the church between Easter and Pentecost. The Synod speaks of "many who do not receive its authority, and scorn to read it in the church of God." This, Lücke thinks, points to doubters in the West also. But Isidore of Seville (died 636), having given the generally received canon, speaks of many Latins who doubted of the Pauline origin of the Epistle to the Hebrews, of the genuineness of 2 Peter, of the Epistle of James, and 2 and 3 John; but not a word of any who doubted about the Apocalypse. So that it may be after all that the Synod of Toledo may allude to Orientals only.

63. Henceforward in the Western church, with the sole exception of the Capitulare of Charlemagne, which, following Greek authorities and especially the Synod of Laodicea, excluded the book from public reading, we find universal recognition of the Apocalypse until the Reformation.

64. In the Greek church during the last noticed period opinions were much in the same state as in the fourth century. On one side we find rejection of the book, at the least from public ecclesiastical use: on the other, unsuspecting reception of it as a genuine work of the Apostle John. Neither side takes any pains to justify its view critically, but simply conforms to local ecclesiastical usage. Cyril of Alexandria says, "The wise John, who wrote for us the book of the Apocalypse, which has also been honoured with the approval of the fathers." The very expression here, it is true, betrays consciousness of the existence of doubts, which however do not affect his confidence, nor that of his contemporaries Nilus and Isidore of Pelusium.

65. At Antioch, however, the opinion in cent. v. seems to have been different. Its greatest Father of this period, Theodore of Mopsuestia (died 429), never cites the Apocalypse in his extant writings and fragments, even where we might have certainly expected it. In the frag-



ments of his expositions of the New Test. we have no allusion to it, even when on 2 Thess. ii. 3 ff. he speaks of Antichrist and of the second Advent: nor again in his Commentary on the twelve prophets. Opponent as he was of the allegorical method of interpretation, he may have been withheld from receiving the Apocalypse by consciousness that no other mode would suit it: or he may have followed the older practice of the Syrian church, and the canon of the Laodicean Synod. Still, he rejected the Epistle of James, which both these recognized: and Lücke thinks he may have rejected the Apocalypse from the decision of his own judgment, helped by his disinclination to the book and the existing doubt about its canonicity: being one of those who, like Luther in later times, sought and found "the Canon within the Canon."

66. Theodoret (bishop of Cyrus, died 457) alludes two or three times to the book: but on 2 Thess. ii. and on Heb. xii. 22, he leaves it unnoticed, as also in his Commentary on Daniel. On Ps. lxxxvi. 2, he seems to aim at describing the heavenly Jerusalem in contrast to the apocalyptic description. In speaking of Cerinthus, and of the Nicolaitans, the Montanists, and even of the Millenarian Nepos and his antagonist Dionysius of Alexandria, he says not a word of the Apocalypse. Only once he names it, and adduces ch. i. 9 with the formula "John says:" but then it is in citing from Athanasius.

67. After this, in the sixth century, the Syrian churches were divided on the matter. The Nestorians rejected the Apocalypse, following Theodore of Mopsuestia and the Peshito: the Monophysites received it, following the Alexandrians, and Hippolytus, and Ephrem Syrus. Lücke thinks from certain indications that even among them it was not in ecclesiastical, but only in theological use.

68. In the Greek church in Asia Minor, we have Andreas, of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, the writer of the first entire and connected Commentary on the Apocalypse. He fully and earnestly recognizes its genuineness and inspiration, and (see above, par. 32) appeals to the testimony of the ancients to bear him out: mentioning by name Papias, Irenæus, Methodius, Cyril of Alexandria, and Gregory Theologus (of Nazianzum). It is perhaps hardly fair in Lücke to infer that, because he names so few, more might not have been adduced: hardly fair again to conclude that, because he promises to use their writings in his Commentary, and has not expressly cited them, he did not so use them, or was himself one of the first who explained the book.

69. Arethas, who followed Andreas in his see, and in his work of commenting on the Apocalypse, repeats in his prologue the scholium of Andreas on the Inspiration of the book, adding the authority of Basil the Great. But we are now approaching a time when, as Lücke remarks, it is really of small import who used the book and who did not, who regarded it as the work of the Apostle, and who did not. Still, a few

facts stand out from the general mass, which may be useful as indications, or at all events have a claim to our attention.

70. Such is the fact of the omission of all reference to the Apocalypse in the writings of Cosmas Indicopleustes in cent. vi. In his *Christian Topography*, book vii., he treats of the duration of the heavens according to Scripture, and Lücke thinks must of necessity have cited the book had it been in his Canon. Still, he uses the Festal Epistle of Athanasius, in which it is expressly included in the Canon.

71. The second canon of the Trullian, or Quinisextan council, sanctions on the one hand the Canon of the Laodicean council, and that of the eighty-five apostolic canons, both which omit the Apocalypse, and on the other that of the African Synods of the end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth centuries, which include it. Various conjectures have been made as to the account to be given of this. The desire to leave the question open (Lücke) can hardly have been the cause. We may safely leave such evidence to correct itself.

72. The list may be closed with one or two notices from later centuries, shewing that the doubts were not altogether forgotten, though generally given up.

Nicephorus (beginning of cent. ix.) reckons only twenty-six books of the New Test., and does not mention the Apocalypse either in the doubtful or in the apocryphal books.

73. A prologue to the book in one of our MSS. (cent. x. or beginning of xi.), after defending its canonicity and apostolic origin, apologizes for the ancient Fathers not mentioning it among the books to be openly read in church "because they cared more about urgent spiritual matters, and judged it unprofitable for the multitude to search into such deep things."

74. In the preface to the comments of Œcumenius (cent. xi.) the canonicity of the book is strongly asserted, and its being "a genuine production of the beloved Apostle and not spurious, as some erroneously say." For this, the writer refers to Athanasius, Basil, Gregory, Methodius, Cyril, and Hippolytus.

75. In the *Church History* of Nicephorus Callistus (cent. xiv.), he treats it as an acknowledged fact that the Apostle John, when in exile in Patmos under Domitian, wrote his Gospel and his holy and inspired Apocalypse. Still, when enumerating the books of the canon in ii. 46, partly from Eusebius, he says summarily of the Apocalypse, that some fancied that it was the work of John the Presbyter.

76. It will be well, before passing to an account of modern opinion, to review the course and character of the evidence from antiquity. As we have before noticed, so again we may observe, that throughout, we have results here in marked contrast to those of our enquiry regarding the Epistle to the Hebrews. In that case there was a total lack of any

fixed general tradition in the earliest times. Gradually, the force and convenience of an illustrious name being attached to the Epistle bore down the doubts originally resting on its authorship, and the Pauline origin became every where acquiesced in. Nothing could be more different from the history of the doubts about the authorship of the Apocalypse. Here we have a fixed and thoroughly authenticated primitive tradition. It comes from men only removed by one step from the Apostle John himself. There is absolutely *no objective evidence whatever* in favour of any other author. The doubts first originate in considerations purely subjective.

77. These are divisible into two classes, *anti-millennial* and *critical*. It was convenient to depreciate the book, on controversial grounds. It was found advisable not to read it in the churches, and to forbid it to the young scholar. And, as matter of fact, thus it was that the doubts about the authorship sprung up. If it countenanced error, if it was not in the canon, if it was not fit to be read, then it could not be the work of the Evangelist and Apostle.

78. Again, to the same result contributed the critical grounds so ably urged by Dionysius of Alexandria, and observed upon above, par. 50. I have there remarked, not only how absolutely shadowy and nothing-worth is Dionysius's "fancy" that John the Presbyter wrote the book, but how this very expression is most valuable, as denoting the entire absence of all objective tradition to that effect in the middle of the third century.

79. Thus the doubts grew up, and in certain parts of the church prevailed: the whole process being exactly the converse of that which we traced in our Introduction to the Hebrews.

80. And, as far as the force of ancient testimony goes, I submit that our inference also must be a contrary one. The authorship of the book by the Apostle John, as matter of primitive tradition, rests on firm and irrefragable ground. Three other authors are suggested: one, Cerinthus, by the avowed enemies of the Apocalypse, an assertion which has never found any favour: the second, John the Presbyter, whose existence *seems* indeed vouched for by the passage of Papias, but of whom we know nothing whatever, nor have we one particle of evidence to connect him with the authorship of the Apocalypse: and the third, John Mark the Evangelist, who is equally unknown to ancient tradition as its author.

81. As far then as purely external evidence goes, I submit that our judgment can only be in one direction: viz. that the Apocalypse *was written by the Apostle John, the Son of Zebedee*.

82. It will now be for us to see how far internal critical considerations substantiate or impugn the tradition of the primitive church.

83. And in so doing, it will be well for us at once to deal with certain

confident assertions which Lücke and others are in the habit of making respecting the testimony of the Apocalypse itself.

84. Lücke begins this portion of his Introduction by setting aside at once the evidence of Justin Martyr and Irenæus, on the ground of supposed inconsistency with the testimony of the writer himself;—he cannot be the Apostle and Evangelist, “because he plainly distinguishes himself from the Apostles:”—referring back to a previous section for the confirmation of this assertion. On looking there, we find, “In ch. xxi. 14, in describing the heavenly Jerusalem, he speaks expressly of the twelve Apostles of Christ and their names on the twelve foundation stones of the celestial city, but apparently in such a manner as not in any way to include himself among them, but rather to exclude himself from them, and to speak of them as a higher and special class of servants and messengers of God.”

85. Now let the reader observe that the “apparently” of the former section has become “plainly” in the latter: for it is thus that even the best of the Germans are often apt to creep on, and to build up a whole fabric of argument upon an inference which at first was to themselves merely an uncertainty.

86. In this particular case, the original assertion has in fact no ground to rest upon. The apocalyptic writer is simply describing the heavenly city as it was shewn to him. On the foundations are the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb. Now we may fairly ask, What reason can be given why the beloved Apostle should not have related this? Was he who, with his brother James, sought for the highest place of honour in the future kingdom, likely to have depreciated the apostolic dignity just because he himself was one of the Twelve? and on the other hand, was he, whose personal modesty was as notable as his apostolic zeal, likely, in relating such high honour done to the Twelve, to insert a notice providing against the possible mistake being made of not counting himself among them?

87. So that the first tentative introduction, and the very confident after-assertion, of this testimony of the book itself, are alike groundless. A similar instance will be found below, when we come to discuss the time and place of writing, of confident assertion respecting two supposed notices of date contained in the book itself. They turn out to be altogether dependent for their relevancy on a particular method of interpretation, not borne out by fair exposition.

88. The notices contained in the Apocalypse respecting its writer may be stated as follows:

First, his name is John, ch. i. 1, 4, 9, xxii. 8.

89. Secondly, he was known to, and of account among, the churches of proconsular Asia.

90. Thirdly, he was in exile (for so we submit must the words of

ch. i. 9 be understood: see note there) in the island of Patmos on account of his Christian testimony.

We may add to these personal notices, that he takes especial pains to assert the accuracy of his testimony, both in the beginning and at the end of his book: ch. i. 2, xxii. 8.

91. Now thus far we have nothing which goes against the ecclesiastical tradition that he was the Apostle and Evangelist John. In the latter part of his life, this Apostle was thus connected with pro-consular Asia, long residing, and ultimately dying at Ephesus: see Introduction to Vol. I., ch. v. § i. 9 ff. It is impossible to reject this concurrent testimony of Christian antiquity: nor have even those done so, whose doubts on the Apocalypse are the strongest.

92. Again, the exile of the Apostle John in Patmos under Domitian is matter of primitive tradition, apparently distinct from the notice contained in the Apocalypse: for his return from it under Nerva, of which no notice is contained in that book, is stated as such by Eusebius: "then" (when the Senate after Domitian's death decreed that the unjustly exiled should return to their homes) "the tradition from the ancients informs us that the Apostle John also returned from his exile in the island and dwelt at Ephesus." And again, "The Apostle whom Jesus loved, yet surviving in the parts of Asia, ruled the churches there, having returned from his exile in the island after the death of Domitian."

93. Equally definite is the tradition, that St. John lived on among the Asiatic churches till the time of Trajan: see Introduction, Vol. I., as above.

94. It is worth while just to pause by the way, and consider, in what situation we are placed by these traditions. To reject them altogether would be out of all reason: and this is not done by Lücke himself. So that we must either suppose that portion of them which regards the exile to have found its way in owing to the notice of Rev. i. 9, or to have been, independently of that notice, the result of a confusion in men's minds between two persons of the same name, John. Either of these is undoubtedly *possible*: but it is their *probability*, in the face of other evidence, which we have to estimate.

95. We may safely ask then, was either of these mistakes at all likely to have been made by Irenæus, who could write as follows: "So that I can describe the place where the blessed Polycarp sat and talked, and his goings forth and entrances, and the character of his life, and the form of his person, and the addresses which he used to make to the people, and how he related his converse with John, and that of the rest who had seen the Lord, and how he told his recollections of their sayings." I own it seems to me out of all probability that such a writer, in ascribing the Apocalypse to John the Apostle, could have confused him with another person of the same name. If we ever have trustworthy personal tradi-



tion, it is surely when it mounts up to those who saw and conversed with him respecting whom we wish to be informed.

96. It may be said indeed, that Irenæus does not mention the exile in Patmos. But this would be mere trifling: he does not, simply because he had no occasion to do so: but his own date of the seeing of the Apocalypse, at the end of the reign of Domitian (see above, par. 7), would, in combination with other notices, be sufficient to imply it: and besides, he admits it by inference from his unhesitatingly adopting the book as written by the Apostle.

97. It seems then to me that the course of primitive tradition, even among those who did not believe the Apocalypse to have been written by the Apostle, asserts of him that he was exiled in Patmos under Domitian: and that we have no reasonable ground for supposing this view to have arisen from any confusion of persons, or to have been adopted merely from the book itself. Persons are appealed to, who knew and saw and heard the Apostle himself: and those who thus appeal were not likely to have made a mistake in a point of such vital importance.

98. We now come to a weighty and difficult part of our present enquiry: how far the matter and style of the Apocalypse bear out this result of primitive tradition. The reader will have seen, by the previous chapters of this Introduction, that I am very far from deprecating, or depreciating, such a course of criticism. I do not, as some of those who have upheld against all criticism the commonly received views, characterize such an enquiry as presumptuous, or its results as uncertain and vague. It is one which the soundest and best critics of all ages have followed, from Origen and Dionysius of Alexandria down to Bleek and Lücke: and, as I have elsewhere observed, is one which will be more esteemed in proportion as biblical science is spread and deepened.

99. In applying it to the book before us, certainly the upholder of the primitive tradition of its Authorship is not encouraged by first appearances. He is met at once by the startling phænomena so ably detailed by Dionysius of Alexandria at the end of his judgment. The Greek construction of the Gospel and Epistle<sup>8</sup>, though peculiar, is smooth and unexceptionable, free from any thing like barbarism or solœism in grammar: "not only faultless according to the Greek Language," says Dionysius, "but very skilful in its words, its reasonings, and the putting together of its meaning." When however we come to compare that of the Writer of the Apocalypse, we find, at first sight, all this reversed:

<sup>8</sup> I speak in the course of this argument of the first Epistle only, as undoubted; not that I do not believe the second and third to be genuine and characteristic also. See above, ch. xx. § i.



“I see its dialect and language not accurate Greek, but it uses barbarian idioms, and sometimes even solecisms.”

100. All this must be freely acknowledged, and is abundantly exemplified in my Greek Testament Commentary. The question for us however is one which lies deeper than the surface, and beyond mere first appearances. It presents itself to us in a double form:

1) Is there any account which might be given of this great dissimilarity, consistent with identity of Authorship?

2) Are there any indications of that identity, lying beneath the surface, notwithstanding this great dissimilarity?

101. In reply to the first question, several thoughts at once suggest themselves as claiming mention and contributing to its solution. The *subject* of the Apocalypse is so different from those of the Gospel and Epistle, that we may well expect a not inconsiderable difference of style. In those, the Writer is, under divine guidance, calmly arranging his material, in full self-consciousness, and deliberately putting forth the product, in words, of his own reflectiveness: in this, on the other hand, he is the rapt seer, borne along from vision to vision, speaking in a region and character totally different<sup>9</sup>. Is this circumstance any contribution to our reply? Let us consider further.

102. St. John was not a Greek, but a Galilean. To speak a certain kind of Greek was probably natural to him, as to almost all the inhabitants of Palestine of his time. But to write the Greek of his Gospel and Epistle, can hardly but have been to him matter of effort. Or to put it in another point of view, the diction and form in which they were conveyed were the result of the deliberate exercise of a special gift of the Spirit, matured by practice, and deemed necessary for the purpose of those writings, to be put forth in them.

103. In the Apocalypse, the case may be conceived to have been different. The necessarily rhapsodical and mysterious character of that book may have led to the Apostle being left more to his vernacular and less correct Greek. Circumstances too may have contributed to this. The visions may have been set down in the solitude of exile, far from friends, and perhaps from the appliances of civilized life. The Hebraistic style may have come more naturally in a writing so fashioned on Old Testament models, and bound by so many links to the prophecies of Hebrew prophets. The style too of advanced age may have dropped the careful elaboration of the preceding years, and resumed the rougher character of early youth.

104. I do not say that these considerations are enough to account for

<sup>9</sup> Since writing this I see in Davidson's Introduction, p. 587, “As Guerike has well expressed it, the Gospel was conceived and written in the *understanding*: but the Apocalypse in the *Spirit*.”

the great diversity which is presented: nay, I fairly own, that taken alone, they are not: and that the difficulty has never yet been thoroughly solved. Still I do not conceive that we are at liberty to cut the knot by denying the Apostolic Authorship, which primitive tradition has so firmly established. Far better is it to investigate patiently, and not, by blind partisanship on either side, to stop the way against unfettered search for a better account of the phænomena than has hitherto been given.

105. It has been shewn more than once, and in our own country by Dr. Davidson in his Introduction, pp. 561 ff., that the roughnesses and solœcisms in the Apocalypse have been, for the purposes of argument, very much exaggerated: that there are hardly any, which may not be paralleled in classical authors themselves, and that their more frequent occurrence here is no more than is due to the peculiar nature of the subject and occasion. This consideration should be borne in mind, and the matter investigated by the student for himself.

106. Our second question asked above was, whether there are any marks of identity of Authorship linking together the Gospel, Epistle, and Apocalypse, notwithstanding this great and evident dissimilarity?

107. The individual character of the Writer of the Gospel and Epistle stands forth evident and undoubted. We seem to know him in a moment. Even in the report of sayings of our Lord common to him and the other Evangelists, the peculiar tinge of expression, the choice and collocation of words, leave no doubt *whose* report we are reading. And so strongly does the Epistle resemble the Gospel in these particulars, that the criticism as well as the tradition of all ages has concurred in ascribing the two to the same person.

108. If now we look at the Apocalypse, we cannot for a moment feel that it is less individual, less reflecting the heart and character of its Writer. Its style, its manner of conception and arrangement of thought, its diction, are alike full of life and personal reality. So that our conditions for making this enquiry are favourable. Our two objects of comparison stand out well the one over against the other. Both are peculiar, characteristic, individual. But are the indications presented by them such that we are compelled to infer different authorship, or are they such as seem to point to one and the same person?

109. The former of these questions has been affirmed by Lücke and the opponents of the Apostolic authorship: the latter by Hengstenberg, and those who uphold it. Let us see how the matter stands. And in so doing (as was the case in the similar enquiry in the Introduction to the Epistle to the Hebrews), I shall not enter fully into the whole list of verbal and constructional peculiarities, but, referring the reader for these to Lücke and Davidson, shall adduce, and dwell upon, some of the more remarkable and suggestive of them.

110. The first of these is one undeniably connecting the Apocalypse with the Gospel and the Epistle, viz. the appellation **the Word of God** given to our Lord in ch. xix. 13 (see John i. 1; 1 John i. 1). This name, "*the Word*," for our Lord, is found in the New Test., only in the writings of St. John. I am aware of the ingenuity with which Lücke has endeavoured to turn this expression to the contrary account, maintaining that it is a proof of diversity of authorship, inasmuch as the Evangelist never writes "*the Word of God*:" but I may leave it to any fair-judging reader to decide, whether it be not a far greater argument for identity that the remarkable designation "*the Word*" is used, than for diversity that, on the solemn occasion described in the Apocalypse, the hitherto unheard adjunct "*of God*" is added.

111. Another reply may be given to our deduction from the use of this name: viz. that it indicates not necessarily John the Apostle, but only one familiar with his teaching, as we may suppose that other John to have been. All I can say to this is, that which I cannot help feeling to apply to the whole hypothesis of the authorship by the second John, that if it be so,—if one bearing the same name as the Apostle, having the same place among the Asiatic churches, put forth a book in which he also used the Apostle's peculiar phrases, and yet took no pains to prevent the confusion which must necessarily arise between himself and the Apostle, I do not well see how the advocates of his authorship can help pronouncing the book a forgery, or at all events the work of one who, in relating the visions, was not unwilling to be taken for his greater and Apostolic namesake.

112. Another link, binding the Apocalypse to both Gospel and Epistle, is the use of "**he that overcometh**," in the Epistles to the churches, ch. ii. 7, 11, 17, 26, iii. 5, 12, 21 (twice): and ch. xii. 11, xv. 2, xvii. 14, xxi. 7. Compare John xvi. 33; 1 John ii. 13, 14, iv. 4, v. 4 (twice), 5. It is amusing to observe again how dexterously Lücke turns the edge of this. "*He that overcometh*" is never used *absolutely* in Gospel or in Epistle, as it is in the Apocalypse: therefore it again is a mark of diversity, not of identity. But surely this is the very thing we might expect. The "*overcoming the world*," "*the wicked one*," "*them*," &c.,—these are the details, and come under notice while the strife is proceeding, or when the object is of more import than the bare act: but when the *end* is spoken of, and the final and general victory is all that remains in view, nothing can be more natural than that he who alone spoke of "*overcoming the world*," "*the wicked one*," "*them*,"—should also be the only one to designate the victor by "*he that overcometh*." Besides which, we have also the other use, in Rev. xii. 11.

113. A third remarkable word, **true**, in the sense, more or less, of **genuine** (*aléthinos*), is once used by St. Luke (Luke xvi. 11), once by St. Paul (1 Thess. i. 9), and three times in the Epistle to the Hebrews

(Heb. viii. 2, ix. 24, x. 22): but nine times in the Gospel of St. John<sup>1</sup>, four times in the Epistle<sup>2</sup>, and ten times in the Apocalypse<sup>3</sup>. Here again, it is true, Lücke adduces this on the other side, alleging that while the Evangelist uses the word only in the sense of *genuine*—“*the true God,*” “*the true light,*” “*the true bread,*”—the Author of the Apocalypse uses it of Christ as a synonym with “*faithful,*” “*righteous,*” “*holy,*” and as a predicate of the “*words,*” “*judgments,*” “*ways*” of God. This latter is true enough; but the former assertion is singularly untrue. For in four out of the nine places in the Gospel, the subjective sense of the word must be taken: viz. in iv. 27, vii. 28, viii. 16, xix. 35: and in the last of these, “*his testimony is true,*” the word is used exactly as in Rev. xxii. 6, “*these sayings are faithful and true.*”

114. The word **lamb** (literally, **little lamb**), which designates our Lord 29 times in the Apocalypse, only elsewhere occurs in John xxi. 15, not with reference to Him. But it is remarkable that John i. 29, 36 are the only places where he is called by the name of a lamb, another Greek word being used, in reference doubtless to Isa. liii. 7 (Acts viii. 32), as in one other place where He is *compared* to a lamb, 1 Pet. i. 19. The Apocalyptic writer, as Lücke observes, probably chooses the diminutive, and attaches to it the epithet “*slain,*” for the purpose of contrast to the majesty and power which he has also to predicate of Christ: but is it not to be taken into account, that this personal name, *the Lamb*, whether in one form or the other, whether with or without the adjunct “*of God,*” is common only to the two books?

115. To these many minor examples might be added, and will be found treated at length in Lücke, p. 669 ff., Davidson, p. 561 ff<sup>4</sup>. The latter writer has succeeded in many cases in shewing the unfairness of Lücke’s strong partisanship, by which he makes every similarity into a dissimilarity: but on the other hand he on his side has gone perhaps too far in attempting to answer every objection of this kind. After all, while there certainly are weighty indications of identity of authorship, there is also a residuum of phænomena of diversity quite enough for the reasonable support of the contrary hypothesis. If the book stood alone in the

<sup>1</sup> John i. 9, iv. 23, 37, vi. 32, vii. 28, viii. 16, xv. 1, xvii. 3, xix. 35.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John ii. 8, v. 20 thrice.

<sup>3</sup> ch. iii. 7, 14, vi. 10, xv. 3, xvi. 7, xix. 2, 9, 11, xxi. 5, xxii. 6.

<sup>4</sup> I have observed the following which I have not seen elsewhere noticed, occurring *only* in the three books, or *only in the peculiar sense* :—

1. “*Ye cannot bear them yet,*” John xvi. 12.

“*Thou canst not bear wicked men,*” Rev. ii. 2.

2. “*Weary from his journey,*” John iv. 6.

“*Thou hast not (literally) grown weary,*” Rev. ii. 3.

3. “*Two angels in white,*” John xx. 12.

“*They shall walk with me in white,*” Rev. iii. 4.

4. Compare Rev. iii. 18 with 1 John ii. 20, 27, as to the anointing and its effects.

matter of evidence, I own I should be quite at a loss how to substantiate identity of authorship between it and the Gospel and Epistle. But as it is, our main reliance is on the concurrent testimony of primitive tradition, which hardly can be stronger than it is, and which the perfectly gratuitous hypothesis respecting a second John as the author entirely fails to shake.

116. Our question respecting the internal evidence furnished by the book itself is thus in a position entirely different from that which it occupied in the Introduction to the Epistle to the Hebrews. There, we had no primitive tradition so general, or of such authority as to command our assent. The question was perfectly open. The authorship by St. Paul was an opinion at first tentatively and partially held: then as time wore on, acquiring consistency and acceptance. Judging of this by the book itself, is it for us to accept or to reject it? In lack of any worthy external evidence, we were thrown back on this as our main material for a judgment.

117. But with regard to the Apocalypse, external and internal evidence have changed places. The former is now the main material for our judgment. It is of the highest and most satisfactory kind. It was unanimous in very early times. It came from those who knew and had heard St. John himself. It only begins to be impugned by those who had doctrinal objections to the book. The doubt was taken up by more reasonable men on internal and critical grounds. But no real substantive counter-claimant was ever produced: only one whose very existence depended on the report of two tombs bearing the name of John, and on a not very perspicuous passage of Papias.

118. This being so, our enquiry necessarily has taken this shape:—*Is the book itself inconsistent with this apparently irrefragable testimony?* And in replying to it, we have confessed that the differences between it and the Gospel and Epistle are very remarkable, and of a character hitherto unexplained, or not fully accounted for: but that there are at the same time striking notes of similarity in expression and cast of thought: and that perhaps we are not in a position to take into account the effect of a totally different subject and totally different circumstances upon one, who though knowing and speaking Greek, was yet a Hebrew by birth.

119. Thus, all things considered, being it is true far from satisfied with any account at present given of the peculiar style and phænomena of the Apocalypse, but being far less satisfied with the procedure of the antagonists of the Apostolic authorship, we are not prepared to withhold our assent from the firm and unshaken testimony of primitive tradition, that the author was the Apostle and Evangelist St. John.

## SECTION II.

## PLACE AND TIME OF WRITING.

1. The enquiry as to the former of these is narrowed within a very small space. From the notice contained in the book itself (ch. i. 9) the writing must have taken place either in Patmos, or after the return from exile. The past tenses, "*bore witness*" in ch. i. 2, and "*I was*" in i. 9, do not decide for the latter alternative; they may both be used as from the point of time when the book should be read, as is common in all narratives. On the other hand, it would be more probable, *judging from without*, that the writing should take place after the return, especially if we are to credit the account given by Victorinus, that St. John was condemned to the mines in Patmos. We have no means of determining the question, and must leave it in doubt. If the style and peculiarities are to be in any degree attributed to outward circumstances, then it would seem to have been written in solitude, and sent from Patmos to the Asiatic churches.

2. The only traditional notice worth recounting is that given by Victorinus (cent. iv.): on Rev. x. 11: where he relates that John *saw* the Apocalypse in Patmos, and then after his release on the death of Domitian, "afterwards delivered down the same Apocalypse which he had received from the Lord." Arethas indeed (cent. x.) says on Rev. vii., "The Evangelist prophesied this in Ionia which is by Ephesus:" but this is too late to be of any account in the matter.

3. It has been remarked<sup>5</sup>, that the circumstance of John having prepared to write down the voices of the seven thunders, Rev. x. 4, appears to sanction the view that the writing took place at the same time with the seeing of the visions.

4. As regards Patmos itself, it is one of the group called the Sporades, to the S. of Samos. It is about thirty Roman miles in circumference. A cave is still shewn in the island (now *Patmo*) where St. John is said to have seen the Apocalypse. See the Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography.

5. With regard however to the *time* of writing, there has been no small controversy. And at this we need not be surprised, seeing that principles of interpretation are involved.

We will first deal with ancient tradition, as far as it gives us any indication as to the date.

6. Irenæus, in a passage already cited (§ i. par. 7), tells us that the Apocalypse "was seen close upon our own generation, at the end of the reign of Domitian."

<sup>5</sup> Stuart, p. 215.



7. Clement of Alexandria says, "When, at the death of the tyrant, he removed from the island Patmos to Ephesus, &c." This passage, it is true, contains no mention who the tyrant was, nor any allusion to the writing of the Apocalypse: but it is interesting for our present enquiry as shewing, in its citation by Eusebius, how *he* understood the date furnished by it. For he introduces it by saying that St. John "ruled the churches in Asia when he had returned from his exile in the island after the death of Domitian," and cites Clement as one of the witnesses of the fact.

8. Origen merely calls St. John's persecutor "the king of the Romans," without specifying which. And he seems to do this wittingly: for he notices that John himself does not mention who condemned him. See the passage quoted above, § i. par. 12.

9. Eusebius, having cited the passage of Irenæus noticed above, says, "Some have even accurately specified the time as the fifteenth year of Domitian, mentioning, with many others, Flavia Domitilla, daughter of the sister of Flavius Clemens, one of the powerful men at Rome at that time, as having been banished to the island Pontia for her testimony to Christ." And this same statement he repeats elsewhere: and, in another place, gives the account of the return of St. John from Patmos in the beginning of Nerva's reign, cited above, par. 92.

10. Tertullian does not appear quite to bear out Eusebius's understanding of him: for he only says, after mentioning the persecution of Nero, "Domitian also had attempted it, being a partial inheritor of Nero's cruelty: but being also accessible to humane feeling, he easily stopped it when begun, and even restored those whom he had banished." Here he certainly makes Domitian himself recall the exiles.

11. Victorinus, in the passage above referred to (par. 1), and afterwards (par. 2), plainly gives the date: as also in another place, where he states that the Apocalypse was written under Domitian.

12. Jerome says, "Domitian in his fourteenth year beginning the persecution second after Nero, he (John) being banished to the island Patmos wrote the Apocalypse . . . but when Domitian was slain, and his acts, on account of their excessive cruelty, repealed by the Senate, he returned to Ephesus under the Emperor Nerva." See too his testimony above, § i. par. 25.

13. So also Sulpicius Severus and Orosius, and later writers generally. The first who breaks in upon this concurrent tradition is Epiphanus, in two very curious passages: the first where he says, "that the Holy Spirit moved John to write his Gospel, at the age of ninety, after his return from Patmos, which took place *under Claudius Cæsar*;" the other,—that "he prophesied long ago, in the times of Claudius Cæsar, when he was in the island Patmos."

14. Now it is plain that there must be some strange blunder here,

which Lücke, who makes much of Epiphanius's testimony as shewing that the tradition, which he calls the Irenæan, was not received by Epiphanius, entirely, and conveniently, omits to notice. The passage evidently sets the return from exile in the extreme old age of St. John. Now if this is so, seeing that Claudius reigned from 41 to 54 A.D., putting the return from exile at the last of these dates, we should have St. John aged ninety in the year 54: in other words, thirty-three years older than our Lord, and sixty-three at least when called to be an Apostle: a result which is at variance with all ancient tradition whatever. Either Epiphanius has fallen into some great mistake, which is not very probable, or he means by Claudius some other Emperor: if Nero, then he would still be wrong as to St. John's age at or near to his return.

15. The testimony of Muratori's fragment on the Canon has been cited (by Stuart, p. 218) as testifying to an early date. But all it says is this: "The blessed Apostle Paul himself, following the order of his predecessor John, writes by name to seven churches in the same order." And the word *predecessor*, as has been pointed out by Credner, merely seems to mean that St. John was an apostle before St. Paul (or perhaps only represents the title presbyter or elder), not to imply that he wrote his seven epistles before St. Paul wrote his.

16. The preface to the Syriac version of the Apocalypse published by De Dieu, supposed to have been made in the 6th century, says that the visions were seen by St. John in the island of Patmos, to which he had been banished by the Emperor Nero.

17. Theophylact, in his preface to the Gospel of St. John, says that it was written thirty-two years after the Ascension in the island of Patmos: and in so saying, places the exile under Nero. But he clearly is wrong, as Lücke remarks, or his meaning not clearly understood, when he attributes the writing of the Gospel to this time: and moreover he is inconsistent with himself: for in commenting on Matt. xx. 22, he remarks that as Herod put to death the Apostle James the greater, so Trajan condemned John as a martyr to the word of truth.

18. Jerome determines nothing, only citing Tertullian: "Tertullian relates that having been put by Nero into a cask of burning oil, he came out clearer and healthier than he went in." But Tertullian only says, in the place apparently referred to, "Happy is the (Roman) Church . . . where Peter was equalled to the passion of our Lord, where Paul was crowned with the death of John (i. e. the Baptist), where the Apostle John having been immersed in burning oil and taken no hurt, was banished to an island." It surely is stretching a point here to say that he implies all three events to have taken place under Nero.

19. The Author of the "Synopsis of the Life and Death of the Pro-

phets, Apostles, and Disciples of the Lord" (ostensibly Dorotheus, bishop of Tyre: but probably it belongs to the 6th century), makes John to be exiled to Patmos by Trajan. Andreas and Arethas give no decided testimony on the point. Arethas, in commenting on Rev. vi. 12, says, that some applied this prophecy to the destruction of Jerusalem under Vespasian: but this is distinctly repudiated by Andreas: allowing however (on vii. 2) that such things did happen to the Jewish Christians who escaped the evils inflicted on Jerusalem by the Romans, yet they more probably refer to the times of Antichrist. Arethas again, on Rev. i. 9 cites without any protest Eusebius, as asserting St. John's exile in Patmos to have taken place under Domitian.

20. Much more evidence on this subject from other later writers whose testimonies are of less consequence,—and more minute discussion of the earlier testimonies, will be found in Elliott, *Horæ Apocalypticæ*, i. pp. 31—46, and Appendix, No. i. pp. 503—517. In the last mentioned, he has gone well and carefully through the arguments on external evidence adduced by Lücke and Stuart for the writing under Galba and Nero respectively, and, as it seems to me, disposed of them all.

21. Our result, as far as this part of the question is considered, may be thus stated. We have a constant and unswerving primitive tradition that St. John's exile took place, and the Apocalypse was written, towards the end of Domitian's reign. With this tradition, as has been often observed, the circumstances seem to agree very well. We have no evidence that the first, or Neronian, persecution, extended beyond Rome, or found vent in condemnations to exile. Whereas in regard to the second we know that both these were the case. Indeed the liberation at Domitian's death of those whom he had exiled is substantiated by Dio Cassius, who, in relating the beginning of Nerva's reign, says, "Through hatred of Domitian his statues . . . were thrown down . . . and Nerva pardoned those who were condemned for impiety, and recalled the exiles . . . and made a general concession that neither impiety, nor Jewish way of living, should form matter of accusation against any."

22. Assuming then the fact of St. John's exile at Patmos during a persecution for the Gospel's sake, it is far more likely that it should have been under Domitian than under Nero or under Galba. But one main reliance of the advocates of the earlier date is internal evidence supposed to be furnished by the book itself. And this, first, from the rough and Hebraistic style. I have already discussed this point, and have fully admitted its difficulty, however we view it. I need only add now, that I do not conceive we at all diminish that difficulty by supposing it to be written before the Gospel and Epistle. The Greek of the Gospel and Epistle is not the Greek of the Apocalypse in a maturer

state: but if the two belong to one and the same writer, we must seek for the cause of their diversity not in chronological but rather in psychological considerations.

23. Again, it is said that the book furnishes indications of having been written before the destruction of Jerusalem, by the fact of its mentioning the city and the temple, ch. xi. 1 ff., and the twelve tribes as yet existing, ch. vii. 4—8. This argument has been very much insisted on by several of the modern German critics. But we may demur to it at once, as containing an assumption which we are not prepared to grant: viz. that the prophetic passage is to be thus interpreted, or has any thing to do with the literal Jerusalem. Let the canon of interpretation be first substantiated, by which we are to be bound in our understanding of this passage, and then we can recognize its bearing on the chronological question. Certainly Lücke has not done this, but, as usual with him, has fallen to abusing Hengstenberg, for which he undoubtedly has a strong case, while for his own interpretation he seems to me to make out a very weak one.

24. Another such assumption is found in the confident assertion by the same critics, that the passages in ch. xiii. 1 ff., xvii. 10 point out the then reigning Cæsar, and that by the conditions of those passages, such reigning Cæsar must be that one who suits their chronological theory. It is not the place here to discuss principles of interpretation: but we may fairly demur again to the thus assuming a principle irrespective of the requirements of the book, and then judging the book itself by it. This is manifestly done by Lücke. Besides which, the differences among themselves of those who adopt this view are such as to deprive it of all fixity as an historical indication. Are we to reckon our Cæsars forwards (and if so, are we to begin with Julius, or with Augustus?), or backwards, upon some independent assumption of the time of writing, which the other phænomena must be made to fit? If the reader will consult the notes on ch. xvii. 10, I trust he will see that any such view of the passages is untenable.

25. Upon interpretations like these, insulated, and derived from mere first impressions of the wording of single passages, is the whole fabric built, which is to supersede the primitive tradition as to the date of the Apocalypse. On this account, Irenæus, who had such good and sufficient means of knowing, must be supposed to have made a mistake in the date which he assigns: on this account, all those additional testimonies which in any other case would have been adduced as independent and important, are to be assumed to have been mere repetitions of that of Irenæus.

26. But it is most unfortunate for these critics that, when once so sure a ground is established for them as a direct indication, in the book itself, of the emperor under whom it was written, they cannot agree

among themselves who this emperor was. Some among them (e. g. Stuart, and others) taking the natural (and one would think the only possible) view of such an historical indication, begin according to general custom with Julius, and bring the writing under Nero. Ewald and Lücke, on account of the "is not, and shall come" of ch. xvii. 8, which they wish to apply to Nero, desert the usual reckoning of Roman emperors, and begin with Augustus, thus bringing the writing under Galba. Again, Eichhorn and Bleek, wishing to bring the writing under Vespasian, omit Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, relying on an expression of Suetonius, that their reigns were a mere "*rebellion of three princes.*" Thus by changing the usual starting-point, and leaving out of the usual list of the Cæsars any number found convenient, any view we please may be substantiated by this kind of interpretation. Those whose view of the prophecy extends wider, and who attach a larger meaning to the symbols of the beast and his image and his heads, will not be induced by such very uncertain speculations to set aside a primitive and as it appears to them thoroughly trustworthy tradition.

27. It may be observed that Lücke attempts to give an account of the origin of what he calls the Irenæan tradition, freely confessing that his proof (?) of the date is not complete without such an account. The character of the account he gives is well worth observing. When, he says, men found that the apocalyptic prophecies had failed of their accomplishment, they began to give a wider sense to them, and to put them at a later date. And having given this account, he attempts to vindicate it from the charge of overthrowing the authority of Scripture prophecy, and says that though it may not be as convenient as the way which modern orthodoxy has struck out, yet it leads more safely to the desired end, and to the permanent enjoyment of true faith.

28. With every disposition to search and prove all things, and ground faith upon things thus proved, I own I am quite unable to come to Lücke's conclusions, or to those of any of the maintainers of the Neronic or any of the earlier dates. The book itself, it seems to me, refuses the assignment of such times of writing. The evident assumption which it makes of long-standing and general persecution (ch. vi. 9) forbids us to place it in the very first persecution, and that only a partial one: the undoubted transference of Jewish temple emblems to a Christian sense (ch. i. 20) of itself makes us suspect those interpreters who maintain the literal sense when the temple and city are mentioned: the analogy of the prophecies of Daniel forbids us to limit to individual kings the interpretation of the symbolic heads of the beast: the whole character and tone of the writing precludes our imagining that its original reference was ever intended to be to mere local matters of secondary import.

29. The state of those to whom it was addressed furnishes another



powerful subsidiary argument in favour of the later date. This will be expanded in the next section.

30. These things then being considered,—the decisive testimony of primitive tradition, and failure of all attempts to set it aside,—the internal evidence furnished by the book itself, and equal failure of all attempts by an unwarrantable interpretation to raise up counter evidence,—I have no hesitation in believing, with the ancient fathers and most competent witnesses, that the Apocalypse was written at the end of the reign of Domitian, i. e. about the year 95 or 96 A.D.

### SECTION III.

#### TO WHOM ADDRESSED.

1. The superscription of the book plainly states for what readers it was primarily intended. At the same time indications abound, that the whole Christian church was in view. In the very epistles to the seven churches themselves, all the promises and sayings of the Lord, though arising out of local circumstances, are of perfectly general application. And in the course of the prophecy, the wide range of objects embraced, the universality of the cautions and encouragements, the vast periods of time comprised, leave us no inference but this, that the book was intended for the comfort and profit of every age of the Christian Church. In treating therefore the question at the head of this section in its narrower and literal sense, I am not excluding the broader and general view. It lies behind the other, as in the rest of the apostolic writings. “These things,” as the older Scriptures, “are written for our ensamples, upon whom the ends of the world are come:” or, in the language of the Muratori fragment on the Canon, “*John, though he writes to seven churches, yet speaks to all.*”

2. The book then was directly addressed to the seven churches of proconsular Asia. A few remarks must be made on the general subject of the names and state of these churches, before entering on a description of them severally.

3. First, as to the selection of the names. The number seven, so often used by the Seer to express universality, has here prevailed in occasioning that number of names to be selected out of the churches in the district. For these were not all the churches comprised in Asia proper. Whether there were Christian bodies in Colossæ and Hierapolis, we cannot say. Those cities had been, since the writing of St. Paul’s Epistle, destroyed by an earthquake, and in what state of restoration they were at this date is uncertain. But from the Epistles of Ignatius we may fairly assume that there were churches in Magnesia



and Tralles. The number seven then is representative, not exhaustive. These seven are taken in the following order: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea. That is, beginning with Ephesus, the first city in the province (see note, Acts ii. 9), it follows a line from South to North up to Pergamum, then takes the neighbouring city of Thyatira, and follows another line from North to South.

4. As regards the general state of these churches, we may make the following remarks:

We have from St. Paul, setting aside the Epistle to the Ephesians, not from any doubt as to its original destination, but as containing no local notices, and that to Philemon, as being of a private character,—three Epistles containing notices of the Christian churches within this district. The first in point of time is that to the Colossians (A.D. 61—63): then follow the two to Timotheus, dating from 67 to 68. It is important to observe, that all these Epistles, even the latest of them, the second to Timotheus, have regard to a state of the churches evidently preceding by many years that set before us in this book. The germs of heresy and error there apparent (see Introduction to the Pastoral Epistles, § i. par. 12 ff.) had expanded into definite sects (ch. ii. 6, 15): the first ardour with which some of them had received and practised the Gospel, had cooled (ch. ii. 4, 5, iii. 2): others had increased in zeal for God, and were surpassing their former works (ch. ii. 19). Again, the days of the martyrdom of Antipas, an eminent servant of Christ, are referred back to as some time past (ch. ii. 13).

5. It is also important to notice that Laodicea is described (ch. iii. 17) as boasting in her wealth and self-sufficiency. Now we know from Tacitus (see below, § iv. par. 12), that in the sixth year of Nero, or in the tenth, according to Eusebius (and apparently with more accuracy), Laodicea was destroyed by an earthquake, and recovered herself by her own resources, without any assistance from the Head of the state. How many years it might take before the city could again put on such a spirit of self-sufficing pride as that shewn in ch. iii. 17, it is not possible to fix exactly: but it is obvious that we must allow more time for this than would be consistent with the Neronian date of the Apocalypse. This is confirmed when we observe the spiritual character given of the Laodicean church,—that of lukewarmness,—and reflect, that such a character does not ordinarily accompany, nor follow close upon, great judgments and afflictions, but is the result of a period of calm and prosperity, and gradually encroaching compromise with ungodliness.

6. I may further mention, that the fact of the relation here shewn to exist between John and the churches of proconsular Asia, points to a period wholly distinct from that in which Paul, or his disciple Timotheus, exercised authority in those parts. And this alone would lead us to meet

with a decided negative the hypothesis of the Apocalypse being written under Nero, Galba, or even Vespasian. At the same time, see note on ch. ii. 20,—the mention of eating things sacrificed to idols there identifies the temptations and difficulties which beset the churches when the Apocalypse was written, with those which we know to have been prevalent in the apostolic age, and thus gives a strong confirmation of the authenticity of the book.

I now proceed to consider these churches one by one.

7. **EPHESUS**, the capital of proconsular Asia, has already been described, and a sketch of its history given, in the Introduction to the Epistle to the Ephesians, § ii. parr. 1—6. More detailed accounts are there referred to. The notes to the Epistle will in each case put the student in possession of the general character and particular excellencies or failings of each church, so that I need not repeat them here. In reference to the threat uttered by our Lord in ch. ii. 5, we may remark, that a few miserable huts, and ruins of great extent and massiveness, are all that now remains of the former splendid capital of Asia. The candlestick has indeed been removed from its place, and the church has become extinct. We may notice, that Ephesus naturally leads the seven, both as the metropolis of the province, and as containing that church, with which the Writer himself was individually connected.

8. **SMYRNA**, a famous commercial city of Ionia, at the head of the bay named after it, and at the mouth of the small river Meles: from which Homer, whose birthplace Smyrna, among other cities, claimed to be, is sometimes called Melesigenes. It is 320 stadia (40 miles) north of Ephesus. It was a very ancient city: but lay in ruins, after its destruction by the Lydians (B.C. 627), for 400 years (till Alexander the Great, according to Pliny and Pausanias; till Antigonus, according to Strabo). It was then rebuilt, 20 stadia from old Smyrna, and rose to be, in the time of the first Cæsars, one of the fairest and most populous cities in Asia. Modern Smyrna is a large city of more than 120,000 inhabitants, the centre of the trade of the Levant. The church in Smyrna was distinguished for its illustrious first bishop the martyr Polycarp, who is said by Irenæus to have been put to death in the stadium there in A.D. 166.

9. **PERGAMUM** (sometimes Pergamus), an ancient city of Mysia, on the river Cæicus, an “illustrious city” (Strabo). At first it appears to have been a mere hill-fortress of great natural strength; but it became an important city owing to the circumstance of Lysimachus, one of Alexander’s generals, having chosen it for the reception of his treasures, and entrusted them to his eunuch Philæterus, who rebelled against him (B.C. 283), and founded a kingdom, which lasted 150 years, when it was bequeathed by its last sovereign Attalus III. (B.C. 133) to the Roman people. Pergamum possessed a magnificent library, founded by its

sovereign Eumenes (B.C. 197—159), which subsequently was given by Antony to Cleopatra, and perished with that at Alexandria under Caliph Omar. It became the official capital of the Roman province of Asia. There was there a celebrated temple of Æsculapins, on which see note, ch. ii. 13. There is still a considerable city, containing, it is said (Stuart, p. 450), about 3000 nominal Christians. It is now called Bergamah.

10. **THYATIRA**, once called Pelopia and Euippia, a town in Lydia, about a day's journey south of Pergamum. It was perhaps originally a Macedonian colony. Its chief trade was dyeing of purple, cf. Acts xvi. 14 and note. It is said to be at present a considerable town with many ruins, called Ak-Hisar, and to contain some 3000 Christians.

11. **SARDIS**, the ancient capital of the kingdom of Lydia, lay in a plain between the mountains Tmolus and Hermus, on the small river Pactolus: 33 miles from Thyatira and 28 from Philadelphia by the Antonine Itinerary. Its classical history is well known. In the reign of Tiberius it was destroyed by an earthquake, but restored by order of that emperor. It was the capital of a "conventus" in the time of Pliny; and continued a wealthy city to the end of the Byzantine empire. More than one Christian council was held here. In the eleventh century Sardis fell into the hands of the Turks, and in the thirteenth it was destroyed by Tamerlane. Only a village (Sart) now remains, built among the ruins of the ancient city.

12. **PHILADELPHIA**, in Lydia, on the N.W. side of Mount Tmolus, 28 miles S.E. from Sardis. It was built by Attalus Philadelphus, King of Pergamum. Earthquakes were exceedingly prevalent in the district, and it was more than once nearly demolished by them. It defended itself against the Turks for some time, but was eventually taken by Bajazet in 1390. It is now a considerable town named Allahshar, containing ruins of its ancient wall, and of about twenty-four churches.

13. **LAODICEA**, "Laodicea ad Lycum," was a celebrated city in the S.W. of Phrygia, near the river Lycus. It was originally called Diospolis, and afterwards Rhoads: and the name Laodicea was owing to its being rebuilt by Antiochus Theos in honour of his wife Laodice. It was not far from Colossæ, and only six miles W. of Hierapolis. It suffered much in the Mithridatic war: but recovered itself, and became a wealthy and important place, at the end of the republic and under the first emperors. It was completely destroyed by the great earthquake in the year 62 A.D.: but was rebuilt by the wealth of its own citizens, without help from the state. Its state of prosperity and carelessness in spiritual things described in the Epistle is well illustrated by these facts. St. Paul wrote an Epistle to the Laodiceans, now lost. See Col. iv. 16, and this Introduction, ch. xiv. § iii. 2, 3. It produced literary men of eminence, and had a great medical school. It was the capital of a "con-

ventus" during the Roman empire. It was utterly ravaged by the Turks, and "nothing," says Hamilton, "can exceed the desolation and melancholy appearance of the site of Laodicea." A village exists among the ruins, named Eski-hissar.

14. See for further notices on the Seven Churches, Dr. Smith's Dictionary of Geography, from which, among other sources, the above accounts are compiled. In those works will be found detailed references to the works of various travellers who have visited them.

## SECTION IV.

### OBJECT AND CONTENTS.

1. The Apocalypse declares its own object (ch. i. 1) to be mainly prophetic; the exhibition to God's servants of things which must shortly come to pass. And to this by far the larger portion of the book is devoted. From ch. iv. 1 to xxii. 5, is a series of visions prophetic of things to come, or introducing in their completeness allégories which involve things to come. Intermixed however with this prophetic development, we have a course of hortatory and encouraging sayings, arising out of the state of the churches to which the book is written, and addressed through them to the church universal.

2. These sayings are mostly related in style and sense to the Epistles with which the book began, so as to preserve in a remarkable manner the unity of the whole, and to shew that it is not, as Grotius and some others have supposed, a congeries of different fragments, but one united work, written at one and the same time. The practical tendency of the Epistles to the Churches is never lost sight of throughout. So that we may fairly say that its object is not only to prophesy of the future, but also by such prophecy to rebuke, exhort, and console the Church.

3. Such being the general object, our enquiry is now narrowed to that of the prophetic portion itself: and we have to enquire what was the aim of the Writer, or rather of Him who inspired the Writer, in delivering this prophecy.

4. And in the first place, we are met by an enquiry which it may be strange enough that we have to make in this day, but which nevertheless must be made. Is the book, it is asked, strictly speaking, a revelation at all? Is its so-called prophecy any thing more than the ardent and imaginative poesy of a rapt spirit, built up on the then present trials and hopes of himself and his contemporaries? Is not its future bounded by the age and circumstances then existing? And are not all those mistaken, who have attempted to deduce from it indications respecting our own or any subsequent age of the Church?

5. Two systems of understanding and interpreting the book have

been raised on the basis of a view represented by the foregoing questions. The former of them, that of Grotius, Ewald, Eichhorn, and others, proceeds consistently enough in denying all prophecy, and explaining figuratively, with regard to then present expectations, right or wrong, all the things contained in the book. The latter, that of Lücke, De Wette, Bleek, Düsterdieck, and others, while it professes to recognize a certain kind of inspiration in the Writer, yet believes his view to have been entirely bounded by his own subjectivity and circumstances, denying that the book contains any thing specially revealed to John and by him declared to us; and regarding its whole contents as only instructive, in so far as they represent to us the aspirations of a fervid and inspired man, full of the Spirit of God, and his insight into forms of conflict and evil which are ever recurring in the history of the world and the Church.

6. I own it seems to me that we cannot in consistency or in honesty accept this compromise. For let us ask ourselves, how does it agree with the phænomena? It conveniently saves the credit of the Writer, and rescues the book from being an imposture, by conceding that he saw all which he says he saw: but at the same time maintains, that all which he saw was purely subjective, having no external objective existence: and that those things which seem to be prophecies of the distant future, are in fact no such prophecies, but have and exhaust their significance within the horizon of the writer's own experience and hopes.

7. But then, if this be so, I do not see, after all, how the credit of the Writer *is* so entirely saved. He distinctly lays claim to be speaking of long periods of time. To say nothing of the time involved in the other visions, he speaks of *a thousand years*, and of things which must happen at the end of that period. So that we must say, on the theory in question, that all his declarations of this kind are pure mistakes: and, in exegesis, our view must be entirely limited to the enquiry, not what is for us and for all the meaning of this or that prophecy, but what was the Writer's meaning when he set it down. Whether subsequent events justified his guess, or falsified it, is for us a pure matter of archæological and psychological interest, and no more.

8. If this be so, I submit that the book at once becomes that which is known as apocryphal, as distinguished from canonical: it is of no more value to us than the Shepherd of Hermas, or the Ascension of Isaiah: and is mere matter for criticism and independent judgment.

9. It will be no surprise to the readers of this work to be told, that we are not prepared thus to deal with a book which we accept as canonical, and have all reason to believe to have been written by an Apostle. While we are no believers in what has been (we cannot help thinking foolishly) called *verbal* inspiration, we are not prepared to set aside the

whole substance of the testimony of the writer of a book which we accept as canonical, nor to deny that visions, which he purports to have received from God to shew to the church things which must shortly come to pass, were so received by him, and for such a purpose.

10. Maintaining this ground, and taking into account the tone of the book itself, and the periods embraced in its prophecies, we cannot consent to believe the vision of the Writer to have been bounded by the horizon of his own experience and personal hopes. We receive the book as being what it professes to be, a *revelation from God*, designed to *shew to his servants things which must shortly come to pass*<sup>6</sup>. And so far from this word offending us, we find in it, as compared with the contents of the book, a measure by which, not our judgment of those contents, but our estimate of worldly events and their duration, should be corrected. The space denoted by **shortly** confessedly contains, among other periods, a period of a thousand years. On what principle are we to affirm that it does not embrace a period vastly greater than this in its whole contents ?

11. We hold therefore that the book, judged by its own testimony, and with regard to the place which it holds among the canonical books of Scripture, is written with the object of conveying to the Church revelations from God respecting certain portions of her course even up to the time of the end. Whether such revelations disclose to her a continuous prophetic history, or are to be taken as presenting varying views and relations of her conflict with evil, and God's judgment on her enemies, will be hereafter discussed. But the general object is independent of these differences in interpretation.

12. The contents of the book have been variously arranged. It seems better to follow the plain indication of the book itself, than to distribute it so as to suit any theory of interpretation. We find in so doing, that we have,

I. A general introduction to the whole book, ch. i. 1—3:

- II. The portion containing the Epistles to the seven churches,  
 i. 4—iii. 22, itself consisting of  
 a. The address and preface, i. 4—8.  
 b. The introductory vision, i. 9—20.  
 c. The seven Epistles, ii. 1—iii. 22.

<sup>6</sup> Dusterdieck has stigmatized this view as that of *magical* inspiration, as distinguished from his own, which he designates as that of *ethical* inspiration. It is difficult to assign any meaning to these epithets at all corresponding to the nature of the case. Why that inspiration should be called *magical*, which makes the prophet the organ of communicating the divine counsels in symbolical language to the Church, it is difficult to say: and surely not less difficult to explain, how that inspiration can be called *ethical*, which makes him pretend to have received visions *from God*, which he has only imagined in his own mind.



- III. The prophetic portion, iv. 1—xxii. 5; and herein
- a. The heavenly scene of vision, iv. 1—11.
  - b. 1. The sealed book, and the Lamb who should open its seven seals, v. 1—14.  
2. the seven seals opened, vi. 1—viii. 5, wherein are inserted two episodes, between the sixth and seventh seals.
    - a. the sealing of the elect, vii. 1—8.
    - b. the multitude of the redeemed, vii. 9—17.
  - c. The seven trumpets of vengeance, introduced indeed before the conclusion of the former portion, viii. 2, but properly extending from viii. 6—xi. 19.  
But here again we have two episodes, between the sixth and seventh trumpets,
    - a. the little book, x. 1—11.
    - b. the two witnesses, xi. 1—14.
  - d. The woman and her three enemies, xii. 1—xiii. 18. And herein
    - a. the dragon, xii. 1—17.
    - b. the beast, xii. 18—xiii. 10.
    - c. the second beast, or false prophet, xiii. 11—18.
  - e. The introduction to the final triumph and the final vengeance, xiv. 1—20. And herein
    - a. the Lamb and his elect, xiv. 1—5.
    - b. the three angels announcing the heads of the coming prophecy:
      1. the warning of judgments, xiv. 6, 7.
      2. the fall of Babylon, xiv. 8.
      3. the punishment of the unfaithful, xiv. 9—12.
      4. A voice proclaiming the blessedness of the holy dead, xiv. 13.
    - c. the harvest (xiv. 14—16) and the vintage (xiv. 17—20) of the earth.
  - f. The pouring out of the seven last vials of wrath, xv. 1—xvi. 21.
  - g. The judgment of Babylon, xvii. 1—xviii. 24.
  - h. The final triumph, xix. 1—xxii. 5. And herein
    - a. the church's song of praise, xix. 1—10.
    - b. the issuing forth of the Lord and His hosts to victory, xix. 11—16.
    - c. the destruction of the beast and false prophet and kings of the earth, xix. 17—21.
    - d. the binding of the dragon, and the millennial reign, xx. 1—6.
    - e. the unbinding, and final overthrow, of Satan, xx. 7—10.
    - f. the general judgment, xx. 11—15.

g. the new heavens and earth, and glories of the heavenly Jerusalem, xxi. 1—xxii. 5.

IV. The conclusion, xxii. 6—21. See on all this the table at p. 363, in which the contents are arranged with a view to prophetic interpretation.

## SECTION V.

### SYSTEMS OF INTERPRETATION.

1. It would be as much beyond the limits as it is beside the purpose of this Introduction, to give a detailed history of apocalyptic interpretation. And it would be, after all, spending much labour over that which has been well and sufficiently done already. For English readers, the large portion of Mr. Elliott's fourth volume of his *Horæ Apocalypticæ* which is devoted to the subject contains an ample account of apocalyptic expositors from the first times to the present: and for those who can read German, Lücke's *Einleitung* will furnish more critical though shorter notices of many among them<sup>7</sup>. To these works, and to others like them<sup>8</sup>, I must refer my readers for any thing like a detailed history of interpretations: contenting myself with giving a brief classification of the different great divisions of opinion, and with stating the grounds and character of the interpretation adopted in the following Commentary.

2. The schools of apocalyptic interpretation naturally divide themselves into three principal branches:

- a. The Præterists, or those who hold that the whole or by far the greater part of the prophecy has been fulfilled:
- b. The Historical Interpreters, or those who hold that the prophecy embraces the whole history of the church and its foes from the time of its writing to the end of the world:
- c. The Futurists, or those who maintain that the prophecy relates entirely to events which are to take place at or near to the coming of the Lord.

I shall make a few remarks on each of these schools.

3. a. The Præterist view found no favour, and was hardly so much as

<sup>7</sup> It is to be regretted that Lücke should have performed this portion of his work so much in the spirit of a partisan, and not have contented himself with giving a résumé *ab extra* in the spirit of fairness, as Mr. Elliott has done. But his notices and remarks are very able and valuable.

<sup>8</sup> e.g. Dr. Todd on the Apocalypse, pp. 269 ff.: Mr. Charles Maitland's *Apostolic School of Prophetic Interpretation*, &c. Mr. Elliott has continued his notices down nearly to the present time in the appendix to his *Warburtonian Lectures*, pp. 510—566.

thought of, in the times of primitive Christianity. Those who lived near the date of the book itself had no idea that its groups of prophetic imagery were intended merely to describe things then passing, and to be in a few years completed<sup>9</sup>. The view is said to have been first promulgated in any thing like completeness by the Jesuit Alcasar, in his "Investigation of the secret sense in the Apocalypse," published in 1614. He regarded the prophecy as descriptive of the victory of the church first over the synagogue, in chapters v.—xi., and then over heathen Rome, in chapters xii.—xix.: on which follows the triumph, and rest, and glorious close, chapters xx.—xxii. Very nearly the same plan was adopted by Grotius in his Annotations, published in 1644: and by our own Hammond in his Commentary, published in 1653: whom Le Clerc, his Latin interpreter, followed. The next name among this school of interpreters is that of Bossuet, the great antagonist of Protestantism. His Commentary was published in 1690. In the main, he agrees with the schemes of Alcasar and Grotius<sup>1</sup>.

4. The Præterist school of interpretation has however of late been revived in Germany, and is that to which some of the most eminent expositors of that nation belong<sup>2</sup>: limiting the view of the Seer to matters within his own horizon, and believing the whole denunciations of the book to regard nothing further than the destruction of Pagan and persecuting Rome.

5. This view has also found exponents in our own language. It is that of the very ample and laborious Commentary of Moses Stuart in America, and of Dr. Davidson and Mr. Desprez in England.

6. *b.* The continuous historical interpretation belongs almost of necessity to these later days. In early times, the historic material since the apostolic period was not copious enough to tempt men to fit it on to the symbols of the prophetic visions. The first approach to it seems to have been made by Berengaud, not far from the beginning of the twelfth century: who however carried the historic range of the Apocalypse back to the creation of the world<sup>3</sup>. The historic view is found in the fragmentary exposition of the Seals by Anselm of Havelburg (1145): in the important exposition by the Abbot Joachim (about 1200)<sup>4</sup>.

7. From Joachim's time we may date the rise of the continuous historic school of interpretation. From this time men's minds, even within

<sup>9</sup> Compare Methodius: "John speaks not of past events, but of those which were then going on, or which were hereafter to happen."

<sup>1</sup> See Elliott, vol. iv. p. 480, and a very good description in Lücke, p. 540.

<sup>2</sup> e. g. Ewald, Lücke, De Wette, Düsterdieck.

<sup>3</sup> See Elliott, vol. iv. pp. 362 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Elliott, vol. iv. pp. 376—410: where see also a tabular view of Joachim's apocalyptic scheme.

the Romish church, became accustomed to the ideas, that the apocalyptic Babylon was in some sense or other not only Pagan but Papal Rome: and that Antichrist was to sit, whether as an usurper or not, on the throne of the Papacy.

8. I pass over less remarkable names, which will be found composing an interesting series in Mr. Elliott's history<sup>5</sup>, noticing as I pass, that such was the view held by the precursors and upholders of the Reformation: by Wicliffe and his followers in England, by Luther in Germany, Bullinger in Switzerland, Bishop Bale in Ireland; by Fox the martyrologist, by Brightmann, Pareus, and early Protestant expositors generally.

9. As we advance in order of time, the same view holds its ground in the main among the Protestant churches. It is, with more or less individual varieties and divergences, that of Mede (1630), Jurieu (1685), Cressener (1690), Vitringa (1705), Daubuz (1720), Sir Isaac Newton (first published in 1733, after his death; but belonging to an earlier date), Whiston (1706), and the Commentators further on in that century, Bengel and Bishop Newton.

10. Mr. Elliott very naturally makes the great French Revolution a break, and the beginning of a new epoch, in the history of apocalyptic interpretation. From it, the continuous historical view seemed to derive confirmation and consistency, and acquired boldness to enter into new details, and fix its dates with greater precision.

11. Some of the more marked upholders of the view since that great Revolution have been divided among themselves as to the question, whether the expected second advent of our Lord is to be regarded as preceding or succeeding the thousand years' reign, or millennium. The majority both in number, and in learning and research, adopt the premillennial advent: following, as it seems to me, the plain and undeniable sense of the sacred text of the book itself.

12. It is not the purpose of the present Introduction to open controversial dispute with systems or with individuals. The following Commentary will shew how far our views agree with, how far they differ from, the school of which I am treating. With this caution, I cannot refrain from expressing my admiration of the research and piety which have characterized some of the principal modern Protestant expositors of this school. I must pay this tribute more especially to Mr. Elliott, from whose system and conclusions I am compelled so frequently and so widely to diverge<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Vol. iv. pp. 416 ff.

<sup>6</sup> The statement made above in the text will account for my not having noticed in detail, with a view to refutation, Mr. Elliott's work, "Apocalypsis Alfordiana," published since the appearance of this volume of my Greek Testament. A careful perusal of that work has not altered my view on any of the points of interpretation whereon we differ. Its arguments are not formidable, consisting for the most part of confident

13. *c.* Our attention now passes to the Futurist school, consisting of those who throw forward the whole book, or by far the greater part of it, into the times of the great second Advent, denying altogether its historical significance.

14. Of these writers, some, who have been called the extreme futurists<sup>7</sup>, deny even the past existence of the seven Asiatic churches, and hold that we are to look for them yet to arise in the last days: but the majority accept them as historical facts, and begin the events of the last days with the prophetic imagery in chap. iv. Some indeed expound the earlier seals of events already past, and then in the later ones pass at once onward to the times of antichrist.

15. The founder of this system in modern times (the Apostolic Fathers can hardly with fairness be cited for it, seeing that for them all was future) appears to have been the Jesuit Ribera, about A.D. 1580<sup>8</sup>. It has of late had some able advocates in this country. To it belong the respected names of Dr. Maitland, Dr. Todd, Mr. Burgh, Isaac Williams, and others.

16. I need hardly say that I cannot regard this scheme of interpretation with approval. To argue against it here, would be only to anticipate the Commentary. It seems to me indisputable that the book does speak of things past, present, and future: that some of its prophecies are already fulfilled, some are now fulfilling, and others await their fulfilment in the yet unknown future: but to class all together and postpone them to the last age of the world, seems to me very like shrinking from the labours which the Holy Spirit meant us, and invites us, to undertake.

17. In the exposition of the Apocalypse attempted in this volume, I have endeavoured simply to follow the guidance of the sacred text, according to its own requirements and the analogies of Scripture. I am not conscious of having any where forced the meaning to suit my own prepossession: but I have in each case examined, whither the text itself and the rest of Scripture seemed to send me for guidance. If a definite meaning seemed to be pointed at in such guidance, I have upheld that meaning, to whatever school of interpretation I might seem thereby for the time to belong. If no such definite meaning seemed to be indicated,

re-assertion of the system which they uphold. In preparing the last edition of this portion of my Greek Testament, I began by inserting in the notes elaborate answers to them: but I found that thus my pages became burdened with matter merely controversial, and moreover that I could not continue this course consistently with the unfeigned respect, which I felt and wished to shew towards Mr. Elliott: the spirit of his book, which I forbear here from characterizing, rendering this wholly impossible.

<sup>7</sup> e. g. the author of "The Jewish Missionary," and "The Sealed Book."

<sup>8</sup> Elliott, vol. iv. pp. 465 ff.

I have confessed my inability to assign one, however plausible and attractive the guesses of expositors may have been.

18. The result of such a method of interpretation may be apparent want of system ; but I submit that it is the only way which will conduct us safely as far as we go, and which will prevent us from wresting the text to make it suit a preconceived scheme. This latter fault seemed to me so glaring and so frequent in our expositors of the historical school, and inspired me with such disgust, that I determined my own pages should not contain a single instance of it, if I could help it. And I venture to hope that the determination has been carried out.

19. The course which I have taken, that of following the text itself under the guidance of Scripture analogy, naturally led to the recognition of certain landmarks, or fixed points, giving rise to canons of interpretation, which I maintain are not to be departed from. Such are for instance the following:

20. The close connexion between our Lord's prophetic discourse on the Mount of Olives, and the line of apocalyptic prophecy, cannot fail to have struck every student of Scripture. If it be suggested that such connexion may be merely apparent, and we subject it to the test of more accurate examination, our first impression will I think become continually stronger, that the two, being revelations from the same Lord concerning things to come, and those things being as it seems to me bound by the fourfold cry, **Come**, which introduces the seals, to the same reference to Christ's coming, must, corresponding as they do in order and significance, answer to one another in detail ; and thus the discourse in Matt. xxiv. becomes, as Mr. Isaac Williams has truly named it, "*the anchor of apocalyptic interpretation :*" and, I may add, the touchstone of apocalyptic systems. If its guidance be not followed in the interpretation of the seals : if any other than our Lord is he that goes forth conquering and to conquer, then, though the subsequent interpretation may have occasional points of contact with truth, and may thus be in parts profitable to us, the *system* is an erroneous one, and, as far as it is concerned, the true key to the book is lost.

21. Another such landmark is found I believe in the interpretation of the *sixth seal* : if it be not indeed already laid down in what has just been said. We all know what that imagery means in the rest of Scripture. Any system which requires it to belong to another period than the close approach of the great day of the Lord, stands thereby self-condemned. I may illustrate this by reference to Mr. Elliott's continuous historical system, which requires that it should mean the downfall of Paganism under Constantine. A more notable instance of inadequate interpretation cannot be imagined.

22. Closely connected with this last is another fixed point in interpretation. As the seven seals, so the seven trumpets and the seven



vials run on to the time close upon the end. At the termination of each series, the note is unmistakeably given, that such is the case. Of the seals we have already spoken. As to the trumpets, it may suffice to refer to ch. x. 7, xi. 18: as to the vials, to their very designation "*these last*," and to the declaration "*they are past*," of ch. xvi. 17. Any system which does not recognize this common ending of the three, seems to me to stand thereby convicted of error.

23. Another such absolute requirement of the sacred text is found in the vision of ch. xii. 1 ff. In ver. 5, we read that the woman "*brought forth a male child, who shall rule (shepherd) the nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.*" All Scripture analogy and that of this book itself (compare ch. xix. 15) requires that these words should be understood of our incarnate Lord, and of no other. Any system seems to me convicted of error, which is compelled to interpret the words otherwise.

24. Another canon of interpretation has seemed to me to be deducible from the great care and accuracy with which the Seer distinguishes between the divine Persons and the ministering angels. Much confusion is found in the apocalyptic commentaries from this point not being attended to. "Is such or such an angel Christ Himself, or not?" is a question continually meeting us in their pages. Such a question need never to have been asked. *An angel*, throughout the book, is strictly and literally *an angel*: never our Lord, never one of the sons of men. This holds equally, I believe, of the angels of the seven churches and of the various angels introduced in the prophetic vision.

25. Other rules and requirements of the same kind will be found mentioned in the Commentary itself. It may be well to speak of some other matters which seem worthy of notice here.

26. The apocalyptic *numbers* furnish an important enquiry to every Commentator, as to their respective significance. And, in general terms, such a question can be readily answered. The various numbers seem to keep constant to their great lines of symbolic meaning, and may, without any caprice, be assigned to them. Thus *seven* is the number of perfection: seven spirits are before the throne (ch. i. 4; iv. 5): seven churches represent the church universal: the Lamb has seven horns and seven eyes (v. 6): in the several series of God's judgments, each of them complete in itself, each of them exhaustive in its own line of divine action, seven is the number of the seals, of the trumpets, of the thunders, of the vials.

27. *Four*, again, is the number of terrestrial extension. Four living-beings are the celestial symbols of creation (iv. 6 ff.): four angels stand on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of heaven (ch. vii. 1): four seals, four trumpets, four vials, in each case complete the judgments as far as physical visitations are concerned: four angels are

loosed from the Euphrates to slay the destined portion out of all mankind (ix. 13 ff.), in obedience to a voice from the four corners of the altar: Satan deceives the nations in the four corners of the earth (xx. 8): the new Jerusalem lieth four-square, having all sides equal.

28. *Twelve* is the number especially appropriated to the Church, and to appearances symbolically connected with her. Twice twelve is the number of the heavenly elders: twelve times twelve thousand, the number of the sealed elect: the woman in ch. xii. 1 has a crown of twelve stars: the heavenly city has twelve gates, at the gates twelve angels, and on them the names of the twelve tribes of Israel; also twelve foundations, and on them the names of the twelve Apostles: and its circumference (probably: see note, ch. xxi. 17) is twelve thousand stadia. Finally, in the midst of her the tree of life brings forth twelve manner of fruits.

29. The occurrence of aliquot portions of these numbers is also worthy of our attention. The half of seven, three and a half, is a ruling number in the apocalyptic periods of time. Three years and a half had been the duration of the drought prayed for by Elijah (see James v. 17, note: also Luke iv. 25): "a time, and times, and the dividing of time" was the prescribed prophetic duration of the oppression of the saints in Dan. vii. 25. Accordingly, we find in the Apocalypse (ch. xi. 2) that the two witnesses, one of whose powers is, to shut up heaven that there shall be no rain (xi. 6), shall prophesy 1260 days =  $3 \times 360 + 180$  = three years and a half. And if this particular reminds us of Elijah, the other, the turning the water into blood and smiting the earth with plagues, directs our attention to Moses, whose testimony endured throughout the forty and two stations of the children of Israel's pilgrimage, as that of these witnesses is to endure forty and two months =  $3 \times 12 + 6$  months = three years and a half. (Again, for three *days* and a half shall the bodies of these witnesses lie unburied in the street of the great city, after which they shall rise again.) The same period in days (1260) is the term during which the woman shall be fed in the wilderness (xii. 6). The same in months (42) is allotted (xiii. 5) to the power of the first wild-beast which ascended from the sea.

30. I have not pretended to offer any solution of these periods of time, so remarkably pervaded by the half of the mystic seven. I am quite unable to say, who the two witnesses are: quite unable, in common with all apocalyptic interpreters, to point out definitely any period in the history of the church corresponding to the 1260 days of ch. xii. 6, or any in the history of this world's civil power which shall satisfy the forty-two months of ch. xiii. 5. As far as I have seen, every such attempt hitherto made has been characterized by signal failure. One after another, the years fixed on for the consummation by different authors have passed away, beginning with the 1836 of Beugel: one

after another, the expositors who have lived to be thus refuted have shifted their ground into the safer future.

31. It is not my intention to enter the lists on either side of the vexed "year-day" question. I have never seen it proved, or even made probable, that we are to take a day for a year in apocalyptic prophecy: on the other hand I have never seen it proved, or made probable, that such mystic periods are to be taken literally, a day for a day. It is a weighty argument against the year-day system, that a period of "a thousand years" (xx. 6, 7) does occur in the prophecy: it is hardly a less strong one against literal acceptance of days, that the principles of interpretation given us by the Seer himself (xvii. 17) seem to require for the reign of the beast a far longer period than this calculation would allow. So that in the apparent failure of both systems, I am driven to believe that these periods are to be assigned by some clue, of which the Spirit has not yet put the Church in possession.

32. Still less can I offer any satisfactory solution of the prophetic number of the Beast (xiii. 18). Even while I print my note in favour of the *Lateinos* of Irenæus, I feel almost disposed to withdraw it. It is beyond question the best solution that has been given: but that it is not *the* solution, I have a persuasion amounting to certainty. It must be considered merely as worthy to emerge from the thousand and one failures strewn up and down in our books, and to be kept in sight till the challenge "*here is wisdom*" is satisfactorily redeemed.

33. On one point I have ventured to speak strongly, because my conviction on it is strong, founded on the rules of fair and consistent interpretation. I mean, the necessity of accepting literally the first resurrection, and the millennial reign. It seems to me that if in a sentence where two resurrections are spoken of with no mark of distinction between them (it is otherwise in John v. 28, which is commonly alleged for the view which I am combating),—in a sentence where, one resurrection having been related, "the rest of the dead" are afterwards mentioned,—we are at liberty to understand the former one figuratively and spiritually, and the latter literally and materially, then there is an end of all definite meaning in plain words, and the Apocalypse, or any other book, may mean any thing we please. It is a curious fact that those who maintain this, studious as they generally are to uphold the primitive interpretation, are obliged, not only to wrest the plain sense of words, but to desert the unanimous consent of the primitive Fathers, some of whom lived early enough to have retained apostolic tradition on this point. Not till millennial views had run into unspiritual excesses, was this interpretation departed from<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> The student who can read German will find a good account of the history of opinions on this subject in Herzog's Encyclopædic, art. Chiliasmus.

34. It now remains that I say somewhat respecting my own view of the character and arrangement of the prophecy, which may furnish the reader with a general idea of the nature of the interpretation given in the notes.

35. And first for the principles on which that interpretation is based.

a) The book is a revelation given by the Father to Christ, and imparted by Him through His angel to St. John, to declare to His servants things which must shortly come to pass: in other words, the future conflicts and triumphs of His church; these being the things which concerned "His servants."

36. b) Of all these, the greatest event is His own coming in glory. In consequence, it is put forward in the introduction of the book with all solemnity, and its certainty sealed by an asseveration from the Almighty and Everlasting God.

37. c) Accordingly, we find every part of the prophecy full of this subject. The Epistles to the Churches continually recur to it: the visions of seals, trumpets, vials, all end in introducing it: and it forms the solemn conclusion, as it did the opening of the book.

38. d) But it was not the first time that this great subject had been spoken of in prophecy. The Old Testament prophets had all announced it: and the language of this book is full of the prophetic imagery which we also find in them. The first great key to the understanding of the Apocalypse, is, the analogy of Old Testament prophecy.

39. e) The next is our Lord's own prophetic discourse, before insisted on in this reference. He himself had previously delivered a great prophecy, giving in clear outline the main points of the history of the church. In this prophecy, the progress of the Gospel, its hindrances and corruptions, the judgments on the unbelieving, the trials of the faithful, the safety of God's elect amidst all, and the final redemption in glory of His faithful people, were all indicated. There, they were enwrapped in language which was in great part primarily applicable to the great typical judgment on the chosen people—the destruction of Jerusalem. When this book was written, that event had taken place: completing the first and partial fulfilment of our Lord's predictions. Now, it remained for prophecy to declare to the church God's course of dealing with the nations of the earth, by which the same predictions are to be again fulfilled, on a larger scale, and with greater fulness of meaning.

40. It is somewhat astonishing, that many of those who recognize to the full the character of the prophetic discourse of our Lord as applying to the last days, should have failed to observe in the Apocalypse the very same features of arrangement, and an analogy challenging continual observation.

41. *f*) In accordance with the analogy just pointed out, I conceive that the opening section of the book (after the vision in the introduction), containing the Epistles to the Churches, is an expansion of our Lord's brief notes of comfort, reproof, and admonition addressed to His own in the prophecy on the Mount of Olives and elsewhere in His prophetic discourses.

42. "1 It reveals to us our Lord as present with His people evermore in the fulness of His divine Majesty as the Incarnate and glorified Son of God: present with them by His Spirit to sympathize, to sustain, to comfort, to reprove, to admonish, as their need requires: his eye evermore on every heart, his love ever ready to supply all their need. The Epistles are no other than the expression of that special message of rebuke or encouragement which day by day in all ages the Lord sees to be needed, in one or other of its parts, by every Church, and every Christian, on earth. Every body of Christians, we are reminded, like every individual, has at each moment, its own definite religious character and condition: like Ephesus, sound, but with declining love and faith: like Smyrna, faithful in tribulation and rich in good works: like Pergamum, stedfast under open trial, but too tolerant of compromises with the world's ways: like Thyatira, diligent in well-doing, and with many signs of spiritual progress, yet allowing false teaching and corrupt practice to go unchecked: like Sardis, retaining the form of sound doctrine, but in practice sunk into a deep slumber threatening spiritual death: like Philadelphia, faithful to the Lord's word and name, loving Him though in weakness, and therefore kept in safety: or finally, like Laodicea, 'lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot:' self-satisfied, because sunk too deep in spiritual sloth and indifference to be conscious of her poverty, and ready therefore to lose all without struggle or regret<sup>2</sup>."

43. This first section has set before us the Lord present with His church on earth: the next introduces us at once to His presence in heaven, and to the celestial scenery of the whole coming prophecy. It is to be noted that this revelation of God is as the God of His Church. The Father, seated on the Throne: the Lamb in the midst of the throne, bearing the marks of His atoning sacrifice: the sevenfold Spirit with His

<sup>1</sup> I borrow the words of a MS. Lecture on the Apocalypse by an old and valued friend.

<sup>2</sup> It has been supposed by some (the first of whom apparently was the Abbot Joachim) that these Epistles are in themselves prophetic of various states of the church from the time of the Apocalypse to the final close of the dispensation. One of the principal among these is Vitringa, in whose Commentary, pp. 27 ff., will be found a full account, and elaborate defence of the view. I need not say that I myself cannot subscribe to it.



lamps of fire: this is Jehovah the covenant God of His redeemed. And next we have Creation, symbolized by the four living-beings—the Church, patriarchal and apostolic, represented by the twenty-four elders: and the innumerable company of angels, ministering in their glory and might, now by one of them, now by another, throughout the course of the prophecy.

44. In the next section, the Lamb, alone found worthy, opens one after another, the seals of the closed book or roll, so that, when they are all opened, it may be unrolled and read. One point I have urged in the following notes: viz., that the roll is never during the prophecy actually opened, nor is any part of it read. The openings of its successive seals are but the successive preparations for its contents to be disclosed: and as each is opened, a new class of preparations is seen in prophetic vision. When the seventh is loosed, and all is ready for the unfolding and reading, there is a symbolic silence, and a new series of visions begins.

45. As regards the seals themselves, the first four are marked off from the other three in a manner which none can fail to observe. They represent, I believe, Christ's victory over the world in His appointed way. We have Himself going forth to conquer, and in His train, the sword which He came to send on earth, the wars, famines, and pestilences which He foretold should be forerunners of His coming. At each of these appearances, one of the living-beings who symbolize Creation echoes with his "Come" the sighs of the world for the manifestation of the sons of God. I conceive it to be a mistake, necessarily involved in the consecutive historical interpretation, but sometimes found where that is not, to interpret these four seals as succeeding one another in time. All are co-ordinate, all are correlative.

46. Next to the sighs of Creation for the Lord's coming, we have those of His martyred saints, crying from under His altar. Then, at the opening of the sixth seal, we have reproduced the well-known imagery of our Lord's discourse and of the Old Test. prophets, describing the very eve and threshold, so to speak, of the day of the Lord: the portents which should usher in His coming: but not that coming itself. For the revelation of this, the time is not yet. First, His elect must be gathered out of the four winds—the complete number sealed, before the judgments invoked by the martyred souls descend on the earth, the sea, the trees. First, the Seer must be vouchsafed a vision of the great multitude whom none can number, in everlasting glory. The day of the Lord's coming is gone by, and the vision reaches forward beyond it into the blissful eternity. Why? Because then, and not till then, shall the seventh seal, which looses the roll of God's eternal purposes, be opened, and the book read to the adoring Church in glory. Then we have the last seal opened,



and the half-hour's silence—the “beginning,” as Victorinus sublimely says, “of eternal rest.”

47. Thus far the vision of the seals necessarily reached onward for its completion. But there is much more to be revealed. God's judgments on the earth and its inhabitants are the subject of the next series of visions. The prayers of the martyred saints had invoked them: with the symbolizing therefore of the answer to these prayers the next section opens. Then follow the trumpet-blowing angels, hurting the earth, the trees, the sea, the rivers, the lights of heaven. And here again, as before, the first four trumpets complete these world-wide judgments, and with the fifth the three woes on mankind begin. The previous plagues have affected only the accessories of life: the following affect life itself.

48. In these latter we have the strictest correspondence with the foregoing vision of the seals. Two of them are veritably plagues, the one of the locusts, the other of the horsemen. After this sixth trumpet are inserted two episodical passages, the one a vision, the other a prophecy (see below): then, when the seventh is about to sound, the consummation of God's judgments passes unrecorded, as it did under the seals; and at the seventh trumpet, we have the song of thanksgiving and triumph in heaven. Such remarkable and intimate correspondence carries its own explanation: the two visions of the trumpets and seals run on to one and the same glorious termination: the former, in tracing the course of the world as regards the Church, the latter, in tracing God's judgments of vengeance on the ungodly dwellers on earth: for it is for this that the heavenly song at its conclusion gives thanks.

49. If now we turn to the two episodes between the sixth and seventh trumpets, we find them distinctly introductory to that section which is next to follow. A little book is given to the Seer, sweet to his mouth, but bitter in digestion, with an announcement that he is yet again to prophesy to many nations—that a fresh series of prophetic visions, glorious indeed but woeful, was now to be delivered by him.

50. These begin by the measurement of the temple of God—seeing that it is the Church herself, in her innermost hold, which is now to become the subject of the prophecy. The course of the two witnesses, recalling to us by their spirit and power Moses and Elias, is predicted: and during the prediction, one principal figure of the subsequent visions is by anticipation introduced: the wild-beast that cometh up out of the abyss. That this is so, is at once fatal in my estimation to the continuous historical interpretation.

51. The student will find that there is no explanation of the two witnesses in the ensuing Commentary. I have studied the various solutions, and I own that I cannot find any which I can endorse as being that which I can feel to be satisfactory. I have none of my own. I

recognize the characters : but I cannot appropriate them. I do not feel it to be any reproach to my system, or any disproof of its substance, that there are this and other gaps in it which I cannot bridge over. Nay, on the contrary, if it be a sound interpretation, there must be these : and to find events and persons which may fit the whole, ere yet the course of time is run, would seem to me rather writing a parody, than earnestly seeking a solution.

52. And now the seventh angel sounds ; and as before at the opening of the seventh seal, the heavenly scene is before us, and the representatives of the church universal fall down and give thanks that God's kingdom is come, and the time of the dead to be judged. But though this series of visions likewise has been thus brought down to the end of the final consummation, there is more yet to be revealed ; and in anticipation of the character of the subsequent visions, the temple of God in heaven is opened, and the pause between one and another series is announced, as before between the seals and the trumpets, and as after at the end of the vials, by thunders and lightnings and voices.

53. And now opens the great prophetic course of visions regarding the church. Her identification in the eyes of the seer is first rendered un mistakeable, by the scene opening with the appearance of the woman and the serpent, the enmity between him and her seed, the birth of the Man-child who should rule over the nations—His ascension to heaven and to the throne of God. Here, at least, all ought to have been plain : and here again I see pronounced the condemnation of the continuous historical system.

54. The flight of the woman into the wilderness, the casting down of Satan from heaven no longer to curse the brethren there, his continued enmity on earth, his persecution of the remnant of the woman's seed, these belong to the introductory features of the great vision which is to follow, and serve to describe the state in which the Church of God is found during the now pending stage of her conflict.

55. What follows, carries out the description of the war made by the dragon on the seed of the woman. A wild-beast is seen rising out of the deep, uniting in itself the formerly described heads and horns of the dragon, and also the well-known prophetic symbols of the great empires of the world : representing, in fact, the secular powers antagonistic to the Church of Christ. To this wild-beast the dragon gives his might and his throne : and notwithstanding that one of its heads, the Pagan Roman Empire, is crushed to death, its deadly wound is healed, and all who are not written in the Lamb's book of life worship it.

56. The further carrying out of the power and influence of the beast is now set before us by the vision of another wild-beast, born of the earth, gentle as a lamb in appearance, but dragon-like and cruel in character. This second beast is the ally and servant of the former : makes

men to worship its image and receive its mark, as the condition of civil rights and even of life itself. Here, in common with very many of the best interpreters, I cannot fail to recognize the sacerdotal persecuting power, leagued with and the instrument of the secular: professing to be a lamb, but in reality being a dragon: persecuting the saints of God; the inseparable companion and upholder of despotic and tyrannical power. This in all its forms, Pagan, Papal, and in so far as the Reformed Churches have retrograded towards Papal sacerdotalism, Protestant also, I believe to be that which is symbolized under the second wild-beast.

57. Next, the apocalyptic vision brings before us the Lamb on Mount Zion with the first-fruits of His people, and the heavenly song in which they join,—as prefatory to the announcement, by three angels, of the prophecies which are to follow, so full of import to the people and church of God. These are, first, the proclamation of the everlasting Gospel as previous to the final judgments of God: next, the fall of Babylon, as an encouragement for the patience of the saints: third, the final defeat and torment of the Lord's enemies. After these is heard a voice proclaiming the blessedness of the holy dead. Then follow, in strict accord with these four announcements, 1) the harvest and the vintage of the earth, and the seven last plagues, symbolized by the outpouring of the vials: 2) the ample details of the fall and punishment of Babylon: 3) the triumph of the Church in the last defeat of her Lord's enemies: 4) the millennial reign, and finally, the eternity of bliss. But on each of these somewhat more must be said.

58. I have found reason to interpret the *harvest*, of the ingathering of the Lord's people: the *vintage*, of the crushing of His enemies: both these being, according to the usage of this book, compendious, and inclusive of the fuller details of both, which are to follow.

59. The vintage is taken up and expanded in detail by the series of the vials: seven in number, as were the seals and the trumpets before. These final judgments, specially belonging to the Church, are introduced by a song of triumph from the saints of both dispensations, and are poured out by angels coming forth from the opened sanctuary of the tabernacle of witness in heaven.

60. The course of these judgments is in some particulars the same as that of the trumpets. The earth, the sea, the rivers, the lights of heaven—these are the objects of the first four: but ever with reference to those who worship the beast and have his mark on them. At the fifth, as in each case before, there is a change from general to special: the throne and kingdom of the beast, the river Euphrates, these are now the objects: and the seventh passes off, as in each former case, to the consummation of all things.

61. Meantime, as so often before, anticipating hints have been given

of new details belonging to the other angelic announcements. At the sixth vial, we have the sounds of the gathering of an approaching battle of God's enemies against Him, and the very battle-field pointed out. After the seventh and its closing formula, Babylon comes into remembrance before God, to give her the cup of his vengeance. Thus then we pass to the second of the angelic announcements—the fall of Babylon. Here the Seer is carried in spirit into the wilderness, and shewn the great vision of the woman seated on the beast. I have entered in the Commentary into all the details of this important portion of the prophecy: and it is unnecessary to repeat them here. It may suffice to say, that the great persecuting city, the type of the union of ecclesiastical corruption with civil tyranny, is finally overthrown by the hands of those very kingdoms who had given their power to the beast, and this overthrow is celebrated by the triumphant songs of the Church and of Creation and of innumerable multitudes in heaven.

62. But here again, according to the practice of which I cannot too often remind the student, a voice from heaven announces the character of the new and final vision which is to follow: Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And now, in the prophetic details of the third of the previous angelic announcements, and of the proclamation of the blessedness of the holy dead, the great events of the time of the end crowd, in their dread majesty, upon us. First, the procession of the glorified Redeemer with the armies of heaven following Him, coming forth to tread the winepress of the wrath of Almighty God. Then, the great battle of the Lord against His foes, the beast and the false prophet, leagued with the kings of the earth against Him. Then, the binding of the dragon, the old serpent, for a season. Then, the first resurrection, the judgment of the church, the millennial reign: as to which I have again and again raised my earnest protest against evading the plain sense of words, and spiritualizing in the midst of plain declarations of fact. That the Lord will come in person to this our earth: that His risen elect will reign here with Him and judge: that during that blessed reign the power of evil will be bound, and the glorious prophecies of peace and truth on earth find their accomplishment:—this is my firm persuasion, and not mine alone, but that of multitudes of Christ's waiting people, as it was that of his primitive apostolic Church, before controversy blinded the eyes of the Fathers to the light of prophecy.

63. But the end is not yet. One struggle more, and that the last. At the end of the millennial period, Satan is unloosed, and the nations of the earth are deceived by him—they come up against and encircle the camp of the saints and the beloved city: and fire comes down out of heaven and consumes them: and the devil who deceived them is cast into the lake of fire. Then is described the general judgment of the







dead, the destruction of death and Hadés, and the condemnation of all whose names are not found written in the book of life.

64. Finally, in accord with the previous proclamation of the blessedness of the holy dead, the description of the heavenly Jerusalem forms the glorious close of the whole.

65. It remains that I say a few words in explanation of the annexed Table, which contains an arrangement of the Apocalyptic matter in accordance with the view upheld above.

66. In the upper part of the table, extending all across it, are specified the general subject of the book, printed in black, and the Epistles to the seven churches. Then follow, printed in red, the heavenly scenery and personages common to the whole following prophecy, till all the various visions merge, at the bottom of each column, in the new heavens and new earth, the description of which is again printed in red across the table beneath the columns.

67. The columns themselves contain the various visions, followed by the episodes which occur in them, in order: each in turn passing away into the great day of the Lord, and the events of the time of the end. Any one who has followed the Commentary, or even the epitome given in this Introduction, will have no difficulty in making use of the conspectus given in the table.

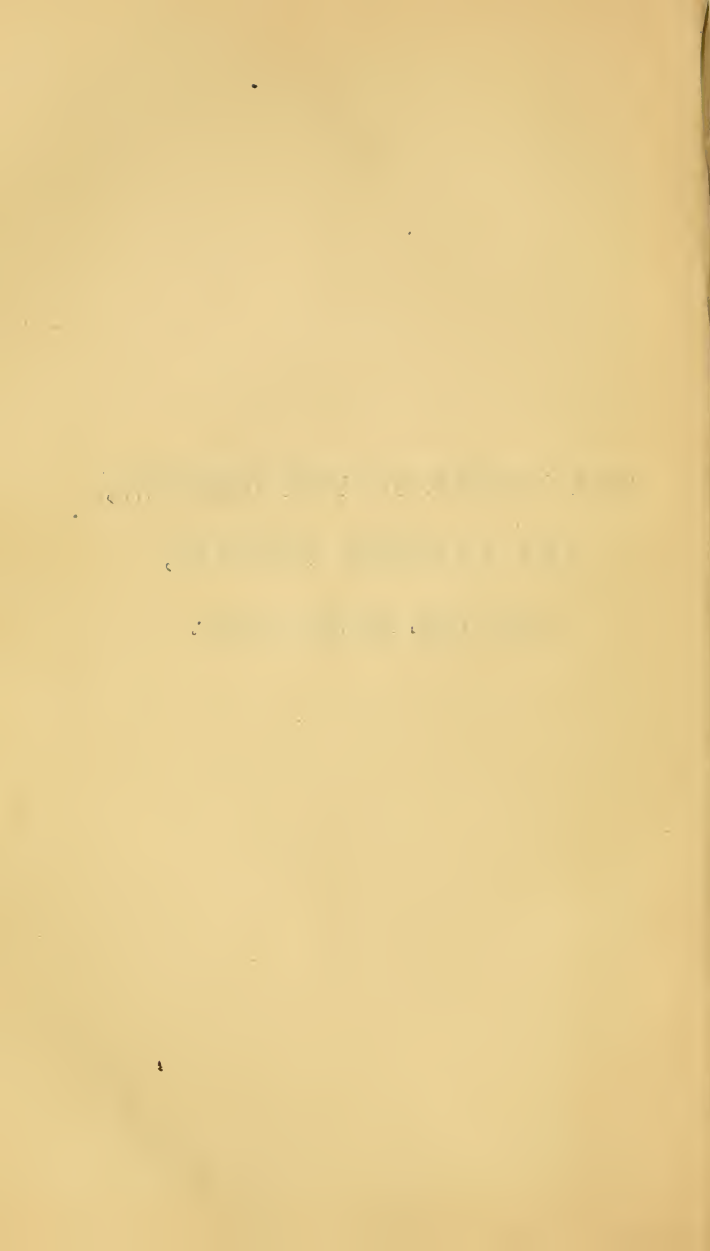
68. The words printed in thick type are intended to direct the reader's attention to their recurrence as furnishing landmarks, or tests of interpretation: e. g. the numbers, seven, four, twelve: the white horse and its Rider: the ruling the nations with a rod of iron, as unmistakeably identifying the Man-child of ch. xii. with the Victor of ch. xix.: &c. &c.

69. I have now only to commend to my gracious God and Father this feeble attempt to explain the most mysterious and glorious portion of His revealed Scripture: and with it, this my labour of now four-and-twenty years, herewith completed. I do it with humble thankfulness, but with a sense of utter weakness before the power of His Word, and inability to sound the depths even of its simplest sentence. May He spare the hand which has been put forward to touch His Ark: may He, for Christ's sake, forgive all rashness, all perverseness, all uncharitableness, which may be found in this book, and sanctify it to the use of His Church: its truth, if any, for teaching: its manifold defect, for warning. My prayer is and shall be, that in the stir and labour of men over His word, to which these volumes have been one humble contribution, others may arise and teach, whose labours shall be so far better than mine, that this book, and its writer, may ere long be utterly forgotten.

AMEN, COME, LORD JESUS.



THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS,  
THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES,  
AND THE REVELATION.



# THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

I. <sup>1</sup> GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past

AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

I. <sup>1</sup> GOD, having in many portions and <sup>a</sup> in divers manners spoken <sup>a</sup> Numb. xii. 6, 8.

CHAP. I. 1—II. 18.] AFTER MANIFOLD REVELATIONS IN FORMER TIMES, GOD HAS NOW REVEALED HIMSELF TO US IN HIS SON (i. 1—4), WHO IS GREATER THAN THE ANGELS, THE DISPENSERS OF THE LAW (i. 4—14; inference, ii. 1—4), THOUGH FOR A TIME HE WAS MADE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS, AND SUBJECTED TO SUFFERINGS, IN ORDER TO BE, AS OUR HIGH PRIEST, OUR RECONCILER TO GOD (ii. 5—18). And herein (i. 1—4), *introduction and statement of position.*

We may notice, 1. The opening of this Epistle without any address, or mention of the Author. Various reasons have been assigned for this, and inferences drawn from it (see Introduction). Some have said that the matter to be treated was so weighty, that the Writer merged altogether his own personality, and trusted to the weight of his subject to gain him a hearing. But this would not account for entire omission of the name of the man and his standing. Some have therefore imagined that another shorter letter of a more private nature must have accompanied this. But we may reply, that this idea derives no countenance from the phenomena of the Epistle itself, containing as it does at the end private notices which might well have been dispensed with, if such a commendatory Epistle had accompanied it. We must therefore deal with this circumstance without any such hypothesis to help us. On the supposition of the authorship by St. Paul, some account may be given of it,—viz. that the name of the Apostle was concealed, from the nature

of the relations between himself, and those to whom he was writing (see this hypothesis examined in the Introduction). And on the idea of *superintendence* by St. Paul, it would obviously admit of the same solution. 2. The carefully balanced and rhetorical style in which the Epistle begins, characteristic indeed of its whole diction, but especially marking this first period (vv. 1—4). The clauses are joined by close grammatical and rhetorical dependence: there is no breaking off, and no carelessness of construction, but all is most carefully and skilfully disposed.

1.] In many portions (or 'parts,' manifoldly as regards the *distribution*. "For not *all* things, nor *the same* things, were revealed to all the prophets, but the parts of great mysteries were distributed among them. E. g., Isaiah was inspired to foretell Christ's birth from a virgin, and His Passion: Daniel, the time of His Advent: Jonah, His burial: Malachi, the coming of His Forerunner. And again some had more, others less, revealed to them." Estius. '*At sundry times*' (A. V.) is not an accurate rendering, nor can it be said to *express* the meaning: *time* is a historical condition of the sequence of parts,—*persons to whom*, an anthropological condition,—but it does not follow that '*at sundry times*,' or '*to sundry persons*,' gives the force of '*in divers parts*;' because it might be the same thing which was revealed again and again. This revelation in portions, by fragments, in and by various persons, was necessarily an imperfect revelation, to which the one final manifestation in and by One Person

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED:

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

b Luke i. 72. &  
xi. 48. John  
vi. 31. Acts  
iii. 13, &c.  
† So all our  
most ancient  
MSS.

in time past unto <sup>b</sup> the fathers in  
the prophets, <sup>2</sup> † at the end <sup>c</sup> of

c Deut. iv. 30. Gal. iv. 4. Eph. i. 10. ch. ix. 26.

unto the fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup> hath in these last days spoken unto us by his

is properly and logically opposed) and in divers manners ("in one way was He seen by Abraham, in another by Moses, in another by Elijah, in another by Michael. Isaiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel saw differing forms of vision." Theodoret. Bleek remarks, that in Numb. xii. 6-8, the diversity of manner of revelation is recognized: dreams and visions being set beneath that open speaking, mouth to mouth, which the Lord used towards His servant Moses. It will be seen, that I cannot agree with Chrysostom and many others in regarding the two adverbs as a mere rhetorical redundancy,—meaning merely, "differently." Both set forth the imperfection of the Old Test. revelations. They were various in nature and in form: fragments of the whole truth, presented in manifold forms, in shifting hues of separated colour: Christ is the full revelation of God, Himself the pure light, uniting in His one Person the whole spectrum: see below on ver. 3) in time past (generally interpreted of the Old Test. period, ending with Malachi. But there is no need for cutting off the period there. In the interim between Malachi and the Writer's time, though the Old Test. canon was closed, we cannot say that God's manifold revelations of Himself had absolutely ceased. Nay, strictly speaking, the Baptist himself belonged to the former, though he pointed on to the latter period. No doubt he was not here in the Writer's view, and the period of former revelations is here regarded as distinct from the final Christian one: but for all that, we must not put an artificial terminus where he puts none) God having spoken to the fathers (so in refl. The term "the fathers" is absolutely used in John vii. 22; Acts xiii. 32; Rom. ix. 5; xi. 28; xv. 8; 2 Pet. iii. 4. It is evident from this term being common to the Writer and his readers, where no reference is made to Jews in the context [as in Rom. ix. 5], that he was writing as a Jew and to Jews) in (not equivalent to "by," though it includes it. The in designates the element in which the speaking takes place, and holds therefore its own proper force. God spoke in the prophets, being resident in them. Bengel draws a distinction,—a human king speaks by his ambassadors, but not in them) the pro-

phets (to be taken here apparently in the wider sense,—as including not only those whose inspired writings form the Old Test. canon, but all who were vehicles of the divine self-manifestation to the Fathers. Thus Enoch in Jude 14 is said to have prophesied. Moses is of course included, and indeed would on any view be the chief of those here spoken of, seeing that by him the greater part of God's revelation of Himself to the fathers was made).

2.] at the end of these days (in order to understand this expression, it will be well to call to mind certain Jewish modes of speaking of time. The Rabbis divided the whole of time into "this age," and "the age to come." The days of the Messiah were regarded as a period of transition from the former to the latter,—His appearance, as the ushering in of the termination of "these days," the beginning of the end,—and His second coming in glory as the accomplishment of "these days" or "this age." And with this, New Test. usage agrees,—see 1 Pet. i. 20; James v. 3; Jude 18; 2 Pet. iii. 3. Thus at the end of these days would mean, 'at the end of this age,' in the technical sense of these words as signifying the whole world-period, the latter boundary of which is the Resurrection. And thus is the manifestation of Christ in the flesh ever spoken of, and especially in this Epistle; compare ch. ix. 26; and notes on ch. ii. 5; vi. 5. Stuart has mistaken the meaning, in rendering 'during the last dispensation,' and making "these" to import that the period had already begun. It is not of a beginning, but of an expiring period, the Writer is speaking. The ancient expositors principally use these words as ground of consolation: those who were in conflict would be consoled on hearing that it was soon to end) spake (not 'hath spoken': the end just spoken of is looked back on as a definite point, at which the divine revelation took place. The attention of the readers is thus directed not so much to the present state in which they are, as to the act of God towards them) unto us (i. e. all who have heard that voice, or to whom it is to be announced. There is no distinction between those who received God's revelation immediately from the Son, and those who received it mediately through others. To this latter



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; <sup>3</sup> who being the brightness of his glory, and

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

these days <sup>d</sup> spake unto us in his Son, <sup>e</sup> whom he appointed heir of all things, <sup>f</sup> by whom he also made the worlds; <sup>3</sup> <sup>g</sup> who being the bright-

Col. i. 10.

g John i. 14. &amp; xiv. 9. 2 Cor. iv. 4. Col. i. 15.

<sup>d</sup> John i. 17. & xv. 15. ch. ii. 3. e Ps. ii. 8. Matt. xxi. 58. & xxviii. 18. John iii. 35. Rom. viii. 17. f John i. 3. 1 Cor. viii. 6. Col. i. 15.

number belonged the Writer himself, compare ch. ii. 3) in (see above) His Son (literally, or rather, nearer the strict sense of the original, in Him who was Son of God. We now pass off into a description of the dignity, and person, and work, of this Son of God: which description ends in asserting and proving Him to be higher than angels, the loftiest of created beings) whom He constituted (not, "hath constituted," or "appointed:" referring, as also does made, which follows, to the time, "in the beginning,"—the date of the eternal counsel of God) heir ("appropriately, after the mention of Sonship, comes inheritance." Bengel. That heir is not equivalent to "lord" simply, is plain: the same expression could not have been used of the Father. It is in virtue of the Sonship of our Lord that the Father constituted Him heir of all things, before the worlds began. "In Him also," says Delitzsch, "culminates the fulfilment of the promise given to the seed of Abraham, that he should be heir of the world." See below. See for St. Paul's use of the word and image, Gal. iv. 7) of all things ("that is, of the whole world." Chrysostom. And we cannot give this a more limited sense, nor restrict it to this world; especially as the subsequent portion of the chapter distinctly includes the angels in it. It is much disputed whether this heirship of Christ is to be conceived as belonging to Him essentially in his divine nature, or as accruing to Him from his work of redemption in the human nature. The Fathers, and the majority of the moderns, decide for the latter alternative. "The Lord Christ is the heir of all things," says Theodoret, "not as God, but as man." And so the Socinian and quasi-Socinian interpreters, arriving at the same view by another way, not believing the præ-existence of Christ. But it is plain that such an interpretation will not suit the requirements of the passage. For this humiliation of His, with its effects, first comes in at the end of ver. 3. All this, now adduced, is referable to his essential Being as Son of God; not merely in the Godhead before his Incarnation, but also in the Manhood

after it, which no less formed a part of His "constitution" by the Father, than His Godhead itself. So that the word "constituted" or "appointed," as observed above, must be taken not as an appointment in prospect of the Incarnation, but as an absolute appointment, coincident with the "this day have I begotten Thee," belonging to the eternal Sonship of the Lord, though wrought out in full by his mediatorial work), by whom (by means of whom, as His acting Power and personal instrument: so Theophylact: "Since the Father is the cause of the Son, He is also of the things which were made by Him. The Father, who begat the Son their maker, seems to make them Himself") He also made (created. The word brought into emphasis by also is not the world, but made. "He not only appointed the Son heir of all things, before the Creation; but He also made the worlds by Him." Bengel) the ages (so literally; but the meaning of the term has been much disputed. The main classes of interpreters are two. (1) Those who see in the word its ordinary meaning of 'an age of time:' (2) those who do not recognize such meaning, but suppose it to have been merged in that of "the world," or "the worlds." To (1) belong the Greek Fathers; and some others. On the other hand, (2) is the view of the majority of Commentators. It is explained and defended at length by Bleek, none of whose examples however seem to me to be void of the same ambiguity which characterizes the expression here. The Jews, it appears, came at length to designate by their phrase, "the present age," not only the present age, but all things in and belonging to it—and so of the "future age" likewise. He therefore would regard the ages as strictly parallel with "all things" above, and would interpret, 'Whom He has constituted lord, possessor and ruler over all, over the whole world, even as by Him He has made all, the universe.' And nearly so Delitzsch, Ebrard, and Lünemann: these two latter adding however somewhat, inasmuch as they take it of all this state of things constituted in time and space. And this last view I

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

ness of his glory, and the express  
image of his substance, and <sup>h</sup> up-

*the express image of his  
person, and upholding all  
things by the word of his*

<sup>h</sup> John i. 4.  
Col. i. 17.  
Rev. iv. 11.

should be disposed to adopt, going however somewhat further still: for whereas Ebrard includes in the expression God's revelation of Himself in a sphere whose conditions are Time and Space, and so would understand by it all things existing under these conditions, I would include in it also *these conditions themselves*,—which exist not independently of the Creator, but are His work—*His* appointed conditions of all created existence. So that the universe, as well in its great primæval conditions,—the reaches of Space, and the ages of Time, as in all material objects and all successive events, which furnish out and people Space and Time, God made by Christ. It will be plain that what has been here said will apply equally to ch. xi. 3, which is commonly quoted as decisive for the *material* sense here. Some have endeavoured to refer the *ages* (3) to the new or spiritual world, or the ages of the Messiah, or of the Christian Church: principally in the interests of Sociinianism: or (4), to the various dispensations of God's revelation of Himself: or even (5), as Fabricius, to the Gnostic æons, or emanations from the divine Essence, and so to the higher spiritual order of beings, the angels. Against all these, besides other considerations, ch. xi. 3 is a decisive testimony). It will be seen by consulting the note on John i. 1, how very near the teaching of Philo approached to this creation of the universe by the Son.

3.] "The Son of God now becomes Himself the subject. The verb belonging to the relative *who* is not found till '*sat down*' at the end of the verse. But the intermediate participial clauses do not stand in the same relation to the main sentence. The first members, '*being, &c.*' still set forth those attributes of the Son of God which are of a permanent character, and belonging to Him before the Incarnation: whereas the following member, the last participial clause, stands in nearer relation to the main sentence, expressing as it does the purification of mankind from sin, wrought by the incarnate Son of God, as one individual historical event,—as the antecedent of that exaltation of Him to the right hand of God, which the main sentence enounces." Bleek.  
**Who** (this represents, it will be evident, rather the præ-existent than the incarnate

Word. But it is perhaps a mistake to let this distinction be too prominent, and would lead to the idea of a change having taken place in the eternal relation of the Son to the Father, when He subjected himself to the conditions of space and time. Even then He could say of Himself, "The Son of Man which *is* in heaven") being (see Phil. ii. 6, which is also said of His præ-existent and essential being) **the brightness** ("*reflexion*," not "*effulgence*." This latter would be legitimate, but does not seem to have been the ordinary usage. See Wisd. vii. 26, where wisdom is called "the brightness of the everlasting light." And this (which, as Delitzsch remarks, is represented by the "light of light" of the Nicene Creed) seems to have been universally the sense among the ancients: no trace whatever being found of the meaning '*reflexion*.' Nor would the idea be apposite here: the Son of God is, in this his essential majesty, the expression, and the sole expression, of the divine Light,—not, as in his Incarnation, its reflexion) **of His glory** (not simply *His light*; nor need the expression be confined to such literal sense. His glory, in its widest and amplest reference), **and express image** (or, **impress**: 'figure,' Wiclif's and Rheims versions: 'very image,' Tyndal and Cranmer: 'engraved forme,' Geneva version. The word appears always to be taken for the impression stamped by a die. Hence it is taken generally for any fixed and sharply marked lineaments, material or spiritual, by which a person or an object may be recognized and distinguished) **of His substance** (substantial or essential being: '*substance*,' Wicl. Tynd. Cranm. Rheims: '*person*,' Geneva, and A. V. Etymologically, the original word (*hypostasis*) imports the lying or being placed underneath: and this is put in common usage for 1) *substratum* or *foundation—fundamentum*. Nearly connected with this is 2) *establishment*, or the state of being established: hence—a) *firmness*,—to which idea the word approaches in the last citation: but especially in reference to firmness of spirit, confidence; see more on ch. iii. 14,—b) *substantial existence, reality*, in contradistinction to that which exists only in appearance or idea. Hence—c) generally, *consistence* or *existence*,—d) it imports the *especial manner of being*,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand

our most ancient MSS.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

holding the universe by the word of his power, <sup>i</sup> when he had † made purification of sins, <sup>k</sup> sat down on

k Ps. cx. 1. Eph. i. 20. ch. viii. 1. & x. 12. & xii. 2. † ch. vii. 27. & ix. 12, 14, 26. † by himself and our are not found in 1 Pet. iii. 22

—the peculiar essence of an object. And this last seems to be the best meaning in our place: His *essential being*, His *substance*. For in regarding the history of the word, we find that the well-known theological meaning ‘*person*,’ was not by any means generally received during the first four centuries. The Nicene Council itself uses “*hypostasis*” and “*essence*” in the same sense, and condemns the deriving the Son from another hypostasis or essence from the Father: and so usually Athanasius. The fact was, that the Easterns most commonly used the term to designate the three separate Persons: whereas the Westerns continued to regard it as equivalent to *essence*, and assumed but one *hypostasis*: and the Western bishops, assembled with Athanasius at the council of Sardica in 347, distinctly pronounced the assumption of three *hypostases* heretical, i.e. Arian. Subsequently, however, to this, in the Synod assembled at Alexandria in 362, at which Athanasius, and bishops of Italy, Arabia, Egypt, and Libya were present, the Easterns and Westerns agreed, on examination of one another’s meaning, to acknowledge one another as orthodox, and to allow indifferently of the use of three *hypostases*, signifying ‘Persons,’ and one *hypostasis*, signifying substance, essence. On all grounds it will be safer here to hold to the primitive meaning of the word, and not to introduce into the language of the apostolic age a terminology which was long subsequent to it, and upholding (bearing up. The Rabbinical writings speak of God as *carrying all the worlds by His strength*) the universe (the meaning attempted to be given by some Socinian expositors, “the whole kingdom of grace,” is wholly beside the purpose: see Col. i. 17; Job. viii. 3; Rev. iv. 11) by the word (*expressed command*: compare ch. xi. 3) of his (Whose? His own, or the Father’s? The latter is held by Cyril of Alexandria. And so Grotius and others. But Chrysostom and the great body of Commentators understand his to refer to the Son. The strict parallelism of the clauses would seem to require, that his here should designate the same person, as it does before in this same verse. But such parallelism and consistency of reference of

demonstrative pronouns is by no means observed in the New Test., e.g. Eph. i. 20, 22, “And placed Him at His right hand (of the Father), . . . and put all things under His feet” (of the Son). In every such case the reference must be determined by the circumstances, and the things spoken of. And applying that test here, we find that in our former clause it is quite out of the question that his should be reflective, referring, as it clearly does, to another than the subject of the sentence. But when we proceed to our second clause, we find no such bar to the ordinary reflective sense of his, but every reason to adopt it as the most obvious. For we have here an action performed by the Son, who *upholds the universe*. Whereby? By the word of His power: where we may certainly say 1) that had another than the subject of the sentence been intended, such intention would have been expressed: and 2) that the assertion would be after all a strange and unexampled one, that the Son upholds all things by the word of the Father’s power. So that, on all accounts, this second his seems better to be referred to the Son) power (not to be weakened into the comparatively unmeaning “his powerful word.” His Power is an inherent attribute, whether uttered or not: the word is that utterance, which He has been pleased to give of it. It is a “powerful word,” but much more is here stated—that it is the word of, proceeding from, giving utterance to, His power), having (or, when He had) made (the vulgate, “making,” is an unfortunate mistranslation, tending to obscure the truth of the completion of the one Sacrifice of the Lord. The words “by Himself” can hardly be retained in the text, in the face of their omission in the most ancient MSS., joined to their internal character as an explanatory gloss. Meanwhile, the gloss is a good and true one. It was by *Himself*, in the fullest sense) purification of sins (as Bleek observes, there is no occasion to suppose the genitive here equivalent to “from sins,” seeing that we may say, “the sins of a man are purified,” as we read, Matt. viii. 3, “his leprosy was cleansed.” Sin was the great uncleanness, of which He has effected the purga-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

the right hand of Majesty on high ;  
 † having become so much better than

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*of the Majesty on high ;  
 † being made so much better  
 than the angels, as he hath*

tion : the disease of which He has wrought the cure. This *purification* must be understood by the subsequent argument in the Epistle : for that which the Writer had it in his mind to expand in the course of his treatise, he must be supposed to have meant when he used without explanation a concise term, like this. And that we know to have been, the purifications and sacrifices of the Levitical law, by which man's natural uncleanness in God's sight was typically removed, and access to God laid open to him. Ebrard's note here is so important that, though long, I cannot forbear inserting it. "The term *purification* answers to the Hebrew, and its ideal explanation must be sought in the meaning which suits the Levitical cleansing in the Old Test. worship. Consequently, they are entirely wrong, who understand this *purification* of moral amelioration, and would so take the '*making purification*' in this place, as if the author wished to set forth Christ here as a moral teacher, who by precept and example incited men to amendment. And we may pronounce those in error, who go so far indeed as to explain the *purification* of the propitiatory removal of the guilt of sin, but only on account of later passages in our Epistle, as if the idea of scriptural *purification* were not already sufficiently clear to establish this, the only true meaning. The whole law of purification, as given by God to Moses, rested on the assumption that our nature, as sinful and guilt-laden, is not capable of coming into immediate contact with our holy God and Judge. The mediation between man and God present in the most holy place, and in that most holy place separated from the people, was revealed in three forms ; (a) in sacrifices, (b) in the Priesthood ; and (c) in the Levitical laws of purity. Sacrifices were [typical] acts or means of propitiation for guilt ; Priests were the agents for accomplishing these acts, but were not themselves accounted purer than the rest of the people, having consequently to bring offerings for their own sins before they offered for those of the people. Lastly, Levitical purity was the condition which was attained, positively by sacrifice and worship, negatively by avoidance of Levitical pollution,—the condition in which the people was enabled, by means of the priests, to come into relation

with God 'without dying' [Deut. v. 26] ; the result of the cultus which was past, and the postulate for that which was to come. So that that which purified, was sacrifice : and the purification was, the removal of guilt. This is most clearly seen in the ordinance concerning the great day of atonement, Lev. xvi. There we find those three leading features in the closest distinctive relation. First, the sacrifice must be prepared [vv. 1—10] ; then, the High Priest is to offer for his own sins [vv. 11—14] ; lastly, he is to kill the sin-offering for the people [ver. 15], and with its blood to sprinkle the mercy-seat and all the holy place, and cleanse it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel [ver. 19] ; and then he is symbolically to lay the sins of the people on the head of a second victim, and send forth this animal, laden with the curse, into the wilderness. For [ver. 30] 'on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord.' In the atonement, in the gracious covering of the guilt of sin, consists *purification* in the scriptural sense. [And so also were those who had become levitically unclean, e.g., lepers, Levit. xiv., cleansed by atoning sacrifices.] So that an Israelitish reader, a Christian Jew, would never, on reading the words *made purification*, think on what we commonly call '*moral amelioration*,' which, if not springing out of the living ground of a heart reconciled to God, is mere self-deceit, and only external avoidance of evident transgression : but the *purification* which Christ brought in would, in the sense of our author and his readers, only be understood of that gracious atonement for all guilt of sin of all mankind, which Christ our Lord and Saviour has completed for us by His sinless sufferings and death : and out of which flows forth to us, as from a fountain, all power to love in return, all love to Him, our heavenly Pattern, and all hatred of sin, which caused His death. To speak these words of Scripture with the mouth is easy : but he only can say Yea and Amen to them with the heart who, in simple truthfulness of the knowledge of himself, has looked down even to the darkest depths of his ruined state, natural to him, and intensified by innumerable sins of act,—and, despairing of all help in him-



AUTHORIZED VERSION.

AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

by inheritance obtained a  
more excellent name than

the angels, as <sup>1</sup>he hath inherited † Eph. i. 21.  
‡ Phil. ii. 9, 10.  
a more excellent name than they.

self, reaches forth his hand after the good tidings of heavenly deliverance." It is truly refreshing, in the midst of so much unbelief, and misapprehension of the sense of Scripture, in the German commentators, to meet with such a clear and full testimony to the truth and efficacy of the Lord's great Sacrifice. And I am bound to say that the other great Germans recognize this just as fully, **sat down on the right hand** (literally, '*in the right hand,*' viz., *portion or side.* The expression comes doubtless originally from Ps. cx. 1, cited below. Bleek, in the course of a long and thorough discussion of its meaning as applied to our Lord, shews that it is never used of his præ-existent coequality with the Father, but always with reference to His exaltation in his humanity after his course of suffering and triumph. It is ever connected, not with the idea of His equality with the Father and share in the majesty of the Godhead, but with His state of waiting, in the immediate presence of the Father, and thus highly exalted by Him, till the purposes of his mediatorial office are accomplished. This his lofty state is, however, not one of quiescence; for (Acts ii. 33) He shed down the gift of the Spirit, —and (Rom. viii. 34) He maketh intercession for us: and below (ch. viii. 1 ff.) He is, for all purposes belonging to that office, our High Priest in Heaven. This "*sitting at the right hand of God*" is described as lasting until all enemies shall have been subdued unto Him, i. e. until the end of this state of time, and his own second coming: after which, properly and strictly speaking, the state of exaltation described by these words shall come to an end, and that mysterious completion of the supreme glory of the Son of God shall take place, which St. Paul describes, 1 Cor. xv. 28) **of Majesty** (this word **majesty** is often found in the Septuagint, and principally as referring to the divine greatness) **on high** (*in high places, i. e. in heaven.* Compare Ps. xciii. 4, cxiii. 5; Isa. xxxii. 15, xxxiii. 5; Jer. xxv. 30. In the same sense we have "*in the highest,*" Luke ii. 14; xix. 38; Job xvi. 20; Eccles. xxvi. 16; Matt. xxi. 9; Mark xi. 10. Ebrard says: "HEAVEN, in Holy Scripture, signifies never unbounded space, nor omnipresence, but always either the starry firmament, or, more usually, that sphere of the created world of space and time, where the union of God with the

personal creature is not severed by sin,—where no Death reigns, where the glorification of the body is not a mere hope of the future. Into that sphere has the Firstling of risen and glorified manhood entered, as into a place, with visible glorified Body, visibly to return again from thence." The omission of the article "*the*" here gives majesty and solemnity —its insertion would seem to hint at other *majesties* in the background), **having become** (distinct from "*being,*" ver. 3: that, importing His essential, this, His superinduced state. For we are now, in the course of the enunciation,—which has advanced to the main subject of the argument, the proving of the superiority of the New Covenant,—treating of the post-incarnate majesty of the Son of God. He was all that has been detailed in ver. 3: He made purification of sins, and sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high, and thus **BECAME** this which is now spoken of. This is denied by Chrysostom, but recognized by Theodoret, in a form however not strictly exact: for he applied it *only to the Humanity* of our Lord. To this Bleek very properly objects, that the making this exaltation belong only to Christ's human nature, and supposing Him to have while on earth possessed still the fulness of the majesty of his Godhead, is not according to the usage of our Writer, nor of the New Test. generally, and in fact induces something like a double personality in the Son of God. The Scriptures teach us that He who was with God before the creation, from love to men put on flesh, and took the form of a servant, not all the while having on Him the whole fulness of his divine nature and divine glory, but having really and actually emptied himself of this fulness and glory, so that *there was not only a hiding, but an absolute inanition, a putting off, of it.* Therefore His subsequent exaltation must be conceived of as belonging, not to his Humanity only, but to the entire undivided Person of Christ, now resuming the fulness and glory of the Godhead (John xvii. 5), and in addition to this having taken into the Godhead the Manhood, now glorified by his obedience, atonement, and victory. See Eph. i. 20—22; Phil. ii. 6—9; Acts ii. 36; 1 Pet. iii. 21, 22. The Son of God before his Incarnation was **Head over** Creation: but after his work in the flesh he had become also *Head of* Creation,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

<sup>m</sup> For unto which of the angels said he at any time, <sup>m</sup> Thou art my Son,

*they.* <sup>5</sup> For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son,

<sup>m</sup> Psa. ii. 7.  
Acts xiii. 33.  
ch. v. 5.

inasmuch as his glorified Body, in which He triumphs sitting at God's right hand, is itself created, and is the sum and the centre of creation) **so much better than** (the usual word of general and indefinite comparison in our Epistle, whether of Christian with Jewish [ch. vii. 19, 22; viii. 6; ix. 23], heavenly with earthly [x. 34; xi. 16; xii. 24], eternal with temporal [xi. 35]: see also vi. 9; vii. 7; xi. 40. It is used only three times by St. Paul, and never [unless 1 Cor. xii. 31, in the received text, be counted] in this sense: but thirteen times in this Epistle) **the angels** (of God; the heavenly created beings; afterwards, ver. 14, called "*ministering spirits.*" All attempts to evade this plain meaning are futile; and proceed on ignorance of the argument of our Epistle, and of the Jewish theology. But *why* should the angels be here brought in? and why should the superiority of the Incarnate Son of God to them be so insisted on and elaborated? Bleek gives a very insufficient reason, when he says that the mention of God's throne brought to the Writer's mind the angels who are the attendants there. The reason, as Ebrard remarks, lies far deeper. The whole Old Test. dispensation is related to the New Test. dispensation, as the angels to the Son. In the former, mankind, and Israel also, stands separated from God by sin: and angels, divine messengers [as in the expression "the angel of the covenant"], stand as mediators between man and God. And of these there is, so to speak, a chain of two links: viz., Moses, and the angel of the Lord. The first link is a mere man, who is raised above his fellow-men by his calling, by his office, the commission given to him,—and brought nearer to God; but he is a sinner as they are, and is in reality no more a partaker of the divine nature than they are. The second link is the angelic form in which God revealed Himself to his people, coming down to their capacity, like to man, without being man. So that Godhead and Manhood approximated to one another: a man was commissioned and enabled to hear God's words: God appeared in a form in which men might see Him: but the two found no point of contact; no real union of the Godhead and the Manhood took place. Whereas in the Son, God and the Manhood not only approximated, but became personally

one. God no longer accommodates Himself to the capacities of men in an angelophany or theophany, but has revealed the fulness of his divine nature in the man Jesus,—in that He, who was the *brightness* of his glory, became man. The argument of the Writer necessarily then leads him to shew how *both* Mediators, the angel of the Old Test. covenant, and Moses, found their higher unity in Christ. First, he shews this of the angel or angels [for it was not always one individual angelic being, but various] by whom the first covenant was given: then of Moses, ch. iii. iv. This first portion is divided into two: vv. 4—14, in which he shews that the Son, as the eternal Son of God, is higher than the angels [see the connexion of this with the main argument below]: then, after an exhortation [ii. 1—4] founded on this, tending also to impress on us the superior holiness of the New Test. revelation, the second part [ii. 5—18] in which he shews that in the Son, the manhood also is exalted above the angels), **in proportion as he hath inherited** (as his own: the word being perhaps chosen in reference to the Old Test. prophecies, which promised it to Him: see below. The *perfect* is important, as denoting something belonging to His present and abiding state, not an event wholly past, as "*sat down*" above, indicating the first "setting himself down," though that word might also be used of a permanent state of session) a **more distinguished** (or, **more excellent**) **name** (to be taken in its proper sense, not understood to mean precedence or dignity; as ver. 5 shews: whence also we get an easy answer to the enquiry, *what name* is intended: viz. that of **Son**, in the peculiar and individual sense of the citation there. The angels themselves are called "*sons of God,*" Job i. 6; ii. 1; xxxviii. 7: Dan. iii. 25, and Gen. vi. 2 [see Jude 6 note, and Introd. to Jude, § v. 11]: but the argument here is that the title "**SON OF GOD**" is bestowed on him individually, in a sense in which it never was conferred upon an angel. See as a parallel, Phil. ii. 9 ff. It must be remembered, as Delitzsch beautifully remarks, that the fulness of glory of the peculiar name of the Son of God is unattainable by human speech or thought: it is, Rev. xix. 12, "*a name which none knoweth but Himself.*" And all the citations and appellations here are but



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

this day have I begotten thee? And again, <sup>2</sup> I will be to him as a father, <sup>2</sup> 2 SAM. vii. 14.  
1 CHRON.  
xxii. 10. &  
xxviii. 6. Ps. lxxxix. 26, 27.

fragmentary indications of portions of its glory; are but beams of light, which are united in it as in a central sun. *Since when* has Christ in this sense inherited this name? The answer must not be hastily made, as by some Commentators, that the term **inherited** implies the glorification of the humanity of Christ to that Sonship which He before had in virtue of his Deity. Evidently so partial a reference cannot be considered as exhausting the sense of the Writer. Nor again can we say that it was at the time of His incarnation, though the words of the angel in Luke i. 35, "*That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God,*" seem to favour such a reference: for it was especially at His incarnation, that He was made *a little lower than the angels*, ch. ii. 9. Rather would the sense seem to be, that the especial name of **SON**, belonging to Him not by ascription nor adoption, but by His very Being itself, has been ever, and is now, His: *inherited* by Him, "in that He is the very Son of God," as Chrysostom says: the Old Test. declarations being as it were portions of the instrument by which this inheritance is assured to Him, and by the citation of which it is proved. Observe that the *having become better than the angels* is not identical with the *inheriting*, but in proportion to it: the triumphant issue of his Mediation is consonant to the glorious Name, which is His by inheritance: but which, in the fulness of its present inconceivable glory [see above], has been put on and taken up by Him in the historical process of his mediatorial humiliation and triumph) **than they.** 5—13.] *Proof from Scripture of this last declaration.*

5.] For (substantiation of His having inherited a more exalted name than the angels) to whom of (among) the angels did He (God, the subject of vv. 1, 2; as the subsequent citation shews) ever say (this citation from Ps. ii. has brought up in recent German Commentators the whole question of the original reference of that Psalm, and of Old Test. citations in the New Test. altogether. These discussions will be found in Bleek, De Wette, and Ebrard. The latter is by far the deepest and most satisfactory: seeing, as he does, the furthest into the truth of the peculiar standing of the Hebrew people, and the

Messianic import of the theocracy. Those who entirely or partially deny this latter, seem to me to be without adequate means of discussing the question. Ebrard's view is, that the Psalm belongs to the reign of David. The objection that ver. 6 will not apply to David's anointing, inasmuch as that took place at Bethlehem in his boyhood, he answers, by regarding that anointing as connected with his establishment on Mount Zion, not as having locally taken place there, but as the first of that series of divine mercies of which that other was the completion. He further ascribes the Psalm to that portion of David's reign when (2 Sam. viii.) Hadadezer, and many neighbouring nations, were smitten by him: which victories he looked on as the fulfilment to him of Nathan's prophecy, 2 Sam. vii. 8—17. In that prophecy the offspring of David is mentioned in the very words quoted below in this verse, and in terms which, he contends, will not apply to Solomon, but must be referred to the great promised Seed of David. He regards this triumphant occasion as having been treated by the royal Psalmist as a type and foretaste of the ultimate ideal dominion of the "Son of David" over the kings of the earth), **Thou** (the seed of David, anointed in God's counsels as king on his holy hill of Zion: see above) **art my Son** (according to the promise presently to be quoted, finding its partial fulfilment in Solomon, but its only entire one in the Son of David who is also the Son of God), **I** (emphatic: "I and no other:" expressed also in the Hebrew) **this day have begotten thee** (first, what are we to understand by this term, **have begotten**? Bleek says, "As Sonship, in the proper sense, is dependent on the act of begetting, so may, especially by the Hebrews, 'to beget' be figuratively used to express the idea of 'making any one a son,' in which derived and figurative reference this also may be meant. And we get an additional confirmation of this meaning from Jer ii. 27, where it is said of the foolish idolatrous Israelites, 'They say to a stock, Thou art my father, and to a stone, Thou hast begotten me' (so the Septuagint). Accordingly, the meaning here is,—'I have made Thee my Son' [so Ps. lxxxix. 20, 26, 27: 'I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: . . . He shall cry unto

AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

and he shall be to me as a son?  
 6 But when he again hath introduced

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

be to him a Father, and  
 he shall be to me a Son?  
 6 And again, when he

me, Thou art my Father . . . Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth'] :—namely, by setting Thee on the throne of my people : and the term **this day** will most naturally be referred to the time of the anointing of the King on Zion, as the act whereby he was manifested as Son of God in this sense." And so Calvin. The above remarks seem pertinent and unobjectionable, as long as we regard them as explaining the supposed immediate reference to David and present circumstances : but it is plain that, according to the above view of Ps. ii., and indeed to the usage of the New Test., in applying this passage to our Lord, we want another and a higher sense in which both the words, **I have begotten**, and **this day**, may be applicable to Him : a sense in which I should be disposed to say that the words must in their fulness of meaning be taken, to the neglect and almost the obliteration of that their supposed lower reference. For, granting the application of such sayings to our Lord, then must the terms of them, suggested by the Holy Spirit of prophecy, which is His testimony, bear adequate interpretations as regards His person and office. It has not therefore been without reason that the Fathers, and so many modern divines, have found in this term **I have begotten** the doctrine of the generation of the Son of God, and have endeavoured, in accordance with such reference, to assign a fitting sense to **this day**. As the subject is exceedingly important, and has been generally passed over slightly by our English expositors, I shall need no apology for gathering from Bleek and Suicer the opinions and testimonies concerning it. 1) One view refers **this day** to the eternal generation of the Son, and regards it as an expression of the everlasting *present* of eternity. Thus Origen very grandly says, "This is said to Him by God, with whom 'to-day' ever is present : for with God, as I think, is no evening, because neither is there morning, but the time which reaches, so to speak, over His unbegotten and eternal life, is an everlasting 'to-day,' in which the Son is begotten : no beginning of His being begotten being found, as neither of this 'to-day.'" And so Athanasius, Augustine, and other Fathers and moderns. 2) A second, to the generation, *in time*, of the

Incarnate Son of Man, when Jesus assumed the divine nature on the side of his *Manhood* also : so Chrysostom, Theodoret, Eusebins, Cyril Alex., and others. 3) A third, to the period when Jesus was manifested to men as the Son of God, i. e. by most, to the time of the Resurrection, with reference to Acts xiii. 33, where St. Paul alleges this citation as thus applying [so, recently, Delitzsch] : by some, to that of the Ascension, when He was set at the right hand of God and entered on His heavenly High Priesthood [ch. v. 5] : so Hilary, Ambrose, Calvin, Grotius, and the Socinians. Owen also takes the same view ["the eternal generation of Christ, on which His filiation or sonship, both name and thing, doth depend, is to be taken only declaratively, and that declaration to be made in His resurrection, and exaltation over all, that ensued thereon"]. Of these interpretations, I agree with Bleek that the *first* is that which best agrees with the context. The former verses represent to us the Son of God as standing in this relation to the Father before the worlds : and ver. 6, which plainly forms a contrast to this ver. 5 as to time, treats distinctly of the period of the Incarnation. It is natural then to suppose that this verse is to be referred to a time prior to that event) ? **And again** (how is the ellipsis here to be supplied? Probably, and [*to whom of the angels ever said He*] again : or perhaps, **again** [see below on ver. 6] merely serves to introduce a fresh citation), **I will be to Him as (for) a father, and he shall be to me as (for) a son** (the citation is from the Septuagint, as usual. It occurs in the prophecy of Nathan to David respecting David's offspring who should come after him. The import of it has been above considered, and its connexion with Ps. ii. shown to be probable. The direct primary reference of the words to Solomon, 1 Chron. xxii. 7—10, does not in any way preclude the view which I have there taken of their finding their higher and only worthy fulfilment in the greater Son of David, who should build the only Temple in which God would really dwell) ? 6.] But (because a further proof, and a more decisive one as regards the angels, is about to be adduced) **when He again** (or, "*when again He?*") Does **again** introduce a new citation, or does it belong to the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. <sup>7</sup> And

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

o the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, <sup>p</sup> And let all the angels of God worship him. <sup>7</sup> And of the

<sup>o</sup> Rom. viii. 29.  
Col. i. 18.  
Rev. i. 5.  
<sup>p</sup> Deut. xxxii. 43, LXX.  
Ps. xcvi. 7.  
1 Pet. iii. 22.

verb, and denote a new and second introduction? This latter view is taken by many, principally the ancient expositors, and lately by Tholuck, De Wette, Lüne-mann, and Delitzsch,—interpreting the ‘second introduction’ diversely: some, as His incarnation, contrasted with His everlasting generation, or His creating of the world, which they treat as His first introduction: others, as His resurrection, contrasted with His incarnation: others, to His second coming, as contrasted with His first. The other view supposes a transposition of the adverb *again*, which in the original stands between *when* and the verb. I have shewn in my Gr. Test. that such a transposition is without examples. In this Epistle, when “*again*” is joined to a verb, it always has the sense of ‘*a second time*’: e. g. ch. iv. 7; v. 12; vi. 1, 6. This being the case, I must agree with those who join *again* with *hath* introduced. And of the meanings which they assign to the phrase “*bringing in again*,” I conceive the only allowable one to be, the second coming of our Lord to judgment. See more below) *hath* (‘shall have.’ It appears from all usage that the present rendering, “*bringeth in*,” is quite inadmissible) *hath* introduced (in what sense? See some of the interpretations above. But even those who hold the transposition of the word *again* are not agreed as to the *introduction* here referred to. Some hold one of the above-mentioned meanings, some another. I have discussed the meaning fully below, and gathered that the word can only refer to the great entering of the Messiah on His kingdom. At present, the usage of the verb here used must be considered. It is the accustomed word in the Pentateuch for the ‘introducing’ the children of Israel into the land of promise, the putting them into possession of their promised inheritance: see also Ps. lxxviii. 54. We have it again in Neh. i. 9, of the second introduction, or restoration of Israel to the promised land. The prophets again use it of the ultimate restoration of Israel: compare Isa. xiv. 2; lvi. 7; Jer. iii. 14; Ezek. xxxiv. 13; xxxvi. 24; xxxvii. 21; Zech. viii. 8. This fact, connected with the circumstances to be noted below, makes it probable that the word here also has this solemn sense of ‘putting in possession of,’ as of an in-

heritance. The sense ordinarily given, of ‘bringing into the world,’ the act of the Father corresponding to the “*coming into the world*” [ch. x. 5] of the Son appears to be unexampled) the *firstborn* (only here is the Son of God so called absolutely. It is His title by præ-existence, “*the firstborn of all creation*,” Col. i. 15 [where see the word itself discussed]:—by prophecy, Ps. lxxxix. 27, “*I will make Him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth*”:—by birth, Luke ii. 7, see also Matt. i. 18–25:—by victory over death, Col. i. 18; Rev. i. 5:—and here, where He is absolutely the *Firstborn*, it will be reasonable to regard all these references as being accumulated—Him, who is the *Firstborn*,—of the universe, of the new manhood, of the risen dead. And thus the inducting Him in glory into His inheritance is clothed with even more solemnity. All angels, all men, are but the younger sons of God, compared to HIM, THE FIRSTBORN) into the world (not the same word as that so rendered, ch. x. 5: but signifying the ‘inhabited earth:’ and very frequently used by the Septuagint in prophetic passages, where the future judgments of God on mankind are spoken of. The usage would not indeed be decisive against referring the words to Christ’s entrance into the human nature, but is much more naturally satisfied by the other interpretation), He (i. e. God, the subject of ver. 5) saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him (there are two places from which these words might come; and the comparison of the two will be very instructive as to the connexion and citation of prophecy. 1) The words themselves, including the *and*, which has no independent meaning here, come from Deut. xxxii. 43, where they conclude the dying song of Moses with a triumphant description of the victory of God over His enemies, and the avenging of His people. It will cause the intelligent student of Scripture no surprise to find such words cited directly of Christ, into whose hand all judgment is committed: however such Commentators as Stuart and De Wette may reject the idea of the citation being from thence, because no trace of a Messianic reference is there found. One would have imagined that the words “*nor is*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

q Psa. civ. 4. angels indeed he saith, <sup>q</sup> Who maketh his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire. <sup>8</sup> But unto the Son, <sup>r</sup> Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: † and the sceptre of thy kingdom is the sceptre of righteousness. <sup>9</sup> Thou lovedst righteousness, and hatedst iniquity; therefore God, even

† So all our most ancient MSS.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God,*

there any that shall pluck them out of my hand," occurring just before, ver. 39 [compare John x. 28], would have prevented such an assertion. But those who see not Christ every where in the Old Testament, see Him nowhere. The fact of the usual literal citation of the Septuagint by our Writer, decides the point as far as the place is concerned from which the words are immediately taken. But here a difficulty arises. The words in the Septuagint, Deut. xxxii. 43, "*Rejoice ye heavens, with Him, and let all the angels of God worship Him,*" do not exist in our present Hebrew text. It is hardly however probable, that they are an insertion of the Septuagint, found as they are [with one variation presently to be noticed] in nearly all the MSS. The translators probably found them in their Hebrew text, which, especially in the Pentateuch, appears to have been an older and purer recension than that which we now possess. 2) The other passage from which they might come is Ps. xvi. 7, where however they do not occur verbatim, but we read, "*worship Him, all ye angels of God.*" This, especially the omission of the *and*, which clearly belongs to the citation, is against the supposition of their being taken from thence: but it does not therefore follow that the Psalm was not in the Sacred Writer's mind, or does not apply to the same glorious period of Messiah's triumph in its ultimate reference. Indeed the similarity of the two expressions of triumph is remarkable. 7.] And (with reference) indeed to the angels He (God) saith, Who maketh his angels winds (see below), and his ministers a flame of fire (the citation is after the Septuagint according to the Alexandrine MS., which indeed commonly agrees with the citations in this Epistle. And as the words stand in the Greek, the arrangement and rendering of them is unquestionably as above. But here comes in no small difficulty as

to the sense of the original Hebrew. It is usually contended that its words can only mean, from the context, "who maketh the winds his messengers, and flames of fire his servants." But I have maintained in my Greek Test. that the sense is, "who maketh his messengers winds, his servants flames of fire," whatever these words may be intended to import. And this latter enquiry will I imagine be not very difficult to answer. He makes his messengers winds, i.e. He causes his messengers to act in or by means of the winds; his servants flames of fire, i.e. commissions them to assume the agency or form of flames for His purposes. It seems to me that this, the plain sense of the Hebrew as it stands, is quite as agreeable to the context as the other. And thus the Rabbis took it. The only accommodation of the original passage made by the Writer, is the very slight one of applying the general terms "His messengers" and "His servants" to the angels, which indeed can be their only meaning. The sense of the words I have endeavoured to give in some measure above. It is evident that the word represented in the A. V. by *spirits*, must be rendered *winds*, not '*spirits*:' from both the context in the Psalm and the correspondence of the two clauses, and also from the nature of the subject. "They all *are* spirits," as asserted below, ver. 14: therefore it could not with any meaning be said, that He *maketh* them spirits). But unto the Son,— Thy throne, O God, [is] for ever and ever: and the rod (i.e. sceptre: see especially Esth. iv. 11; Amos i. 5, where the same Hebrew word occurs) of thy kingdom is the rod of straightness (i.e. righteousness, justice). Thou lovedst (the Writer refers the words to the whole life of our Lord on earth, as a past period) righteousness, and hatedst iniquity; for this cause (because of His love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity, shewn by his blameless life and perfect obedience on earth)



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

even *thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*

<sup>10</sup> *And, Thou, Lord, in the*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

thy God, <sup>s</sup> anointed thee with oil of gladness above thy fellows. <sup>s</sup> Isa. lxi. 1. Acts iv. 27. & x. 38. <sup>10</sup> And,

God (some render this first, "*O God,*" but apparently without necessity), **thy God, anointed thee** (*how? and when?*) We must distinguish this anointing from what is said in Acts x. 38, "*God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit, and with power,*" and the anointing of Isa. lxi. 1. For it is a consequent upon the righteous course of the Son of God in his Humanity, and therefore belongs to his triumph, in which He is exalted above his *fellows* [see below]. Again, the "*oil of gladness*" below seems rather to point to a festive and triumphant, than to an inaugurative unction. We should therefore rather take the allusion to be, as in Ps. xxiii. 5; xcii. 10, to the custom of anointing guests at feasts: so that, as the King in the Psalm is anointed with the oil of rejoicing above his fellows, because of his having loved righteousness and hated iniquity, so Christ, in the jubilant celebration of His finished course at his exaltation in heaven, is anointed with the festive oil *above His fellows* [see below]. There is of course an allusion also in the word **anointed** (*echrîsen*) to the honoured and triumphant Name *Christ* with oil of rejoicing (see above: oil indicative of joy, as it is of superabundance: compare Isa. lxi. 3) **beyond thy fellows** (i. e. in the Psalm, 'other kings: hardly 'brothers by kin' [other sons of David], as Grotius and others. But to whom does the *Writer* apply the words? Chrysostom says, "Who are the *fellows*, except *men*? And the meaning is, Christ received not the Holy Spirit by measure." Theodoret on the Psalm, Calvin, Beza, and others, think of believers, the adopted into God's family: others, of the High Priests, prophets, and kings, in the Old Test., anointed as types of Christ: others, of *all creatures*: others, as in the Psalm, of *other kings*. Camero says, "Christ had in His office no fellows; in His human nature, all men; in grace, all the faithful." Still we may answer to all these, that they do not in any way satisfy the requirements of the context. Were it the intent of the *Writer* to shew Christ's superiority over his human brethren of *every kind*, we might accept one or other of these meanings: but as this is not his design, but to shew His superiority to the angels, we must I think

take the word **fellows** as representing other heavenly beings, partakers in the same glorious and sinless state with Himself, though not in the strict sense, His "*fellows.*" De Wette objects to this sense, that the *Writer* places the angels far beneath Christ: Delitzsch, that the angels are not *anointed*, whereas there is no necessity in the text for understanding that these *fellows* are also anointed: the comparison may consist in the very fact of the anointing itself:—and Ebrard, speaking as usual strongly, says that "neither the Psalmist, nor our author if in his senses, could have applied the word to the angels." But this need not frighten us: and we may well answer with Lünemann, 1) "that the general comparison here being that of Christ with the angels, the fresh introduction of this point of comparison in ver. 9 cannot of itself appear inappropriate. 2) Granted, that just before, in ver. 7, the angels are placed far beneath Christ,—we have this very inferiority here marked distinctly by the terms of this comparison. 3) The angels are *next* to Christ in rank, by the whole course of this argument: to whom then would the *Writer* more naturally apply the term *fellows*, than to them?" I may add, 4) that the comparison here is but analogons to that, in ver. 4, of which indeed it is an expansion: and 5) that thus only can the figure of anointing at a triumphant festival be carried out consistently: that triumph having taken place on the exaltation of the Redeemer to the Father's right hand and throne [ver. 8], when, the whole of the heavenly company, His *fellows* in glory and joy, being anointed with the oil of gladness, His share and dignity was so much greater than theirs. It remains that we should consider the general import, and application here, of Ps. xlv. From what is elsewhere found in this commentary, it will not be for a moment supposed that I can give in to the view of such writers as De Wette and Hupfeld, who maintain that it was simply an ode to some king, uncertain whom, and has no further reference whatever. Granting that in its first meaning it was addressed to Solomon (for to him the circumstances introduced seem best to apply, e.g. the palace of ivory, ver. 9, compare 1 Kings x. 18: the gold

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

† Psa. cii. 25, &c. <sup>t</sup> Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are works of thine hands: <sup>u</sup> they shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> But to which of the angels

*beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: <sup>11</sup> they shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> But to which of the angels said*

from Ophir, ver. 10, compare 1 Kings ix. 28: the daughter of Tyre with her gift, ver. 13, compare 2 Chron. ii. 3—16), —or even, with Delitzsch, to Joram, on his marriage with the Tyrian Athaliah, —we must yet apply to it that manifest principle, without which every Hebrew ode is both unintelligible and preposterous, that the theocratic idea filled the mind of the Writer and prompted his pen: and that the Spirit of God used him as the means of testifying to that King, who stood veritably at the head of the theocracy in the divine counsels. Thus considered, such applications as this lose all their difficulty; and we cease to feel ourselves obliged in every case to enquire to whom and on what occasion the Psalm was probably first addressed. And even descending to the low and mere rationalistic ground taken by De Wette and Hupfeld, we are at least safer than they are, holding as we do a meaning in which both Jews and Christians have so long concurred, as against the infinite diversity of occasion and reference which divides their opinions of the Psalm).

10.] *And (He saith to the Son:* see a similar *And* introducing a new citation in Acts i. 20. The comma and capital letter, as in text, should be retained after this *And*), *Thou, in the beginning, Lord* (this has no word to represent it in the Hebrew. But it is taken up from “*O my God*” in ver. 24; and indeed from the whole strain of address, in which *Jehovah* has been thrice expressed; in vv. 1, 12, 15. On the bearing and interpretation of the Psalm, see below), *foundedst the earth; and the heavens are works of thine hands* (see Ps. viii. 3): 11.] *they* (seems most naturally to refer to *the heavens* immediately preceding. There is no reason in the Psalm why the pronoun should not represent both antecedents, the heavens

and the earth. Here, however, the subsequent context seems to determine the application to be only to the heavens: for to them only can be referred the following image, “*as a vesture shalt thou fold them up*”) *shall perish* (as far as concerns their present state. Compare the parallel expression, “*shall be changed,*” below); *but thou remainest* (Bleek prefers the future, on the ground of the verbs being all future in the Hebrew text. But perhaps the consideration alleged by Lünemaun, that the Writer, using only the Septuagint, seems to place “*but thou remainest*” and “*but thou art the same,*” as parallel clauses, is of more weight than the other. De Wette, on the Psalm, renders the Hebrew verbs *present*. The verb in the original is a compound one, giving the sense of endurance through all changes); *and they all shall wax old as a garment* (see Isa. li. 6, “*The earth shall wax old like a garment:*” also Isa. l. 9; and Eccles. xiv. 17); *and as a mantle* (the word signifies any enveloping, enwrapping garment) *shalt thou fold them up* (the Hebrew here, and apparently some copies of the Septuagint, have the same verb as below: “*thou shalt change them,*”—“*thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed.*” But the Alexandrine MS. reads as our text: and there can be little doubt that the Writer of this Epistle followed that text as usual), *and they shall be changed* (viz. as a mantle is folded up to be put away when a fresh one is about to be put on): *but thou art the same* (Hebrew, “*and Thou art He:*” viz., He, which thou hast ever been: compare Isa. xlvi. 4), *and thy years shall not fail* (Hebrew, “*Thy years end not,*” are never completed. The account to be given of Psalm cii. seems to be as follows: according to its title it is “*a prayer of the afflicted, when he is over-*



AUTHORIZED VERSION.

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?

II. 1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest

Luke i. 10. & li. 9, 13. Acts xli. 7, &c. & xxvii. 23.

AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

hath he said at any time, <sup>x</sup> Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? 14 <sup>y</sup> Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth <sup>y</sup> for ministry on account of them who shall be <sup>z</sup> heirs of salvation?

II. 1 Therefore we ought to give

z Rom. viii. 17. Tit. iii. 7. James ii. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 7.

x Psa. cx. 1.  
 Matt. xxii.  
 44. Mark  
 xii. 30. Luke  
 xx. 42.  
 ch. x. 12.  
 ver. 3.  
 Gen. xix. 10.  
 & xxxii. 1, 2.  
 24. 1<sup>st</sup>.  
 xxxiv. 7. &  
 xel. 11. &  
 ciii. 20, 21.  
 Dan. iii. 28.  
 & vii. 10, &  
 x. 11. Matt.  
 xviii. 10.  
 1 Pet. iii. 7.

whelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord." It was probably written during the Babylonian exile (compare vv. 14, 15) by one who "waited for the consolation of Israel." That consolation was to be found only in Israel's covenant God, and the Messiah Israel's deliverer. And the trust of Israel in this her Deliverer was ever directed to the comfort of her sons under the immediate trouble of the time, be that what it might. As generations went on, more and more was revealed of the Messiah's office and work, and the hearts of God's people entered deeper and deeper into the consolation to be derived from the hope of His coming. Here then we have this sorrowing one casting himself on the mercy of the great Deliverer, and extolling his faithfulness and firmness over, and as distinguished from, all the works of His hands. To apply then these words to the Redeemer, is to use them in their sense of strictest propriety.

13.] But (the contrast is again taken up from ver. 8) to whom of the angels hath He (God, as before) ever said, Sit thou on my right hand until I place thine enemies (as) a footstool (the allusion is to the custom of putting the feet on the necks of conquered enemies, see Josh. x. 24 f.) of thy feet? Hardly any Psalm is so often quoted in the New Test. with reference to Christ, as Ps. cx. And no Psalm more clearly finds its ultimate reference and completion only in Christ, as even those confess, who question its being immediately addressed to Him at first: and regard the argument of our Lord to the Pharisees founded on this place, as merely one grounded on concession on both sides. On the theocratic principle of interpretation, there is not the slightest difficulty in the application of the words directly to Him who is (and was ever regarded, even in David's time) Israel's King, the Head and Chief of the theocracy. And see this further carried out in the note on ch. v. 6.

14.] Are they not all (all the angels) ministering (in reference probably

to the word "ministers" in ver. 7. The word, signifying "pertaining to the ministry," is used in the Septuagint of any thing pertaining to the ministers or their service; the instruments, vessels, garments, or offerings for the ministry: here, of those devoted to or belonging to the ministry of God) spirits (unembodied beings, even as God Himself, but distinguished by the epithet *presiding*. The idea of "angels of service" or "of the ministry," is familiar to the rabbis), sent forth (it is the present participle, so also in Rev. v. 6: he does not mean that angels have before now, in insulated cases, been sent forth, but that they are ever thus being sent forth,—it is their normal work and regular duty through all the ages of time) for ministry (in order to the ministration which is their work. The A. V., "sent forth to minister for them," gives a wrong idea of the meaning. The ministry is not a *waiting upon men*, but a fulfilment of their office as *ministers of God*. See Rom. xiii. 4. Compare with this expression Col. i. 7, "a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf") on behalf of those who are about to inherit salvation (in the highest sense—eternal salvation: not, as Kuinoel and others, "deliverance from dangers:" in so solemn a reference, that meaning would be quite beside the purpose. Those spoken of are the elect of God, they who love Him, and for whom all things work together for good, even the principalities and powers in heavenly places. And if it be said, that the ministration of angels has often been used for other immediate purposes than the behoof of the elect, we may answer, that all those things may well come under the *ministry*, on account of them who shall be heirs of salvation: for all things are theirs; and for them, in and as united to Christ, all events are ordered)? Thus the Son of God is proved superior to the angels—i. e. to the highest of created beings: who, so far from being equal with Him, worship Him, and serve His purposes.

CHAP. II. 1—4.] *Practical inference*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest we be diverted from them. <sup>2</sup> For if the word <sup>a</sup> spoken by angels became binding, and <sup>b</sup> every transgression and

*heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. <sup>2</sup> For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience re-*

a Deut. xxxiii.  
2. Ps. lxxviii.  
17. Acts vii.  
53. Gal. iii.  
19.

b Numb. xv.  
30, 31. Deut. iv. 8. & xvii. 2, 5, 12. & xxvii. 26.

*from the proved superiority of the Son of God to the angels.*

1.] On this account (viz. because Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant, is far above all the angels who were the mediators of the former Covenant) it behoves us (*"being aware of this difference,"* Theodoret: it is a moral necessity, arising from the previous premises: so Matt. xviii. 33; xxv. 27; 2 Tim. ii. 6. There is no stress on us) to give heed more abundantly (we must not understand after the comparative, more abundantly, "than we did to the law," as Chrysostom and others; or the aim of the Writer to be, to shew the superiority of the Gospel over the law, as Theodoret: but the comparative intimates how much our attention ought to be increased and intensified by our apprehension of the dignity of Him whose record the gospel is, and who is its Mediator) to the things heard [by us], lest haply we be diverted (Aristotle uses the same passive form of this Greek verb to indicate that which we familiarly call food *going the wrong way* in course of swallowing. Plutarch uses it of a ring *falling off from the finger*. See other illustrations in my Greek Test. The meaning of the verb seems then to be clear — to flow past, or away, or aside, to fall off, deflect from a course. We, going onward in time, living our lives in one or another direction, are exhorted 'to adhere to the things we have heard' [see above], and that, 'that we do not at any time float past them,' be not carried away beside them, led astray from the course on which they would take us. Two mistakes respecting the word are to be avoided: a) that of A. V., '*lest at any time we should let them slip.*' From what has been above said of the tense and voice, it will be clear that such cannot be the meaning. b) Still worse is that of those who have thought of a comparison with a sieve, or a leaking vessel. So Calvin, Owen, and others: and I find it reproduced in Tait's commentary on the Hebrews: "*lest . . . we should run out as leaking vessels.*" The meaning is as un-

tenable, as the simile is irrelevant. The Greek expositors, whose authority in matters of Greek verbal usage is considerable, all explain it as above. So also all the more accurate of the moderns) from them (such is the most natural object to supply after the verb: turned aside from and floated away from the course on which the adhering to them would have carried us).

2.] For (introduces an argument [vv. 2—4] *from the less to the greater*. The law was introduced by the mere subordinate messengers of God, but was enforced with strict precision: how much more shall they be punished who reject that Gospel, which was brought in by the Son of God Himself, and continues to be confirmed to us by God's present power) if the word which was spoken by means of angels (i. e. the law of Moses. The co-operation of angels in the giving of the law at Sinai was not merely a rabbinical notion, but is implied in both the Old and New Testaments. There can consequently be little doubt that the Writer, in mentioning the word spoken by angels, had reference to the law of Moses, and not, as some think, to the scattered messages which were, at different times in Old Test. history, delivered by angels. It has been sometimes supposed that the angels spoken of here are not angels, but merely human messengers. Chrysostom says, "Some think that Moses is pointed at: but not with justice: for the writer speaks of many angels." Bleek remarks that the Writer would hardly have used this argument of depreciating contrast, had he regarded the Law as given either to Moses or to the people by the direct ministry of the Son of God Himself) was made (*"became,"* on being thus spoken by angels) binding (*firm, ratified: "stedfast,"* as A. V.: as applied to commands, — *imperative,* — not to be violated with impunity), and every transgression (overstepping of its ordinances, or more properly walking alongside of, and therefore not in, the path which it marked out) and disobedience (the relation of these two words to one another in point of sense seems accord-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

ceived a just recompence of reward; <sup>3</sup> 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; <sup>4</sup> God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders,

disobedience received just recompence of reward; <sup>3</sup> <sup>e</sup> how shall we escape, if we have neglected so great salvation; <sup>d</sup> seeing that it, having begun to be spoken by the Lord, was <sup>e</sup> confirmed unto us by them that heard it; <sup>4</sup> <sup>f</sup> God also bearing witness to it, <sup>g</sup> with both signs and

<sup>e</sup> ch. x. 28, 29.  
& xii. 25.

<sup>d</sup> Matt. iv. 17.  
Mark i. 11.  
ch. i. 2.

<sup>e</sup> Luke i. 2.

<sup>f</sup> Mark xvi. 20.  
Acts xiv. 3. &  
xix. 11.  
Rom. xv. 18,  
19. 1 Cor.  
<sup>g</sup> Acts ii. 22, 43.

ii. 4.

ingly to be, that **transgression** denotes the outward act of transgression of the Law, the practical withstanding of its precepts, while **disobedience** occurs when we fulfil not, and have no mind to fulfil, the precepts of the Law: the former expresses, viewed *from without*, more something positive, the latter something negative, while at the same time it regards more the disposition of the man. Still, the distinction, as regards the moral region here treated of, is not of such a kind that each *transgression* may not also be treated as a *disobedience*, and each *disobedience* include or induce a *transgression*. Bleek) received just recompence of reward (this term is used only in this Epistle, and every where else in a good sense.

To what does the Writer refer? To the single instances of punishment which overtook the offenders against the law, or, as Grotius suggests, to the general punishment of the whole people's unbelief, as in ch. iii. 8; iv. 11; xii. 21, and see 1 Cor. x. 6 ff.? I should be disposed to think, to the former: such penalties as are denounced in Deut. xxxii. 35, and indeed attached to very many of the Mosaic enactments: as Owen: "The law was so established, that the transgression of it, so as to disannul the terms and conditions of it, had by divine constitution the punishment of death temporal, or excision, appointed unto it"); 3.] **how shall we** (emphatic: including Christians in general, all who have received the message of salvation in the manner specified below) **escape, if we have neglected so great** ("that was a giving of laws only, but the other brought the grace of the Spirit, and the taking away of sins, and the announcement of the kingdom of heaven, and the promise of immortality: so that he had some reason to say so great." Theodore of Mopsuestia) **salvation** (as in ch. i. 14); **the which** (equivalent to 'seeing that it'), **having begun to be spoken by means of** (he was the instrument in this

case, as the angels in the other; but both, law and gospel, came at first hand not from the mediators, but from God) **the Lord** (by the Lord is to be joined with the whole, **having begun to be spoken**, not with **spoken only**. The Lord, as Bleek remarks, has here an especial emphasis setting forth the majesty and sovereignty of Christ: "He Himself, the Master of angels, first brought to us the doctrine of salvation," Theodoret), **was confirmed** (see Mark xvi. 19, where the word is used exactly in the same sense and reference. It seems to be used to correspond to *became binding* (or firm, the cognate adjective to this verb *confirmed*) above, signifying a ratification of the Gospel somewhat correspondent to that there predicated of the law: as also **spoken here answers to spoken there) unto us by those who heard** (*it!* or *Him!* In the sense, the difference will be but little: in either case, those pointed at will be, as Theodoret, "those who were partakers of the apostolic grace:" the "eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word" of Luke i. 2. From the usage, however, of the Writer himself, I prefer understanding "it:" compare ch. iii. 16; iv. 2; xii. 19) **it** (on the evidence furnished by this verse as to the Writer of the Epistle, see Introduction, § i. parr. 130 ff.); **God also bearing witness to it** (Chrysostom remarks: "How then was it confirmed? What if those who heard it, themselves feigned it? To remove the shame of this, and to shew that the grace came not from men, he adds that God also bore witness. For had they been the inventors, God would not have borne witness to them: but now they are witnesses, and God is witness besides. We have not simply believed them, but have been helped by signs and wonders: so that we have not believed them, but God Himself"), **with signs and wonders** (Bleek remarks: "As regards the relation of the two expressions to each other in their combination here, as

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

wonders, and various miraculous powers, and <sup>h</sup> distributions of the Holy Spirit, <sup>i</sup> according to his own will? <sup>5</sup> For not unto angels did he put in subjection <sup>k</sup> the world to come,

and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will? <sup>5</sup> For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to

<sup>h</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 4,  
7, 11.  
<sup>i</sup> Eph. i. 5, 9.

<sup>k</sup> ch. vi. 5.  
<sup>2</sup> Pet. iii. 13.

divine confirmations of human testimony, it is this: a sign is a more general and wider idea than a wonder. Every sign, religiously considered, is also a wonder, but not always *vice versa*. A wonder always includes the idea of something marvellous, something extraordinary in itself, betokens something which by its very occurrence raises astonishment, and cannot be explained from the known laws of nature. On the other hand, a sign is each and every thing whereby a person, or a saying and assertion, is witnessed to as true, and made manifest: and thus it *may* be something, which, considered in and of itself, would appear an ordinary matter, causing no astonishment, but which gets its character of striking and supernatural from the connexion into which it is brought with something else, e. g. from a heavenly messenger having previously referred to some event which he could not have foreseen by mere natural knowledge. But it may also be a wonder, properly so called. Still, it is natural to suppose that the biblical writers, using so often as they do the words together, did not on every occasion bear in mind the distinction, but under the former word thought also of events which of themselves would be extraordinary and marvellous appearances"), and various miraculous powers, and distributions (this substantive is that derived from the verb used in Rom. xii. 3; 1 Cor. vii. 17; 2 Cor. x. 13) of the Holy Spirit (is this genitive descriptive of the *object distributed*, or of the *subject distributing*? It does not follow that this will be ruled by the reference of the possessive pronoun *His* below. It seems much more natural to refer this pronoun to God, the primary subject of the sentence, than to the Holy Spirit, who is merely introduced in the course of it. And if it be once granted that *His* refers to God, we should have, on the supposition of the *subjective genitive*, an awkwardly complicated sense, hardly consistent with the assertion of absolute sovereignty so prominently made in the following clause. I take then the genitive, with most commentators, as *objective*, and the Holy Spirit as that which *is distributed*,

according to God's will, to each man according to his measure and kind. The declaration in John iii. 34, of Him whom God sent, "*He giveth not the Spirit by measure,*" speaks of the same *giving*, but of its unmeasured fulness, as imparted to our glorious Head, not of its fragmentary distribution to us, the imperfect and limited members), according to His (God's: see above) will (it is best to refer this clause, not to the whole sentence preceding, nor to the two clauses, *various miraculous powers and distributions of the Holy Spirit*, as Bleek and Lünemann, but to the last of these only, agreeably to 1 Cor. xii. 11, and to the free and sovereign agency implied in the word *distributions*. See on the whole sense, Acts v. 32)!

5—18.] *The dogmatic argument now proceeds. The new world is subjected, by the testimony of the Scriptures, not to angels, but to Christ: who however, though Lord of all, was made inferior to the angels, that He might die for, and suffer with, being made like, the children of men.* 5.] The proposition stated. For the connexion is with the sentence immediately preceding, i. e. with vv. 2—4. That former word was spoken by angels: it carried its punishment for neglect of it: much more shall this *salvation*, spoken by . . . &c., confirmed by . . . &c. For this whole state of things, induced by the proclamation of that salvation, is not subjected to angels, but to Christ, the Son of God. Then the fact that it is to MAN, and to Him AS MAN, that it is subjected, is brought in, and a new subject thus grafted on the old one of His superiority to the angels) not to angels ("*angels*" stands in the place of emphasis, as contrasted with "*man*" below) did he subject (viz., at the date of His arrangement and laying out of the same. The subjection of this present natural world to the holy angels, as its administrators, is in several places attested in Scripture, and was a very general matter of belief among the Jews. In Deut. xxxii. 8, we read in the Septuagint, "*When the Highest distributed nations, as He dispersed the sons of men, He set the boundaries of nations according to the number*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

come, whereof we speak.  
 6 But one in a certain place testified, say-

of the angels of God." There, it is true, the Hebrew text has, as A. V., "according to the number of the children [more properly, the sons, in the stricter sense] of Israel." Origen (or his translator) says, "According to the number of His angels, or, as we read in other copies, according to the number of the sons of Israel." But the doctrine rests on passages about which there can be no such doubt. See Dan. x. 13, 20, 21; xii. 1, for this committal of kingdoms to the superintendence of angels: Rev. ix. 11; xvi. 5, for the same as regards the natural elements: Matt. xviii. 10, as regards the guardianship of individuals: Rev. i. 20 &c., for that of churches [for so, and not of chief bishops, is the name to be understood: see note there]. See also Dan. iv. 13. In the apocryphal and rabbinical writings we find the same idea asserted, and indeed carried out into minute details. So in Ecclus. xvii. 17, "*In the division of the nations of the whole earth he set a ruler over every people: but Israel is the Lord's portion.*" The rabbinical authorities may be found in Bleek and Eisenmenger. See also a very elaborate article—"Engel"—by Böhme, in Herzog's Encyclopædie; and testimonies to the view of the early church from Eusebius, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Athenagoras, and Clement of Alexandria, in Whitby's note. The idea then of subjection of the world to angels was one with which the readers of this Epistle were familiar) the world to come (the reference of this expression has been variously given by expositors. 1) Many imagine it to refer to the world which is, strictly speaking, to come, as distinguished from this present world. This meaning will hardly tally with the context here. Though it might be said that the future life, being the completion of the state of salvation by Christ, might very well here be spoken of as the subject of the present discourse. 2) Some have supposed a direct allusion to ch. i. 6. But certainly in this case the verb would have been past: "of which we spoke;" and besides, the addition of the epithet to come sufficiently distinguishes it from the mere inhabited world, in the other place. 3) Others again have thought of heaven, which is to us future, because we are not yet admitted to its joys. But this again would not agree with the context. 4) The

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

whereof we speak. 6 But one in a certain place testified, saying, 1 What

<sup>1</sup> Job vii. 17.  
<sup>2</sup> Psa. viii. 4,  
 &c. & cxliv.  
 3.

most probable account to be given is that the phrase represents the Hebrew expression, "*the age to come*" [see note on ch. i. 1], and imports the whole new order of things brought in by Christ,—taking its rise in His life on earth, and having its completion in His reign in glory. This last-mentioned view is by far the best, agreeing as it does with the connexion, for he has been speaking of the gospel above, with the ordinary way of speaking, and with the whole subject of the Epistle. All reference to the future need not be excluded: we Christians are so eminently "prisoners of hope," that the very mention of such a designation would naturally awaken a thought of the glories to come: but this reference must not be pressed as having any prominence, of which we are speaking (which forms the subject of our present argument: viz. that urged in vv. 1—4. The sense is strictly present; not past, nor future. Bleek has here some excellent remarks: "As regards the whole thought, the non-subjection of the new order of the world to angels, it respects partly what is already present, partly what we have yet to wait for. Certainly, here and there in the New Test. history angels are mentioned: but they come in only as transitory appearances, to announce or to execute some matter which is specially entrusted to them: they never appear as essential agents in the introduction of the kingdom of God, either in general, or in particular: they do not descend on earth as preaching repentance, or preparing men to be received into God's kingdom. This is done by men, first and chiefly by Him who is Son of Man *par excellence*, and after Him by the disciples whom He prepared for the work. Even the miraculous conversion of Paul is brought about, not by angels, but by the appearing of the Lord Himself. Our author has indeed, in ch. i. 14, designated the angels as fellow-workers in the salvation of men: but only in a serving capacity, never as working or imparting salvation by independent agency, as does the Son of Man in the first place, and then in a certain degree His disciples also. So that we cannot speak with any truth of a subjection of this new order of things to the angels. Rather, even by what we see at present, does it appear to be subjected to the Redeemer Himself. And this will ever



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

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

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

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

more and more be the case; for,—according to the prophetic declaration of the Psalm, the whole world shall be put under His feet [ver. 8]. Thus, by reminding them of the will of God declared in the holy Scriptures, does the Writer meet at the same time the objections of those of his readers and countrymen, to whom perhaps this withdrawal of the agency of the angels with the introduction and growing realization of the new order of things might appear an important defect"). 6.] But (introduces a contrast to a preceding negative sentence frequently in our Epistle: compare ch. iv. 13. 15; ix. 12; x. 27; xii. 13. An ellipsis follows it, to be supplied in the thought, "it is far otherwise, for" . . .) one somewhere (no inference can be drawn from this indefinite manner of citation, either that the writer was quoting from memory, as some think, or that he did not know who was the author of the Psalm, as others. Rather may we say that it shews he was writing for readers familiar with the Scriptures, and from whom it might well be expected that they would recognize the citation without further specification. He certainly is not quoting from memory, seeing that the words agree exactly with the Septuagint: and Ps. viii. both in the Hebrew and Septuagint has a superscription indicating that it was written by David. We can hardly infer with some that the Writer meant to express his feeling that the Old Test. books had no human authors, but God Himself: for in this case the personal designation *some one* would hardly have been used, but a passive construction, "*it is written*," or the like, adopted instead) testified, saying (this seems the proper place for a few remarks on the sense of the citation which follows, and on the connexion of thought in the rest of the chapter. The general import of the *eighth Psalm* may be described as being, to praise Jehovah for His glory and majesty, and His merciful dealing with and exaltation of mankind. All exposition which loses sight of this general import, and attempts to force the Psalm into a direct and exclusive prophecy of the personal Messiah, goes to conceal its true prophetic sense, and to obscure the force and beauty of its reference to Him. This has been done by Bleek and others, who have made "the

Son of Man" a direct title here of Christ. It is MAN who in the Psalm is spoken of, in the common and most general sense: the care taken by God of *Him*, the lordship given to *him*, the subjection of God's works to *him*. This high dignity he lost, but this high dignity he has regained, and possesses potentially in all its fulness and glory, restored, and for ever secured to him. How? and by whom? By one of his own race, the MAN Christ Jesus. Whatever high and glorious things can be said of man, belong of *proper right* to Him only, *in proper person* to Him only, but derivatively to us His brethren and members. And this is the great key to the interpretation of all such sayings as these: whatever belongs to man by the constitution of his nature, belongs superlatively to that MAN, who is the constituted HEAD of man's nature, the second Adam, who has more than recovered all that the first Adam lost. To those who clearly apprehend and firmly hold this fundamental doctrine of Christianity, the interpretation of ancient prophecy, and the New Test. application of Old Test. sayings to Christ, become a far simpler matter than they ever can be to others. And so here, it is to MAN, not to angels, that the "world to come" is subjected. This is the argument: and, as far as the end of ver. 8, it is carried on with reference to *man*, properly so called. There is *here* as yet no personal reference to our Lord, who is first introduced, and that in His lower personal human Name, at ver. 9. This has been missed, and thus confusion introduced into the argument, by the majority of Commentators. To hold that our Lord is from the first intended by "*man*" and "*the son of man*" here, is to disturb altogether the logical sequence, which runs thus: "It is *not to angels* that He has subjected the latter dispensation, but to *man*. Still we do not see man in possession of this sovereignty. No; but we do see Jesus, whose humiliation fulfilled the conditions of manhood, crowned with glory and honour, and thus constituted the Head of our race, so that His death and sufferings were our deliverance and our perfecting. And for this to be so, the sanctifier and the sanctified must be all of one race." And the rest of the chapter is spent in laying forth with inimitable beauty and tenderness the



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

thou visitest him? <sup>7</sup> 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: <sup>8</sup> thou hast put all things in subjection

from the Psalm), are wanting in the Vatican MS. and others. ch. i. 13.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

him? <sup>7</sup> Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour †: <sup>8</sup> thou didst put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that

† The words, "and didst set him over the works of thy hands," though inserted in many of our oldest MSS. (probably

m Matt. xxviii. 18. 1 Cor. xv. 27. Eph. i. 22.

necessity and effect of Jesus being thus made like us. The whole process of this second chapter stands without parallel for tender persuasiveness amidst the strictest logical coherence. And yet both of these are concealed and spoiled, unless we take these words of the Psalm, and the argument founded on them, of man generally, and then, and not till then, of Jesus, as man like ourselves), **What is man** (some have understood this to mean, "How great, how noble, is man; who even amongst the immensity of all these heavenly works of God, yet is remembered and visited of Him;") but against this are the two words here used in the Hebrew, both betokening man on his lower side, of weakness and inferiority. There can be little doubt that the ordinary view is right—not *how great*, but *how little*, is man. This agrees far better also with the wonder expressed at God's thinking of and visiting him, below), **that thou art mindful of him** (i. e. objectively, — as shewn by Thy care of him)? or (in the Hebrew "and" is here doubtless substituted for or by the Septuagint, to indicate that the second member of the parallelism does not point to another subject additional to the first) **the son of man** (proceeding on the same view as that given above, it would be irrelevant here to enter on an enquiry as to the application of this title to our Lord, by others, and by Himself,—inasmuch as it is not here appropriated to Him, but used of any and every son of Adam. It is true, our thoughts at once recur to Him on reading the words—but, if we are following the train of thought, only as their ulterior, not as their immediate, reference), **that Thou visitest him?**

7.] Thou madest Him a little lower than the angels (literally, in the Hebrew, "Thou lettest him be little inferior to God." The best Hebrew scholars seem to agree that the word "God" here represents not the personal God, but the abstract qualities of Godhead, in which all that is divine, or immediately connected with the Deity, is included. If so, then

the rendering of the Septuagint and our text is, though not exhaustive of the original, yet by no means an inaccurate one. The angelic nature, being the lowest of that which is divine and heavenly, marks well the terminus just beneath which man is set. And it must be remarked that the stress of the argument here is not on this mention of the angels, but on the assertion of the sovereignty of man. I may remark, that the marginal rendering of our A. V., "*a little while inferior to*," though doubtless also warranted by the usage of the Greek, seems quite unnecessary in the context, where not the question of *time*, but that of *place*, is before us); **thou crownedst him with glory and honour** (I must remind the reader of what has been said before; that the quotation is adduced here not of the Messiah, but of *man*, and that on this the whole subsequent argument depends. With this view vanish the difficulties which have been raised about the original and here-intended meaning of this clause. It is, in fact, a further setting forth of the preceding one. Man, who was left not far behind the divine attributes themselves, was also invested with kingly majesty on earth, put into the place of God Himself in sovereignty over the world. That this has only been realized in the man Christ Jesus, is not brought out till below, and forms the central point of the argument. Hupfeld remarks that the Hebrew term here rendered **glory and honour**, is a common expression for the divine majesty, and thence for the kingly, as a reflexion of the divine: and the crowning represents the kingly majesty, with which man is adorned as with a kingly crown): **8.] thou didst put all things under his feet** (universal dominion is bestowed on man by his constitution as he came from God. That that bestowal has never yet been realized, is the next step of the argument: the Redeemer being at present kept out of sight, but by and by to be introduced as the real fulfiller of this high destiny of man, and on that account, incarnate in man's nature).

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

he put all things in subjection to him, he left nothing that is not put in subjection to him. But now <sup>n</sup> we see not yet all things put in subjection to him. <sup>9</sup> But him <sup>o</sup> that is made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, we behold, on account of his suffering of death, <sup>p</sup> crowned

n 1 Cor. xv. 25.

o Phil. ii. 7, 8.  
9.

p Acts ii. 33.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*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. <sup>9</sup> But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death,*

For (this for grounds, or rather begins to ground that already asserted in ver. 5) in that he (viz. God: not, the writer of the Psalm: unless indeed we are to understand "put in subjection" to mean saying that such is the case, as St. Paul expresses it, 1 Cor. xv. 27: but the other is much simpler, more analogous to usage, and more in the sense of the Psalm, which is a direct address to God) put all things (*the universe*: in the original, not merely all things as before, but *the sum of all*) under him (Man, again: not, Christ: see above, and remarks at the end of the verse), He left nothing ("he seems to except neither celestial nor terrestrial," Primasius. Possibly: and in the application itself, certainly: but we can hardly say that such was his thought here. The idea that angels are especially here intended, has arisen from that misconception of the connexion, which I have been throughout endeavouring to meet) unsubjected to him. But (contrast bringing out the exception) now (in the present condition of things: not strictly temporal, but as "now" ch. xi. 16, and ch. ix. 26) we see not yet (compare on the whole, 1 Cor. xv. 24—27) all things (*the universe* again) put under him (the word him in all three places referring to MAN: man has not yet attained his sovereignty. That the summing up of manhood in Christ is in the Writer's mind, is evident throughout, and that he wishes it to be before his readers' minds also; but the gradual introduction of the humiliation and exaltation of Christ in His humanity is marred by making all this apply personally to Him. Manhood, as such, is exalted to glory and honour, and waiting for its primeval prerogative to be fully assured, but it is IN CHRIST, and in Him alone, that this is true: and in Him it is true, inasmuch as He, being of our flesh and blood, and having been Himself made perfect by sufferings, and calling us His brethren, can lead us up through sufferings into glory,

freed from guilt by His sacrifice for our sins).

9.] We do not see man, &c. But (strong contrast again: "but rather"—see on ver. 6) him who is made (better than 'was,' or 'hath been, made;') His humanity in its abstract position being in view) a little (not necessarily, here either, of time [a little while]: nor are we at liberty to assume such a rendering: though of course it is difficult to say, when the same phrase has two analogous meanings both applicable, as this, how far the one may have accompanied the other in the Writer's mind) lower than (the) angels, we behold (notice the difference between the half-involuntary words "we see" above, the impression which our eyes receive from things around us,—and the direction and intention of the contemplating eye [here, of faith: ch. iii. 19; x. 25] in this word, we behold, (namely) Jesus, on account of his suffering of death (it has been much doubted whether these words belong (I.) to the foregoing clause, "made a little lower than the angels," or, (II.) to the following, "crowned with glory and honour." The former connexion is assumed without remark by the ancient Commentators, and by several moderns. And these interpret the words two ways: 1) on account of the suffering of death [i.e. because He has suffered death],—thus making "a little (while)" refer to the time of His sufferings and death, or, as Chrysostom and others, to the three days of His being in the grave: 2) for the sake of the suffering of death,—so that He might suffer death. So Augustine and most of the ancients. But (II.) the latter connexion, with the following clause, is adopted by Theophylact, Luther, Calvin, and many others. The arrangement of the words, and the requirements of the context, on account of the suffering of death, both seem to require the latter, not the former connexion. The words are emphatic; they are taken up again

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. <sup>10</sup> For

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

with glory and honour; in order that he † by the grace of God should † taste death <sup>q</sup> for every man. <sup>10</sup> † For

<sup>†</sup> Some ancient copies, versions, and fathers, have instead of "by" q John r Luke xxiv. 40.

*the grace of God,* except God, or without God. Origen (Cent. III.) mentions both readings. See note. iii. 1d. & xii. 32. Rom. v. 18. & viii. 32. 2 Cor. v. 15. 1 Tim. ii. 6. 1 John ii. 2. Rev. v. 9.

in the next sentence by 'made perfect by sufferings' [which words themselves are a witness that suffering and exaltation, not suffering and degradation, are here connected]. But emphatic they could not be in the former connexion, coming as they would only as an explicatory clause, after "made a little lower than the angels." Again, the latter connexion entirely satisfies the context, the sufferings of Christ being treated of as necessary to His being our perfect Redeemer. And this connexion will be made even clearer by what will be said on the next clause), crowned with glory and honour (viz. at His exaltation, when God exalted Him to His right Hand: not, as some, at His incarnation, or His establishment as Saviour of the world: see above, ver. 7); in order that (how is this logically constructed? It depends on the last clause, which clause it will be best to take in its entirety, "on account of His suffering of death crowned with glory and honour." The full connexion we cannot enter into, till the three other questions arising out of our clause are disposed of: by the grace of God,—for every man,—and, that He should taste death) by the grace of God (how is this to be understood? At all events we have strong Scripture analogy for such an expression. In Gal. ii. 21, the Apostle's confession of faith in the Son of God, he says, "I do not make void the grace of God; for if righteousness be by the law, then Christ died without cause." And in Rom. v. 8, we read, "God giveth proof of His own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." And in Titus ii. 11, "The grace of God was manifested, bringing salvation to all men." So that, in point of meaning, no difficulty need be found in the words. It was by the love and grace, the kindness and love towards men of the Father, that all Redemption was effected, and above all that One Sacrifice which was the crowning act of Redemption. The remarkable various reading (see margin) is discussed at length in the notes to my Greek Testament. I have there concluded, that it does not seem possible to assign to

the words "except God," or, "without God," a meaning in accordance with the demands of the context, and the analogy of Scripture. This indeed would be no argument against a reading universally and unobjectionably attested by external authorities; but where no such attestation exists, may well be brought in to guide us to a decision) He might for ('on behalf of,' 'for the benefit of: ' where this ordinary meaning of the preposition suffices, that of vicariousness must not be introduced. Sometimes, as e. g., 2 Cor. v. 15, it is necessary. But here clearly not, the whole argument proceeding not on the vicariousness of Christ's sacrifice, but on the benefits which we derive from His personal suffering for us in humanity; not on His substitution for us, but on His community with us) every man (in the original the word may be neuter or masculine; every thing, or every man. If the latter, to what is it to be referred? Origen and others take it as neuter, and apply it either to all nature, or to all reasonable beings. The latter see discussed below. The former can hardly be here meant: for of such a doctrine, however true, there is no hint. Then taking the adjective masculine, are we to understand it "for every one, angels included?" So Ebrard: but where do we find any such usage of "all," or "every," absolutely put as here? And where in this chapter again is any room for the position, that Christ suffered death for angels? In the logical course of the argument, we have done with them, and are now treating of man, and of Him who was made man to be our High Priest and advocate. And therefore of none other than man can this word "every one" be here meant, in accordance indeed with its universal usage elsewhere. If it be asked, why every man rather than all men, we may safely say, that the singular brings out, far more strongly than the plural would, the applicability of Christ's death to each individual man: and we may say that this again testifies to the sense "every man," as there would be no such reason for individualizing other rational beings, as there is for showing that the whole nature of

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

s. R. m. xl. 36.

it became him, <sup>s</sup> for whom are all things, and by whom are all things,

*it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing*

man, to which this promise of sovereignty is given, is penetrated by the efficacy of Christ's death) taste of death (some have seen in the phrase an allusion to the shortness and transitoriness of the Lord's death: so Chrysostom, "He properly said *should taste death*, and not, *should die*. For as if really only *tasting* it, He made so little stay in it, and immediately arose:" then, comparing Christ to a physician who first tastes his medicines to encourage the sick man to take them, adds, "So also Christ, since all men had ever been afraid of death, to persuade them to be bold against it, Himself tasted it, having no benefit so to do." So also many other Commentators, among whom Beza and Bengel find also the *verity* of His Death indicated in the words. But it is well answered, that in none of the places where the phrase appears, either in the New Test. or in the rabbinical writings, does any such meaning appear to be conveyed. Nor again can we, as Bleek, understand the implication to be that Christ underwent all the *bitterness* of death. But the phrase falls into exact accord with the general argument of the passage, that it became Christ, in order to be the great and merciful High Priest of humanity, to be perfected through human sufferings: and it forms in fact the first mention of this idea, and prepares the way for for which follows. I would say, that the word *taste* must be regarded as slightly emphatic, and as implying the personal undergoing of death and entering into its suffering. And I doubt much, whether it will not be found that in the other passages where the phrase occurs, this personal suffering of death, though not boldly prominent, is yet within view, and agreeable to the context.

And now, having considered the three points, by the *grace* of God,—for every man,—and *taste* of death,—we return again to the question of the connexion of *in order that*, with which this clause begins. We before stated that we find it dependent on the former clause, *on account of His suffering of death crowned with glory and honour*. This exaltation, being the *perfecting* [see ver. 10] of Christ, was arrived at *through sufferings*, and *on account of His suffering of death*,—both by means of, and on account of, His suffering of death. And this exalta-

tion has made Him the divine Head of our humanity—the channel of grace, and the Captain of our salvation. Without His exaltation, his death would not have been effectual. Unless he had been crowned with glory and honour, received to the right hand of the Father, and set in expectation of all things being put under his feet, His death could not have been, for every man, the expiation to him of his own individual sin. On the *triumphant issue* of his sufferings, their efficacy depends. And this I believe is what the Sacred Writer meant to express. His glory was the consequence of his suffering of death;—arrived at through His suffering: but the applicability of His death to every man is the consequence of His constitution in Heaven as the great High Priest, in virtue of his blood carried into the holy place,—and the triumphant Head of our common humanity: which common humanity of Him and ourselves now becomes the subject of further elucidation).

10.] For (the connexion with the foregoing, see above. The for renders a reason why the result just introduced should have been one which the *grace of God* contemplated) it became (as matter not only of decorum, but of sequence from the data; —'was suitable to,' not as matter of absolute necessity, which was not the question here. The expression here glances at those who found in a suffering and crucified Messiah something unsuitable to the Godhead; and expresses not merely a negative, that it was not unsuitable, not unworthy of God,—but at the same time the positive, that it was altogether correspondent to and worthy of His Being and His Wisdom and His Love, to take this course: that it is so shaped, that he who knows the being and attributes of God, might have expected it. And thus it is indirectly implied, that it was also the most suitable, and that any other way would have been less correspondent to the being and purpose of God. Bleek has some excellent remarks on the lingering of the offence of the cross among these Jewish Christians, who, although their ideas of the glory and kingly triumph of the Messiah had been in a measure satisfied by the resurrection and exaltation of Christ, and their hopes awakened by the promise of future glory at His second coming,—

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

bringing, as he did, many sons unto glory, to make <sup>t</sup>perfect through † Luke xiii. 32. ch. v. 9.

yet, in the procrastination of this great event, felt their souls languishing, and the old stumbling-block of Christ's sufferings recurring to their minds. To set forth then the way of suffering and the cross as one worthy of God's high purpose, would be a natural course for the argument of the Writer to take) Him, for whom are all things (not only, 'all those things which contribute to man's salvation,' but 'the sum total of things,' 'the universe,' as in the parallel passages. All created things are for God [see below], for His purpose and for His glory), and by whom (by whose will, and fiat, and agency) are all things (who is intended? From the sequel of the sentence there can be no doubt that it is God the Father. For the subject of this clause is there said to perfect Christ: and this could be predicated of none but the Father Himself. That these expressions are found frequently used of the Son, need be no objection: whatever is thus said of Him as the End, and the Worker, in creation may *à fortiori* be said of the Father who sent Him and of whose will He is the expression. As to the reason of this lengthened appellation here, Calvin well says: "He might have designated God in one word: but he wished to remind them that that was to be accounted *best*, which He decreed whose will and glory is the real end of all things." And not only this: in introducing the "*becomingness*" of Christ's sufferings by such a description of God, he reminds his readers that those sufferings also were for Him—contributing to His end and His glory—and by Him, brought about and carried through by His agency and superintendence), bringing (the application of the clause is to God the Father, the subject of the preceding. See the idea which refers it to *Christ* treated in my Greek Test. Some take the participle as *past*, "*having brought*," referring the expression chiefly, or entirely, to the Old Test. saints. These however can hardly be meant; for they cannot be said in any adequate sense to have been led to glory, or to have had Christ for the Captain of their salvation. And surely it would be most unnatural to refer the participle to those saints only who had entered into glory since the completion of Christ's work, but before this Epistle was written. The peculiar form of the participle here used has in

all cases reference to the *completion* of the action. In Christ's being *perfected*, the bringing many sons to glory is *completed*. Had it been a *present*, we must have rendered, as indeed the A. V. has erroneously rendered now, '*in bringing*:' so that the Father's *perfecting* of Christ would be *only a step in the process* of leading many sons to glory. But now it is *the whole process*. We cannot give in idiomatic English this delicate shade of meaning correctly: the nearest representation of it is, as in the text, perhaps—'it became Him . . . bringing, as He did, many sons to glory, to' &c.) many (not in contrast to *all*, but in contrast to *few*, and in relation to one) sons (probably in the closer sense: not merely sons by creation, but sons by adoption. This seems necessitated by the next verse) to glory (the expression is not common in this meaning in our Epistle: and is perhaps chosen on account of the word occurring in ver. 9. It is, that supreme bliss and majesty which rightly belongs to God only—of which His divine Son is [ch. i. 3] the brightness or shining forth, and of which believers in Christ are here in their degree partakers, and shall be fully so hereafter. It is the crowning positive result of the negative word *salvation*), to make perfect (this word is used often in our Epistle, and in various references. It is said of the Redeemer Himself, here, and in ch. v. 9; vii. 28,—of His people, who are *made perfect* through Him, ix. 9; xi. 14, 40; xii. 23; and indeed xii. 2;—with a general reference, vii. 11, 19; see also *perfect*, ch. v. 14; ix. 11,—and *perfection*, ch. vi. 1. From all this it is evident, that some meaning must be looked for wide enough to include all these senses of the word itself and its cognates. And such a sense is found in the ordinary rendering of the word,—to "*accomplish*," or "*make complete*," or "*perfect*." This accomplishment, completion or perfecting of Christ was, the bringing Him to that glory which was His proposed and destined end: and it answers to the "*crowning with glory and honour*" of ver. 9: and to the "*glorifying*" of St. John: and fits exactly the requirements of the other passages in our Epistle where our Lord is spoken of. Nor is such meaning at all misplaced in those passages where *we* are



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

u Acts iii. 15.  
& v. 31.  
ch. xii. 2.  
x ch. x. 10, 14.

sufferings <sup>u</sup> the author of their sal-  
vation. <sup>11</sup> For <sup>x</sup> both he that sancti-  
fied and they who are sanctified

salvation perfect through  
sufferings. <sup>11</sup> For both he  
that sanctifieth and they  
who are sanctified are all  
of one : for which cause

y Acts xvii. 20. y  
z Matt. xxviii.

are all of one : for which cause <sup>z</sup> he

of one : for which cause

10. John xx. 17. Rom. viii. 20.

spoken of: seeing that it is a relative term, and our *being made perfect* is the being brought, each one of us, to the full height of our measure of perfection, in union with and participation of Christ's glory. Some have imagined that the meaning here and elsewhere in our Epistle, of the word rendered "*to make perfect*," is "*to consecrate*:" and understand the word of the setting apart or consecration of Christ to the high-priestly office. So Calvin [the first, as Bleek thinks, who propounded the view], Beza, and others. But Bleek replies well, that such a meaning will not suit the other passages in our Epistle, e. g. ch. vii. 11, 19: and besides, no such meaning is really ever found for the Greek word) the Author (*Captain*, in the A. V., introduces an idea foreign to the meaning of the title here used for our Lord. It is often found in the sense of a leader in the Septuagint: in that of the progenitor of a race: of one who precedes others by his example, they following him. Compare particularly ch. xii. 2, where the idea of author and completer is so closely allied to that in our verse, that the word *author* should have been kept here also. The idea of origination for the word frequently occurs in Greek writers, especially later ones, of the person from whom any thing, whether good or bad, first proceeds, in which others have a share. Hence the usage here, and in Acts iii. 15, where Christ is called "*the Prince of Life*," is easily explained: on Him our salvation depends; He was its originator) of their salvation through sufferings (i. e. His sufferings were the appointed access to, and the appointed elements of, His glory: see more particularly below, on ch. v. 8, 9. Chrysostom gives a beautiful general application: "shewing us that he who suffers for another, does not benefit him alone, but also himself becomes more illustrious and nearer perfection"). 11—13.]

The connexion with the foregoing cannot be made plain, till we have discussed the meaning of of one below. It may suffice to say, that the assertion, and the quotations are subordinate to the words "*many sons*" in ver. 10.

11.] For both the Sanctifier and (notice both—and, which bind

closely together in one category) the sanctified (sanctification is not here the same as "*salvation*," but as every where, when used in allusion to Christ's work on His people, involves that transforming and consecrating process, of which His Spirit is the actual agent. Hence, believers are ordinarily not described by the past participle, "*having been sanctified*," but as here by the present, "*being sanctified*." The word to sanctify signifies in the Septuagint and New Test. usually, to select out: and where their present state is spoken of, the participle is present: where God's purpose respecting them, and Christ's finished work, the perfect. Sanctification is glory working in embryo: glory is sanctification come to the birth and manifested.

It is disputed whether the reference of these words is to be considered as general, applying to every case of sanctifier and sanctified, as, e. g., the priest and the people under the old law, the firstfruits and the remaining harvest: or is to be restricted to Christ and His people alone. Certainly the latter seems to be required by the context, and most of all by the assumption of the subject in the next clause tacitly as contained in *he that sanctifieth*. The ground on which Christ is our Sanctifier has also been variously alleged. Grotius leaves the connexion very loose, when he says, "Christ makes us holy by His teaching and example. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and we by the Holy Spirit get a new nature: thus we both have a common origin." But this obviously does not reach the depth of the following argument, see especially ver. 17: and we must believe that there is a reference to the expiatory death of Christ: see also ch. x. 10, 14, and more in the note there) [are] of one (one, as will be seen by the reference in my Greek Test., must be taken as masculine. And if masculine, what are we to supply? Some say, *Adam*: others, *Abraham*. But it seems far better and simpler here, on account of the expression *many sons*, above, and as satisfying fully the force of of, or out of, to understand God to be meant. It is not here the mere physical unity of all men with Christ which is treated, but the



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

he is not ashamed to call them brethren, <sup>12</sup> saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. <sup>13</sup> And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

is not ashamed to call them brethren, <sup>12</sup> saying, <sup>a</sup> I will declare thy name <sup>a</sup> Psa. xxii. 22, 25. unto my brethren, in the midst of the assembly will I sing of thee. <sup>13</sup> And again, <sup>b</sup> I will put my trust <sup>b</sup> Psa. xvi. 1. 2. Isa. xii. 2. in him. And again, <sup>c</sup> Behold I and <sup>c</sup> Isa. viii. 18.

further and higher spiritual unity of the *Sanctifier* and the *sanctified*, as evinced by his speaking of them. The same is plain from ver. 14 below : see there. So that it is the higher Sonship of God, common to the Lord and those whom the Father by Him is leading to glory, which must be understood. See John viii. 47 ; 1 John iii. 10 ; iv. 6 ; v. 19 ; 3 John 11.

Note, that the point brought out here is not that the holiness of our Lord's human nature, and our holiness, are both of one, viz. the Father [John x. 36] : which, however true, would be introducing a matter not belonging to the argument *here*, all [of them] : on which account (viz. because they are all of one) He (Christ : see above) is not ashamed (His consent in this relationship springs, as Chrysostom says, not from the nature of the case merely, but from His extreme love and condescension) to call them (that are sanctified) brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the assembly will I sing of thee (it will be sufficient to refer, respecting the general sense and prophetic import of Ps. xxii., to what has been before said, on Ps. viii. [above ver. 6], and on similar citations elsewhere. The Psalm was originally the expression of a suffering saint, in all probability David, communing with his God : laying forth to Him his anguish and finally triumphing in confidence of His gracious help and deliverance. But by the mouth of such servants of God did the prophetic Spirit speak forth His intimations respecting the Redeemer to come. No word prompted by the Holy Ghost had reference to the utterer only. All Israel was a type : all spiritual Israel set forth the second Man, the quickening spirit : all the groanings of God's suffering people pre-figured, and found their fullest meaning in, His groans, who was the chief in suffering. The maxim cannot be too firmly held, nor too widely applied, that all the Old Test. utterances of the Spirit anticipate Christ, just as all His New Test. utterances set forth and expand Christ : that Christ is

every where involved in the Old Test., as He is every where evolved in the New Test. And this Psalm holds an illustrious place among those which thus point onward to Christ. Its opening cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" was uttered by the Lord Himself in His last agony. The most minute particulars detailed in it are by the Evangelists adduced as exemplified in the history of His Passion ; see e.g. John xix. 24. And, as Bleek well observes, the particulars chosen out of that history by St. Matthew seem to have been selected with an especial view to the illustration and fulfilment of this Psalm. Ebrard, in his note here, insists on the authorship of the Psalm by David, and on its date, as belonging to the time of his persecution by Saul. Then he maintains the exact parallelism of the circumstances with those of the second and greater David, and refers the "*brethren*" here to the countrymen of David, who were hereafter to be his subjects. I have no positive objection to this view. Subordinately to the deeper and wider one, it might be applicable in individual instances : but that other seems to me both safer and nearer the truth.

The particular verse here chosen, the 22nd, forms the transition-point from the suffering to the triumphant portion of the Psalm : and consequently the resolution expressed in it by the Messiah has reference to His triumphant state, in which he is still not ashamed to call his people brethren. It is characteristic of the object of this Epistle with reference to its intended readers, that whereas the Writer might have cited two instances as matters of fact, in which our Lord did call His disciples brethren after His resurrection [see John xx. 17 ; Matt. xxviii. 10], yet he has not done so, but has preferred to establish his point by the Old Test. citations).

13.] And again, I will put my trust in Him (there is considerable dispute as to the original place from which this citation comes. Most Commentators, and recently Bleek and Delitzsch, have believed it to be taken from Isa. viii. 17, where the words

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

d John x. 29.  
& xvii. 6, 9,  
11, 12.

the children <sup>d</sup> which God gave me.  
14 Forasmuch then as the children

*I and the children which  
God hath given me. 14 For-  
asmuch then as the chil-*

occur in the Septuagint, immediately preceding the next citation. The only objection to this view is, that it would be hardly likely in this case that the words "*and again*" would have occurred, but the two citations would have proceeded as one. And hence the words have been sought in other places: e. g. in Ps. xviii. 3, Isa. xlii. 1, where however, besides the Septuagint being different, the words are spoken in a totally different reference. The *same* words are found in the Septuagint in 2 Sam. xxii. 3, and Isa. xii. 2 There is no objection to the first of these passages being the *origin* of our citation; and the alleged non-Messianic character of the Psalm will weigh very light with those who view the Psalms as above set forth. Still, regarding the above-stated objection as of no weight,—owing to the diversity of the two cited clauses, the one expressive of personal trust in God, the other declaratory respecting a relation to others [compare also ch. x. 30, which is a nearly though not exactly similar case],—I prefer, as the more natural, the opinion which derives both texts from the same place of Isaiah. On the sense then, see below). And again, Behold I and the children which God gave me (Isa. viii. 18. Considerable difficulty has been made by the Commentators in applying these citations to Christ. I own that the question seems to me to be admirably stated by Theodoret on Ps. xxii., "More credit is to be given to the Holy Apostles and to our Saviour Himself when He uses plainly the opening of the Psalm, than to those who attempt to interpret it." But this does not preclude our entering on an attempt in each case to give a distinct account of the rationale of the application. In the passage of Isaiah [vv. 11—18], the Prophet is especially blaming the people of Judah under Ahaz, for having called in the help of the Assyrian king against Pekah king of Israel, and Rezin king of Syria. And in these verses [17 f.] the Prophet expresses his own determination, in spite of the reliance of the people on the confederacy, to wait for the Lord, and to remain, he and the children whom God had given him, for signs and wonders in Israel from the Lord of Hosts, which dwelleth in Zion. Then from Isa. viii. 18 to ix. 7, is set forth the prospect of future deliverance to Judah coming from their God, ending with the glorious anticipation of the great

future Deliverer. This confident speech of the Prophet our Writer adopts at once as the words of the greatest of all Prophets—thereby *assuming* the prophetic office of Christ. Thus the matter illustrated [for there is no demonstration here; this verse is a *consequence* of the last] is, that as the prophet Isaiah withstood the human dependence of his age, and stood forth, he and the children whom God had given him, and who were begotten in pursuance of the divine command as a sign to Israel,—so *the great Prophet* himself fulfilled the same office, and had the same hopes, and bore the same relation to those among whom He prophesied, praising God with them, leading them in confidence on God, and speaking of them as one family and stock with Himself. So that our passage forms a notable instance of the prophetic office of Christ being taken as the antitype of the official words and acts of all the Prophets, just as His kingly office fulfils and takes up all that is said and done by the theocratic Kings, and His priestly office accomplishes all the types and ordinances of the Old Test. Priesthood). 14.] The connexion and line of argument is this: in ver. 5 it was shewn, that *not to angels, but to MAN*, is the new order of things subjected: in vv. 6—8, that this domination was predicated of man in the Old Test.: in ver. 9, that the only case of its fulfilment has been that of Jesus, who has been crowned with glory and honour on account of His suffering death. Then, vv. 10, 11 a, it is shewn that the becoming way for the Redeemer to this crown of glory, the purpose of winning which was to bring many sons of God to it, was, being perfected through sufferings, seeing that He must share with those whom He is to sanctify, in dependence on a common Father. Then vv. 11 b, 12, 13 have furnished illustrations confirmatory of this, from His own sayings in the Scripture. And *now* we are come to the proof, that He who was thus to be the Leader of the salvation of these many sons, by trusting like them, and suffering like them, must Himself *BECOME MAN* like them, in order for that His death to have any efficacy towards His purpose. Since then (by since an inference is drawn from the words immediately preceding: by then, the thought is cast back to the argument of which the citations had been an interruption: as if it

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*dren 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; <sup>15</sup> and deliver them who through fear of death were all their*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

are partakers of blood and flesh, he <sup>e</sup> himself also in like manner took part in the same things; <sup>f</sup> that through his death he might destroy him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil; <sup>15</sup> and might deliver as many as <sup>g</sup> through fear

<sup>e</sup> John 1. 14.  
Rom. viii. 3.  
Phil. ii. 7.  
<sup>f</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 54,  
55. Col. ii.  
15. 2 Tim. i.  
10.

<sup>g</sup> Luke 1. 74.  
Rom. viii. 15.  
2 Tim. i. 7.

had been said, "and by this very expression in our last citation, the children, we may substantiate that which our argument is seeking to prove" the children (before mentioned) are partakers of (literally, 'have been constituted partakers of,'—in the order established in nature, and enduring still. The participation is not with their elders, as Valcknaer, but with one another) blood and flesh ("this expression betokens," says Bleek, "the whole sensuous corporeal nature of man, which he has in common with the brutes, and whereby he is the object of sensuous perception and corporeal impressions: whereby also he is subjected to the laws of the infirmity, decay, and transitoriness of material things, in contrast to purely spiritual and incorporeal beings." Delitzsch remarks on the order, that it differs from "*flesh and blood*," in setting forth first the inner and more important element, the blood, as the more immediate and principal vehicle of the soul, . . . before the more visible and palpable element, the flesh: doubtless with reference to the shedding of Blood, with a view to which the Saviour entered into community with our corporeal life), **He Himself also in like manner** (*similarly*). The word expresses a general similitude, a likeness in the main; and so is not to be pressed here, to extend to *entire identity*, nor on the other hand to imply, of purpose, *partial diversity*; but to be taken in its wide and open sense—that He Himself also partook, in the main, in like manner with us, of our nature. The ancient expositors dwell justly on the word as against the Docetæ, who held that our Lord's was only an apparent body) participated in (the A. V., "*took part*," is good, but it should be followed by '*in*,' not '*of*,' which makes it ambiguous. Notice the past tense, referring to the one act of the Incarnation) **the same things** (*viz. blood and flesh*: not, as Bengel, "the same things which happen to his brethren, not even death excepted"); that by means of his death (a paradox.

"Death itself, as Death, is that which Jesus used as the instrument of annihilating the prince of Death;" Hoffmann. There is an old Latin Epigram, which may be thus given in English: "Had not the death of death | by death done death to death, | that key were lost, which Life | Eternal openeth") **He might destroy** (bring to nought. The word is found, besides here, once in St. Luke [xiii. 7], and twenty-five times in St. Paul) **him that hath the power of death** (the present participle is better taken of the office, 'the holder of the power,'—than of past time, '*him that had the power*,' as A. V. The reason why this clause comes first, and not "*the devil*," is probably, as Chrysostom suggests, to exhibit the paradox mentioned above), **that is, the devil** (compare Wisdom ii. 24, "By the envy of the devil death came into the world:" and see Rev. xii. 9; xx. 2. So in the Rabbinical writings, Samael, the chief of the evil spirits, was called the angel of death: and it is said, "Samael was the cause of death to all the world.") The Death of Christ brought to nought the agency of the devil in death, because, that Death of His being not the penalty of His own sin, but the atoning sacrifice for the sin of the world, all those who by faith are united to Him can now look on death no longer as the penalty of sin, but only as the passage for them, as it was for Him, to a new and glorious life of triumph and blessedness. But for those who are not united to Him, death, retaining its character of a punishment for sin, retains also therewith all its manifold terrors); **and might deliver those who** (as many as. This does not in such a case imply the existence of *others who do not fulfil the thing* predicated, but rather takes, so to speak, the full measure of those indicated, being almost equivalent to "*who, every one of them . . .*" These persons whom Christ died to free, were all subject to this bondage induced by the fear of death. And these in fact were, all mankind; to whom the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

of death were all their lifetime kept under bondage. <sup>16</sup> For, as we know, it is not angels that he helpeth, but it is <sup>h</sup> the seed of Abraham that he helpeth. <sup>17</sup> Wherefore it behoved him in all things <sup>i</sup> to be like unto

n Matt. i. 1.

i Phil. ii. 7.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*lifetime subject to bondage.*  
<sup>16</sup> *For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.*  
<sup>17</sup> *Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made*

potential benefit of Christ's death extends) by fear of death were through all their lifetime subjects of (not merely 'subject to,' so that they might or might not be involved in it, but their actual implication is inferred) bondage (Calvin's note is well worth transcribing: "This place admirably expresses how wretched is their life who dread death; as all must dread it who view it out of Christ; for then there appears in it nothing but a curse. For whence comes death except from the wrath of God against sin? Hence this bondage through life, i.e. perpetual anxiety, constraining their unhappy souls. For conscience of sin ever implies dread of divine judgment. From this fear Christ has liberated us, taken away our curse by submitting to it, which was the thing formidable in death").

16.] Explanatory of ver. 15, by pointing out a fact well known to us all, that it was to help a race subject to death, that Christ came. For, as we well know, it is not angels that He helpeth, but it is the seed of Abraham that He helpeth (I have rendered thus, to preserve the emphasis on the two contrasted words, *angels*, and the *seed of Abraham*. The word rendered *helpeth* signifies "*takes by the hand*," in order to assist and lead. This help is not by Him rendered to *angels*: He is not the Captain of their salvation. And herein there is no contradiction to Col. i. 20: for the reconciliation which Christ has effected even for the things in the heavens, is not delivering them from fear of death, or bringing them through sufferings to glory, whatever mystery it may involve beyond our power of conception. *the seed of Abraham* next comes under consideration. And we must here as ever, render, and understand, according to the simple sense of the words used, regarding the circumstances under which they were used. Accordingly, we must not here understand *mankind*, as some have done: nor again with others, can we suppose the *spiritual* seed of Abraham to be meant [Gal. iii. 7, 29; Rom. iv. 11 f., 16],—because, as Bleek well remarks, the present context speaks

not of that *into which* Christ has made those redeemed by Him, but of that *out of which* He has helped them. *The seed of Abraham* then means, *the Jewish race*, among whom Christ was born in the flesh, and whom He did come primarily to help: and the peculiarity of the expression must be explained, with Estius,—“This whole epistle prudently dissimulates the calling of the Gentiles, either because the mention of them would be displeasing to the Hebrews, or because that mention was not necessary to its design.” I must not omit to mention, that the above manner of interpreting this verse, now generally acquiesced in, was not that of the ancient expositors. By them it was generally supposed that the verb referred to our Lord's taking upon Him of our nature: and they for the most part make it into a past tense, and render as A. V.,—“*He took not upon Him the nature of angels, but He took upon Him the seed of Abraham.*” But independently of other reasons against this, arising from the usage of the word, the formula ‘to take on him the seed of Abraham, or the angels,’ would be a most unnatural way of expressing ‘to take the nature of either of these.’ And the ancients themselves seem to have felt, that this formula of itself could not bear such a meaning. They assume accordingly that the writer represents man and his nature, through sinfulness, alienated and flying from God and the divine nature, and the Son of God pursuing, overtaking, and drawing it into union with Himself. It needs little to shew how far-fetched and forced this interpretation of the words is, if it is intended to give the sense of *assuming the nature of man*. See more remarks on the meaning in my Greek Test.).

17.] Because then He had this work to do for the seed of Abraham (sons of men, in the wider reference),—viz. to deliver them from *fear* of death, He must be made like them in all things, that He may be a merciful and faithful High Priest. Then ver. 18 gives the reason of this necessity. **Whence it behoved Him** (not implying the eternal purpose of God [Luke xxiv.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

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.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

his brethren, that he might become <sup>k</sup> a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make expiation for the sins of the people. <sup>k</sup> ch. iv. 15. & v. 1, 2.

26:—but a moral necessity in the carrying out of His mediatorial work) in all things (i. e. all things wherewith the present argument is concerned: all things which constitute real humanity, and introduce to its sufferings and temptations and sympathies. The exception, *without sin*, brought out in ch. iv. 15, is not in view here) to be like (not, ‘made like.’ The original expresses that this resemblance was brought about by a definite act, other than his former state: an important distinction, which however we must rather lose in the English than introduce an irrelevant idea by the word ‘made’) unto his brethren (the children of Israel, as above: but obviously also, his brethren in the flesh—all mankind), that he might become (become, not simply be, because the High Priesthood of Christ in all its fulness, and especially in its work of mercy and compassion and succour, was not inaugurated, till He entered into the heavenly place: see ch. v. 9, vi. 19, 20, vii. 26, viii. 1, 4. His being in all things like his brethren, sufferings and death included, was necessary for Him, in order to his becoming, through those sufferings and death, our High Priest. It was not the death [though that was of previous necessity, and therefore is often spoken of as involving the whole], but the bringing the blood into the holy place, in which the work of sacerdotal expiation consisted: see Levit. iv. 13—20: and below, on the end of the verse) a merciful (the original might also be rendered, ‘merciful, and a faithful High Priest:’ but against adopting this here, see in my Greek Test.) and faithful (true to His office, not only as regards God [ch. iii. 5], but as regards men also; to be trusted without fail) High Priest (this is the first mention of the sacerdotal office of Christ, of which so much is afterwards said in the Epistle, and which recurs again so soon, ch. iii. 1) in matters relating to God (the words must not be referred to faithful, but to High Priest; or rather to the whole idea, “a merciful and faithful High Priest”), to expiate the sins (the word used here means to be propitiated, and properly used passively

of the person to be rendered propitious. The expression is not a strict one: but is thus to be accounted for: God is rendered propitious to the sinner, who has forfeited His favour and incurred His wrath. But we never find in Scripture, Old Test. or New Test., any such expression as “the Father was propitiated concerning our sins by the death of His Son;” or as this, “Christ propitiated God (or, ‘the wrath of God’) by His blood:” never, “God was reconciled to us.” “As the Old Test. nowhere says, that sacrifice propitiated God’s wrath, lest it should be thought that sacrifice was an act, by which, as such, man influenced God to shew him grace,—so also the New Test. never says that the sacrifice of Christ propitiated God’s wrath, lest it may be thought that it was an act anticipatory of God’s gracious purpose,—which obtained, and so to speak, forced from God previously reluctant, without His own concurrence, grace instead of wrath.” Delitzsch. To understand this rightly, is all-important to any right holding of the doctrine of the Atonement. This then is not said: but the sinner is [improperly, as far as the use of the word is concerned] said on his part, to be propitiated, to be brought into God’s favour; and if the sinner, then that on account of which he is a sinner, viz. his sin. The word here is used of Him who, by His propitiation, brings the sinner into God’s favour, i. e. makes propitiation for, expiates, the sin. The Death of Christ being the necessary opening and condition of this propitiation,—the propitiation being once for all consummated by the sacrifice of His death, and all sin by that sacrifice expiated, we must of necessity determine [against the Socinian view of Christ’s High Priesthood, which will again and again come before us in this commentary] that His High Priesthood was, strictly speaking, begun, as its one chief work in substance was accomplished, here below, during His time of suffering. That it is still continued in heaven, and indeed finds its highest and noblest employ there, is no reason against this view. The high priest had accomplished his sacrifice, before he went



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>1</sup> ch. iv. 15, 16.  
& v. 2. & vii.  
25.

18<sup>1</sup> For he himself having been tempted in that which he hath suffered, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

III. <sup>1</sup> Wherefore, holy brethren,

within the veil to sprinkle the blood: though it was that sprinkling of the blood by which the atonement was actually made, as it is by the Spirit's application of Christ's atoning blood to the heart of each individual sinner that he is brought into reconciliation with God) of the people (again, the Jewish people, compare Matt. i. 21 : Luke i. 68, 77 ; ii. 10. "Why did not he say, the sins of the world, but, of the people? because then the relation of the Lord was to the Jews only, and He came especially on their account, that their salvation might precede the salvation of the rest : notwithstanding that the converse really happened." Theophylact).

18.] Explanation, how the being like His brethren in all things has answered the end, that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest. For He Himself having been tempted in that which He hath suffered, He is able to succour them that are (now) tempted (the construction is much doubted. The sentence is open to several logical arrangements and consequent renderings. 1) "for He is able to help those who are tried by the same temptations in which His own sufferings have consisted : " 2) "for having been Himself tempted in that which He hath suffered, &c. : " 3) "for in that which He hath suffered when He himself was tempted, He is able to succour those who are tempted [in the same] : " 4) "for in that in which He himself was tempted and hath suffered He is able, &c." Of these I much prefer 2) ; because (a) it keeps together the prominent members of the logical comparison, between Him being tempted and us being tempted, giving "in that which He hath suffered" as a qualification of being tempted, and thus explaining wherein His temptation consisted. Nor (b) is it at all open to Lünemann's objection, that it limits the power of Christ to help, to those things merely in which He himself has suffered and been tempted : stating as it does generally the fact being tempted, and then specifying in what, viz. in that which He hath suffered. It also (c) corresponds exactly in construction with the similar sentence ch. v. 8,—"He learned, from the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

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

III. <sup>1</sup> Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the

things which He suffered, obedience," in supplying an object after suffered. And (d) it seems more natural that an object should be required after the perfect, than that it should be used absolutely. After 'He hath suffered,' we enquire, 'What?'—after 'He suffered,'—'When?' Christ's whole sufferings were a temptation in the sense here intended : see ch. iv. 15 ; James i. 2. The rendering given in the A. V., making "in that" a conjunction of inference, meaning "because," seems to be quite unauthorized. The ability to succour here is not to be understood of the power to which the Lord has been exalted through death and suffering to be a Prince and a Saviour,—which is not here in question : but of the power of sympathy which he has acquired by personal experience of our sufferings. As God, He knows what is in us : but as man, He feels it also. And by this, wonderful as it may seem, He has acquired a fresh power, that of sympathy with us, and, in consequence, of helping us. See my sermon on this text, in Quebec Chapel Sermons, vol iii. p. 84. And this is the general view of expositors, both ancient and modern).

CHAP. III. 1—IV. 16.] THE SON OF GOD GREATER ALSO THAN MOSES : AND INFERENCES THEREFROM. The Writer has arrived, through the reasonings of ch. i. ii., at the mention of the High Priesthood of Jesus. He might at once have passed thence to the superiority of His High Priesthood to that of the imperfect priests on earth. But one point yet remains, without which the Gospel would not have its entire comparison with the law. The law was given by angels in the hand of a mediator. Moses was that mediator. Moses was above all others the prophet by whom God had spoken to the Fathers in times past. Christ therefore must be compared with Moses, and shewn to be greater than he. This being done, he returns again to his central idea, the High Priesthood of Christ (ch. iv. 14) ; and from thenceforward treats of and unfolds it. Ebrard gives the detailed connexion well : "The angel of the covenant came in the name of God before the people of



AUTHORIZED VERSION.

heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; <sup>2</sup> who was faithful to him that ap-

AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

partakers of <sup>a</sup> an heavenly calling, <sup>a</sup> consider <sup>b</sup> the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, † Jesus; <sup>2</sup> that he is faithful to him that <sup>b</sup>

Rom. 1. 7.  
1 Cor. i. 2.  
Eph. iv. 1.  
Phil. iii. 14.  
2 Thess. 1. 11.  
2 Tim. i. 9.  
2 Pet. i. 10.  
Rom. xv. 8.  
ch. ii. 17. &  
iv. 14. & v. 5.

& vi. 20. & viii. 1. & ix. 11. & x. 21.

† Christ is omitted by all our earliest MSS.

Israel; Moses in the name of Israel before God: the High Priest came in the name of God before Israel (with the name 'Jehovah' on his forehead), and in the name of Israel (with the names of the twelve tribes on his breast) before God (Exod. xxviii. 9-29 and 36-68). Now the New Test. Messiah is above the angels, according to ch. i. ii. a) because in Himself as Son of God He is higher than they, and b) because in Him all humanity is exalted above the angels to lordship in the 'world to come,' and that by this means, because the Messiah is not only Angel, but also High Priest,—not only messenger of God to men, but also the propitiatory sacerdotal representative of men before God. Now exactly parallel with this runs our second part. The fundamental thesis, ch. iii. 3, 'For this person hath been counted worthy of more honour than Moses,' is plainly analogous in form with the fundamental thesis of the first part, i. 4, 'becoming so much better than the angels.' The New Test. Messiah is above Moses, because He a) of Himself, as Son of the house (iii. 6), is above him who was only the servant of the house (compare with iii. 5,—i. 14), and b) because the work, of bringing Israel into rest, which was not finished by Moses, is now finished by Him (iv. 1 ff.). And this work Christ has finished, by being not, as Moses, a mere leader and lawgiver, but at the same time a propitiatory representative, an *High Priest* (ch. v. 11 ff.). So far does the parallelism of the two portions reach even into details, that as the two divisions of the former part are separated by a hortatory passage, so are those of this part also:—

I. The Son and the angels.

a) The Son of God of Himself higher than the ministering spirits of God, i. 5-14.

(Hortatory passage, ii. 1-4.)

b) In Him manhood is exalted above the angels, ii. 5-16.

II. The Son and Moses.

a) The Son of the house of Israel higher than the servant of the house, iii. 1-6.

(Hortatory passage, iii. 7-19.)

b) In Him Israel has entered into rest, iv. 1-13.

For He was also High Priest, ii. 17, Thus He is also our High Priest, iv. 14-16."

Ebrard has perhaps not enough noticed the prevalence of the hortatory mood not only in the interposed passage, iii. 7-19, but all through the section: compare iv. 1, 11, 14, 16.

1.] Whence (i. e. seeing that we have such a helper: it is connected with the result of ch. ii. The fact just announced in ii. 18, is a reason for our *considering*, &c.: see below), *holy brethren* (both these words are used in reference to the *brethren*, ch. ii. 11, 12. Not that the *brethren* here are *Christ's* brethren: but that the use of the word reminds them of that brotherhood in and because of Christ, of which he has before spoken. Whether the idea of common nationality is here to be introduced, is at least doubtful. I should rather regard it as swallowed up in the great brotherhood in Christ: and Bleek has well remarked, that, had the Writer been addressing believing Jews and Gentiles, or even believing Gentiles only, he would have used the same term of address, and without any conscious difference of meaning), *partakers of an heavenly calling* (the invitation, or summons, of God, calling men to His glory in Christ—and hence the state which is entered by them in pursuance of that calling: compare especially Phil. iii. 14. Then also *heavenly* means—a calling made from heaven, see ch. xii. 25. Or it may mean, the calling which proposes a heavenly reward,—whose inheritance is in heaven. By far the best way is, to join the two meanings together: *heavenly* in its purport and *heavenward* in its result), *contemplate* (survey, with a view to more closely considering, not, "pay attention to, be obedient to") *the Apostle and High Priest* (both words belong to the genitive, which follows) *of our profession, Jesus* (apostle, as superior to the *angels*, being Himself the angel of the covenant, God's greatest messenger: the word "*angel*" being avoided, on account of its technical use before, to prevent Christ being confused with the angels in nature. He is the "*sent from the Father*:" see John xx. 21.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

<sup>c</sup> Numb. xii. 7. made him, as also was <sup>e</sup> Moses in  
ver. 6. all His house. <sup>3</sup> For this person  
hath been counted worthy of more  
<sup>d</sup> Zech. vi. 12. glory than Moses, inasmuch as <sup>d</sup> he  
Matt. xvi. 18. who established the house hath more  
honour than the house. <sup>4</sup> For every

*pointed him, as also Moses  
was faithful in all his house.  
<sup>3</sup> 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.  
<sup>4</sup> For every house is builded*

[I may remark, that the circumstance of the Writer using the term "*apostle*" without scruple, as designating our Lord, may shew that the *apostles*, as a class, were not so distinctly marked as they have since been: a view supported also by some expressions of St. Paul: e.g. 2 Cor. viii. 23.] of our [Christian] confession,—i.e. of our faith. 2.] First, a point of *likeness* between our Lord and Moses is brought out, and that by a reference to an Old Test. declaration respecting the latter); that he is (not '*was.*' The present sense must be retained here. Then a question arises: are we to understand it strictly of present time, of Christ now in heaven,—or as in the case cited, of general designation? Clearly, I think, of the latter: Jesus, whose character it is, that He is *faithful*. For the strict present would, to say nothing of other objections, not apply to the portion of the Lord's office, designated by the word "*apostle,*" but only to that comprized under "*High Priest.*" It characterizes faithfulness as His inherent attribute) *faithful* (it is questioned, whether or not this word refers back to the "*faithful High Priest*" of ch. ii. 18. The sense is certainly not the same: the faithfulness there being the fidelity wherewith He, being like His brethren, would, so to speak, reproduce their wants before God;—that here spoken of being His faithfulness to God, over whose house He is set, ver. 6. Still I cannot help thinking that the *word itself* is led to by, and takes up that other. That regarded more the *sacerdotal*, this regards the *apostolic* office of Christ) to him that made him (so we must render: not, '*that appointed him.*' See this defended, and citations of the expression in both senses in the Fathers, in my Greek Test. The word thus taken, is of course to be understood of that constitution of our Lord as our Apostle and High Priest in which He, being human, was made by the Father: not of Him as the eternal Word, which would be irrelevant here, besides being against all Scripture pre-

cedent), as also (also—to take another instance of faithfulness: thus, with every circumstance of honour, is Moses introduced, before any disparagement of him is entered upon) [*was*] Moses in all his house (cited from Numbers in the references, "*My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house.*" 1) It may be well to remark, that the substitution of his for "*my*" at once indicates to whom "*His*" is to be referred: viz. to God, who made him: see also below on ver. 6. And so most ancient and modern Commentators. 2) The circumstance of the quotation makes it far more natural to refer "*in all His house*" to Moses directly, and not to Christ, as some do, putting a comma at *Moses*. 3) The ellipsis is to be filled up by "*was faithful*" after "*Moses,*" as in the place cited, and as in A. V. 4) The signification of "*His house*" is well illustrated by 1 Tim. iii. 15,—"*the house of God, which is the church of the living God.*" It imports the Church of God: and is one and the same here and in ver. 6; not two different houses, but the same, in the case of Moses taken at one time only,—in that of Christ, in its whole existence and development). 3.] For (the *for* is best connected, as commonly, with the "*consider*" above: as containing the reason why our attention should be thus fixed on Jesus: *for*, though He has the quality of faithfulness in God's house in common with Moses, yet is He far more exalted and glorious than he) this person (better than "*this man*" of the A. V., which brings in an element not present here) hath been held worthy (the word includes, with the idea of '*accounting worthy,*' that also of the *actual* bestowal of the dignity. It refers to the honour and glory wherewith God hath crowned Christ, in His exaltation to His right Hand; which is taken for granted without further explanation, as a fact well known to the readers) of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he hath more honour than the house, who established it (so literally. The *establishing* here meant refers beyond

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

by some man; but he that built all things is God. <sup>5</sup> And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

house is established by some one; but <sup>e</sup> he that established all things is God. <sup>5 f</sup> And Moses verily was faithful in all His house, as <sup>g a g</sup> a servant, <sup>h</sup> for testimony of those

<sup>e</sup> Eph. ii. 10. & iii. 9. ch. i. 2.

<sup>g a g</sup> Exod. xiv. 31. Numb. xii. 7. Deut. iii. 24. Josh. i. 2. & viii. 31. <sup>h</sup> Deut. xviii. 15, 18, 19.

doubt primarily to the erection of an actual house. The word is so used, of the preparation of a building,—a house, or temple, or ship, or town, &c.—In almost all the places where it occurs (see my Greek Test.) the verb may be so taken as to include not only the erection of the building, ship, &c., but also the fitting up, providing with proper furniture. And here also we may say, that it means more than the building of the house, and includes, besides the building of the house, the fitting it up and providing it with all requisites. So that to this *establishment* of the house belong servants, male and female; and so here we may say that the servants of the house are included. The sense then is this: just as he who has built and furnished a house,—for himself namely, as master of the house,—stands higher in honour than the house itself and the individual *servants*, so does Christ higher than Moses: and Christ is thus represented as he who has prepared the house of God [and therefore as its lord], to whom Moses also belongs as an individual *servant*).

4.] For (expansion and justification of the last verse) **every house is established by some one** (i. e. it belongs to the idea of a house that some one should have built and fitted it up: arrangement implies an arranger, design a designer); but (contrast as passing from the individual to the general) **He which established all things is God** (before treating of the misunderstanding of this verse by the fathers, and by many of the moderns, let us endeavour to grasp its true meaning. The last verse brings before us Christ as the *establisher* of the house of God. And this He is, in whatever sense the word “house” be taken: whether in the narrower sense which best suits this present comparison, or in the wider sense implied by the faithful centurion in Matt. viii. 9, in which all natural powers are his *servants*. But he is this, not by independent will or agency. “By whom also He made the worlds,” is our Writer’s own language of the creation by Christ: and it is in accord with that of St. John, where he says “all things were made by Him.” He, as the

*Son*, is *He that established* the house of God—the church, or the world, or the universe; but, apparently [compare ver. 6], the former of these: but it is as one with—by virtue of his Sonship—Him who is the *Establisher of all things*, viz. God. And thus the **his**, twice repeated in vv. 5, 6, falls into its own place as belonging both times to God: Moses is His servant, part and portion of His household: Christ is His Son, over His household. And by this reference to God as the *first Establisher*, is the expression above, “*him that made him*,” illustrated and justified. So that this verse is not parenthetical, as almost all the recent expositors make it,—but distinctly part of the argument. The ancient expositors, almost without exception, take “*God*” as predicate, and “*He that established all things*” as a designation of Christ—“*now He that founded all things, is [must be] God?*” thus making the passage a proof of the deity of Christ. But, apart from the extreme harshness and forcing of the construction to bring out this meaning, the sentiment itself is entirely irrelevant here. If the Writer was proving Christ to be greater than Moses inasmuch as He is God, the founder of all things, then clearly the mere assertion of this fact would have sufficed for the proof, without entering on another consideration: nay, after such an assertion, all minor considerations would have been not only superfluous, but preposterous. He does however, after this, distinctly go into the consideration of Christ being faithful not as a servant but as a son: so that he cannot be here speaking of His Deity as a ground of superiority).

5.] The argument proceeds, resuming the common ground of ver. 2. **And Moses indeed** (inasmuch as but following has the effect of bringing out, and thus emphasizing, *Christ*, this **indeed**, or **verily**, may almost be treated as a particle of disparagement) [was] **faithful in all His** (i. e. God’s, compare above the words of the citation, on ver. 2. It is necessary in the English to mark this reference, which otherwise would be missed) **house, as a servant** (compare. as above; the word *servant* is

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

things which were to be spoken  
 after; <sup>6</sup> but Christ as <sup>1a</sup> a son over  
 1 ch. i. 2. His house; <sup>k</sup> whose house are we,  
 k 1 Cor. iii. 16. & vi. 19.  
 2 Cor. vi. 16. Eph. ii. 21,  
 22. 1 Tim. iii. 15. 1 Pet. ii. 5.  
 1 ver. 14.  
 Matt. x. 22. & xxiv. 15. Rom. v. 2. Col. i. 23. ch. vi. 11. & x. 55.  
 if we hold fast the confidence and  
 the matter of boasting of our hope †.  
 7 Wherefore, (as <sup>m</sup> the Holy Ghost

were to be spoken after;  
<sup>6</sup> 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  
 † firm unto the end is omitted by the Vatican MS. and some  
 in 2 Sam. xxiii. 2. Acts i. 16.

often applied in the Old Test. to Moses :

see Exod. iv. 10, xiv. 31 : Numb. xii. 7, 8 : Josh. i. 2, &c. The Greek word used here for *servant* is not that which signifies *slave*, but a more honourable one, designating all who minister to one another on any account, for testimony of the things which were to be [afterwards] spoken (these words are not to be joined with "*servant*," nor with "*faithful*," but with the whole preceding sentence: the purpose of the faithful service of Moses in God's house was, for testimony, &c. The things which were to be spoken after can only mean *the Gospel* (see the various insufficient meanings which have been given and discussed in my Greek Test.). Owen observes, "This as well the order of the words as the import of them doth require. In his ministry he was a testimony, or, by what he did in the service of the house he gave testimony: whereunto? to the things that were afterwards to be spoken, viz. in the fulness of time, the appointed season, by the Messiah: i. e. the things of the gospel. And this indeed was the proper end of all that Moses did or ordered in the house of God"; but Christ (understand, *is faithful*). Then, supplying this, are we to join it with "*over his house*," or to insert it before the words "*as a Son*," and take it absolutely? Certainly the latter, as shewn by the order of the words in the previous sentence; the ellipsis here being, to judge by that order, between "*but Christ*" and "*as*," not between "*Son*" and "*over*" as a Son over His house (his here again of God,—not primarily, though of course by inference, of Christ. The house is God's throughout: but Christ is of primary authority and glory in it, inasmuch as He is the Son in the house, and actually established the house. This, which I am persuaded is required by the context, is shewn decisively by ch. x. 21, "Having . . . a great High Priest over the house of God." Most Commentators refer it to Christ: and some, as A. V., understand "*his*" to mean "*his own*." But thus the parallelism is destroyed, and in fact the

identity of the house in the two cases, on which depends the strictness of the comparison between Moses and Christ. Ebrard has maintained that *two houses* are intended: "in the one house serves Moses for a testimony of the future revelations of God, the *house* itself being part of the *testimony*: the other *house*, the *house* of Christ, are *we*: it is a living house, built of living stones." But this introduces a complicated comparison, and to my mind infinitely weakens the argument. There is but one house throughout, and that one, the Church of God, in which both are faithful; one as a servant, the other as a son: this house was Israel, this house are we, if we are found faithful in the covenant; whose (not [except by inference] Christ's). Besides the considerations urged above as affecting the question, we have the strong argument from Scripture analogy, compare 1 Tim. iii. 15; 1 Pet. iv. 17; 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17; 2 Cor. vi. 16; Eph. ii. 22; ch. x. 21, xii. 22; Rev. iii. 12: which alone, especially ch. x. 21, would go very far with me to decide the question) house are we (the Writer and his Hebrew readers: of whose house we are, even as Moses was), if we hold fast the confidence and the matter of boasting of our hope (see Rom. v. 2).

7—19.] See the summary at the beginning of the chapter. *Exhortation*, founded on the warning given by the Spirit in Ps. xcvi., not to allow an evil heart of unbelief to separate them from this their participation in the house of God.

7.] Wherefore (i. e. seeing that they are the house of Christ, if they hold fast their confidence and boast of hope. It has been disputed, what following verb is to be connected with *wherefore*. Some join it immediately with "*harden not*," and regard the Writer as making the Spirit's words his own: but this labours under the great difficulty that in ver. 9 the speaker is God Himself, and so an unnatural break is made at the end of ver. 8. Others believe that the construction begun with *wherefore* is dropped, and

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

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

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

saith, <sup>n</sup> To-day if ye hear his voice, <sup>n ver. 15. Psa</sup>  
 8 harden not your hearts, as in the <sup>xcv. 7.</sup>  
 provocation, at the day of tempta-  
 tion in the wilderness: 9 where your  
 fathers tempted, † in proving, and † <sup>So all our</sup>  
 saw my works forty years. 10 Where- <sup>oldest MSS.</sup>

never finished, as in Rom. xv. 3, 21; 1 Cor. i. 31, ii. 9: *supplying* after *wherefore*, "*harden not your hearts*,"—or understanding *wherefore* more freely, "*wherefore* let it be so with you, as &c." But by far the best way is, to take the whole citation, including the formula of citation, as a parenthesis, and join *wherefore* with take heed, ver. 12. The length of such parenthesis is no objection to this view: see ch. vii. 20—22; xii. 18—24, where the Writer, after similar parentheses, returns back into the previous construction. Nor again is it any objection, that in the midst of the citation, another "*wherefore*" occurs, ver. 10: for that "*wherefore*" belongs strictly to the citation, and finds both its preparation and its resulting clause within its limits),—even as the Holy Spirit saith (in Ps. xcv., Hebrew and English. This Psalm in the Hebrew has no writer's name: in the Septuagint it is headed, "*a psalm of praise of (or, to) David.*" And it is ascribed to David in ch. iv. 7 below. The passage is cited as the direct testimony of the Holy Spirit, speaking through David), *To-day if ye hear his voice* (in the Psalm, according to the Hebrew, the words corresponding to these, the second half of the 7th verse, form an independent sentence, to be taken as a powerful exhortation expressed in the form of a wish. The sense from ver. 6 is,—*Come let us fall down and bow ourselves, kneel before Jehovah our Creator. For He is our God, and we the people of his pasture and the flock of his hand.*' Then this sentence follows: *'O that ye might this day hearken to His voice!'* "*This day*" stands first, with strong emphasis, in contrast to the whole past time, during which they had shewn themselves disobedient and rebellious against the divine voice, as e. g. during the journey through the wilderness, alluded to in the following verses: '*to-day*' therefore means '*now*,' '*now at length.*' Then in the following verses, to the end of the Psalm, is introduced, that which the divine voice, which they are to hear, addresses to them. *To-day* will thus refer to the day in which the Psalm was used in public worship,

whenever that might be. See below), *harden not your hearts* (Hebrew, *heart*. Bleek remarks, that this is the only place where this expression '*to harden the heart,*' is [in the original Hebrew text: the A. V. is inaccurate in Exod. viii. 15, 32, 1 Sam. vi. 6, where the expression is, literally rendered, *to make heavy or dull*] used of *man's* own act: elsewhere it is always of *God's* act, compare Exod. iv. 21; vii. 3 [vii. 22; viii. 19]; ix. 12 [35]; x. 20, 27; xi. 10; xiv. 4, 17; Isa. lxiii. 17; and with "*spirit*," Deut. ii. 30; whereas when the hardening is described as the work of man, the formula "*to stiffen the neck*" is used, Deut. x. 16; Neh. ix. 17, 29; 2 Chron. xxx. 8; xxxvi. 13; Jer. vii. 26; 2 Kings xvii. 14. For New Test. usage see Acts xix. 9; Rom. ix. 18), as in the provocation (the Hebrew has, '*as [at] Meribah.*' In Exod. xvii. 1—7 we read that the place where the children of Israel murmured against the Lord for want of water was called Massah and Meribah. But the subsequent account of Numb. xx. 1—13, makes it plain that the two names refer to two different events and places: and this is further confirmed by Deut. xxxiii. 8,—*"Thy holy One whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah."* In the Psalm these two are mentioned together, and the Septuagint as usual *translate* the names. In giving, for the proper names, their meaning and occasion, they have in fact cast light upon the sacred text; though it is rather comment than strict translation), *in the time of* (in the Hebrew this second clause is distinct from the first, and introduces a fresh instance: see below) *the day of the temptation in the wilderness* (Hebrew, "*as in the day of Massah in the wilderness:*" viz. that of the second murmuring against Moses and Aaron for want of water: see Numb. xx. 1—13. The place was in the wilderness of Sin, near Kadesh: ib. ver. 1): *where your fathers tempted, by way of trial* ('*tempted [me] in trying,*' or '*proving [me]*'), and *saw my works* (Hebrew, "*moreover they saw my work*"—i. e. my penal judgments; for



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

† *So most of  
our oldest  
MSS.*

fore I was grieved with † this generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they never knew my ways. <sup>11</sup> According as I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. <sup>11</sup> So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)*

these penal judgments lasted during the forty years, and it is they which are described in the next sentence. The meaning given by most expositors, "*although they saw my works [miracles of deliverance, &c.] for forty years,*" is not so likely, seeing that these provocations happened at the beginning of the forty years. But see below) **forty years** (these words in the Hebrew most probably belong, as rendered in our A. V., to what follows: "*I was grieved with this generation forty years:*" an arrangement rendered impossible here, on account of *wherefore* intervening.—But that such arrangement was not unknown to our Writer is plain, from his presently saying, ver. 17, "*With whom was he grieved forty years?*" It is therefore likely that he did not choose this arrangement without reason. And if we ask what that reason was, we find an answer in the probability that the forty years' space is taken as representing to the Hebrews their space for repentance; their "*to-day*" between the opening of the preaching of the gospel [compare ch. ii. 2], and their impending destruction. This idea was recognized by the Jews themselves in their books: "How long endure the years of the Messiah? Rabbi Eliezer said, forty years, in like manner as the children of Israel were this number of years in the wilderness." "And if," says Bleek, "this idea of the days of the Messiah was prevalent, that they were the immediate precursors of the '*age to come*,' as the time of the great Sabbath-rest and the completed glory of the people of God,—this is something very analogous to the acceptance of the period of the forty years which seems to underlie what is said of them in our Epistle." If so, it is possible that the meaning may be, that they saw My wonderful works and took no heed to them, and thereby increased their guilt). . . . **10.] Wherefore** (see above: it is inserted, to mark more strongly the reference of the *forty years* to the preceding. It is impossible, with this particle of inference, to join those words to this sentence. Instead of being anxious, as some Commentators are, at the

expense of the meaning of words, to put our citations straight to the letter, it is far better to recognize at once the truth, for such it is, which Calvin here so boldly states: "We know that the Apostles, in citing testimonies, are more attentive to the main subject, than anxious about words") **I was offended with this generation** (the Septuagint has "*that generation,*" as the received text here: there is no demonstrative in the original Hebrew,—*the generation*. The change seems to be made by our Writer for a set purpose, viz., to extend the saying, by making "*generation*" thus import the whole Jewish people,—the then living race, as well as that which provoked God in the wilderness. Compare Matt. xxiv. 34, and note), and said, **They do alway err in their heart** (Hebrew, "*They are a people of wanderers in heart*"); but they (in Hebrew, merely "*and they*") **knew not** (*never knew*: their ignorance preceded their wandering, and is treated as the antecedent fact to it. The *not knowing*, where matters of practical religion are concerned, implies the not following) **my ways** (i. e., the ways which I would have them to walk in: so Gen. vi. 12; Exod. xviii. 20). **As according** ("in conformity with the fact, that:": such conformity not necessarily implying that the excluding oath was *prior* to the disobedience, but only that the oath and the disobedience were strict correlatives of one another. As the one, so was the other) **I sware** (see Numb. xiv. 21 ff.; xxxii. 10 ff.; Deut. i. 34 ff.) **in my wrath, If they shall enter** (so literally: this elliptical form of an oath stands for a strong negative: it is sometimes, when *man* is the speaker, filled up by "The Lord do so to me and more also, if . . ." Compare reference Mark; 2 Sam. iii. 35, and other places. It is interpreted below, ver. 18: "*to whom sware he that they should not enter,*" &c.) **into my rest** (in the Psalm, and in the places referred to above, the *rest* is, primarily, the promised land of Canaan. In Deut. xii. 9, 10, the words "*rest*" and "*giving you rest*" are used of the promised inheritance of Canaan. But it has been



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

<sup>12</sup> Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. <sup>13</sup> But exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. <sup>14</sup> For we are made partakers of Christ, if we

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

into my rest.) <sup>12</sup> Take heed, brethren, lest there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the ° living God. <sup>13</sup> But exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day; lest from among you any one be hardened through the deceitfulness of his sin. <sup>14</sup> For we have become partakers of

o ch. ix. 14, &  
x. 31, & xii.  
22.

well noticed, that after Joshua had led the people into the land, they never in reality enjoyed entirely the rest which had been promised;—and in consequence, the meaning of that threat of God opened out before them, and it became plain that more was denounced upon the *generation* than one generation merely could exhaust, more also than the mere not entering into Canaan. Hence the prophetic pregnancy of the oath became evident, and its meaning was carried on in this exhortation by the Psalmist, and is here carried on by the sacred Writer of this Epistle, to a further rest which then remained for Israel, and now still remains for the people of God). 12.]

Take heed (on the connexion of this with “wherefore” above, ver. 7, see note there), brethren, lest there shall be in any one of you (not the same as “among you.” It is more searching, in meaning not the whole flock only, but every individual member of it. “The good shepherd ought so to watch for the whole flock, as not to neglect a single sheep.” Calvin) an evil heart of unbelief (the genitive is possessive; an evil heart belonging to, characteristic of, unbelief. This is plain, from the consideration that *unbelief* is throughout the leading idea, compare ver. 19, and ch. iv. 3,—and not the *evil heart*. Unbelief must be kept to its simple primary meaning, not rendered *disobedience*; it was not this, but disbelief in the strictest sense, which excluded them, and against which the Hebrews are warned. That it led on to *disobedience*, we all know, but this is not before us here), in (the element in which the existence of such an evil heart of unbelief would be shewn) departing (apostatizing, falling from the faith: see below) from the living God (by using this solemn title of God, he not only warns them from Whom, and at what risk, they would depart, but also identifies the God whom they would leave, with Him who had so often called Himself by this

name as the distinctive God of Israel, and as contrasted with the dumb and impotent idols of other nations. And thus he shows them that Israel, and the privileges and responsibilities of Israel, were now transferred to the Christian church, from which if they fell away they would be guilty of apostasy from the God of Israel. Compare the three other places [reff.] where the term occurs in our Epistle, and the notes there).

13.] But exhort yourselves (so, in a literal rendering, should the word be given, and not “one another,” though English idiom may require this latter in a version intended for use. This is especially meant, that in the church one should exhort another: yet not excluding the implication, that each one should himself be exhorted by his exhortation of the church. In Col. iii. 16, we have the same relation expressed) day by day, as long as the [word] “To-day” is named (i. e., as long as that period endures, which can be called by the name “to-day” as used in the Psalm. That period would be here, *the day of grace*: the short time [see ch. x. 25, 37] before the coming of the Lord); that from among you (emphatic, as contradistinguished from “your fathers” ver. 9) no one be hardened (as they, ver. 8) by deceit of (arising out of, belonging to) his sin (compare Rom. vii. 11, “For sin . . . deceived me and slew me.” See also Eph. iv. 22. In ch. xi. 25, xii. 4, “sin” is similarly used for defection from God).

14.] A reason given for taking heed, &c., enforcing the caution; since it is only by endurance that we can become partakers of Christ. For we have become (Bleek remarks, “Our Writer loves the use of this term, ‘have become,’ where he designates a state to which any one has attained, even where it would have been sufficient to have expressed simply the being in that state.” See text and notes, ch. v. 11, 12; vii. 16, 20, 22,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

p ver. 6. Christ, <sup>p</sup>if we hold the beginning  
of our confidence stedfast unto the  
q ver. 7. end; <sup>15</sup> for it is said, <sup>q</sup>To-day if ye  
will hear his voice, harden not your  
r Numb. xiv. 2, hearts, as in the provocation. <sup>16</sup> For  
4, 11, 24, 30. who, when they had heard, did pro-  
Deut. i. 34, voke? Nay, was it not all that came  
36, 38. out of Egypt by Moses? <sup>17</sup> And

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

hold the beginning of our  
confidence stedfast unto the  
end; <sup>15</sup> while it is said,  
To day if ye will hear  
his voice, harden not your  
hearts, as in the provoca-  
tion. <sup>16</sup> For some, when  
they had heard, did pro-  
voke: howbeit not all that  
came out of Egypt by  
Moses. <sup>17</sup> But with whom

23; xii. 8. But here it is rather perhaps anticipatory, looking on to the fulfilment of the condition to be stated) partakers of Christ (some take these words to signify 'fellow-partakers with Christ;' but improperly), if, that is, we hold fast (see on ver. 6) the beginning of our confidence (some render this, "the beginning of the subsistence of Christ in us." But there can be little doubt that the text is right.

It is, however, somewhat doubtful, whether by the expression is to be understood our incipient confidence, which has not yet reached its perfection,—or, "our former confidence," see 1 Tim. v. 12; Rev. ii. 4, 5. This latter is taken by very many; but the other is far better, inasmuch as it keeps the contrast between *beginning* and *end*: "if we hold fast this *beginning* of our confidence firm until the *end*." Otherwise, by making the *beginning* of merely mean the *former*, the contrast vanishes) firm unto the end (the *end* thought of is, not the death of each individual, but the coming of the Lord, which is constantly called by this name).

15.] The whole connexion and construction of this verse is very difficult. I have discussed them in full in my Greek Test.; and have concluded that the words are to be taken as a proof that we must hold fast &c. in order to be *partakers of Christ*. I would render then, "since it is said," or in more idiomatic English, for it is said, To-day if ye hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. Thus the context goes on smoothly, and the purpose of the whole is to shew, as is summed up in ver. 12, that (ver. 12) it is the wicked heart of *unbelief* which they have above all things to avoid. This argument is now carried forward by taking up the word *provocation*, and asking, in a double question, who they were that provoked, and with whom it was that He was offended.

16.] The A. V. renders, as indeed the original will very well bear,

"For some, when they had heard, did provoke; howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses:"—the exceptions being, Caleb and Joshua, and all under twenty years old, and the women and Levites. But if we come to examine, (a) what contextual sense such a sentence can bear, or even (b) how our Writer would probably have expressed such a meaning, we shall find reason at once to reject the interpretation. For (a), the purpose here is clearly not to bring out the *exceptions* to those who were included in this saying, a process which would have quite defeated the purpose of the exhortation, seeing that the rebellious would be designated merely by *some*, and the exceptions would appear to be by far the greater number: and so every reader might shelter himself under the reflection that he was one of the faithful many, not one of the rebellious "some." Nor again (b) would this, as mere matter of fact, have been thus expressed by the Writer. For it obviously was not so. The "*some*" were the faithful few, not the rebellious many: "but with the greater part of them God was not well pleased," 1 Cor. x. 5. As regards the context, the course of thought is in fact just contrary to what this construction would require. The faithful exceptions are overlooked, and the whole of Israel is included in the *provocation*, to make the exhortation fall more forcibly on the readers.

For ("you need indeed to be careful against unbelief:—for on account of this very unbelief all our fathers were excluded") who, when they had heard (in immediate reference to "if ye hear," ver. 7), provoked (viz. God)? Nay, was it not all who (as above noticed, the exceptions are put out of sight, and that which was true of *almost all*, asserted generally) came out from Egypt by means of Moses? And (literally, but; it simply brings out the very slight contrast of a second and new particular, and therefore

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness?

<sup>18</sup> And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? <sup>19</sup> So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

IV. <sup>1</sup> 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.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

with whom was He grieved forty years? was it not with them that sinned, <sup>a</sup> whose carcases fell in the wilderness? <sup>18</sup> And <sup>t</sup> to whom sware He that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that disobeyed? <sup>19</sup> <sup>u</sup> And thus we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

IV. <sup>1</sup> Let <sup>a</sup> us therefore fear, lest, a promise being still left us of entering into his rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it.

<sup>a</sup> Numb. xiv. 22, 29, &c. & xxvi. 65. Ps. cvl. 26. 1 Cor. x. 5. Jude 5. <sup>t</sup> Numb. xiv. 30. Deut. i. 34, 35.

<sup>u</sup> ch. iv. 6.

<sup>a</sup> ch. xii. 15.

must in English be expressed by **and**. It is 'but' in the A. V.: but that is because they take ver. 16 in the manner above rejected, as an *assertion*) **with whom was He offended forty years** (see on vv. 9, 10, and the consonance, in the connexion of forty years with the verb, with that in the Psalm, which was there departed from)? **was it not with those who sinned, whose carcases** (literally, members of the body, but especially the legs: taken also for the legs and arms, i. e. limbs: probably with the meaning that their bodies should fall and perish limb from limb in the wilderness: so Beza: "By this word is signified not so much that they died by the ordinary means, or by any plague, as that they fell in the desert by their bodies gradually wasting away") **fell in the wilderness** (see 1 Cor. x. 5). The words here are exactly those of Numb. xiv. 29. Again, we must remember, in explaining these words, that the Writer is not bearing in mind at this moment the exceptions, but speaking generally)? **And to whom sware He that they should not enter into His rest, except to those who disobeyed** (not, as A. V., "believed not:": this was a fact, and was indeed the root of their *disobedience*)? <sup>19.</sup> **And [thus] we see that they were not able to enter in** (however much they desired it: they were incapacitated by not fulfilling the condition of inheriting all God's promises, belief and resulting obedience) **on account of unbelief** (see above on ver. 12. This verse forms a kind of 'quod erat demonstrandum' [as Ebrard], elucidating the argument which has been proceeding since ver. 12. The Writer now proceeds to make another use of the example on which he has been so long dwelling).

CHAP. IV. 1—13.] *In the Son, Israel enters into the true rest of God.* On the mingling of the hortatory form with the progress of the argument, see the summary at ch. iii. 1.

1.] **Let us fear therefore** (this form of expressing the caution seems purposely chosen to express the fear and trembling, Phil. ii. 12, with which every servant of God, however free from slavish terror and anxiety, ought to work out his salvation), **lest, a promise being still left us** (notice the *present*—not "*having been left us*." On the force of this present, very much of the argument rests) **of entering into His rest** (it is to be observed, that in the argument in this chapter, the Writer departs from the primary sense of the words "*my rest*" in the Psalm, and lays stress on *His*, making it *God's* rest, the rest into which God has entered; see below on ver. 10. And this is very important as to the nature of the rest in question, as importing, not the land of Canaan, but the heavenly home which that earthly rest mystically foreshadowed. Of course all references of the rest spoken of to the period after the destruction of Jerusalem, as Hammond, or to the cessation of Levitical ordinances, as Michaelis, are inadequate and out of the question), **any one of you** (although the communicative form has been used before in "*let us fear*," the second person is here returned to; and of purpose. A similar change is found in ch. x. 24, 25: and in Rom. xiv. 13) **appear** (see below) **to have fallen short of it** (i. e. be found, when the great trial of all shall take place, to have failed of, = to have no part in,—the promise. So that **appear** is, as so many both of ancients and moderns have taken it, a mild term, conveying indeed a sterner intimation behind

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>2</sup> For unto us have good tidings been preached, as well as unto them: but the word of hearing did not profit them, † unmingled as they were in faith with those that heard it. <sup>3</sup> <sup>b</sup> For we who believed do enter into the rest, even as He hath said, <sup>c</sup> As I swear in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were

† So in the Alexandrine, Vatican, Paris, and Claromontane MSS., &c. The Sinaitic MS. reads in meaning as the A. V., but has a different word for mixed from the others.

b ch. iii. 14.

c Ps. xev. 11. ch. iii. 11.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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

it). <sup>2</sup>] The former half of this verse substantiates the expression "*being still left*" of the last verse. The stress is not, "*we, as well as they*," but lies on **have good tidings been preached**, which includes both us and them. **For good tidings have been also announced to us, as likewise to them** (they were not the *same* good tidings in the two cases: but the Writer treats them as the same. To them indeed it was primarily the inheritance of the land of promise: but even then, as proved below, the term **my rest** had a further meaning, which meaning reaches even down to us): **nevertheless the word of [their] hearing** (*of hearing*, genitive of apposition; the word and the *hearing* being commensurate: "*the word of [consisting in] that which they heard*") **did not profit them, unmingled as they were in faith with its hearers.**

The passage is almost a desperate one. I have discussed it, in its various readings and meanings, in my Greek Test., and, deeming it necessary to adopt the reading followed in the text, have found this meaning,—"And so these men received no benefit from 'the word of hearing,' because they were not one in faith with its hearers; did not correspond, in their method of receiving it, with faithful hearers, whom it does profit." I have stated that this interpretation *does not satisfy me*: but it seems the only escape from violation either of the rules of criticism or of those of grammar: and therefore I am constrained to accept it until some better is suggested. <sup>3</sup>] **For** (taking up again the word "*faith*" in ver. 2) **we do enter** (are to enter. Some Commentators have seen a communicative and conciliatory tone in the first person here. But Bleek and Lünemann well remark that it is not so; for the fact of *believing* brings out a class distinct from the rest, as in ch. vi. 18, xii. 25) **into the** (aforesaid) rest

(not only, as A. V., "*into rest*," abstract), **we who believed** (the past tense is anticipatory, the standing-point being, the day of entering into the rest. It was unbelief which excluded them: the promise still remains unfulfilled, see below: they who at the time of its fulfilment shall be found to have believed, shall enter into it), **even as He hath said** (this citation evidently does not refer to the whole of what has just been said, but only to the fact, that the rest has not yet been entered into in the sense of the promise. The condition, *believing*, is not yet brought into treatment, but follows below in ver. 11 in hortatory form, having in fact been demonstrated already in ch. iii. 12—19), **As I swear in my wrath, if** (see above on ch. iii. 11) **they shall enter into my rest: although** (the context is much disputed. I believe it will be best taken thus: the Writer is leading on to the inference, that the entering into *God's rest* is a thing YET FUTURE for God's people. And this he thus brings about. "*My rest*" is not a thing future for God:—He has already entered therein,—ver. 4. Still [ver. 5] we have again, after God had thus entered in, the oath, They shall not, &c. Consequently, since [ver. 6] it remains that *some* must enter in, and they to whom it was first promised did not, on account of unbelief,—for that they *did not* [i. e. none of them did], is plain by His repeating in David, after the lapse of so many centuries, the same warning again [ver. 7], which He would not have done if Joshua had led Israel into that rest [ver. 8]:—since this is so, the sabbatism of God's people is YET FUTURE [ver. 9], and reserved for that time when they shall rest from their labours, as God from His [ver. 10]. Then follows a concluding exhortation, vv. 11—16. Thus all is clear, and according to the progress of the argument. See other proposed mean-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

finished from the foundation of the world. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. <sup>6</sup> Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: <sup>7</sup> again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a

finished from the foundation of the world. <sup>4</sup> For He hath spoken in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, <sup>d</sup> And God did rest on the seventh day from all his works. <sup>5</sup> And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. <sup>6</sup> Seeing therefore it still remaineth that some enter therein, <sup>e</sup> and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of disobedience: <sup>7</sup> again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, after so long a time, To-day;

<sup>d</sup> GEN. II. 2.  
EXOD. XX. 11.  
& xxxi. 17.

<sup>e</sup> ch. vi. 19.

ings discussed in my Gr. Test.) the works (viz. of God: an expression borrowed from the citation which follows) were constituted (i. e. finished) from the foundation of the world (i. e. as substantiated in next verse, though God Himself had not that rest to enter into, and did not mean this by my rest, but had entered into the rest of which He speaks: the key-verse to this being ver. 10).

4.] Substantiation of the last assertion. For he (God, not Moses, nor the scripture: see ch. xiii. 5) hath spoken somewhere (see above on ch. ii. 6) concerning the seventh day on this wise, And God rested (the rest here spoken of must not be understood only as that of one day after the completion of creation; but as an enduring rest, commencing then and still going on,—into which God's people shall hereafter enter. Still less must we find here any discrepancy with such passages as John v. 17: Isa. xl. 28: God's rest is not a rest necessitated by fatigue, nor conditioned by idleness: but it is, in fact, the very continuance in that upholding and governing, of which the Creation was the beginning) on the seventh day from all His works.

5.] And in this (place: our present passage) again (i. e. on the other hand: a citation which shall qualify and explain that other, making it impossible that men should have already entered into it), If they shall enter into my rest (these words are to be taken exactly as before, in a strong negative sense. The point raised is, that in the days of Moses, nay, long after, of David, men had not yet, in the full sense at least, entered into that rest, because it was

spoken of as yet future: it being of no import to the present argument, whether that future is of an affirmative or negative proposition: the negative denunciation in fact implying in itself the fact, that some would enter therein).

6.] Since then it yet remains (this is the sense in all places where the word is used: remains over, not having been previously exhausted. The time indicated by the present here is that following on the threat above) that some enter into it (viz. by the very expectation implied in the terms of the exclusion—"These shall not:" therefore there are that shall: because, the entering in of some being a portion of God's purposes, the failure of these persons will not change nor set aside that purpose. This latter consideration however does not logically come into treatment, but is understood;—"since what God once purposed, He always purposes"), and those who were formerly (as contrasted with David's time, and with the present) the subjects of its announcement (viz. the Israelites in the wilderness) did not enter in on account of disobedience (not, 'unbelief:' see on ch. iii. 18. The first clause, Seeing therefore, &c., was a deduction from the terms of the divine denunciation, as to God's general purpose; and now this second clause is a particular concrete instance in which that general purpose was not carried out. Since some must, and they did not, the implied promise is again found recurring many centuries after): again (emphatic: anew), He limiteth (has fixed, specifies, assigns the time) a certain day, saying "To-day" in David ("in," as we say, "in Isaiah," meaning, "in the book



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

f PSA. NOV. 7.  
CH. III. 7.

as it hath been said before, <sup>f</sup> To-day if ye hear his voice, harden not your hearts. <sup>8</sup> For if Joshua had given them rest, then would He not afterward speak of another day. <sup>9</sup> There is yet reserved therefore a keeping of sabbath for the people of God. <sup>10</sup> For he that entered into his rest, he himself also rested from his own works, as God from his own.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. <sup>8</sup> For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. <sup>9</sup> There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. <sup>10</sup> For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as*

of Isaiah"), after (the lapse of) so long a time (viz. the time between Joshua and David); as it hath been said before (viz. ch. iii. 7, 15: there can hardly be a question that the reference of the words is backward, to what has been already cited, not forwards to the words which follow), **To-day if ye hear His voice, harden not your hearts.** 8.] Confirmation of the above, as against an exception that might be taken, that notwithstanding the exclusion of many by unbelief, those who entered the promised land with Joshua *did enter* into that rest of God. **For if Joshua** (it does not appear that any parallel between the typical and the great final Deliverer is intended: but it could hardly fail to be suggested to the readers. Our translators, in retaining "Jesus" (the Greek form of *Joshua*) here, have introduced into the mind of the ordinary English reader utter confusion. It was done in violation of their instructions, which prescribed that all proper names should be rendered as they were commonly used) **had given them rest** (led them into this rest of which we are treating), **He** (God: the subject of "*limiteth*" and "*saying*" above) **would not speak** (not "*have spoken,*" as A. V.) **after this of another day.** 9.] *Consequence from the proposition* in ver. 6. *Some* must enter therein: some, that is, analogous to, inheriting the condition of and promises made to, those first, who did not enter in because of disobedience. These are now specified as "*the people of God,*" doubtless with a reference to the true spiritual character of Israelites indeed, represented under their external name: and their rest is no longer a "*rest*" merely, but (see below) is called by a higher and nobler name. **Therefore** (see above) **there is yet reserved** (see on ver. 6: remains as yet

unexhausted, unoccupied, unrealized) a keeping of sabbath (the term is used here to correspond to "*my rest,*" specified and explained in ver. 4. God's rest was a *keeping of sabbath*: so also will ours be. The idea of the rest hereafter being the antitype of the Sabbath-rest, was familiar to the Jews. They spoke of the "*age to come*" as the "day which is all sabbath." It is hardly probable that the sacred Writer had in his mind the object which Calvin mentions: "I doubt not that the Apostle purposely alludes to the Sabbath, to dissuade the Jews from its outward observance: for thus only can its abrogation be understood, by the understanding its spiritual end." Still more alien from the sense and context is it to use this verse, as some have absurdly done, as carrying weight one way or the other in the controversy respecting the obligation of a sabbath under the Christian dispensation. The only indication it furnishes is negative: viz. that no such term as "*keeping of sabbath*" could then have been, in the minds of Christians, associated with the keeping of the Lord's day: otherwise, being already present, it could not be said that it is yet reserved) **for the people of God** (the well-known designation of Israel the covenant people. It occurs again, ch. xi. 25. Here it is used of that veritable Israel, who inherit God's promises by faith in Christ: compare Gal. vi. 16). 10.] is taken in two ways: 1. as a general axiom, justifying the use of the words "*keeping of sabbath*" above: **For he that entered into his (God's) rest, himself also rested from his (own) works, like as God rested from his own.** This has been the usual explanation. Theophylact says, "He is explaining, in what sense he called such a rest a *sabbatism*: because, he says, we



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*God did from his.* <sup>11</sup> *Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.* <sup>12</sup> *For the word of God is quick,*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>11</sup> Let us therefore earnestly strive to enter into that rest, lest any man fall into the same example of <sup>g</sup> disobedience. <sup>12</sup> For the word of God

also rest from our works, as also God, when He rested from His works in creating the world, named the day the Sabbath." This explanation labours under two difficulties: (a) the past tense, 'entered into his rest,' which thus is made into a perfect or a present: (b) the double reference of his, first to God, and then to the man in question, especially when God's works are taken up by the strong term his own. 2. The other interpretation has been that of Owen, and others, and recently Ebrard, who refer he that entered to Christ: For He that entered into his (own or God's) rest, Himself also rested from His works like as God rested from His own: and therefore, from our Forerunner having entered into this sabbatism, it is reserved for us, the people of God, to enter into it with and because of Him. Thus, as Ebrard says, Jesus is placed in the liveliest contrast to Joshua, who had not brought God's people to their rest; and is designated as "That one, who entered into God's rest." And to this view I own I am strongly inclined, notwithstanding the protest raised against it by Bleek, Lüne-mann, and Delitzsch. My reasons are, in addition to those implied above, a) the form of the assertion, as regards Joshua here and Jesus in ver. 14. That a contrast is intended between the Jesus who did not give them rest, and the "Great High Priest who is gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God," seems very plain. And if so, it would be easily accounted for, that Christ should be here introduced merely under the designation of He that entered into his rest. b) the introduction of the words he himself also, lifting out and dignifying the subject of this clause as compared with God, in a way which would hardly be done, had the assertion been merely of any man generally. c) Scripture analogy. This rest, into which the Lord Jesus entered, is spoken of Isa. xi. 10, "And His rest shall be glorious:" and this work of His, in Isa. xl. 10, "His work is before Him:" and by Christ Himself, John ix. 4, "I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day." d) The expression that rest below, which stands harshly

insulated, unless it refers to the rest in this verse. e) The whole context: see summary at ch. iii. 1. Render then: For He that entered into his (either, "God's;" or more probably merely "his," reflective, as in Isa. xi. 10 above) rest, He Himself also (on this, see above) rested from his works (see above) as God from his own (His own, not with any distinction of kind, but used only to mark distinction of possession). 11—13.] *Exhortation*, so frequently interspersed in the midst of the argument: see on ch. iii. 1. Let us therefore (consequence from vv. 3—7; seeing that the promise is held out to us, as it was to them, and that they failed of it through disobedience) earnestly strive to enter into that rest (viz that mentioned in ver. 10, into which Christ has entered before: compare ver. 14, ch. vi. 20), lest any one fall into (not, as A. V. and others, "fall after") the same example of disobedience (not, *unbelief*: see on ch. iii. 18. It was they that disobeyed who failed to enter in). 12, 13.] Apart from the difficulties of some terms used, we may give the connexion thus: Such an endeavour is well worth all our earnestness—for we have One to do with, who can discern and will punish every even the most secret disobedience. For the word of God (in what sense? 1) The Personal Word has been understood by many, e.g., the Fathers in general, and not a few moderns. To this the first obvious objection is, that this mode of expression is confined to St. John among the New Test. writers. This however, though clearly not to be met by alleging such passages as Luke i. 2; Acts xx. 32, is not decisive. For our Epistle, though perhaps anterior to all the writings of St. John, is yet so intimately allied to the Alexandrine terminology, that it would be no matter of surprise to find its Writer using a term so nearly ripe for his purpose as we find "the Word" in Philo [see below]. The real objections to the Personal Word being simply and directly here meant, lie in the Epistle, and indeed in the passage itself. In the Epistle: for we have nowhere in it this term used with any definiteness of our Lord, nor indeed any approach to it;

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

is <sup>h</sup> living, and active, and <sup>i</sup> sharper than any <sup>k</sup> twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and of spirit, both joints and marrow, and

<sup>h</sup> Isa. xlix. 2.  
 Jer. xxiii. 20.  
 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.  
 1 Pet. i. 28.  
<sup>i</sup> Prov. v. 4.  
<sup>k</sup> Eph. vi. 17.  
 Rev. i. 10. &  
 ii. 10.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

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 dis-

not even where we might have expected it most, in the description of His relation to the Father, ch. i. init. Every where He is the Son of God, not His Word. And in ch. vi. 5, xi. 3, where he says the worlds were made by the Word of God, he uses not the Greek word *logos*, by which the Personal Word is always designated, but another word (*rhema*), by which He never is. *And in the passage itself*: for such adjectives as he here joins to "*the Word of God*," as matter of emphatic predication, would hardly be used of the Personal Word: and, which to my mind is stronger evidence still, had these words applied to our Lord, we should not have had Him introduced immediately after, ver. 14, as "*Jesus the Son of God*." But 2) some of the ancient, and the great mass of modern Commentators, have understood by the term, *the revealed word of God*, in the law and in the gospel: or in the gospel alone, as contrasted with the former dispensation. And so even some of those who elsewhere in their writings have understood it of Christ. But neither does this interpretation seem to meet the requirements of the passage. The qualities here predicated of the "*Word*" do not appear to fit the mere written word: nor does the introduction of the written word suit the context. I should be rather disposed with Bleek to understand 3) *the spoken word of God*, the utterance of His power, by which, as in ch. xi. 3, He made the worlds,—by which His Son, as in ch. i. 3, upholds all things. This spoken word it was, which they of old were to hear and not harden their hearts: "To-day if ye hear his voice . . .:" this spoken word, which interdicted them from entering into His rest—"I sware in my wrath, If they shall enter into my rest." It seems then much more agreeable to the context, to understand this utterance of God, so nearly connected with God Himself, the *breath of his mouth*: and I would not at the same time shrink from the idea, that the Alexandrine form of expression respecting the *Word*, that semi-personification of it without absolutely giving it personal existence, was before the mind of the Writer. Indeed, I do not see how it is possible to

escape this inference) is living (not, in contrast with the dead works of the law [Ebrard], of which there is no question here: nor, *nourishing*, and able to preserve life: nor, *enduring*: but, as A. V., *quick*, i. e. having living power, in the same sense in which God Himself is so often called "the living God," e. g. ch. x. 31), and active (this activity is the very first quality and attribute of life: so that the predicates form a climax: *not only living, but energizing: not only energizing, but sharper, &c.*: and *not only that, but piercing, &c.*: nor that only, but reaching even to the spirit, a discerner of the thoughts and ideas of the heart), and sharper than every twoedged sword (literally, *two-mouthed*: meaning, sharpened on both sides, both edge and back. The comparison of the word of God or of men to a sword is common in Scripture: see Ps. lvii. 4, lix. 7, lxiv. 3; Wisd. xviii. 15, 16; Rev. i. 16; and above all, Eph. vi. 17. It has been questioned, whether the office here ascribed to the word of God is *punitive*, or merely *searching*: whether it regards the foes, or the servants of God. There seems no reason why we should separate the two. The same WORD, to which evidently by the succeeding clause is attributed the searching power, is powerful also to punish. The *knife* [the word commonly used for *sword* in the New Test. signified both] belongs to the surgeon, and to the judge: has its probing, as well as its smiting office), and reaching through, even to dividing of soul and spirit, both joints and marrow (there has been considerable diversity in the taking of these genitives. I have regarded them as follows: *soul* and *spirit* denote two separate departments of man's being, each subordinate to the process indicated by *dividing*. The *Word* pierces to the dividing, not of the *soul* from the *spirit*, but of the *soul* itself and of the *spirit* itself: the former being the lower portion of man's invisible part, which he has in common with the brutes; the latter the higher portion, receptive of the Spirit of God; both which are pierced and divided by the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. Then passing on to both joints and marrow, I do not regard these terms as co-ordinate with

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

cerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> Seeing then that we have a

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

is <sup>1</sup>a discerner of the thoughts and ideas of the heart. <sup>13</sup> <sup>m</sup> Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked <sup>n</sup> and lying open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. <sup>14</sup> Seeing then that we have <sup>o</sup> a <sup>o</sup> ch. iii. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Cor. xiv. 24.  
25.  
<sup>m</sup> Ps. xxxiii.  
13, 14. & ec.  
8. & cxxxix.  
11, 12.

<sup>n</sup> Job xxvi. 6.  
& xxxiv. 21.  
<sup>o</sup> Prov. xv. 11.

the former, "soul and spirit," but as subordinate to them, and as used in a spiritual sense, not a corporeal: implying that both the *joints* and the *marrow* of the *soul* and of the *spirit* are pierced and divided by the *Word*. This I conceive is necessitated both by the wording of the original, and by the sense, which otherwise would degenerate into an anti-climax, if *joints* and *marrow* were to be understood of the body. The other views are, 1) That which regards the *dividing* as being a division of the *soul* from the *spirit*, the *joints* from the *marrow*. The objections to this are both psychological and contextual. It has been rightly urged [see especially Ebrard's note here] that the soul and spirit cannot be said to be separated in any such sense as this [Eucumenius understands the taking away of the Holy Spirit from man's soul to be meant]: and on the other hand the *joints* and *marrow* could not be thus said to be separated, having never been in contact with one another. 2) Many Commentators, who hold the division of soul from spirit, are not prepared to apply the same interpretation to the "*joints and marrow*." 3) Many understand the *dividing* to mean, not the act of division, but the *place where the division occurs*: where soul divides from spirit, and joints from marrow: i. e. to the innermost recesses of soul and body. The objection to this arises from its not satisfying the requirements of grammar in the original, and a *judger* (or, *discerner*) of (the) *thoughts and ideas* (this seems the nearest term to the Greek: not "*intents*," as A. V.) of the *heart* (the inner and thinking and feeling part of man). <sup>13</sup>] And there is not a creature (the term embraces all created things, visible and invisible, compare Col. i. 16) *unseen* in His presence (first as to the possessive pronoun: to what does it refer? to the *word of God*, or to *God* Himself? The idea of its referring to *Christ* falls with the untenableness of the personal meaning of the *Word*: although some, abandoning that, yet hold it. Then of the two other,

it seems much the more obvious to refer it to *God*, especially in the presence of "*the eyes of Him with whom we have to do*" below. Nor is there any harshness in this; from speaking of the uttered word of *God*, whose powers are not its own but *His*, the transition to Himself, with whom that word is so nearly identified, is simple and obvious): but (nay, rather . . . i. e. so far from this, that . . .) *all things are naked and lying open* (the Greek word thus rendered is a very unusual and difficult one. Its intention seems to be to convey the idea of entire prostration and subjugation under the eye of *God*: so that the things of which this is said are not only naked, stripped of all covering and concealment,—but also laid prostrate in their exposure, before His eye. See the whole matter discussed in my Greek Test. It is one which can hardly be made intelligible to the mere English reader) to His eyes (for His eyes to see) with whom we have to do (there could not be a happier rendering than this of the A. V., expressing our whole concern and relation with *God*, One who is not to be trifled with, considering that His word is so powerful, and His eye so discerning. The ancients, without exception, confined this relation to one solemn particular of it, and rendered, "*to whom our account must be given*." And many of the moderns also take this view. Others suppose it to mean, "concerning whom is our discourse").

<sup>14</sup>—<sup>16</sup>.] *Hortatory conclusion of this second course of comparison* (see summary at ch. iii. 1); taking up again by anticipation that which is now to be followed out in detail, viz. the *High Priesthood of Jesus*. This point is regarded by many as the opening of the new portion of the Epistle: but on account of its hortatory and collective character, I prefer regarding it, with Ebrard, as the conclusion of the preceding: being of course at the same time transitional, as the close connexion of ch. v. 1 with our ver. 15 shews. It is much in the manner of the *Writer*, to

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

p ch. vii. 26. & ix. 12, 24. great high priest, <sup>p</sup> that is passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, <sup>q</sup> let us hold fast our confession. <sup>15</sup> For <sup>r</sup> we have not an high priest unable to sympathize with our infirmities; but <sup>s</sup> rather

*anticipate*, by frequently dropped hints, and by *asserting* that, which he intends very soon to *demonstrate*. 14.] Having therefore a great High Priest (the fact of this being Christ's office is as yet *assumed*: see above, ch. ii. 17, iii. 1:—but now with more points of contact with what has been already said; e. g. ver. 10, where the *entering into His rest* has close connexion with the High Priest entering within the veil. Great, as in ch. xiii. 20, “the great Shepherd of the sheep:” answering very much to the use of *true*, in St. John,—“*I am the true vine*,”—“*this was the true light*”:—one archetypal High Priest,—one above all), passed through (not ‘into,’ as A. V.: see below) the heavens (as the earthly High Priest passed through the veil into the holiest place, so the great High Priest *through* the heavens to God's throne: see ch. ix. 11: with reference also to ver. 10, the entering of Jesus into His rest. In this fact, His greatness is substantiated. On the heavens, plural, see on ch. i. 10. “By the heavens are understood all those heavens which are interposed between us and God: viz., both the whole region of the atmosphere, which is also called heaven in Scripture, and the heavens wherein are the sun, moon, and stars, and lights of the world, than all of which Christ is become greater: see ch. vii. 26. Eph. iv. 10. After these is that heaven where God dwells, the habitation of immortality, which our High Priest entered, and did not pass through.” Schlichting. Thus, as Theophylact remarks, our Lord became greater than Moses, who neither entered himself into the land of promise, nor led the people into it), Jesus the Son of God (certainly not so named in this connexion without an allusion to the *Jesus*, or *Joshua*, above mentioned. We cannot conceive that even a careful ordinary writer would have used the *same name* of two *different persons*, so designating the second of them, without intention. At the same time, there is no reason for supposing that such an allusion exhausts the sense of the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. <sup>15</sup> For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was

weighty addition. It brings out the majesty of our High Priest, and justifies at the same time the preceding clause, leading the mind to supply “to God, whose Son He is.” Besides which, it adds infinite weight to the exhortation which follows), let us hold fast the confession (viz. of our Christian faith: not merely of Christ's ascension, nor merely of Christ as our High Priest: compare ch. iii. 1 and note, and ch. x. 23, which gives more the subjective side, here necessarily to be understood also. See also ch. iii. 6. Cornelius-a-Lapide gives a beautiful paraphrase: “Come, ye Hebrews, persist in the faith of Christ, press on to your rest in the heavens: though they seem far above us, we shall easily climb and pass them with Christ for our Leader, who passed through them and opened them to us,—if only we firmly retain the confession,—the profession,—i. e. of our faith and our hope”). 15.] For (how connected? certainly not as grounding the facts just stated; but as furnishing a motive for *holding fast our confession*. The effort is not hopeless, notwithstanding the majesty of our High Priest, and the power of the Word of our God: for we are sympathized with and helped by Him. As Schlichting, “He anticipates an objection. Any one might say, How shall this great High Priest help me,—who in proportion as He is greater and more remote from us, will probably be insensible to care for us?” To suppose, as some have done, that a contrast to the Jewish High Priests is intended, is to contradict directly ch. v. 2. Rather is our great High Priest in this respect expressly identified with them) we have not an high priest unable to sympathize with our infirmities (primarily, our inner and innate weaknesses,—be they *physical*, and thereby leading to exposure to suffering and disease, which itself is sometimes called by this name,—or *spiritual* and moral,—whereby misery arises, and sin finds entrance, as in ch. v. 2, vii. 8. Both these, indeed *all* human infirmities, are here included. With all does

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*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.*

V. <sup>1</sup> *For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

one in all points tempted in like manner, <sup>t</sup> yet without sin. 16 <sup>u</sup> Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help while yet there is time.

V. <sup>1</sup> For every high priest, being taken from among men, <sup>a</sup> is ap-

<sup>t</sup> 2 Cor. v. 21.  
 ch. vii. 26.  
<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 22.  
<sup>1</sup> 1 John iii. 5.  
<sup>u</sup> Eph. ii. 18. &  
 iii. 12. ch. x.  
 19, 21, 22.

ch. viii. 3.

the Son of God sympathize, and for the reason now to be given) may, rather, (one) tempted in all things (see on ch. ii. 17) according to (our) similitude (there is no word in the original to answer to "our," or, "as we are," as A.V.: but it is obviously intended that such should be supplied from the context), apart from sin (so that throughout these temptations, in their origin, in their process, in their result,—sin had nothing in Him: He was free and separate from it).

16.] *Exhortation to confidence, even in our guilt and need, grounded on this sympathy of our great High Priest. Let us therefore approach* (this idea, of approach, or coming, or drawing near, to God [all expressed by the same word in the Greek], is a favourite one in this Epistle, see ch. vii. 25; x. 1, 22; xi. 6; xii. 18, 22, and generally in the same sense as here, either, as under the Old Test., by sacrifices, or, as under the New Test., by the one sacrifice of Christ. The same idea is expressed Eph. ii. 18; iii. 12, by the word "access") **with confidence** (ch. iii. 16, and note there) **to the throne of grace** (i. e. not, Christ Himself,—nor the throne of Christ, but, by the analogy of this Epistle, the *throne of God*, at the right hand of which, ch. viii. 1; xii. 2, Jesus our Forerunner is seated. That it is here called the throne of *grace*, is owing to the complexion of the passage, in which the grace and mercy of our reconciled God are described as ensured to us by the sympathy and power of our great High Priest), **that we may receive compassion** (corresponding to that *sympathy* of our High Priest above spoken of: but extending further than our *infirmities*, to the forgiveness of our sins by God's mercy in Christ), **and may find grace** (both, the receiving *mercy* and finding *grace*, apply to the next clause) **for help in time** (i. e. *to-day*, while it is yet open to us. This is decidedly the right interpretation, and not as many Com-

mentators and the A. V., "*in time of need*," "*as often as we want it*," which would be both flat, and hardly justified by usage).

CHAP. V. 1—X. 18.] THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST: and this in several points of view. That which has before been twice by anticipation hinted at, ch. ii. 17; iii. 1; iv. 14, 15, is now taken up and thoroughly discussed. First of all, v. 1—10, two necessary qualifications of a High Priest are stated, and Christ is proved to have fulfilled both: a) vv. 1—3, *he must be taken from among men, capable, in respect of infirmity, of feeling for men,* and b) vv. 4—10, *he must not have taken the dignity upon himself, but have been appointed by God.* 1.] For (takes up again ch. iv. 15, with a view to substantiate it: see remarks below) **every high priest** (in the sense, Levitical High Priest; the only class here in question. Delitzsch is however right in maintaining, that it is not right to limit the words to this sense, or to see in them this condition, which indeed is not brought forward, but only exists in the nature of the case, no other High Priests being in view), **being taken from among men** (this participial clause belongs to the predicative portion of the sentence, and indeed carries the chief weight of it, having a slight causal force; "inasmuch as he is taken from among men." Some take it as belonging to the *subject*, as does the A. V., "Every high priest taken from among men," and see in it a contrast, as in ch. vii. 28, between human High Priests, and the Son of God. But such contrast here is not only not in, but inconsistent with, the context: which does not bring out as yet any difference between Christ and the Jewish High Priests, but rather [see below] treats of the attributes of a High Priest from their example) **is appointed for** (*on behalf of*, for the benefit of: vicariousness must not be introduced where the context, as here, does not require it: see



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

b ch. ii. 17. pointed for men <sup>b</sup> in things pertaining to God, <sup>c</sup> that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: <sup>2 d</sup> being able to have compassion on the ignorant and erring, seeing that <sup>e</sup> he himself also is compassed with infirmity. <sup>3</sup> And <sup>f</sup> by reason hereof he must, even as for the people, so also for himself, offer for sins, <sup>4 g</sup> And none taketh to himself the honour;

pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. <sup>4</sup> And no man taketh this honour unto

note on ch. ii. 9) **men** (the stress is both times on this noun and its preposition, "*being taken from among men, is appointed for men,*" the former justifying the latter. This is a powerful additional reason for taking "*taken from among men*" predicatively: for, if it be taken as attached to the subject, "every High Priest taken from among "*men,*" with a necessary stress in such case on "*men,*" the same stress must be laid on "*men,*" in the clause "*is appointed for men,*" with an implication that Christ, with whom on this hypothesis the human High Priest is contrasted, was *not* appointed for *men*) in matters relating to God (see note on ch. ii. 17), that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins (gifts and sacrifices are both to be taken with for sins: not, *gifts* alone, and *sacrifices* for sin together.

for, or on behalf of, i. e. to atone for, ch. ii. 17. No satisfactory distinction can be set up between gifts and sacrifices: properly speaking, the former would be *any manner of offerings*, the latter *slain beasts* only: but this usage is not observed in Scripture): 2.] **being** (one who is) **able** (this clause is closely bound to the last, and belongs to it, not to the whole sentence) to be compassionate towards the ignorant and erring (the former mild word though frequently used of sinners elsewhere without, as well as with, the implication of ignorance, seems to be here placed, as well as *erring*, itself at all events a milder term than *sinning*, as suitable to the tone of the sentence, in which the feeling of a sinner towards his fellow-sinners is expressed. The sense might be filled up, 'towards those who [possibly after all] are ignorant and deluded.' And thus the propriety of the next clause is rendered still greater; both these, *ignorance* and *error*, being the re-

sults of *weakness*, with which he himself is encompassed. There is in these designations exclusion on the one side of "sinners with a high hand," and an inclusion in them, as above, of much more than sins, strictly speaking, of ignorance), seeing that he himself is also compassed about with infirmity (infirmity, as in ch. vii. 28, that moral weakness which makes men capable of sin. It is never predicated of Christ in this sense: nay, by the terms of vii. 28, He is excluded from it. That *infirmity* of the flesh which He bore on Him, and thereby was capable of suffering and of death, was entirely distinct from this).

3.] And on account of it (the infirmity wherewith he himself is encompassed) he must (not meaning, it is his appointed duty according to the law: but, it is necessary for him, a priori, on higher ground than, and before, the ordinance of the law. See on ch. ii. 17), even as for the people, so also for himself, offer (here only used *absolutely* in New Test.: see Num. vii. 18) for (see on ch. x. 6) sins (and accordingly, such was the ordinance of the law: see Levit. iv. 3, ix. 7, xvi. 6.

Much has been said as to the applicability or otherwise of these considerations to Christ. Some have considered all that has hitherto been said as spoken of human High Priests in contradistinction to Him: but it is better to understand it all as spoken of High Priests in general: and then, as Ebrard well says, leave it to the Writer himself, ver. 5 ff., to determine how far these requisites are satisfied in Christ. The progress of the argument itself will shew us,—ver. 8 f., and further on, ch. vii. 27,—in how far Christ is unlike the Old Test. High Priest).

4—10.] Second requisite: *divine appointment*. 4.] And (couples to ver. 1, of which the subsequent verses have been explanatory) none taketh the office to



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. <sup>7</sup> Who in the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

but † only when called of God, as indeed <sup>h</sup> was Aaron. <sup>5 i</sup> Thus Christ also glorified not himself to be made high priest; but he that spake unto him, <sup>k</sup> Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee. <sup>6</sup> Even as he saith also in another place, <sup>l</sup> Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. <sup>7</sup> Who in the days of

† So all our oldest MSS.  
h Exod. xxviii. 1. Numb. xvi. 5, 40, 1 Chron. xxiii. 13.  
l John viii. 54.

k Ps. ii. 7. ch. i. 5.

l Ps. cx. 4. ch. vii. 17, 21.

himself (carrying the stress of the sentence); but (only when) called by God, as indeed was Aaron (see Exod. xxviii. 1, xxix. 4; Levit. viii. 1; Num. iii. 10; but especially Num. xvi.—xviii. Schöttgen quotes from the Rabbinical books: "Moses said to Korah and his fellows, If Aaron my brother had taken to himself the priesthood, ye did rightly in rising against him: but now God has given it to him.")

This divine ordinance of Aaron and his sons to be High Priests endured long in the Jewish polity: but long before this time the rule had been disturbed: Josephus relates how Herod, when put into the kingdom by the Romans, no longer took the high priests from the Asamonæan family, but gave the office to any obscure persons, except in the one case of Aristobulus).

5.] Thus Christ also (as well as those others) did not glorify HIMSELF to be made High Priest (i. e. did not raise Himself to the office of High Priest. The word glorify is here used in its most general sense, of all those steps of elevation by which the dignity might be attained: see especially John viii. 54, which is exceedingly useful to the right understanding here); but He (i. e. the Father) who spake to Him, Thou art my Son, I have this day begotten thee (see ch. i. 5, where this same saying is similarly adduced as spoken by the Heavenly Father to the Son. It must be carefully observed, that the Writer does not adduce this text as containing a direct proof of Christ's divine appointment to the High Priesthood: that follows in the next verse: nor again, does it merely assert, without any close connexion, that the same divine Person appointed Him High Priest, who said to Him, "Thou art my Son:" but it asserts, that such divine appointment was wrapped up and already involved in that eternal generation to the Sonship which was declared in these words.

Then again, we must beware of imagining that he that spake unto him, &c. is a mere periphrasis of the Father, as some have done. The true account seems to be this: the word glorified contains in it the whole process of exaltation [through suffering] by which the Lord Jesus has attained the heavenly High Priesthood. This whole process was not his own work, but the Father's, John viii. 54. And in saying this, we involve every step of it, from the very beginning. Of these, unquestionably the first was, His eternal generation by the Father. He did not constitute himself the Son of God, in virtue ultimately of which sonship He became High Priest. And therefore in proving this, the sacred Writer adduces first the declaration of the Father which sets forth this His generation as Son of God, on which all His process of glorification depended, and then, when He was completed by sufferings, vv. 7—10, the direct declaration of his High Priesthood, also by the Father). Even as also he saith in another (place: see on ch. iv. 5), Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec (on the relation of this Psalm to Christ, see generally on ch. i. 13. I may add to what was there said, that it is thus declared, that He, in whom all the theocratic promises find their fulfilment, in whom the true Kingdom of God comes and is summed up, was to be, as in Zech. vi. 12 ff., "a priest upon His throne," and such a priest [i. e. necessarily High Priest, if a King; as indeed the word is given in ver. 10 and ch. vi. 20], as should be after the order of Melchisedec. In examining this last predication, we find that after the order, according to the ordinary meaning of the word, imports, according to the office or the rank, which Melchisedec held).

7 ff.] The sufferings of Christ are now adduced, as a portion of his being glorified to be made High Priest. They were all

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

<sup>m</sup> Matt. xxvi. 39, 42, 44.  
<sup>Mark</sup> Mark xv. 36, 39. John. xvii. 1.  
<sup>n</sup> Ps. xxii. 1. Matt. xxvii. 46, 50. Mark xv. 34, 37.  
<sup>o</sup> Matt. xxvi. 53. Mark xiv. 30.

his flesh, having <sup>m</sup> offered up prayers and supplications <sup>n</sup> with strong crying and tears unto him <sup>o</sup> that was able to save him from death, and

*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*

in subjection to the will of the Father: they were all parts of his *being made perfect*, by virtue of which he is now, in the fullest and most glorious sense, our High Priest. So that these verses are no digression, but stand directly in the course of the argument, as proving the proposition, "*he glorified not himself to be made High Priest.*" It will be best to mark at once what I believe to be the connexion of this much-disputed sentence, and then to examine each portion in detail afterwards. Who in the days of his flesh, in that he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears to Him that was able to save him from death, and was heard by reason of his reverent submission; though He was a Son, learned, from the things which he suffered, his obedience; and being made perfect, became the cause of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, being addressed by God as High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. That is, being paraphrased,—“who had a course of glorifying for the High Priest’s office to go through, not of his own choice, but appointed for Him by the Father, as is shewn by that sharp lesson of obedience (not as contrasted with disobedience, but as indicating a glorious degree of perfect obedience, his obedience), familiar to us all, which He, though God’s own Son, learned during the days of his flesh: when He cried to God with tears for deliverance from death, and was heard on account of His resignation to the Father’s will [‘not my will but Thine be done’], &c.” Then as to details: in the days of his flesh I understand as a general wide date for the incident which is about to be brought in, as contrasted with His present days of glorification in the Spirit. with tears is not distinctly asserted in the sacred narrative: but is a most obvious inference from what is there: see Matt. xxvi. 37. There seems no reason for understanding the strong crying and tears of any other time than the agony at Gethsemane, as some have done. This is adduced as the most illustrious instance of that learning obedience from suffering. Epiphanius reports, that this weeping of the Lord in His agony was once related in

some texts of St. Luke: see note on Luke xxii. 43, 44. to save him from death is by some understood to mean, not as generally, of rescue from the death which He was about to suffer, but of His happy deliverance from that death by the Resurrection. So also recently Ebrard. But this is not only against the usage of the phrase here used, but still more decidedly against the truth of the sacred narrative: “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me:” for we must of course assume, that in such a designation of the Father, the contents of the prayer made to him are also indicated. The clause which follows is rendered in three different ways. 1) “He was heard on account of His pious resignation.” 2) “He was heard, and so delivered, from that which He feared.” 3) “He was heard by Him who was His fear” Gen. xxxi. 42, 43). I have discussed all these in my Greek Test., and have rejected 3), as far-fetched, and inconsistent with the usage of the Greek word here used: 2), as also inconsistent with the usage of that word, which signifies not terror,—His own fear, or the thing which caused that fear,—but the fear of caution, or modesty, or reverence: besides that He was not delivered from death, as this meaning would assert. So that 1) must be accepted; and it fulfils the requirements both of usage and of fact. The religious sense of this cautious fear suits remarkably well in our passage. No term could more exactly express the reverent submission to his Heavenly Father’s will which is shewn in those words, “Not my will but thine be done:” none the constant humbling of himself in comparison with the Father, and exalting him in word and deed, of which our Saviour’s life is full. I have no hesitation therefore in adopting this rendering, and feeling entirely satisfied with it. Besides the fulfilling the requisites of philology and of fact, it admirably suits the context here, where the appointment of Christ by the Father to his High Priesthood and the various steps by which that High Priesthood was perfected, are in question. The matter of fact represented by the assertion that *He was heard* may require some explanation. He

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

from death, and was heard in that he feared; <sup>8</sup> though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; <sup>9</sup> and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; <sup>10</sup> called of God

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

having been heard <sup>p</sup> by reason of his reverent submission; <sup>8 q</sup> though he was a Son, yet learned he his <sup>r</sup> obedience from the things which he suffered; <sup>9</sup> and <sup>s</sup> being made perfect, he became the cause of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him, <sup>10</sup> being addressed by God as

<sup>p</sup> Matt. xxvi. 37. Mark xiv. 33. Luke xxii. 33. John xii. 27. ch. iii. 0.  
<sup>r</sup> Phil. ii. 8.  
<sup>s</sup> ch. ii. 10. & xi. 40.

was heard, not in the sense of the cup passing away from Him, which indeed was not the prayer of his *cautious fear*,—but in strength being ministered to Him to do and to suffer that will of his Father, to fulfil which was the prayer of that *cautious fear*—“not my will but thine be done.” And I have little doubt that the word immediately refers to the “angel from Heaven strengthening Him,” of Luke xxii. 43. though he was a Son.] This clause is to be taken by itself, not with what follows. Thus much is certain from usage: the next question is, to what these words are to be applied. We may take them with the clause immediately preceding: He was heard, although He was a Son, and thus had no need of being heard:—though He was a Son, yet not this, but his *reverent fear*, was the ground of his being heard: which gives an undoubted good sense. Not much dissimilar will be the sense given by the other and more general way: viz. to take the words with the following clause: although He was a Son, He learned his obedience, not from this relation, but from his sufferings. So Chrysostom, and almost all the moderns. And there can be little doubt that this yields the better sense, and points to the deeper truth. Christ was a Son: as a Son, He was ever obedient, and ever in union with His Father’s will: but *His special obedience*, that course of submission by which He became perfected as our High Priest, was gone through *in Time*, and matter of *acquisition* for Him, and *præctice*, by suffering. The ancients found this assertion startling, attributing too narrow a sense to our Lord’s *sufferings*. So Chrysostom: “He who before this had been obedient even unto death, how can He be said afterwards to have learned obedience?” This indeed would be a difficulty, were the Writer speaking of the Passion only, in its stricter sense; but he is speaking, I take it, of that continuous course of new obedience entered on by new suffering, of

which the prayer in Gethsemane furnishes indeed the most notable instance, but of which also almost every act of His life on earth was an example. Theophylact is so scandalized by the whole passage as applied to Christ that he says, “See how for the benefit of his readers Paul condescends, even to the appearance of uttering absurdities.” Two mistakes must be avoided: 1) though he was *the Son*, which I find in Craik’s new translation of the Epistle: and 2) that of Whitby, that the Greek verb here means “*taught (us)*.” [I have even heard the same maintained of the English verb here, “*learned* ;” see an example in Ps. xxv. 4, Prayer-book version.] If such a meaning ever could be admitted, least of all could it, from the context, here, where the subject treated is entirely Christ Himself, in his completion as our High Priest, and not till this is finished does that which He became to others come into question. *being made perfect*, see note on ch. ii. 10; completed, brought to his goal of learning and suffering, through death: the time to which the word would apply is that of the Resurrection, when his triumph began: so our Lord Himself on the way to Emmaus,—“*Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and [being made perfect would come in here] to enter into His glory?*” He was made, by means of that course which ended in His *perfection*. In the words, *all them that obey Him*, there is probably an allusion to “*His obedience*” above. As he obeyed the Father, so must we obey Him, if we would be brought to that “*eternal salvation*” into which he has led the way. The expression is strictly parallel with “*we that have believed*,” ch. iv. 3, and “*they that come unto God by Him*,” ch. vii. 25. Some have thought that in the word *all*, the Writer hints to his Jewish readers, that such salvation was not confined to them alone. But it hardly seems likely that such a by-purpose should lie in the word. The next clause, *being addressed, &c.*, depends

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

t ver. 6.  
ch. vi. 20.

high priest <sup>t</sup> after the order of Melchisedec. <sup>11</sup> Concerning whom what

u John xvi. 12.  
2 Pet. iii. 10.

<sup>u</sup> we have to say is much, and difficult

x Matt. xiii. 15.

of interpretation for us to speak, seeing ye are become <sup>x</sup> dull of hearing.

y ch. vi. 1.

<sup>12</sup> For though for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye again have need that some one teach you <sup>y</sup> the first

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*an high priest after the order of Melchisedec. <sup>11</sup> Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. <sup>12</sup> For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of*

closely upon "*being made perfect, &c.*" above, and belongs to the time of Christ's exaltation, indicated by that *perfection*: and therefore must not be divided by a semicolon, as in A. V., from the foregoing, nor supposed to refer to the whole from ver. 7. The reference is to the passage of the Psalm above, and is made to confirm what has just been said. *Being addressed*, in this connexion, has a force of solemnity and formal appellation, implying His previous appointment and inauguration, and is hardly expressed by the slighter and more familiar "*called*" of the A. V.

11—VI. 20.] *Digression*, before entering on the comparison of Christ with Melchisedec, *complaining of the low state of spiritual attainment of the readers* (11—14): *warning them of the necessity of progress and the peril of falling back* (vi. 1—8): *but at the same time encouraging them by God's faithfulness in bearing in mind their precious labour of love, and in His promises generally, to persevere in faith and patience to the end* (vi. 9—20).

11.] Concerning whom (i. e. *Melchisedec*: not as some, *Christ*, of whom such an expression as this would hardly here be used, seeing that the whole Epistle hitherto has been concerning Him: the *Writer returns to Melchisedec*, ch. vii. 1) **what we have to say** (the plural pronoun, not with any definite reference to Timothy or other companions of the *Writer*, nor intended to include the readers, which is here impossible: but, as in some other places of the Epistle, merely indicating the *Writer* himself, as so frequently also in the Epistles of St. Paul) **is much, and difficult of interpretation** [for us] **to speak** (this is somewhat difficult. Who is the *interpreter*? the *Writer*, so that it should be difficult for him to explain what he has to say to his readers, or the *readers*, so that it should be difficult for them to understand it for themselves? This latter alternative

is taken by some: but it is hardly justified by the original: see my Greek Test. We are driven then to the other alternative, of making the *Writer* the subject to be supplied: so Chrysostom: "For when one has an audience who do not follow one, nor understand what is said, one cannot interpret well to them:" and many others; and the verb, *to speak*, which follows, will be constructed much as in our phrase "beautiful to look upon," "hard to work upon," &c.), **since** (probably renders a reason only for the *difficulty of interpretation*, not belonging also to the fact that the discourse would be *abundant*) **ye are become** (not '*are*,' as A. V. Chrysostom says well, "This shews that at one time they were well and strong, fervent in zeal and afterwards thus degenerated") **dull** ('*difficult to move*,' '*torpid*') **in your hearing.**

12.] **For though** (or, '*when*:' but, in the presence of the words "*for the time*," which give the temporal reference, it is perhaps better not to repeat it) **ye ought** (see on ver. 3, and ch. ii. 17) **on account of the time** (i. e. the length of time during which you have been believers: thus he shews that they had for some time been converted. On the evidence given by expressions of this kind as to the time of writing the Epistle, and the persons to whom it is addressed, see Introduction) **to be teachers, ye again have need that some one teach you** (in the original it is doubtful whether the sense is, "that some one teach you the first principles," or, "that [one] teach you what are, which be, the first principles." The latter has been taken by our A. V., after considerable authorities. But the other rendering has also ancient authority for it: and indeed is the only one which will fit either the context, or the construction strictly considered. The context: for it was not loss of power in them to distinguish between first elements and other portions of Christian doctrine, of which he complains, but ignorance

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.* <sup>13</sup> *For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.* <sup>14</sup> *But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of <sup>2</sup> milk, and not of solid food. <sup>z</sup> <sup>1</sup> <sup>Cor. iii. 1,</sup> <sup>2, 3.</sup> <sup>13</sup> For every one that useth milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness: for he is <sup>a</sup> a babe. <sup>14</sup> But <sup>a</sup> <sup>1</sup> <sup>Cor. xlii. 11.</sup> <sup>& xiv. 20.</sup> <sup>Eph. iv. 14.</sup> <sup>1</sup> <sup>Pet. ii. 2.</sup> solid food belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their organs of

altogether, and slowness of ear to receive divine knowledge: and they wanted *some one* to begin again with them and learn them the very first elements. And so far from "*some one*" being, as Delitzsch most absurdly says, *flat and unmeaning*, it carries with it the fine keen edge of reproach; as if it were said, "to teach you what all know and any can teach") **the rudiments** (or, 'elements,' or, 'first principles;' see Gal. iv. 3 and note; the simple parts out of which a body is compounded) **of the beginning** (the genitive specifies the elements, that they are not only such, but also belong to the *very beginning* of divine knowledge) **of the oracles** (that Christian doctrine [ch. vi. 1] which rests entirely on revelations from God) **of God; and ye have become** ("not only, '*ye have need*;' but *ye have become such as have need*: indicating that it was of their own will, that they had brought themselves into this state of need." Chrysostom) **(persons) having need of milk, and not of solid food** (see 1 Cor. iii. 2. The similitude is very common with Philo. What is the milk in the Writer's meaning, is plain from ch. vi. 1, where he enumerates several portions of Christian doctrine as parts of the discourse concerning the beginning of Christ). <sup>13.</sup>] renders a reason for vv. 11, 12, and especially for the assertion that the discourse would be difficult of interpretation. Having before stated that what he had to say would be hard for him to explain to them, and then that they were become persons needing milk and not solid food, he now proceeds to join these two positions together: **For every one who partakes of** (in the sense of *has for his share*, in ordinary feeding: not, partakes of in common with other things, for that adults do: see 1 Cor. x. 21) **milk is unskilled in** (not, *unskilful* in, which would be so, but is a different thing) **the word of righteousness: for he is an infant** (that is, "for every partaker of milk, in

the metaphorical sense in which I just now used the word, i. e. every one who requires yet to be taught the first principles &c., is devoid of understanding in the word of righteousness, in, that is, the positions and arguments which treat of God's salvation by Christ: for he is an infant: takes the same rank in spiritual understanding, that an infant does in worldly." Thus taken, I can see no difficulty in the contextual connexion. There is of course a mingling of the figure and the thing represented, which however is easy enough to any reader to whom both figure and thing are already familiar. But it is necessary to fix more satisfactorily the meaning of the somewhat obscure expression, **the word of righteousness**. Chrysostom interprets it of the doctrine of a pure and holy life: others, of that relating to Christ, the Author of righteousness: others again, of the higher doctrines: others, of the doctrine of justification by faith: others, of the doctrine of perfection, of which he by and by speaks: some, of the doctrine respecting Melchisedec, who is *King of Righteousness*. I incline more to Lünemann's view of the meaning, based as it is on the requirements of the passage, in which the stress is not on "*the word of righteousness*," but on "*unskilled*," and "*the word of righteousness*" follows as something of course and generally understood. Feeling this, he interprets it of the gospel in general: that *word* of which the central point is, the righteousness which is of God. And he refers to 2 Cor. iii. 9, "*the ministration of righteousness*," and xi. 15, "*ministers of righteousness*." This acceptance would not altogether preclude "*the king of righteousness*" falling under the same general head, and thus would bring the two expressions into union, though without any distinct reference from one to another).

<sup>14.</sup>] **But** (continuation of and contrast to ver. 13) **solid food belongs to** (is the



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

b Isa. vii. 15.  
 1 Cor. ii. 14,  
 15.

sense exercised with a view <sup>b</sup> to discernment of good and evil.

a Phil. iii. 12,  
 13, 14,  
 ch. v. 12.

VI. <sup>1</sup> Therefore <sup>a</sup> leaving discourse concerning the beginning of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance <sup>b</sup> from dead works, and of faith on God, <sup>2</sup> of the doctrine of

b ch. ix. 14.

portion of) the grown up, to those who by virtue of their (long) habit have their organs of sense (not, *their senses* themselves, but their eyes, ears, tongue, by which the senses act. Here again there manifestly is a mixture of the figure and the thing signified: on account of what follows, we must necessarily understand these organs of sense of the inner organs of the soul) exercised with a view to distinction of good and evil (this puts us in mind, as Bleek remarks, of the common Old Test. expression in describing childhood; e.g. Deut. i. 39; Isa. vii. 16. The reference here of good and evil is manifestly not to moral qualities, but to excellence and inferiority, wholesomeness and corruptness in doctrine).

CHAP. VI. 1.] Therefore (on the connexion, see below) leaving (as behind, and done with; in order to go on to another thing: not, *forgetting*, any more than the foundation is forgotten when we rear the house upon it) the word of the beginning of Christ (compare above, ch. v. 12: that word, or discourse, which has respect to the fundamental and elementary things mentioned below), let us press on to maturity (a question of some difficulty has divided the Commentators here: whether this sentence be meant as expressing the resolution of the Writer, as we say, "let us now proceed" to this or that,—or as conveying an exhortation to the readers. Each view has a formidable array of supporters. Owen tries [and so also Delitzsch] to comprehend both meanings: giving, however, the alternative very lucidly: "The Apostle either assumes the Hebrews unto himself, as to his work, or joins himself with them as to their duty. For if the words be taken the first way, they declare his resolution in teaching: if in the latter, their duty in learning." Between these two, both equally legitimate, the context must decide. And in seeking for elements of decision, I own

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

VI. <sup>1</sup> 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, <sup>2</sup> of the doctrine of baptisms, and of

that the alternative seems to me to have been put too exclusively. What I mean will be plain, when we consider on the one hand that "*laying the foundation*" can hardly be properly said of any but a teacher: and on the other, that vv. 4 ff. must necessarily have a general reference of warning to the hearers. It seems to me that the fact may be best stated thus: The whole is a "*condescension*" of the Writer to his readers: he with his work of teaching comes down to their level of learning, and regards that teaching and learning as all one work, going on together: himself and them as bound up in one progress. Thus best may we explain the expressions, which seem to oscillate alternately between writer and readers. And thus will *therefore* retain all its proper meaning, which on the first hypothesis was obliged to be wrested. It will mean, 'Wherefore, seeing that we [you and I, by communication] are in so low a state, babes, instead of grown men, let us, &c.?'; not again laying the foundation (the *subjects* to be supplied to the participle *laying* are the readers, with whom the Writer unites himself, as above explained) of (the genitives here indicate the materials of which the foundation consists. They are all matters belonging to the "*discourse concerning the beginning of Christ*:" extending indeed in their influence over the whole Christian life, just as the shape of the foundation is that of the building: but to be laid down once for all and not afterwards repeated) repentance from dead works, and faith on God (so in the opening of the Gospel, Mark i. 15: and in its progress, Acts xx. 21. These were the common conditions on which all mankind were invited to embrace the Gospel. And as the readers here were Jews, so would these words especially remind them of the form in which they were first invited by Christ's messengers. But we have to notice the



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.  
<sup>3</sup> And this will we do, if

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

washings <sup>c</sup> and laying on of hands, <sup>c</sup> Acts viii. 14, 15, 16, 17, & xix. 6.  
 and resurrection of the dead <sup>d</sup> and <sup>d</sup> Acts xvii. 31, 32.  
 eternal judgment. <sup>3</sup> And this † will <sup>e</sup> Acts xxiv. 25, Rom. ii. 13.  
 † Some of our oldest MSS. read, "let us do."

qualifications which here follow each term—repentance from dead works, faith on God. The dead works are taken by all the patristic expositors to mean *sinful* works. And so the great majority of modern Commentators also. And the justification of such an expression as *dead works* for *sins* is variously given: as *causing death eternal*: as *polluting, like the touch of a dead body* [so Chrysostom]. But neither of these meanings is borne out: the former being contrary to usage, the latter far-fetched and unlikely. It is much better to take the epithet in its common and obvious meaning; *dead, devoid of life and power*: compare "*dead faith*," James ii. 17, 26, and "*dead sin*," Rom. vii. 8; and in the references. St. Paul speaks, Eph. v. 11, in nearly the same sense: "*the unfruitful works of darkness*." But such dead or lifeless works again may be variously understood: either of the works of the flesh in the unconverted man, or of the Jewish works of the law which could not give life. Considering the readers and object of the Epistle, it is much more likely that the latter are here meant; those works by which they sought to set up a righteousness of their own, before they submitted themselves to God's righteousness. The best explanation of *faith on God* is found in St. Paul's language, Rom. iv. 5. And by this, our expression is defined to mean, *full trust, rested on God, that He has fulfilled his promises in Christ*. We may observe, that the things mentioned arrange themselves in groups of pairs, of which this is the first), of the doctrine of washings (not baptisms: this is a different form of the word from that generally used in the New Test. for both Christian baptism and that of John. In Mark vii. 4, ch. ix. 10, Col. ii. 12, the word is used, as here, of washing, or lustration with water. On the meaning, see below. On the construction, see in my Greek Test. As regards the plural, washings, it has been very variously taken for the singular: but none of the accounts of it seems to reach the point so well as that given above, which includes in the idea those various washings which were under the law, the baptism of John and even Christian

baptism also perhaps included, the nature of which, and their distinctions from one another, would naturally be one of the fundamental and primary objects of teaching to Hebrew converts. When it is objected to the view [as e. g. by Stuart] that the doctrine of Jewish washings would have had nothing to do with the elements of Christian teaching, we may fairly say that such objection is brought in mere thoughtlessness. The converts being Jews, their first and most obviously elementary instruction would be, the teaching them the typical significance of their own ceremonial law in its Christian fulfilment) and of laying on of hands (the doctrine of laying on of hands, like that of washings, not being confined to any one special rite, will mean, the reference and import of all that imposition of hands which was practised under the law, and found in some cases its continuance under the Gospel. By laying on of hands, the sick were healed, Mark xvi. 18; Acts ix. 12, 17; xxviii. 8; compare 2 Kings v. 11; Matt. ix. 18, &c.; officers and teachers of the Church were admitted to their calling, Acts vi. 6; xiii. 3; 1 Tim. iv. 14; v. 22; Num. viii. 10; xxvii. 18, 23; Deut. xxxiv. 9; converts were fully admitted into the Christian Church after baptism, Acts viii. 17; xix. 6; 2 Tim. i. 6. And there can be little doubt that it is mainly to this last that the attention of the readers is here called, as the Writer is speaking of the beginning of Christian teaching), and [of] resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment (these words, as well as the foregoing clause, depend on doctrine. These also were points of Jewish doctrine, confirmed and brought into clearer light by the Gospel. Some have supposed the resurrection of the dead to refer only to the righteous, as in John vi. 39, 40, 44, 54, —eternal judgment only to the wicked. But it is more probable, in a passage of such very general reference, that the Writer speaks generally, without any such distinction here in view, of the two doctrines: of the "*resurrection of life*" and the "*resurrection of judgment*" of John v. 29. And it is probable that he uses judgment in the same indefinite meaning: see Acts xxiv. 25. eternal, probably as part of the proceedings of eternity, and thus bear-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

f Acts xvliii. 21.  
 1 Cor. iv. 19.  
 g Matt. xii. 31.  
 32. ch. x. 26.  
 2 Pet. ii. 20.  
 21. 1 John  
 v. 16.  
 h ch. x. 32.  
 i John iv. 10.  
 & vi. 32.  
 Eph. ii. 8.  
 k Gal. iii. 2, 5.  
 ch. ii. 4.

we do, <sup>f</sup> if God permit. <sup>4</sup> For it is <sup>g</sup> im-  
 possible, in the case of those <sup>h</sup> who  
 have been once enlightened, and  
 have tasted of <sup>i</sup> the heavenly gift,  
 and <sup>k</sup> have been made partakers of

God permit. <sup>4</sup> For it  
 is impossible for those  
 who were once enlightened,  
 and have tasted of the  
 heavenly gift, and were  
 made partakers of the

ing the character and stamp of eternal :  
 or perhaps, as Theophylact, the judgment  
 which decides men's eternal fate).

3.] And this we will do (this has been  
 variously interpreted. Grotius, and several  
 others, who suppose [see above] that "*let  
 us go on*," in ver. 1, expresses the deter-  
 mination of the Writer, take it as referring  
 to the participial clause, "*not laying again  
 the foundation*," and as meaning, "*even  
 [also] this [viz., laying again the founda-  
 tion] we will do*." But besides that the  
 words will not bear it, no convenient sense  
 would be yielded by such a reference.  
 For having asserted on this hypothesis  
 that even the relaying of the foundation  
 should be done, if God will, he goes on to  
 say, "For it is impossible," &c., which  
 would in no way [see below] fit in to the  
 context. This being so, others, still re-  
 garding "*let us go on*" as the first, refer  
 the future, *we will do*, to the *thus going  
 on*. So Theophylact, "*This will we do* :  
 what ? go on to perfection." And doubtless  
 so a very good sense is given. In favour of  
 the reading *let us do*, it may be said, that it  
 corresponds better with the hortatory tone  
 of "*let us go on*" above, and though the less  
 obvious reading, is more in accordance  
 with the style of the Epistle if, that is  
 (the effect of the word here used, in  
 hypothetical sentences like the present,  
 is to assume the hypothesis as altogether  
 requisite to the previous position), *God  
 permit* (it may here again be said, that  
 the addition after the hortatory *let us do*  
 is as delicate and beautiful, as it is frigid  
 in the common acceptation after the in-  
 dicative "*we will do*." For it is God who  
 worketh in us both to will and to do of  
 his good pleasure, Phil. ii. 13. And it  
 leads the way beautifully to what follows :  
 "If," I say, "God permit : for when men  
 have once fallen away, it is a thing im-  
 possible," &c.). 4.] For (depends on  
 the whole foregoing sentence, including  
 the reference to the divine permission.  
 The connexion is: *we must go on* : for if  
 we go back, it will be to perdition—a  
 thing which [ver. 9] we do not think of  
 you and therefore expect your advance)

it is impossible, in the case of (these  
 words I insert, not as belonging to the  
 Greek construction, but as necessary in  
 English, to prevent the entire inversion of  
 the Greek order of the sentence) *those who  
 have been* (or, *were* : but here it is quite  
 necessary to take our English perfect : for  
 our indefinite past, "who were enlightened  
 and tasted . . . and were made . . . and  
 tasted . . ." would convey to the mere  
 English reader the idea that all this took  
 place at one and the same time, viz. bap-  
 tism,—whereas the participles clearly in-  
 dicate progressive steps of the spiritual  
 life) *once* (for all : indicating that the  
 process needs not, or admits not, repeti-  
 tion) *enlightened* (*taught by the preach-  
 ing of the word of God*. An historic  
 interest belongs to the occurrence of this  
 word here, as having in all probability  
 given rise to a meaning of *enlightened* and  
*enlightenment*, as denoting *baptism*, which  
 was current throughout the church down  
 to the Reformation. And so all the ancient  
 Commentators here understand the word,  
 and some of the moderns. Erasmus seems  
 the first who interpreted the word aright  
 ["who have once left the darkness of their  
 former life, being illuminated by the doc-  
 trine of the Gospel"], and almost all since  
 have followed him), and *have tasted* (per-  
 sonally and consciously partaken of : see  
 1 Pet. ii. 3, and Ps. xxxiv. 8 : and on the  
 general expression, note on ch. ii. 9) *of  
 the heavenly gift* (what is more espe-  
 cially meant ? It is very variously given :  
*remission of sins*, either general or in  
 baptism : *peace of mind*, arising from such  
 remission : *joy and peace in believing* ;  
*the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper* ; *the  
 Holy Spirit and His gifts* : *Christ Him-  
 self* : *the religion of Christ*,—*the Gospel* :  
*faith* : *regeneration* in general, as distin-  
 guished from the special gifts of the Spirit  
 in Baptism. Bleek and Tholuck, on account  
 of the close coupling by *the* to what has  
 preceded, understand by it the *light* itself  
 conveyed in the previous word *enlightened*.  
 But I would rather take the gift to have  
 a perfectly general reference,—'that which  
 was bestowed on them thereby.' This

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*Holy Ghost, <sup>5</sup> and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, <sup>6</sup> if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

the Holy Ghost, <sup>5</sup> and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of <sup>1</sup>the world to come, <sup>6</sup> and <sup>1</sup>ch. ii. 5. have fallen away,—to renew them again unto repentance; <sup>m</sup>seeing they <sup>m</sup>ch. x. 20. crucify to themselves afresh the Son

heavenly gift the persons supposed have *tasted for themselves*), and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit (outwardly, the agency would be the laying on of hands after baptism: but obviously the emphatic word is *partakers*—have become *real sharers*: so that the proper agent is He who only can bestow this participation, viz. God), <sup>5</sup>] and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come (what is *the good word of God*? The epithet is frequently applied to the word of God: see 1 Kings viii. 56; 2 Kings xx. 19; Neh. ix. 13; Jer. xxix. 10; Zech. i. 13; Rom. vii. 12; and usually with reference to its quickening, comforting, strengthening power, as sent or spoken by God to men. And in consequence it has been taken here to signify the comforting portion of the gospel, its promises. But it is better to take it more generally, as the wholesome and soul-preserving utterance of God in the gospel.

Then it is a far more debated question, what is meant by the *powers of the world* (literally, *age*) to come. Some have said, those *powerful foretastes of glory* which belong indeed to the future state in their fulness, but are vouchsafed to believers here. But most Commentators, and rightly, take the *age to come* as equivalent to "*the world to come*," ch. ii. 5 [where see note], and as designating the Christian times, agreeably to that name of Christ in Isa. ix. 6, in the Septuagint, "*the Father of the age to come*." Then the *powers* of this "world to come" will be the *spiritual gifts*, given by the Spirit in measure to all who believed, "distributing severally to every man as He will." We need not necessarily limit these to external miraculous powers, or even *prophecy* and the like: but surely may include in them spiritual powers bestowed in virtue of the indwelling Spirit to arm the Christian for his conflict with sin, the world, and the devil), and have fallen away (this expression is used here, as "*sinning willingly*," ch. x. 26, and "*departing from the living God*,"

ch. iii. 12,—see also ch. x. 29, and ch. ii. 1,—as pointing out the sin of apostasy from Christ: and the case supposed is very similar to that of the Galatians, Gal. v. 4; and iii. 3. The fear was [see *Introduct.* § iv. 1] lest these Hebrew converts should cast away their confidence in Christ, and take up again that system of types and shadows which He came to fulfil and abrogate: and nearly connected with this peril was their small progress in the doctrine of Christ. While speaking therefore of that, and exhorting them to be advancing towards maturity, he puts in this solemn caution against the fearful result to which their backwardness might lead,—to *renew* [them] *again unto repentance* (there is no superfluity, as Grotius thought, in to *renew again*. For the *renewing* would be the regenerating in any case, and the *again renewing* the renewal of it. Even in the first case, man is *renewed*: in the second case is *again renewed*. "Instead of *unto repentance*, or *by repentance*, inasmuch as *renewal* in full measure can only be brought about by *repentance*, and must therefore be preceded by it. But on the other side, *repentance* itself, the change of disposition, may be considered as the result of the renewal of the man having taken place; and so is it here: to *renew to repentance*, i. e. so to form anew, that entire change of disposition precedes." Bleek. There was a very general ancient reference of this to *renewal of baptism*; of which view I have given examples in my Greek Test.); *crucifying as they do* ("*seeing they crucify*," as A. V. well) *afresh* (some have questioned the possibility of the word here meaning to crucify *afresh*, and would render it simply "*crucify*." But it seems hardly doubtful that the meaning, as here given, is contained in it) *to themselves* (Christ was their possession by faith: this their possession they took, and reneued to themselves: deprived themselves of all benefit from Him, just as did the unbelieving Jews who nailed Him to the tree. He who should have been their gain

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

of God, and put him to an open shame. 7 For land which hath

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.  
7 For the earth which drink-

was made their loss) the Son of God (for solemnity, to shew the magnitude of the offence), and putting (Him) to open shame (they crucify Him anew, and as at his former crucifixion, put Him to shame before all: as Bleek strikingly says, they tear Him out of the recesses of their hearts where He had fixed his abode, and exhibit Him to the open scoffs and reproach of the world, as something powerless and common: compare ch. x. 29. It would be quite beyond the limits of mere annotation, to give any satisfactory analysis of the history of interpretation of this passage, and of the conflicts which have sprung up around it. Such accounts will be found admirably given in several of the Commentators, among whom I would especially mention Bleek and Tholuck; and for the English reader, Owen, who treats it at great length and very perspicuously. I will only mention the most notable points, and set down a few landmarks of the exposition. 1) The passage was used by the Montanists and the Novatians, in ancient times, to justify the irrevocable exclusion from the church of those who had lapsed. But 2) in the Catholic church, this view was ever resisted, and the Fathers found in the passage simply a prohibition against the repetition of baptism. And so all the ancients who have noticed the passage, and some of the moderns. 3) In later times the great combat over our passage has been between the Calvinistic and the Arminian expositors. To favour their peculiar views of indefectibility, the former have endeavoured to weaken the force of the participial clauses as implying any real participation in the spiritual life. So Calvin himself, and Beza: so Owen ["the persons here intended are not true and sincere believers: . . . for 1) in their full and large description there is no mention of faith or believing," &c.], and recently Tait, Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews. But all this is clearly wrong, and contrary to the plainest sense of the terms here used. The Writer even heaps clause upon clause, to show that no such shallow tasting is intended: and the whole contextual argument is against the view, for it is the very fact of these persons having veritably entered the spiritual life, which makes it impossible to renew them afresh if they fall away. If they have never entered it,

if they are unregenerate, what possible logic is it, or even common sense at all, to say, that their shallow taste and partial apprehension makes it impossible to renew them? what again to say, that it is impossible to *renew again* persons in whose case no *renewal* has ever taken place? If they never have believed, never been regenerated, how can it be more difficult to renew them to repentance, than the heathen, or any unconverted persons? One landmark of exposition then must be, to hold fast the simple plain sense of the passage, and recognize the fact that the persons are truly the partakers of the spiritual life—regenerate by the Holy Spirit. *Elect* of course they are not, or they could not fall away, by the very force of the term: but this is one among many passages where in the Scripture, as ever from the teaching of the Church, we learn that "*elect*" and "*regenerate*" are not convertible terms. All *elect* are regenerate: but all regenerate are not *elect*. The regenerate may fall away, the *elect* never can. 4) Again the word *impossible* has been weakened down to "*difficult*." The readers of this commentary will not need reminding, that no such sense can be for a moment tolerated. And this is our second landmark of explanation: this word *impossible stands immoveable*. But let us see where, and how, it stands. It is the strongest possible case which the Writer is putting. First there is *considerable advance in the spiritual life*, carefully and specifically indicated. Then there is *deliberate apostasy*: an enmity to Him whom they before loved, a going over to the ranks of His bitter enemies and revilers, and an exposing Him to shame in the sight of the world. Of such persons, such apostates from being such saints, the Writer simply says that it is impossible to bestow on them a fresh renewal to repentance. There remaineth *no more* sacrifice for sin than that One which they have gone through and rejected: they are in the state of crucifying the Son of God: the putting Him to shame is their enduring condition. How is it possible then to renew them to repentance? It is simply impossible, from the very nature of the case. The question is not, it seems to me, whether man's ministry or God's power is to be supplied as the agent, nor even whether the verb is *active*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

*eth in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: <sup>8</sup> but that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. <sup>9</sup> But, beloved,*

drunk in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbage meet for them for whom it is also dressed, <sup>n</sup> partaketh of blessing from <sup>n</sup> Ps. lxx. 10. God: <sup>8</sup> ° but if it bear thorns and <sup>o</sup> Isa. v. 6. thistles it is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. <sup>9</sup> But, beloved, we are per-

or passive ["to renew them," or, "that they should be renewed"]: the impossibility lies merely within the limits of the hypothesis itself. Whether God, of His infinite mercy and almighty power, will ever, by judgments or the strong workings of His Spirit, reclaim the obdurate sinner, so that even *he* may look on Him whom he has pierced, is, thank Him, a question which neither this, nor any other passage of Scripture, precludes us from entertaining. There is no barring here of God's grace, but just as I have observed above, an axiomatic preclusion by the very hypothesis itself, of a renewal to repentance of those who have passed through, and rejected for themselves, God's appointed means of renewal. 5) Another dispute over our passage has been, whether the *sin against the Holy Ghost* is in any way brought in here. Certainly we may say that the fall here spoken of cannot be identical with that sin: for as Bleek has well remarked, that sin may be predicated of persons altogether outside the Christian Church, as were those with reference to whom our Lord uttered His awful saying on it. It is true, the language used in the parallel place, ch. x. 29, does approach that sin, where he says, "*have done despite to the Spirit of grace*:" but it is also clear that the impossibility here spoken of cannot depend on the fact of such sin having been committed, by the very construction of the sentence, which itself renders the reason for that impossibility). 7, 8.] *Illustration of the last position*, by a contrast between profitable and unprofitable land. For land which hath drunk in the rain frequently coming on it (so far, is the *subject* of both sides of the hypothesis: and not the word "*land*" only. The A.V., "But that which beareth thorns, &c.," is mistranslated. Besides which, the A.V. has neglected the past participle here, in rendering, "*the earth which drinketh in*." The drinking in the rain is an act prior to both the hypotheses. The term *hath drunk*

in implies not only that the earth has *received* the rain, but that it has *taken it in*, sucked it in, "being no impenetrable rocky soil, from which the rain runs off without sinking in. And thus it is an appropriate figure for men who have really taken into themselves the word of God, and experienced its power," and so furnishes an explanation of vv. 4, 5, as well as being explained by them. In the interpretation, *rain* must not be too strictly confined to "teaching," but taken widely, as importing all spiritual influences whatever), and *bringeth forth plants* (properly fodder, provender, for man or beast: the word is generally used for grass, or corn, or any kind of green herb) *fit* (meet) *for those on whose account* (the A.V. renders ungrammatically, "*by whom*." On the sense, see below) *also* (this *also* is common in cases where some special reference of an already patent fact is adduced) *it is tilled* (*who are* these persons, in the *interpretation*? Theophylact mentions two references: 1) to the men themselves, who, bearing Christian graces as fruit, will themselves reap the advantage: 2) to their teachers, who participate in their disciples' excellences. But both these fall short of the mark: and there can be no doubt that if, as is probable, the features of the parable are to be traced in the interpretation, we must understand *GOD* as the owner of the land which is tilled, and the tillers are the teachers and preachers of the Gospel. So 1 Cor. iii. 9), *partaketh of* (the verb is often used without any necessary reference to *others also* being sharers) *blessing from God*: but if it bear thorns and thistles is *accounted worthless* ('*reprobate*,' tried and found wanting. Being thus rejected, it gets no share of God's blessing), and *nigh unto cursing* (there appears here to be an allusion to Gen. iii. 17, 18, "Cursed be the ground for thy sake: thorns and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee." Chrysostom has noticed that in the ex-



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

suaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, even though we thus speak. <sup>10</sup> For <sup>q</sup> God is not unjust, so as to forget <sup>r</sup> your work and <sup>†</sup> your love, which ye shewed toward his name, in that ye <sup>s</sup> ministered to the saints, and still minister. <sup>11</sup> But we earnestly

p Prov. xiv. 31.  
Matt. x. 42.  
& xxv. 40.  
John xiii. 20.  
q Rom. iii. 4.  
r 2 Thess. i. 6,  
7.  
† 1 Thess. i. 3.  
† So all our  
oldest au-  
thorities.  
The words  
labour of  
have been  
inserted  
from 1 Thess. i. 3.

s Rom. xv. 25. 2 Cor. viii. 4. & ix. 1, 12. 2 Tim. i. 18.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> And we desire that every*

pression "*nigh unto cursing*," there is a softening of the severity of the declaration); of which the end is unto burning. There is considerable doubt both as to the connexion, and as to the interpretation of the sense when obtained. To what does of what, or whose, belong? to "*land*," or to "*cursing*"? The latter is taken by some: the end, result, of which curse is that it tends to burning. But it does not seem to me that this would have been thus expressed. I would therefore, with Chrysostom, and most Commentators, refer "*whose*" to "*land*." But then, with what view will this ultimate burning take place? Some have said, with a salutary end, to purge out the evil. Strange to say, this meaning is adopted, not by Roman-Catholic Commentators, but by Protestants: most of them not seeing that the inevitable conclusion from such an acceptance would be, the existence of purgatorial fire. The reference clearly is, as the whole context, and the finality of the expression "*whose end is unto*" shew, not to purifying, but to consuming fire: as in ch. x. 26, 27, where the same ultimate fear is described as issuing in *fire which shall consume the adversaries*. So in Deut. xxix. 22, 23, the curse of the apostate land is described as consisting in "*brimstone, and salt, and burning*; that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, &c." And this destruction by burning is quite according to New Test. analogy: e. g. John xv. 6; Matt. iii. 10, 12; vii. 19; xiii. 30, 40 ff. Vv. 9-20.] *Encouragement to perseverance*: and first (9-12), *from God's faithfulness*: see summary at ch. v. 11. "Having now reproved them sufficiently, and terrified and smitten them, he heals them again, so as not to cast them down further, and prostrate them: for he that beats a sluggard only renders him more sluggish. He does not

then altogether flatter them, to avoid uplifting them, nor altogether smite them, for fear he should lay them more prostrate: but mingles a little blame with much added praise, so as to bring them right as he wishes." Chrysostom. 9.] But we are persuaded (the original word gives the result of actual conviction by proof) concerning you, beloved ("this appellation is most appositely inserted, that they may not think him their foe and hater, but might know that he is ardent with Christian love towards them: which love causes us always to think better things of those whom we love, and even though we say any thing severely, to say it with a mind anxious to correct, not to injure." Schlichting), the things which are better (the better course as regards your moral state: or, the better fate, as regards your ultimate end. The latter is most probably the reference, seeing that what follows rests on God's ultimate faithfulness and justice in the day of retribution. The former is of course involved in it, as conditioning it), and (things) akin to salvation, if even we do thus speak (are in the habit of thus speaking). 10.] For God is not unjust, (so as) to forget (there are many places in the Old Test. where forgetfulness on the part of God is thus denied: Ps. ix. 12, 18; x. 12; Amos viii. 7: or deprecated, 1 Sam. i. 11; Ps. xiii. 1; xlii. 9; xlv. 24; lxxiv. 19, 23; Isa. xlix. 14 ff.; Lam. v. 20) your work (i. e. your whole Christian life of active obedience: so work is used absolutely in the passage 1 Cor. iii. 13-15; so in Gal. vi. 4, "*Let every one prove his own work*." See this work somewhat specified in ch. x. 32-34. It is a general term, including the labours of love mentioned below) and your love (the expressions nearly resemble those in 1 Thess. i. 3), which ye shewed toward His name (the saints were those who were called by



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: <sup>12</sup> that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. <sup>13</sup> For when God

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

desire that every one of you do <sup>t ch. iii. 6, 1</sup> shew the same diligence with regard <sup>u Col. i. 2.</sup> to the full assurance of your hope until the end: <sup>12</sup> that ye become not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience <sup>x in- x ch. x. 36.</sup> inherit the promises. <sup>13</sup> For when

God's name, so that beneficence towards them was in fact shewn towards His name. His refers to God, as the antecedent expressed above: not to Christ, as some explain it), in having ministered (probably, see Rom. xv. 4; 2 Cor. viii. 4, 19, 20; ix. 1; Acts xi. 29, if not exclusively, yet principally, in eleemosynary bestowals. It may hence perhaps be surmised that these Hebrews did not live in Judæa: see *Introd.* § ii. 15) to the saints, and still ministering (there is a fine touch here of that delicate compliment, which is also characteristic of St. Paul. "This pious care has not ceased in you, though it may perhaps have declined," as Schlichting: but the Writer leaves the defect to be understood, and states the excellency at its utmost).

11.] But (carries a slight reproof, contrasting your need of exhortation to constancy with your past and partially remaining present practice) we earnestly desire (a fervent heartfelt expression) that every one of you ("he cares alike for great and small, knowing all, and passing over none." Chrysostom) do shew the same diligence (not, as some explain, the same which some have already shewn: nor, the same as ye have already shewn, as Chrysostom and others, which would imply that the Writer was satisfied with their state hitherto, and only desired its continuance: an inference at variance with the facts of the Epistle: but, the same, with a view to the full assurance of hope unto the end, as they had already shewn with regard to the necessities of the saints) with regard to (the employment which this diligence is to find: the object with reference to which it is to energize) the full assurance (not, as some, the full formation, objective,—which is against the New Test. usage of the word rendered) of your hope until the end (see ch. iii. 14. The words until the end belong to the whole sentence, not to the verb, nor to "the full assurance of hope" only. "The end" is the coming of the Lord, looked for as close at hand; see note as above): that ye become not ("be not"

misses the fine delicacy of the Writer, implying that the dulness which he deprecates was indeed commenced, but might be broken off. Compare ch. v. 11, where they are said to have become dull of hearing—the same adjective in the Greek. It is true that there is no contradiction between the two verses—the one being of sluggishness in hearing, the other in Christian practice), sluggish, but (this again brings in a strong contrast—"nay, but rather:" passing to another subject altogether, as it were. See on ch. ii. 6) imitators of them who through faith and endurance (see Col. i. 11, also ver. 15; James v. 7, 8. That constant and patient waiting is implied, without which faith would be made void: of which it is said, "It is good that a man should both hope and wait for the salvation of the Lord") inherit the promises (what is meant by this, and who are indicated by the expression? The two questions are very closely connected together. First observe that the verb is not past, *who . . . inherited*, but present: said not of any one act by which these persons entered on the inheritance of the promises, but of (1) a state now going on, "*who are inheriting*," or (2) in mere predication, "*who are inheritors of*." That the first cannot be meant, is clear: for in ch. xi. where he enumerates the examples of faith and patience, he says, "*These all . . . received not the promise*." The same consideration would prevent the reference very commonly here supposed, to Abraham and the patriarchs. Taking then (2), we may regard the designation as used without reference to time, but as indicative of office, or standing, or privilege. Thus the reference of the words will be perfectly general: not, *who have inherited*, nor *who shall inherit*, nor *who are inheriting*, but "*who are inheritors of*," *who inherit*, in all times and under all circumstances. Of these, Abraham is chosen as the most illustrious example). 13—20.] The encouragement to perseverance is further confirmed by God's express oath made to

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, <sup>y</sup> he sware by himself, <sup>14</sup> saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. <sup>15</sup> And thus, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. <sup>16</sup> For men verily swear by the greater: and of all gainsaying <sup>z</sup> an oath is to them an end for confirma-

<sup>y</sup> Gen. xxii. 16,  
17,  
Ps. cv. 9,  
Luke i. 73.

<sup>z</sup> Exod. xxii.  
11.

*Abraham, the first inheritor of the promise.*

13.] For "in these words he does not render a reason why we should imitate those just mentioned, but a reason why he mentions them. A man might ask whether there are any such, and who they are? So in these words he introduces Abraham, the father of all the faithful, who was most enduring in his faith, and reaped most fruit from it." Schlichting) God when He promised (Bleek well remarks, that promised is to be taken not only as "made a promise," but in the Messianic sense, "gave the promise," as "the promises" above, and vv. 15, 17, ch. vii. 6; Rom. ix. 4; Gal. iii. 16) to Abraham, since He could swear by none (no person) greater, swore by Himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless (at first the participle, in this expression, seems to have had a certain emphasis: but afterwards this was lost, and the expression became a mere formula) thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And thus (i. e. when he had received this promise,—being in this state of dependence on the divine promise), having endured with patience (viz. in his waiting so long for God's promise to be fulfilled—in having, when it was partially fulfilled, again shewn noble endurance in the will of God by offering up Isaac), he obtained the promise (i. e. not as Bleek, he had made to him the promise above related: this would merely stultify the sentence, which proceeds on the faithfulness of God, confirming his promise with an oath by Himself, and the faith and endurance of Abraham, waiting for that promise to be fulfilled: but as Lünemann, he obtained, got fulfilled to him, the promise, the thing promised, to wit, the birth of Isaac, as the commencement of the fulfilment—as much of it as he could see. And thus Abraham became inheritor of the promises. That

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, <sup>14</sup> saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. <sup>15</sup> And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. <sup>16</sup> For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.

there is here no inconsistency with ch. xi. 39, see shewn there). 16—20.]

*Security of this promise*, as being part of God's great promise, which He has fulfilled in Christ. These verses are transitional, and lead us to the consideration of the Melchisedec Priesthood of our Lord in the next chapter.

16.] For [indeed] men (emphatic) swear by the greater [one] (undoubtedly masculine: it could not be predicated of any thing neuter, that it was greater than the men who swear. And by the expression here, generally taken, must be meant God Himself: that greater One, who is above all men): and an oath is to them an end (see reff. and more examples in Bleek) of all gainsaying (A. V. with very many other versions, "strife," which is a legitimate meaning, but not borne out here by the context, seeing that there is no allusion, in the application of the example, to any instance in which God and men were at strife. And besides, in the only places where the word occurs in the New Test. it has the meaning "gainsaying:" e. g. ch. vii. 7, without possibility of gainsaying. So that it is best to take this meaning here, and understand that an oath puts an end to all gainsaying by confirming the matter one way, in which all parties consent) for confirmation (the A. V. ungrammatically joins these words with an oath,— "an oath for confirmation." They can only be joined, and that closely, with an end. Calvin's remark on this verse is pertinent: "This passage teaches us that there is among Christians a lawful use of an oath, and this is to be noticed as against fanatics, who of their own fancy want to abrogate the rule of reverent swearing which God has prescribed in His law. For the Apostle beyond doubt here treats of the manner of swearing as of a pious practice and one sanctioned by God: inas-

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

<sup>17</sup> *Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: <sup>18</sup> 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: <sup>19</sup> which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; <sup>20</sup> whither the forerunner is for us*

AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

tion. <sup>17</sup> In which behalf God, willing more abundantly to shew unto <sup>a</sup> the <sup>a ch. xi. 9.</sup> heirs of the promise <sup>b</sup> the immuta- <sup>b Rom. xi. 20.</sup> bility of his counsel, interposed with an oath: <sup>18</sup> that by means of two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God ever to lie, we may have strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope <sup>c</sup> set before us: <sup>c ch. xii. 1.</sup> <sup>19</sup> which we have as an anchor of our soul, both sure and stedfast, <sup>d</sup> and entering into the part within <sup>d Lev. xvi. 15. ch. ix. 7. e ch. iv. 14. & viii. 1. & ix. 24.</sup> the veil; <sup>20</sup> <sup>e</sup> where as forerunner

much as he does not speak of it as having formerly been in use, but as yet subsisting").

17.] In which behalf (nearly equivalent to "wherefore." This seems the best rendering, and not, with the A. V., to take it as signifying *wherein* or *in which*) God, willing to shew more abundantly (than he would have done without an oath) to the heirs of the promise (from ch. xi. 9, Isaac and Jacob were "*co-heirs of the same promise*" with Abraham. But there is no need to confine the title to them: it may well be extended down to us, who are "the seed of Abraham and heirs according to the promise," Gal. iii. 29) the unchangeableness of His counsel, interposed (became mediator: so Josephus says in one place, "They said these things with an oath, and constituted God the Mediator of their promises." And thus when He Himself swears, having no greater to swear by, He swears by Himself, so making Himself as it were a third person between the parties to the oath) with an oath (the instrument: it was by means of the oath that He exercised the office of interposer or Mediator): that by means of two ("what two?" says Chrysostom: and replies, "the saying and promising, the adding an oath to His promise." The Writer is impressing on us the strength of that *method of assurance* which God has been pleased to give us, in that He has not only promised [in both cases in question], but also confirmed it by an oath) unchangeable things, in which (as the material of the lie, if it were possible) it is impossible for God ever (this force is given by the original construction, which distributes the propo-

sition into separate incidents) to lie (in each and either of them, it is out of all question that falsehood should be suspected in Him), we may have strong encouragement (or, exhortation, which amounts to the same: better than *consolation*: see ch. xii. 5, xiii. 22, where the same Greek word occurs), who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope (taken here objectively, or very nearly so: hope as embodying the thing hoped for) set before us (proposed to us as a prize in a contest): which (viz. the hope: in its subjective resting on objective grounds now to be set forth) we have (not, "*we hold fast*," as some) as an anchor of our soul (the similitude is a very common one in Greek and Roman writers; and on coins and medals, where hope is represented by an anchor. A saying is attributed to Socrates, "A ship is not to be held by one anchor, nor life by one hope"), safe and firm (the adjectives belong to anchor, not to "which [hope].") An anchor may be unsafe and unsteady, as well as safe and firm), and entering into the part within the veil (first, to what is entering in to be referred? to the anchor, or to the hope? The former is the more obvious construction: and has been accepted by many, thus explaining it: "As a ship's anchor does not fasten in the water, but enters the earth beneath the water, and there fixes: so our hope, the anchor of the soul, thinks it not enough to enter the vestibule, i. e. is not content with earthly and visible blessings, but penetrates even to those things which are within the veil, even into the very Holy of Holies: i. e. lays hold of God

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

f ch. iii. 1. &  
v. 6, 10, & vii.  
17.

on our behalf Jesus entered, <sup>f</sup> having become an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

a GEN. xiv. 18,  
&c.

VII. <sup>1</sup> For this <sup>a</sup> Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of God the

VII. <sup>1</sup> For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high

Himself, and heavenly blessings, and fixes on them." Estius. This is said by Bleek to be too artificial, and he, with some others, takes *hope* as that which enters within the veil, simply, the figure being dropped. But I must say that I prefer the other, being as it seems to me the simpler view. "Two figures are here not so much mixed, as wonderfully combined. The Writer might have compared the world to a sea, the soul to a ship, the future yet hidden glory to the concealed bottom of the deep, the far off terra firma, stretching away under the water and covered by it. Or, he might have compared the present earthly life with the forecourt, and the future blessedness with the heavenly sanctuary which is concealed from us as by a veil. But he has combined both these. The Soul clings, as one in fear of shipwreck, to an anchor, and sees not whither the cable of the anchor runs,—where it is fastened: but she knows, that it is fastened behind the veil which hides the future glory, and that she, if she only holds on to the anchor, shall in her time be drawn in where it is, into the holiest place, by the hand of the Deliverer." Ebrard. This is very beautiful, and in the main, simple and natural: only going off into fancy at the end,—which is not required for the interpretation. The word here used was the name for the second veil or curtain [ch. ix. 3], which shut in the Holy of Holies; the first or outer one being called by another name, where as forerunner (not "the forerunner," as A. V.) on our behalf (as representing, and introducing, us, who are to come after. It is a figure analogous, in its propriety, to that where our Lord is described as *firstfruits of them that slept, firstborn of the dead*, in theirs. And it is one full of comfort to us: for, as Theophylact says, "A forerunner must be so with reference to some that follow, and there is not generally any entire difference between the forerunner and his followers, as neither was there between John and Christ. Be not then faint-hearted: we shall very soon enter where our forerunner has entered") entered Jesus, having become (see on ch. ii. 17) a High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec (the

stress is on these last words. And this is so, because it is this particular point to which the Writer wishes to return in what follows. He assumes for the present the eternal priesthood as conceded, and takes up the mysterious point which he left at ch. v. 10, for elucidation. And thus ends the digression which began there).

CHAP. VII. 1—X. 18.] THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDEC, SET FORTH IN ITS DISTINCTION FROM THE LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD:—THE NEW COVENANT BROUGHT IN BY CHRIST, IN ITS DISTINCTION FROM THE OLD:—AND THE FULL PROPITIATION WROUGHT BY HIM, IN DISTINCTION FROM THE PROPITIATORY SACRIFICES FORMERLY OFFERED. And herein, VII. 1—10.] *The priesthood of Melchisedec: its nature, as eternal (1—3; as superior to the Levitical (4—10). 1—3.] For this Melchisedec, king of Salem (Gen. xiv. 18. It is doubtful whether this Salem is a short form of Jerusalem, or some other place. Those who hold the latter opinion contend that Jerusalem cannot be meant, because Jebus, and not Salem, was its old name, and Salem for Jerusalem occurs only in Ps. lxxvi. 2, a song of late date,—and there as a poetical form, for the rhythm's sake. A prose writer of the primitive date of Genesis would not be likely to use such a form. They therefore suppose that this Salem was that mentioned John iii. 23 as near to Enon, where John baptized: probably also in Gen. xxxiii. 18, where the Septuagint, Vulgate, and A. V. all recognize Salem as the name of a place, though the Targumists, Josephus, &c., regard it as an adjective. The same place seems to be mentioned in Judith iv. 4, the valley of Salem. And for this view, there is very ancient and weighty authority. Jerome says that he had heard from the most learned Jews, "that Salem is not, as Josephus and all our people suppose, a name of Jerusalem, but a town near Scythopolis, which is called Salem to this day."* And he goes on to say, that the palace of Melchisedec was shewn there, betokening by the magnitude of the ruins that of the ancient fabric. And Bleek, from whom

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; <sup>2</sup> 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; <sup>3</sup> without father, without mother,*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

most high, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; <sup>2</sup> to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that [being] also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; <sup>3</sup> without father, without mother,

this notice is mainly taken, argues with some probability that the Writer of our Epistle can hardly have thought of Jerusalem as indicated by Salem, or he would have pressed, not merely the etymology of the name, but all those sacerdotal associations which belonged to the holy city. As to the further question, whether *Salem* is here, or by Philo, meant *as the name of a place at all*, see on ver. 2), **priest of God the most high** (so in Genesis. The appellation, here and in the Old Test., belongs to the true and only God: see Gen. xiv. 19, 22, where in this same history both Melchisedec and Abraham speak of "the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth." The union of the kingly and priestly offices in one belonged to the simplicity of patriarchal times, and is found in Abraham himself, who offers sacrifice; see Gen. xv. and xxii. Remember the prophetic announcement Zech. vi. 13, so familiar to every Christian. Our beloved Saviour, as the "*Father of the age to come*" (so the Septuagint, Isa. ix. 6, where we have "*the Everlasting Father*"), restores again that first blessed family relation, which sin had disturbed), **who met Abraham** (it was, as the narrative in Gen. literally stands, the king of Sodom, who came out to meet Abraham: but Melchisedec is mentioned in the same sentence as having brought forth bread and wine, and must be included in the category of those who came out to meet him also) **returning from the defeat of the kings, and blessed him** (Gen. ver. 19: see the argument below, vv. 6, 7); **to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth of all** ("of all," viz. the booty which he had taken from the kings: see ver. 4 below. In the narrative, the whole has the solemnity of a formal act; of sacerdotal blessing on the part of Melchisedec, and recognition of him as High Priest of God on the part of Abraham. The custom of setting apart the tenth to divine uses, was heathen as well as Jewish.

So far (see the

summary above) is purely historical: now follow the inductions from the history; from the mystical office and name of the Person concerned); **first indeed being interpreted** (i.e. "*being by interpretation*:" his name bearing this meaning when translated into Greek) **King of righteousness** (or **righteous king**, as Josephus gives it. But the other form here is no doubt purposely chosen, inasmuch as Melchisedec is a prophetic symbol of Him who is not only righteous, but the fount and ground of all righteousness before God. Zech. ix. 9; Isa. ix. 7; Jer. xxiii. 5, 6; Dan. ix. 24; Mal iv. 2; 1 Cor. i. 30), **and next also** ("*being,*" not "*being interpreted,*" must be supplied. This is plain from "*King of Salem*" representing a matter of fact, and the interpretation *following*) **King of Salem, which is, King of peace** (it has been much disputed, whether Salem is regarded by the Writer as the name of a town *at all*, and is not rather a portion of the personal appellation of Melchisedec. This latter has been held by Bleek, mainly from the consideration that no distinction here is made between the two expressions, "King of righteousness," and "King of peace." But, as Bleek himself confesses, we may well imagine that the Writer may wish to point out as a remarkable fact, that the city over which Melchisedec reigned, as well as his own name, was of typical significance; and in that case does not the expression **and after that also** draw sufficient distinction between his personal appellation and that of his city? As regards the word itself, *peace* is here used in that pregnant and blessed sense in which Christ is said to be "Prince of peace," Isa. ix. 6; see also Rom. v. 1; Eph. ii. 14, 15, 17; Col. i. 20. It is peace as the fruit of righteousness, compare Isa. xxxii. 17: notice the order here, **first . . . of righteousness**, and after that also of **peace**. "Righteousness and peace," says Delitzsch, "form in Old Test. prophecy, the characteristic of the times



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

without genealogy, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but likened unto the Son of God;

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth*

of the Messiah"); without father, without mother, without genealogy (it is very difficult to assign the true meaning to these predicates. The latter of them seems indeed to represent a simple matter of fact: viz. that Melchisedec has not in Genesis any genealogy recorded, by which his descent is shewn [see below]. But as to the two former, it cannot well be denied that, while they also may bear a similar sense, viz., that no father and mother of his are recorded in the sacred narrative, it is very possible on the other hand to feel that the Writer would hardly have introduced them so solemnly, hardly have followed them up by such a clause as "*having neither beginning of days nor end of life,*" unless he had coupled with them far higher ideas than the former supposition implies. I confess this feeling to be present in my own mind:—indeed I feel that such solemn words seem to me to decide against that other supposition. So far I think all is clear: but when we come to inquire *what* high and mysterious eminence is here allotted to Melchisedec, I own I have no data whereon to decide: nor, I think, is a decision required of us. The Writer assigns to him this mysterious and insulated position, simply as a type of Christ: and this type he is merely by virtue of negations, as far as these epithets are concerned: in what he was *not*, he surpasses earthly priests, and represents Christ: what he *was*, is not in the record. I would regard the epithets then as designedly used in this mysterious way, and meant to represent to us, that Melchisedec was a person differing from common men. It remains to give a summary of the opinions respecting the passage. The circumstance that Melchisedec is here stated to be **likened unto the Son of God**, has led many of the older expositors to regard these epithets as belonging to Melchisedec only in so far as he is a type of the Son of God, and as properly true of Him alone, not of Melchisedec, or only in an improper sense, and a subordinate manner. Accordingly, they understand **without father** of Christ in reference to his Humanity; **without mother**, in reference to his Divinity; and so also **without genealogy**. But, however the term "*without father*" might perhaps be conceded to be not

unnaturally applied to Christ in virtue of his Humanity, the words "*without mother*" and "*without genealogy*" lie so far off any obvious application to his Divinity, that we may safely say this view could not well have been in the Writer's mind. See further reasons, on the words "*likened to the Son of God*" below, for applying these epithets to Melchisedec, and not to Christ. But *when they are so applied*, we are met by two widely divergent streams of opinion, partly hinted at in the explanation of the rendering given above. The one of these regards Melchisedec as a superhuman being: the other finds nothing in this description which need point him out as any thing beyond a man. Jerome had received from Evagrius an anonymous work, in which the "most famous question respecting the Priest Melchisedec" was treated, and the writer tried to prove him "to have been of divine nature, not to be thought of as a man: and to have at the end presumed to say that the Holy Spirit met Abraham, and was the person who appeared to him as a man." This strange opinion moved Jerome "to examine the books of the ancients to see what their opinions were." And he found that Origen, in his first Homily on Genesis [now lost], maintained him to have been *an angel*, as did Didymus, the follower of Origen. Then he examined Hippolytus, Eusebius of Cæsarea, and Eusebius of Emesa, Apollinarius, Eustathius of Antioch, and found that all these held him to have been *a man of Canaan, King of Jerusalem*, and endeavoured to prove it in different ways. He then mentions the opinion of the Jews, that Melchisedec was *Shem*, the eldest son of Noah; and gives their calculation that this may well have been, for Shem survived Abraham forty years. On this he pronounces no opinion. The view, that Melchisedec was the Holy Ghost, was also entertained by Hieracas the Egyptian, and by a branch of the Theodotian heretics, founded by a younger Theodotus, and called Melchisedecites: and Marcus Eremita [about 400], who wrote a treatise on Melchisedec, mentions heretics who believed him to be "God the Word, before He took flesh, or was born of Mary." This opinion Epiphanius mentions as held by



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*a priest continually.* <sup>4</sup> *Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

abideth a priest for ever. <sup>4</sup> But consider how great this man was,

some within the church: and Ambrose, from his remarks, vol. i. p. 288, seems to have held this: though, as above, he expressly states him to have been merely a holy man, a type of Christ. This last view was ever the prevalent one in the church. Cyril of Alexandria combats the two opinions that Melchisedec was a vision of the Holy Spirit, and that he was a great angel.

In later times the idea that he was the Son of God has been revived. The theory that he was *Shem* has found many advocates: among others, Luther [on Gen. xv.] and Melancthon. Jurieu believes him to have been *Ham*; Hulse and Calnet to have been *Enoch* reappearing on earth), having neither beginning of days, nor end of life (these words are again taken by most Commentators to mean, that of Melchisedec, neither beginning of days nor end of life are related in Scripture. Some take beginning for that of his sacerdotal life: others take end also for that of his priestly life: "for that no one preceded him in the priesthood to which he succeeded, and no one is related to have succeeded him in his priesthood, in which thing he was a type of Christ." Camero. But however the end of his life may be legitimately thus referred, seeing that his priesthood and his life would expire together, his beginning of days can hardly be understood of any thing but his natural life, especially as following his being without father or mother, and in the presence of the general biblical usage of the days of any one as a man's lifetime. Accordingly most expositors take the words in this their natural sense and interpret them as above. Again however, no one, I think, can help feeling that such an interpretation is in fact no worthy acceptance of these solemn words of the sacred Writer. The expressions become incomparably more natural, as Bleek says, if the Writer really mean that Melchisedec had not, as mortal men, a definite beginning and end of his life. It really would seem to me almost childish, to say thus solemnly of any whose acts were related in the Old Test., but whose birth and death were not related, that *they had neither beginning of days nor end of life*. Suppose e.g. such a thing were said of Hobab, father-in-law of Moses. Here again Delitzsch, who takes strongly the other

view, quotes from Philo an expression respecting Cain which he supposes analogous: "Cain, the symbol of evil, shall not die, because evil must always live among the mortal race of men." But surely it is hardly legitimate to conclude that, because Philo means only thus much, the Writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews means no more; but (yea, rather) likened to the Son of God (this clause stands alone and pendent, like the preceding, and must not be taken with "*abideth a priest for ever*." To this there are three objections: 1) it would be extremely unnatural to say that from a text where it is said that the Son of God is a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec, Melchisedec himself derives the character of remaining a priest for ever: 2) it would be but a poor way of proving the eternal priesthood of Christ, to shew that He is a priest after the order of one who only appeared to have, but really had not, such eternal priesthood: and 3) it is clearly not in respect of *priesthood* that the *being made like* is here meant, but in respect of the foregoing predicates: for it is as to these only that the Son of God would be an archetype for Melchisedec, seeing that, in respect of priesthood, Melchisedec, was chronologically prior to our Lord. The sense is then that Melchisedec, in being "*without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life*," personally, not typically, resembles the Son of God—in his personal attributes, as the Son of God subsequently in His incarnation, resembled *him* in His priesthood); *remaineth priest for ever* (the expression is one which must be interpreted in each case by the context in which it occurs. There is no reason why here, where an eternal priesthood is in question, it should mean *for life*: indeed such meaning would be absurd, seeing that all were priests for life. All kinds of ways have been devised to escape the plain assertion of these words. Most Commentators have had recourse to the same as before, viz. that *no end of his priesthood is related to us in Scripture*: so Ecumenius, Theophylact, Cyril of Alexandria, Epiphanius, and many moderns. Schlichting takes it, that as our Lord's High Priesthood, which is said to be eternal, will endure to that time when the high-priestly office will cease, so Melchisedec's priesthood is said

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

b Gen. xiv. 20 <sup>b</sup> unto whom Abraham, even the patriarch, paid tithes from the best of the spoil. <sup>5</sup> And indeed <sup>c</sup> they of the sons of Levi, when they receive the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that

c Numb. xviii. 21, 26.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. <sup>5</sup> 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 bre-*

to endure for ever, "because it endured as long as the nature of the case would admit. So," he adds, "David said he would praise the Lord for ever," &c. Stier says, "He stands in Scripture as a type of an eternal priest:" but the question here is not of *type*, but of *fact*. Tholuck, "He remains, in so far as the type remains in the antitype, in so far as his priesthood remains in Christ." But thus type and antitype are hopelessly confounded. Christ is to be proved to be a High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Can we conceive then that the Writer, in setting forth what the order and attributes of Melchisedec are, should go back to Christ to find them? Again, to shew to what shifts interpreters have been reduced here, others actually understand "who" before "abideth," and construe, "made like to the Son of God, who, abideth, &c."

Every thing shews that which has been maintained all through this difficult passage, that the assertions are made, and this chief one is above all made, simply of Melchisedec, and they are, as matters of fact, inferred and laid down by the sacred Writer from the historic notices of him. What further inference lies from such dignity being here put on Melchisedec, is not, as I before said, for us to enquire: certainly, none which can in any way interfere with Christ's eternal and sole priesthood, can be correct. It is one of those things in which we must not be wise above that which is written, but must take simply and trustingly the plain sense of our Bibles on a deep and mysterious subject, and leave it for the day when all shall be clear, to give us full revelation on the matter).

4—10.] See summary at ver. 1. *The Melchisedec priesthood greater than the Levitical, shewn by the fact that Melchisedec received tithes of Abraham and blessed him (4—8), and potentially, in Abraham, Levi (9, 10).* 4.] But observe how great (of what dignity and personal excellence) this man [was] (let

it be noticed that the argument still puts forward the personal dignity of Melchisedec, in a way quite inconsistent with the commonly received interpretation of the predicates above), to whom Abraham paid tithes also (went so far as to pay tithes), from the best [of the spoil] (literally, that which comes from the top of an heap, and so the firstfruits. And in consequence, some have pressed here the proper meaning, and understood, that Abraham gave to Melchisedec the tenth of that portion of the spoil which was already set apart for God. But, considering that these words merely take up the tenth part of all, ver. 2, and of Genesis, it is more natural to understand *the spoils* in a wider and less proper sense, of the booty itself, as indeed all booty brought away might be considered as the firstfruits, the choice part, in contradistinction to the more worthless portion which was left behind), the patriarch (added at the end of the sentence to emphasize the title: *and he, the illustrious patriarch*).

5.] *Continuation of ver. 4, setting forth the reason of his greatness. And indeed (the A. V. "and verily," is rather too strong) they of the sons of Levi who receive the priesthood (or, and perhaps more properly, "they of the sons of Levi, when they receive the priesthood?" in either case meaning the family of Aaron, not the whole tribe of Levi, which indeed was appointed by God to receive tithes, see Numb. xviii. 20: the words they of the sons of Levi will not admit of this interpretation. The Writer speaks of the custom, whereby not all the Levites, but the priests only, received tithes), have commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law (the commandment referred to, on the ordinary construction of the first words of the verse, would be Numb. xviii. 20—32. But it seems more natural to understand those first words as I have given them in the alternative there, and then according to the law falls into its place easily*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

thren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: <sup>6</sup> but he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. <sup>7</sup> And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. <sup>8</sup> And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. <sup>9</sup> And as I may so say,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

is, of their brethren, though they be come out of the loins of Abraham: <sup>6</sup> but he whose genealogy is never reckoned from them hath taken tithes of Abraham, <sup>d</sup> and hath blessed <sup>e</sup> him that hath the promises. <sup>7</sup> And without all contradiction the less is blessed by the better. <sup>8</sup> And here indeed men that die receive tithes; but there one, <sup>f</sup> of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. <sup>9</sup> And as I may so say,

<sup>d</sup> Gen. xiv. 19.

<sup>e</sup> Rom. iv. 13.  
Gal. iii. 16.

<sup>f</sup> ch. v. 6. & vi.  
20.

“Those of the sons of Levi, when they are invested with the priesthood, receive commandment to tithe the people according to the law”), that is, of their brethren, though [they be] come out of the loins of Abraham (the meaning is very difficult to assign. I take this to be intended: by the first clause, that is, of their brethren, that the Levitical tithe right was all within the limits of one race, a privilege enjoyed by sons of Abraham over sons of Abraham, and therefore less to be wondered at, and involving less difference between man and man, than the tithe right of Melchisedec over Abraham, one of different race, and indeed over all his progeny with him. Then the second clause, though they be come out of the loins of Abraham, is inserted to shew the deep subjection of the ordinary Abrahamic to the Melchisedec priesthood, seeing that, notwithstanding his privilege of descent, he was subjected to his own priest, his brother, who in turn paid tithes in Abraham to Melchisedec). <sup>6.]</sup> But (answers to “indeed,” ver. 5) he whose pedigree is never (see below) reckoned from them (the sons of Levi, not, from the sons of Israel, nor, from Levi and Abraham: and it means “from them,” i. e. their line of descent) hath taken tithes of Abraham (not, received, as A. V. The sentence is cast into this form, because of the enduring nature of the office and priesthood of Melchisedec, which is given by the perfect tense), and hath blessed the possessor of the promises (some would urge the present sense,—“him who now possesses the promises;” but there seems to be no necessity for this. I should rather take the words for a quasi-official

designation of Abraham [see on ch. vi. 12], as the possessor of the promises). And without all controversy the less is blessed by the better (it is obvious that the axiom here laid down only holds good where the blessing is a solemn and official one, as of a father, or a priest: as was the case here. In such cases the blessing stands in the place of God, and as so standing is of superior dignity). <sup>8.]</sup> Second item of superiority, in that Melchisedec’s is an enduring, the Levitical a transitory priesthood. And here indeed (the Levitical priesthood being still in existence in the Writer’s time) men who die (there is a secondary emphasis on men: men, who die) receive tithes (different sorts of tithes taken of different things); but there (i. e. in this matter concerning Melchisedec) one, of whom it is testified (one, no longer “a man of whom.” This is not again expressed, nor is it to be supplied. The mysterious character of Melchisedec is still before the Writer. The testimony meant is certainly that of Scripture; probably, that in Ps. cx. 4, where an eternal priesthood, and therefore duration, is predicated of Melchisedec. It cannot well be, as Calvin and others hold, the mere negative fact of his death not being recorded, which would not amount to a testimony that he lives: and it is improbable that in so express a statement as this the Writer should, as some imagine, intend to combine both the positive testimony and the inference from the omission) that he liveth (this clearly cannot be interpreted of the priesthood of Melchisedec enduring: for what is here said is eminently personal, and that Melchisedec himself is meant, is shewn by the historical

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

even Levi also, who receiveth tithes, hath paid tithes by means of Abraham. <sup>10</sup> For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him. <sup>11</sup> If again perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for on the ground of it the people hath received the law,) what further need was there that a different priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and that he

g Gal. ii. 21.  
ver. 18, 19.  
ch. viii. 7.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*Levi also, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham.* <sup>10</sup> *For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.* <sup>11</sup> *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*

reference to the fact of his receiving tithes of Abraham. As Bleek well remarks, if the *dying* applies personally to the sons of Levi, the *living* must also apply personally to Melchisedec.

9.] The Jew might reply, that it was nothing to him, if Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec; for Abraham was no priest, and therefore paid tithes naturally to a priest: the Writer therefore proceeds to a *third proof*, shewing that *in Abraham even Levi himself*, the patriarch of the Jewish priesthood, *paid tithes*. And so to speak (the phrase is used when any thing is about to be said that is unexpected, or somewhat strained, not likely to be universally recognized, at least in the general way in which it is asserted. It may be here regarded as introducing and softening a strong saying), by means of Abraham Levi also, who receiveth tithes (who is the head and representative of the tithe-taking tribe. Indeed the name here is almost a collective one, the personal reference being taken up in the next clause), hath been taken tithes of (on the perfect, see above, ver. 6).

10.] For he was yet in the loins of his father (i. e. his forefather, Abraham: for Isaac was not yet born, much less Jacob. On the expression, compare ver. 5), when Melchisedec met him.

11—25.] *Further proof of the perfection of Christ's priesthood*, as compared with the Levitical: (11—14) *in that He sprang from a tribe not recognized as a priestly one by the law, thus setting aside the law: (15—19) in that He was constituted priest not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life, thus impugning the former commandment as weak and unprofitable: (20—22) in that He was made with an oath, they without one: (23, 24)*

*in that they by reason of their transitoriness were many, whereas He was one and unchangeable.*

11.] If again (this takes up the reasoning, not from the point immediately preceding, but from the main line of argument, of which what has just preceded has been merely a co-ordinate illustration. So that it is not necessary to say here, as some have attempted to do, from what point in the preceding chapters the reasoning is resumed. The main line of thought is again referred to, dependently on the promise of Ps. cx. 4, as made to our Lord and verified in Him) perfection (in the widest sense: *the bringing of man to his highest state*, viz. that of salvation and sanctification: see on ver. 19) were by means of (could be brought about by the instrumentality of) the Levitical priesthood,—for upon it (i. e. the Levitical priesthood: not, as many Commentators, for the sake of obtaining perfection. On the various meanings assigned, see the note in my Greek Test. If we consider the priesthood as the basis on which the law was constructed, so that not the priests only, but the *people* also [compare the same, in ch. ix. 19] were involved in the question of the dignity and finality of the priesthood, then a sufficient reason seems to be gained for inserting this parenthesis: as if it were said, not only they, but the whole system of which the priesthood was the basis and centre) the *people* (emphatic) hath received the law (the perfect is used, as indicating the fact that the people was still remaining, and observing the law),—what further need (was there) (what need after that,—any longer, that being so) that a different priest (more than “another”—not only another, but of a different kind) should

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

after the order of Aaron?<sup>12</sup> For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.<sup>13</sup> For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.<sup>14</sup> For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.<sup>15</sup> And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

should be said to be not after the order of Aaron?<sup>12</sup> For if the priesthood is changed, there is made of necessity a change of the law also.<sup>13</sup> For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to a different tribe, of which no man hath ever given attendance at the altar.<sup>14</sup> For it is evident that our Lord hath arisen out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning † priests.<sup>15</sup> And it is yet far more abundantly evident: seeing that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth a different

<sup>h</sup> Isa. xl. 1.  
Matt. i. 3.  
Luke iii. 33.  
Rom. i. 3.  
Rev. v. 5.  
† So all our  
oldest MSS.

arise after the order of Melchisedec, and that he (the priest that should arise) is said to be not after the order of Aaron (on the construction, see my Greek Test.)?

12.] For if the priesthood is changed (better thus than A. V., “the priesthood being changed”), there takes place of necessity a change of the law also (viz. of that law, which as above, is legislated upon the ground of that priesthood: not of the law of the priesthood only, nor of the ceremonial law only. The connexion is with the parenthesis in ver. 11, which was inserted to prepare the way for our verse. The Writer as yet expresses himself mildly and cautiously: the change here in fact amounts to the *disannulling* in ver. 18, but is not yet so expressed).

13.] Confirmation of the position that a change is made in the law, by another fact indicative of a change in the priesthood. For he with reference to whom these things (viz. the promise in Ps. cx.: not, these which I am now saying) are said is member of (pertaineth to, literally, hath taken part in: the perfect implying the enduring of his humanity) a different tribe (from that of Levi, which has been already sufficiently indicated in the preceding context), of which (sprung from which, coming from which) no one hath (ever, to this day) given attention (applied himself, see ch. ii. 1, note) to the altar (i. e. as a general and normal practice, hath had any thing to do with the service of the priesthood).

14.] Proof of ver. 13. For it is plain to all (the word is used of that which lies before men’s eyes, plain and undoubted)

that our Lord (this is the only place in Scripture where Christ is called by this appellation, now so familiar to us, without the addition of either His personal or official name. 2 Pet. iii. 15, “the long-suffering of our Lord,” is hardly an exception: see there) hath arisen (some have thought that this word, which, as an intransitive verb, is generally used of the heavenly bodies, has reference to our Lord’s rising as a Sun of Righteousness: so Mal. iv. 2; Isa. lx. 1; Num. xxiv. 17, to which Theophylact thinks there is allusion here. And it is quite legitimate, and a very beautiful thought, to regard these sublime ideas as having been in the Writer’s mind, while at the same time we confess, that the word is used of the springing or rising up of other things, e. g. of water: and especially of the sprouting of plants) out of Judah (this word may be the name, either of the tribe or of the patriarch. From Gen. xlix. 9, 10, it would appear to be the personal name: but preceded and followed as it is here by “a different tribe,” and “of which tribe,” it would rather seem to be that of the tribe); of (with reference to) which tribe Moses said nothing concerning priests (i. e. nothing to imply that any priests should be or be consecrated out of it: reserving that entirely for the tribe of Levi).

15—17.] Another proof that the law is changed (set aside): for our Lord could not be of the law (i. e., the Levitical priesthood), seeing he is an eternal Priest. And it (viz. the change of the law; the proposition of ver. 12) is yet more abundantly manifest: if (i. e. seeing that) according to the simili-



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

priest, <sup>16</sup> who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

<sup>†</sup> So most of our oldest MSS. <sup>17</sup> For <sup>†</sup> this testimony is borne concerning him, <sup>1</sup> Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

<sup>18</sup> For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for <sup>k</sup> the weakness and unprofitableness thereof <sup>19</sup> (for <sup>1</sup> the law made nothing perfect), and [there is] a bringing in of <sup>m</sup> a better hope, by which <sup>n</sup> we draw nigh unto God.

k Rom. viii. 3.  
Gal. iv. 9.  
Acts xiii. 39.  
Rom. iii. 20,  
21, 28. & viii.  
3. Gal. ii. 10.  
ch. ix. 9.  
m ch. vi. 18. &  
viii. 6.  
n Rom. v. 2.  
Eph. ii. 18. &  
iii. 12. ch. iv.  
16. & x. 19.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

priest, <sup>16</sup> who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

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

<sup>18</sup> For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. <sup>19</sup> For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

tude of (equivalent to "after the order of" before) **Melchisedec ariseth a different priest** (i. e. Christ, not Melchisedec), **who is appointed** (hath become priest), **not according to the law of a carnal commandment** (i. e. not in accordance with, following out, the rule and order of an exterior ordinance founded on the present fleshly and decaying state of things), **but according to the power of an indissoluble life** (the two clauses closely correspond in rhythm, as is much the practice of the Writer. The *power* here spoken of does not, however, strictly correspond, in its relation to the priesthood spoken of, with "the law of a carnal commandment" above. That was the rule, by and after which the priesthood was constituted: this, the vigour inherent in the glorious priesthood of Christ,—for it is of His enduring Melchisedec-priesthood in glory that this is spoken—to endure for ever. Some have thought the power to be, Christ's power to confer life on others: others the enduring nature of the divine decree which constituted this priesthood: but both are shewn to be wrong by the next verse, in which the enduringness of the priesthood is the point brought out).

<sup>17.</sup> *Proof of the last clause from Scripture.* The stress of the citation is on **for ever**. **For he** (the different priest) **is borne witness of, that thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.**

<sup>18, 19.</sup> These verses belong to the proof of <sup>15</sup>—<sup>17</sup>, expanding the conclusion thence derived, and expressing it more decidedly than before in ver. 12. **For moreover there takes place an abrogation of the preceding commandment** (the command-

ment intended is that mentioned in ver. 16, according to which the priesthood was constituted, not, as Chrysostom and others think, the whole Mosaic law, however much that may be *involved* in the assertion: compare the parenthesis in ver. 11. This commandment went before — not merely in time, but was an introduction to and gave way before the greater and final ordinance) **on account of its weakness and unprofitableness** (Rom. viii. 3, as Gal. iv. 9, is remarkably parallel, both in thought and mode of expression: one of those coincidences which could hardly take place where there was not community of thought and diction), — **for the law perfected nothing** (this parenthetical clause is inserted to explain the implication contained in the words "*the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.*" The law had not the power to bring any thing whatever to perfection, to its appointed end and excellence: — perfection, in any kind, was not by the law), — **and an introduction** (a *bringing in besides*: the law being already there, this is brought in to and upon it) **of a better hope** (the contrast is between the preceding commandment, weak and unprofitable, and a better thing, viz. the *hope* which brings us near to God), **by means of which we draw near to God** (this note, of personal access to God, has been twice struck before, ch. iv. 16; vi. 19, and is further on in the Epistle expanded into a whole strain of argument. See ch. ix. 11 ff.; x. 19 ff. It is that access, which was only carnally and symbolically open to them by shedding of the blood of sacrifices, but has been spiritually and really



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>20</sup> And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: <sup>21</sup> (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:) <sup>22</sup> by so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. <sup>23</sup> And they

<sup>20</sup> And inasmuch as it was not without an oath: <sup>21</sup> (for they without an oath are made priests; but He with an oath by him that saith unto him, °The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever † :) <sup>22</sup> of so much better a testament also P hath Jesus become surety. <sup>23</sup> And

o Ps. ex. 4.

† The words "after the order of Melchisedec" are omitted in our oldest MSS. ch. viii 6. & ix. 15. & xii. 24.

opened to us by the shedding of Christ's blood once for all, so that we being justified by faith can approach the very throne of God. The verb here used is the technical term in the Septuagint for the *drawing near* of the priests in their sacrificial ministrations. It remains to treat of the connexion of the above sentence, vv. 18, 19, which has been entirely mistaken by many, and among them by the A. V. The ending clause, "but the bringing in of a better hope," has been wrongly joined with "for the law made nothing perfect:" and that, either 1) as A. V., "but the bringing in of a better hope did." Beza appears here, as in so many other cases, to have led our translators into error: or 2) "For the law perfected nothing, but was the introduction," &c. This latter is successfully impugned by Beza, on the ground that the law was not an *introduction* at all, from the very meaning [see above] of that word. See the rest of the matter argued in my Greek Test.).

20—22.] See summary at ver. 11. Further proof of the superiority of the Melchisedec priesthood of Christ—in that he was constituted in it by an oath, thus giving it a solemnity and weight which that other priesthood had not. And inasmuch as [it was] not without an oath (the ellipsis here is variously supplied. Some fill it up out of what follows, "that He became surety." And this seems on the whole more natural, and more agreeable to the style of our Epistle, than to put in, as A. V., "he was made priest," or as Bleek, and others, "this [the bringing in of a better hope] took place": for they [as we know] without swearing of an oath are made priests (are made, as strongly marking the existence of these priests at the time of writing); but He with swearing of an oath by Him who saith (i. e., certainly not the Psalmist,

who cannot be said to have spoken this unto Him, unless indeed we take "unto" in the mere secondary sense of "with reference to." In the following citation it is the words of address only to which this refers: the former part is the mere introduction to them. Not seeing this has led to the above mistake. It was God who addressed Him, God who made Him priest, God who sware unto Him) to Him, The Lord (Jehovah) sware and will not repent (i. e. the decree stands fast, and shall undergo no change), Thou art a priest for ever:—of so much (in that same proportion, viz. as the difference between the oath and no oath indicates) better a testament (the meanings of the word thus rendered [*diatheké*], 1) an appointment, without concurrence of a second party, of somewhat concerning that second party,—of which nature is a *last will and testament*, 2) a mutual agreement in which all parties concerned consent,—a *covenant*, in the proper sense,—being confessed, our business here is, not to enquire what is the fixed theological acceptance of the word, and so to render it here, irrespective of any subsequent usage by our Writer himself; but to enquire 1) how he uses it in this Epistle, 2) whether he is likely to have used it in more than one sense:—and to render accordingly. Now it cannot well be doubted, that in ch. ix. 16, 17, he does use it in the sense of "testament." And just as little can it be questioned, that he is speaking there of the same thing as here; that the "new testament" there answers to the better testament here, this first mention of it being in fact preparatory to that fuller treatment. I therefore keep here to the A. V.) also hath Jesus become surety ("Jesus is become the surety of the better covenant, i. e. in His person security and certainty is given to men, that a better covenant is made and sanctioned by God.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

they truly are appointed priests in numbers, because they are not suffered to continue by reason of death: <sup>24</sup>but He, because he continueth ever, hath his priesthood unchangeable. <sup>25</sup>Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth <sup>a</sup> to make intercession for them. <sup>26</sup>For such an high priest

q Rom. viii. 34.  
1 Tim. ii. 5.  
ch. ix. 24.  
1 John ii. 1.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: <sup>24</sup>but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. <sup>25</sup>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. <sup>26</sup>For

For Christ, the Son of God, became man, to publish this covenant on earth,—has sealed it with His sufferings and death, and by His resurrection from the dead was declared with power to be sent by God as the Founder of such a Covenant.” Lünemann. This seems better, considering the context, in which our hope mainly, and not at present Christ’s satisfaction, is in question, than to bring in, as some do, that satisfaction, or to regard His suretyship as meaning His mediators-hip [see ch. viii. 6, where He is described as *mediator of a better testament or covenant*] seen from both sides—that He is God’s surety for man and man’s surety for God).

<sup>23—25.</sup>] *Further proof still of the superiority of Christ’s priesthood, in that the Levitical priests were continually removed by death: Christ is undying and abiding.* This point was slightly touched before in ver. 8, and again in ver. 16 f.: in the first place it was to shew the abiding nature of the superiority of the priesthood—its endurance in Melchisedec, and in Christ, Melchisedec’s antitype, as contrasted with dying men who here receive tithes. In the second, it was to bring out the difference between the ordinances which constituted the two priesthoods: the one the law of a carnal commandment, the other, the power of an endless life. Here, the *personal* contrast is dwelt on: the *many*, which change: the *ONE*, who abides.

<sup>23.</sup>] **And they indeed** (i. e. the Levitical priests) **are appointed priests in numbers** (the chief emphasis is on this latter point, as contrasted with *unchangeable* below), **on account of their being by death hindered from continuing** (in *life*? or, in their *priesthood*? The latter is taken by many, and is the more probable. The context clearly here treats of abiding in the priesthood: besides which, it would be

somewhat tautological to say that they were hindered by death from continuing in life): **but He, on account of his remaining for ever** (here again our former argument conversely applies, and obliges us to understand this *remaining* of endurance now in *life*, not in priesthood. It would be tautology to say, as some explain it, “because He remains a priest for ever, He has an unchangeable priesthood:” besides that thus the members of the parallelism would not correspond. They, on account of their deaths, are subject to continual renewal: He, because he lives for ever, has his priesthood unchangeable. See John viii. 35; xii. 34; xxi. 22 f.: 1 Cor. xv. 6: Phil. i. 25), **hath his priesthood unchangeable.**

<sup>25.</sup>] **Whence** (since he ever liveth) also (as a natural consequence, something else, flowing from and accompanying the last: but with a slightly characteristic force: a new and higher thing follows) **He is able to save** (in its usual solemn New Test. sense, to rescue from sin and condemnation) **to the uttermost** (some take this of *time*: “He is ever able to save,” or “He is able to save for ever.” But this is not the usage of the word. Bleek has shewn by very many instances, that *completeness*, not *duration*, is its idea) **those that approach** (see above, ver. 19) **through Him** (i. e. by faith in Him. The contrast is to those, whose approach to God was through the Levitical priesthood) **to God, ever living as He does** (this clause in fact is explanatory of the “*wherefore*,” giving the reason which is wrapped up in that conjunction) **to intercede for them** (this intercession implies the whole mediatorial work, which the exalted Saviour performs for his own with his heavenly Father, either by reference to his past death of blood by which He has bought

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; <sup>27</sup> 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.*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

was for us <sup>r</sup> becoming also, holy, <sup>r</sup> harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners, <sup>s</sup> and made higher than the heavens; <sup>27</sup> who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices <sup>t</sup> first for his own sins, <sup>u</sup> and then for the people's: for <sup>x</sup> this he did once for all, when he offered

<sup>r</sup> ch. iv. 15.

<sup>s</sup> Eph. i. 20. & iv. 10. ch. viii. 1.

<sup>t</sup> Lev. ix. 7. & xvi. 6, 11. ch. v. 3. & ix. 7.

<sup>u</sup> Lev. xvi. 15. <sup>x</sup> Rom. vi. 10. ch. ix. 12, 28. & x. 12.

them for Himself, or by continued intercession for them. See Rom. viii. 34, below, ch. ix. 24; 1 John ii. 1).

26—28.] *Further and concluding argument for the fact of Christ being such a High Priest: that such an one was necessary for us.* This necessity however is not pursued into its grounds, but only asserted, and then the description of His exalted perfections gone further into, and substantiated by facts in His own history and that of the priests of the law (ver. 28).

26.] For such (i. e. such as is above described: retrospective, not prospective, as some have taken it. Then the following adjectives serve as appositional predicates, carrying forward the word **such**, and enlarging on the attributes of our High Priest, which were already slightly touched ch. iv. 14, 15) an **High Priest was for us** (emphasis on *us*) **becoming also** ("nay, not only for all the above-mentioned reasons, but even for this"),—**holy** (the word here thus rendered is not the ordinary one, "*hagios*," but "*hosios*," that used in Ps. xvi. 10, and cited in Acts ii. 27, as the especial title of the incarnate Son of God, perfect in piety and reverent holiness towards his heavenly Father), **harmless** (simple and free from vice or evil suspicion), **undefiled** (not only from legal, but from moral pollution, in deed, word, and thought), **separated from sinners** (from the whole race and category of sinners. This lets us into the true meaning, which is, not that Christ, ever and throughout, was free from sin, however true that may be, but [see next clause] that in His service as our High Priest, He, as the Levitical high priests in their service [Levit. xxi. 10 ff.], is void of all contact and commerce with sinners, removed far away in His glorified state and body, into God's holy place. This expression exactly answers to that in ch. ix. 28, where it is said that He shall come a second time *without, apart from, sin*: see there), and **made (advanced to be) higher than the**

heavens; who hath not necessity (the present tense shews, that the Writer is not setting forth the ideal of a high priest, but speaking of the actual existing attributes of our great High Priest, as He is) **day by day** (the allusion is to the *daily offerings* of the priests, Ex. xxix. 38—42; Num. xviii. 3—8, which are spoken of as offered by the high priests, though they took part in them only on festival days, because the high priests in fact lead and represent the whole priesthood), as the **high priests, to offer sacrifices first for his own sins, then for those of the people** (so Philo, speaking also of the daily sacrifices. Still it must be confessed that the application of such an idea to them has no authority in the law: and it would seem probable, as Bleek suggests, that the ceremonies of the great day of atonement were throughout before the mind of the Writer, as the chief and archetypal features of the High Priest's work, but repeated in some sort in the daily sacrifices. The most probable solution of the difficulty however is that proposed by Hofmann and approved by Delitzsch: that "*day by day*," from its situation, belongs not to the high priests, but only to Christ: "*who has not need day by day, as the high priests had year by year*," &c.): **for this he did** (what? of necessity, by the shewing of ver. 26 and of ch. iv. 15, the offering for the sins of the people only. To include in **this** the whole, "first for his own, then for those of the people," would be either to contradict these testimonies of the Writer himself, or to give some second and unnatural sense to *sins*, as the Socinian interpreters do, who regard it as importing only *weaknesses* when applied to Christ. Besides, as Delitzsch well observes, the idea of "offering himself for his own sins" would be against all sacrificial analogy, according to which the *sinless* is an offering for the sinful) **once for all, when He offered** (see above) **Himself** (this is the first place in the Epistle where

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

up himself. <sup>28</sup> For the law maketh  
 y men high priests, which have in-  
 firmity; but the word of the oath  
 which was after the law, maketh  
 the Son, <sup>z</sup> who is made perfect for  
 evermore.

VIII. <sup>1</sup> Now of the things which  
 we are saying this is the chief: We  
 have such an high priest, <sup>a</sup> who sat  
 down on the right hand of the throne  
 of majesty in the heavens; <sup>2</sup> a mi-  
 nister of <sup>b</sup> the holy place, and of

a Eph. i. 20.  
 Col. iii. 1.  
 ch. i. 3, & x.  
 12. & xii. 2.

b ch. ix. 8, 12,  
 24.

mention is made of Christ's having offered Himself. Henceforward it becomes more and more familiar to the reader: "once struck, the note sounds on ever louder and louder," Delitzsch).

28.] *Final bringing out of the contrast between the Aaronic priests and Christ.* For (gives the reason for the difference in the last verse) the law makes men (emphatic, opposed to the Son below) high priests, who have infirmity (compare ch. v. 2, of the human high priest, and see below. The expression here involves, from the context, liability to sin, and subjection to, removal by, death. Christ had not the first, and therefore need not offer for his own sin: he was freed from the second, and therefore need not repeat His sacrifice); but the word (utterance; or, purport) of the oath which was after the law (these words, "the oath which was after the law," belong together, which ought to be marked in the A. V. by the omission of the comma after "oath." This oath is recorded in David, i. e. subsequently to the giving of the law, and therefore as antiquating it and setting it aside. The argument is similar to that in Gal. iii. 17), (makes) the Son, made perfect (in this participle, as Delitzsch remarks, lies enwrapped the whole process of the Son's assumption of human infirmity, and being exalted through it: for this being made perfect was through sufferings, ch. ii. 10, v. 9. Those priests, by their infirmity, were removed away in death, and replaced by others: He, by that infirmity, which He took on Him, went out through death into glory eternal, and an unrenovable priesthood) for evermore (these words belong simply and entirely to the participle,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

<sup>28</sup> 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.

VIII. <sup>1</sup> 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; <sup>2</sup> a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle,

"made perfect." The A. V. has obliterated both sense, and analogy with ch. ii. 10 and v. 9, by rendering this participle, 'consecrated').

CHAP. VIII. 1—13.] *Not only is Christ personally, as a High Priest, above the sons of Aaron, but the service and ordinances of the covenant to which His High Priesthood belongs are better than those of that to which they belong.*

1.] Now the principal matter (the word here used also signifies *sum total*, and this other meaning would be apposite enough here, were the sense confined to ver. 1, which has been treated of before: but ver. 2 contains new particulars, which cannot be said to be the *sum* of any things hitherto said) in (in, or upon: lying as it were, by, and among) the things which we are saying: We have such an High Priest (emphasis on *such*, which refers, not to what preceded, but to what is to follow, viz. "who sat down," &c.), who sat down ("in ch. i. 3, the sitting at the right hand of God was mentioned as a pre-eminence of the Son above the angels, who stand as ministering spirits before the presence of God: here, where the same is said of Christ as High Priest, Schlichting and others rightly remark that there is again a pre-eminence over the Jewish high priests: for these, even when they entered the holiest place, did not sit down by the throne of God, but only stood before it for a moment: compare ch. x. 11, 12." Bleek. Lünemann calls this fanciful: but such distinctions are not surely to be overlooked altogether) on the right hand of the throne of majesty in the heavens (better thus, than "of the majesty in the heavens"); 2.] a minister of the holy place, and of the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

which the Lord pitched, and not man. <sup>3</sup> For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. <sup>4</sup> For if he

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>e</sup> the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. <sup>3</sup> For <sup>d</sup> every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices: whence <sup>e</sup> it is necessary that this man have somewhat also to offer. <sup>4</sup> † Yea, if he were

e ch. ix. 11.

d ch. v. 1.

e Eph. v. 2.  
ch. ix. 14.† So all our  
oldest MSS.

true (archetypal, *only true*, as so often in St. John, and in one passage of St. Luke, xvi. 11) tabernacle, which the Lord (here evidently the Father: see note on ch. xii. 14) pitched, not [any] man (it is an important question, symbolically considered, whether any and what distinction is intended by the Writer, between the holy place and the tabernacle. Delitzsch has gone into it at length, and Hofmann has treated of it in two places. Both are agreed that the holy place betokens the immediate immaterial presence of God, the veritable Holy of Holies, beyond, and approached through, the heavens, ch. iv. 14. But as regards the tabernacle they differ. Hofmann maintains it to be the glorified body of Christ, and argues that it alone will satisfy such expressions as that in ch. ix. 11, "not of this creation:" in order to satisfying which, this tabernacle must belong to the new creation, the regeneration, which commences with the glorification of Christ. This glorified body of His is the new and abiding temple of God, in which He dwells and meets with us who are united to and have put on that glorified body, our house, eternal in the heavens: for so Hofmann interprets 2 Cor. v. 1 ff. On the other hand, Delitzsch controverts this view, as inconsistent with the symbolism in ch. ix. 11, 12, where Christ, "through the greater and more perfect tabernacle . . . entered into the holy place," taking this connexion of the words: and also with our ver. 5, where the Mosaic tabernacle is set forth as the representation and shadow of the heavenly. Accordingly, he believes the tabernacle here to be the heavenly Jerusalem, the worship-place of blessed spirits [Ps. xxix. 9] and of those men who have been rapt in vision thither [Isa. vi.],—the "temple of the tabernacle of witness," of Rev. xv. 5,—the place where God's visible presence [in contradistinction to His personal and invisible presence in the holy places] is manifested to his creatures angelic and human. In weighing these two opinions, I own they seem to me to run into one, and of that one by far the larger component is on Hofmann's side.

For what is the Heavenly Jerusalem? What but the aggregate, in their persons and their glorious abiding-place, of the triumphant saints and servants of God? And what is this aggregate, but the mystical body of which Christ is the Head and they are the members, in its fulfilment and perfection? That glorified body of His, in which they are accepted before God, and in which as a heavenly temple they serve God, and God dwells, He has passed through, not by passing out of it, but by finally establishing it as an accomplished thing in God's sight, and in and as proceeding forth from it carrying on his intercession and ministration in the true tabernacle, in the holy place itself. See more on this subject, ch. ix. 11: and the views of Bleek, Tholuck, &c.: also a sermon of Schleiermacher's on the text, vol. ii. of his Predigten, p. 504).

3—6.] This heavenly office and work our High Priest must have, if He be veritably a High Priest.

3.] For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices (see the very similar passage, ch. v. 1, and note there): whence it is necessary that this (High Priest) also have somewhat which He may offer (there is here considerable difficulty. For the Writer is evidently, from what follows, laying the stress on the heavenly "ministry" of Christ: and this "somewhat to offer" applies therefore to His work, not on earth, but in heaven. If so, how comes it to be said that He has somewhat to offer in heaven, seeing that His offering, of Himself, was made once for all, in contradistinction to those of the Levitical priests which were being constantly offered? See especially ch. x. 11, 12, which, on this view, brings the Writer here into direct contradiction to himself. In order to avoid this, Lünemann and Hofmann attempt to make the "somewhat to offer" retrospective: "it is necessary for Him to have [there, in heaven] somewhat [viz. His body] which he may have offered." But surely this is a view which cannot be admitted. The straightforward construction of our sentence makes it neces-



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

on earth, he would not even be a priest, seeing that there are † those that offer the gifts according to the law: <sup>5</sup> such as serve the delineation and † shadow of the heavenly things, even as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to complete the tabernacle:

† So all our oldest MSS.

† Col. ii. 17. ch. ix. 23. & x. 1.

sary that the words should refer to an act done in the state pointed out, however the nature of that act may be, in each case of its being done, such as to be accomplished at the moment, and not enduring onwards: which latter would certainly involve the contradiction above spoken of. Thus regarded then, what is it which our High Priest in heaven has to offer? In ch. v. 7, He is described as *having offered* prayers and supplications in the days of His flesh: and it might be thought that His *interceding for us*, ch. vii. 25, might be here meant, the offering being those intercessions. But this would hardly satisfactorily give the force of the word *somewhat*, which, as Delitzsch remarks, is too concrete for such an interpretation. It must be something with which and by virtue of which, and as offering and applying which, our High Priest enters and ministers in the Holy of Holies above. Now if we look to the analogy of ch. ix. 7, 12, we see (1) that the high priest entered the holy place “*not without blood, which he offers for himself, and for the ignorances of the people,*”—(2) that Christ is entered into the *holy places of heaven, not with the blood of goats and bulls, but by His own blood*: see also *ib.* ver. 25. This BLOOD of the one offering, Christ is represented as bearing into the Holy Place, and its application is set ever forth to us as a continuing and constantly repeated one. Thus this *blood of sprinkling* is regarded as being *in heaven*, ch. xii. 24: as *being sprinkled on the believer as the end of his election*, 1 Pet. i. 2: as *cleansing us from all sin*, 1 John i. 7: as *that wherein the saints wash their robes and make them white*, Rev. vii. 14. Still, as Delitzsch also remarks, this is not the place to enlarge on this matter, seeing that it is merely incidentally introduced here, the present object being to shew that it is in heaven, and not on earth, that our High Priest ministers).

4.] Yea, if (the connexion is

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: <sup>5</sup> who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith*

obvious: “our High Priest must have somewhat to offer. But *on earth* this could not be: yea, &c.”) **He were on earth, He would not even be a Priest** (observe the emphasis: which is not, as Bleek, He would not even be a *priest, much less a High Priest*, but the stress is on the verb *be*, and it is taken as a matter agreed that the *High Priest* belonged to the genus *priest*: “He would not even belong to the category of priests.” In the background lies, “and if not so, certainly could not be a High Priest:” but it is not brought forward, nor does it belong to the argument), **since there are** (‘there are already:’ not, “*were,*” as is shewn by the *present tense* below. The time indicated is that of writing the Epistle) **those who offer the gifts according to (the) law: men who serve** (this word thus rendered occurs eight times in St. Luke, four times in St. Paul, and six times in this Epistle. It has the general sense of “*servng,*” either God, as almost always, or some especial portion of divine service or sacred things, as here and ch. xiii. 10) **the delineation** (the word cannot, as in ch. iv. 11, mean, a pattern, or example: but must be taken as meaning a suggestive representation, or sketch) **and shadow** (‘adumbration.’ See on ch. x. 1, where the *shadow* and *image* are contrasted) **of the heavenly things** (i. e. the things in heaven, in the heavenly sanctuary. Chrysostom understands it of *spiritual* things:—and then goes on to instance the work of the Spirit in baptism, the power of the keys, the utterance of Christian praise, &c. But the context clearly requires the other view), **even as Moses was commanded** (“*admonished of God,*” A. V., an excellent rendering) **when about to complete** (not in distinction from *beginning*, as if he were about to put the finishing stroke to the work already nearly ended: but involving the whole work: “to take in hand and carry on to completion”) **the tabernacle: for**



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. <sup>8</sup> For finding

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>5</sup> for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount. <sup>6</sup> But now <sup>h</sup> hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, in proportion as he is also mediator of a better covenant, one which hath been established upon better promises. <sup>7</sup> <sup>i</sup> For if that first covenant were faultless, then would not place be sought for a second. <sup>8</sup> For finding fault with

<sup>g</sup> Exod. xxv. 40 & xxvi. 30, & xxvii. 8. Numb. viii 4 Acts vii. 44.

<sup>h</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 6, 8, 9. ch. vii. 22.

<sup>i</sup> ch. vii. 11, 18.

(justifies the assertion by the following citation) take heed, He says (supply *God*; there can be no doubt of this here, where the words following are God's own), that thou makeest all things (this is not in the Septuagint, nor in the Hebrew, but is supplied also by Philo) according to the pattern which was shewn thee in the mount. If now we ask what this pattern was, we are met with various replies. Faber Stapulensis interprets it, "that what was shewn to Moses in the mount was not the truth itself, but only an adumbration and idea of it." And so Schlichting, concluding, "so that the ancient tabernacle was only an example of an example, and a shadow of a shadow." This view is strongly controverted by Delitzsch, who takes the pattern to be the veritable heavenly things themselves, not seen however by Moses directly and naturally, which would be impossible, but made visible to him in a vision. I do not see that there is much to choose between the two views. If the latter be taken, then surely the vision thus vouchsafed to Moses was itself only an intermediate representation, and so this view comes much to the same as the other.

6.] But now (the logical, not the temporal now, as in ch. ix. 26; xi. 16, and frequently in St. Paul, meaning, "as the fact really is") He hath obtained a more excellent ministry (than that of any earthly priests), in proportion as He is also (also, introducing a special reference to an already acknowledged fact, as in ch. vi. 7, where see note) mediator (the meaning of the word is, one who becomes a goer between two persons, assuring to each the consent of the other to some point agreed on in common. The genitive after mediator may either be of the persons between whom, as in 1 Tim. ii.

5: or of one of the parties concerned: or of the object of the mediation, the agreement or covenant. And in this last sense is the genitive here. Jesus is the mediator, between God and us) of a better covenant, of one which has been laid down (literally, has been law-given, or enacted: see on ch. vii. 11. The word law is also used of the new covenant by St. James, i. 25; ii. 12: see also iv. 12, and St. Paul, Rom. iii. 27; viii. 2; ix. 31) upon (on the condition of) better promises (viz. those which are about to be particularized in the following citation. Theodoret says, "For the old covenant had joined to it material promises, a land flowing with milk and honey, and abundance of children, and the like: but the new has eternal life, and the kingdom of heaven." But as Bleek objects, it would be very improbable that the Writer should intend to refer the promises, on which the old covenant was based, to mere earthly blessings, in the face of such a designation of the hope of Abraham and the patriarchs, as we find in ch. xi. 10—19).

7.] Argumentation, exactly as in ch. vii. 11, from sayings of God, to shew the imperfection of the former covenant. For if that first (covenant) were (or, had been) blameless (without defect in that for which a covenant with God is intended. It is the contrary of "weak and profitless," ch. vii. 18), a place would not be (not, would not have been) sought (i. e. space opened, viz. in the words of the following prophecy, which indicate the substitution of such a covenant for the old one. Bleek gives a rather far-fetched interpretation,—that the place is the place in men's hearts, as distinguished from the tables of stone on which the first covenant was written; referring to 2 Cor. iii. 3 for a similar distinction. But it is far better to

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

k JER. xxxi. 31,  
32, 33, 34.

them, he saith, <sup>k</sup> Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will accomplish upon the house of Israel and upon the house of Judah a new covenant: <sup>9</sup> not according to the covenant that I appointed to 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.

*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: <sup>9</sup> 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*

understand it of a *place in history*) for a second (the emphasis is on second).

8—12.] *Proof, that a place for a second is contemplated*, by citation from Jeremiah. For (introduces the substantiation of the assertion) **blaming them** (*them*, viz. the persons under the first covenant, who were not rendered perfect by it) **He saith** (the following citation is the great prophetic passage Jer. xxxi. 31—34; see also Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27. “After the sack of Jerusalem, Jeremiah with the other captives was brought in chains to Rama, where Nebuzaradan had his head-quarters. There took place, at God’s special command, his prophecies of the future entire restoration of Israel, of another David, of Rachel’s wailing over her children at Rama, and their future return, of the new covenant resting on absolute and veritable forgiveness of sins which Jehovah would make with his people, these prophecies forming the third part of the third trilogy of the three great trilogies into which the prophecies of Jeremiah may be divided: ch. xxi.—xxv., the book against the shepherds of the people: ch. xxvi.—xxix., the book of Jeremiah’s conflict against the false prophets: ch. xxx., xxxi., the book of restoration,” Delitzsch. “The question which has before now been abundantly handled, whether the saying refers to the return of the exiles, or to the covenant of which Christ is the mediator, or to the future general conversion of the Jews, or whether some things in it to one of these, some to another, or whether the whole in its lower literal sense to the return of the exiles and in its higher spiritual sense to Christ and His kingdom, must be answered by the considerations before adduced on ch. i. 5. It belongs throughout to the cycle of Messianic prophecies, and is one

of the most beautiful and sublime of them; and its true fulfilment can only be sought in the covenant brought in by the Saviour, and in the salvation through Him imparted to mankind, and ever more and more unfolded and completed. This is the case, however this salvation, in the perception and declaration of the prophet, is bound up with the restoration of the ancient covenant people and their reunion in the land of their home.” Bleek), **Behold, the days come, saith the Lord** (“the prophecy, taken from this rich cycle of prophecies concerning the last things, whose clear Messianic sense allows of no evasion, begins with Jeremiah’s constant formula. ‘*behold the days come.*’” Delitzsch), and (so literally, meaning, when) **I will accomplish upon** (the Septuagint has, “*I will make with.*” The difference is beyond doubt intentional, to set forth the completeness of the new covenant) **the house of Israel and upon the house of Judah** (both these, Israel first and Judah afterwards, were sent into captivity for their sins: and both are specified severally in God’s promise of grace and restoration) **a new covenant** (see on ch. vii. 22): **9.]** (this covenant is first specified negatively: it is *not* to be like that first one) **not according to the covenant** (different in quality from, not after the measure of) **which I appointed to** (not “*with.*” it is a pure dative, and betokens mere agency on the part of the subject, God: the people of Israel, the objects, being only recipients, not co-agents) **their fathers in the day of my taking hold of their hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; because they abode not in my covenant, and I disregarded them** (many take the sentence beginning with *because* as an independent one—“*because they abode not in my*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

not, saith the Lord. <sup>10</sup> 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: <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> For I will be

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>10</sup> For <sup>1</sup>this is the covenant that I <sup>1</sup>ch. x. 16. will establish to the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord, to put my laws into their mind; and I will write them in their hearts, and <sup>m</sup>will be to them for a God, and they shall be to me for a people: <sup>11</sup> and <sup>n</sup>they shall not have to teach every man his † fellow-citizen, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: because all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. <sup>12</sup> Because I will be mer-

<sup>m</sup> ZECH. viii. 8.

<sup>n</sup> Isa. liv. 13.  
John vi. 45.  
1 John ii. 27.  
† So all our  
ancient au-  
thorities.

covenant, I also disregarded them"), saith the Lord.

On the fact of their not continuing in God's covenant, Delitzsch gives a striking quotation from Schelling,—"The Law appears to be the mere ideal of a religious constitution, as it has never existed in fact: in practice, the Jews were almost throughout polytheists. The substance of their national feeling was formed by heathendom; the accidents only, by revelation. From the queen of heaven down to the abominations of the Phœnicians, and even to Cybele, the Jews passed through every grade of paganism." "In fact," adds Delitzsch, "there is no period of the history of Israel before the captivity, in which more or less idolatry was not united with the worship of Jehovah, except the time of David and the first years of Solomon, during which the influence of Samuel still continued to be felt. And when by the captivity Idol-worship was completely eradicated from the people, as far at least as regards that part of it which returned, it is well known that a hypocritical letter-worship got the mastery over them, which was morally very little better." See note on Matt. xii. 43.

10.] For (the reason rendered is for the expression "new," above: "new, I say: for . . .") this (predicate, explained in what follows) is the covenant which I will establish to the house of Israel (Israel here in its wider sense, comprehending both Israel proper and Judah: because then all Israel shall be again united) after those days (after the end of that dispensation, when those days of disregard are over), saith the Lord, giving (or, putting). This is the first of the better promises on which

the new covenant is established) my laws into their mind (their inward parts, their spiritual man, as distinguished from the mere sensorium which receives impressions from without); and on their heart will I inscribe them (contrast to the inscription of the old law, which was on tables of stone: see 2 Cor. iii. 3), and I will be to them for (as ch. i. 5, which see) a God, and they shall be to me for a people.

11.] Second of the better promises—universal spread of the knowledge of God: following on the other, that God would put His laws in their minds and write them in their hearts. And they shall not have to teach every man his [fellow]-citizen, and every man his brother, saying, Know (plural: "Know ye") the Lord: because all shall know me, from the small [one] even to the great [one] of them (that is, "they shall be all taught of God," as cited by our Lord in John vi. 45, from Isa. liv. 13, as written in the prophets, alluding to such passages as this, and Joel ii. 28, 29. See also 1 John ii. 20, 27, and notes there. Under the old covenant, the priests' lips were to keep knowledge, and they were to teach the people God's ways: under the new, there is no more need for the believer to have recourse to man for teaching in the knowledge of God, for the Holy Spirit, which is given to all that ask, reveals the things of Christ to each, according to the measure of his spiritual attainment and strength of faith. And the inner reason of this now follows, making, formally, the third of these better promises, but in fact bound up with, and the condition of, the last mentioned). Because ("by God passing

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

o Rom. xi. 27.  
 ch. x. 17.  
 † and their  
 iniquities is  
 omitted by  
 the best of  
 our ancient  
 authorities.  
 p 2 Cor. v. 17.

ciful to their iniquities, ° and their  
 sins † will I remember no more.  
 13 P In that he saith, A new [cove-  
 nant], he hath made the first old.  
 But that which decayeth and waxeth  
 old is ready to vanish away.

IX. 1 Now accordingly the first  
 covenant had also ordinances of di-

*merciful to their unright-  
 eousness, and their sins  
 and their iniquities will I  
 remember no more. 13 In  
 that he saith, A new cove-  
 nant, he hath made the  
 first old. Now that which  
 decayeth and waxeth old is  
 ready to vanish away.*

*IX. 1 Then verily the  
 first covenant had also*

by the former guilt of His sinful people, and beginning a new relation of grace with them, is this blessed change made possible." De Wette) **I will be merciful to their iniquities, and of their sins will I make mention no more.**

13.] Transition to the antithetical parallel which he is about to draw between the former, earthly and ceremonial, and the latter, heavenly and actual tabernacle: see summary at ch. ix. 1. In saying (here, as in each of those, the subject is God, belonging here to the following verb: "when God saith"), **A new [covenant], he hath made old** (*made old*, viz. by speaking of,—and where God is the speaker, actually in decree establishing, seeing that all God's sayings are realities,—a new one) **the first [covenant]. But** (transition from a particular assertion, to an axiomatic general truth: as in Rom. xiv. 23) **that which is being made old** (the saying of God *hath made old* that first covenant: the state of antiquation thereby induced, continues, as the perfect tense shews,—and hence the covenant is continually *being made old*) **and getting into old age is nigh unto vanishing away** (the writer uses the expression of the whole time subsequent to the utterance of the prophecy. At that time the *being made old* began, by the mention of a new covenant: and from that time the first covenant might be regarded as ever dwindling away, so to speak, and near its end, which God might bring on at any time. It is far better to regard the *being ready to vanish away* thus, than, with some, to place it at the time of the Writer, when in fact it had already taken place).

CHAP. IX. 1.] The chief train of thought and argument, although in the main forwarded, has been for the present somewhat broken, by the long citation in the last chapter. It is now resumed. Christ is the High Priest of a heavenly tabernacle, the Mediator of a covenant established upon better promises. This latter has

been shewn out of Scripture: and it has been proved that the old covenant was by that Scripture pronounced to be transitory and near its end. As such, it is now compared in detail with this second and better one, as to its liturgical apparatus and proffered means of access to God. These are detailed somewhat minutely, mention being even made of some which are not insisted on, nor their symbolism explained: and the main point of comparison, the access into the holiest place, is hastened on. In this particular especially the infinite superiority of the new covenant is insisted on: and the whole access of Christ into God's presence for us is elaborately contrasted with the former insufficient ceremonial access by means of animal sacrifices. In one point, above all, is this contrast brought out: *the supreme efficacy of the blood of Christ, as set against the nullity of the blood of bulls and of goats to purge away sin*. Then the subject of the heavenly tabernacle and holy place is recurred to, and the future prospect of Christ's re-appearing from thence opened.

1—5.] *The liturgical appliances of the first covenant.*

1.] **Now accordingly** (this takes up the thought of ch. viii. 5, where the command is recited directing Moses to make the tabernacle after the pattern shewn him in the mount. In pursuance of that command it was that *the first covenant had*, &c.) **the first [covenant]** (not, the first *tabernacle*, as the received text in the Greek wrongly and clumsily glosses. There is no question between a first and second *tabernacle*: the *greater and more perfect tabernacle* is a prototype, not an afterthought. The gloss has probably arisen from a blunder in interpreting "*the first tabernacle*" in ver. 8: see there) **had** (it was no longer subsisting in the Writer's time as a *covenant*, however its observances might be still surviving. Or perhaps the word **had** may refer back to the time indicated in ch. viii. 5, when Moses made the tabernacle: had, when its

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. <sup>2</sup> For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. <sup>3</sup> And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; <sup>4</sup> which had the golden censer, and

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

vine service, and <sup>a</sup> the worldly sanctuary. <sup>2</sup> <sup>b</sup> For the tabernacle was established, the first one, <sup>c</sup> wherein was <sup>d</sup> the candlestick, and <sup>e</sup> the table, and the shewbread; that tabernacle, which is called the holy place. <sup>3</sup> <sup>f</sup> But after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called holy of holies; <sup>4</sup> having a golden censer, and <sup>g</sup> the

a Exod. xxv. 8.  
b Exod. xxvi. 1.  
c Exod. xxvi. 35, & xl. 4.  
d Exod. xxv. 31.  
e Exod. xxv. 23, 30. Lev. xxiv. 5, 6.  
f Exod. xxvi. 31, 33, & xl. 3, 21. ch. vi. 19.  
g Exod. xxv. 10, & xxvi. 23, & xl. 5, 21.

liturgical appliances were first provided. But I prefer the other view also (as well as this second and more perfect covenant: not that this has all the things below mentioned, but that it too possesses its corresponding liturgical appliances, though of a higher kind) ordinances ("the old covenant also had liturgical ordinances, which were of divine right, ordinances which rested their obligatory right upon revelation from God and declaration of His will." Delitzsch) of service (*worship*: see ch. viii. 5 and note), and its (or, *the*: see below) worldly sanctuary (as the whole passage treats of the distinction between the two sanctuaries, one into which the Levitical priests entered, and the other into which Christ is entered, it is certain that the signification must be local only. worldly, i. e. 'mundane,' belonging to this world. It stands opposed to heavenly, and is an epithet distinguishing the sanctuary of the first covenant from that of the second, not one common to the two. This is also shewn by the article *the*. The first covenant had not merely a worldly sanctuary, but the only sanctuary which was upon earth: that one which was constructed after the pattern of things in the heavens).

2—5.] *Explanatory of the worldly sanctuary by a particular detail.* For the tabernacle was established (set up as a tent), the first one (in situation to those entering: see Acts xvi. 12 note), in which were the candlestick (with seven lights: of gold, carved with almond flowers, pomegranates, and lilies: see Exod. xxv. 31—39, xxxvii. 17—24. There were ten of these in the Temple of Solomon, see 1 Kings vii. 49; 2 Chron. iv. 7: but in the second Temple, the Mosaic regulation was returned to, and only one placed in the tabernacle: see 1 Macc. i. 21, iv. 49. Josephus describes Vespasian's triumph, and the candlestick as borne in it,

which is now to be seen in relief on the arch of Titus at Rome), and the table (for the shewbread: of shittim [acacia?] wood, overlaid with gold, Exod. xxv. 23—30, xxxvii. 10—16, of which there was one only in the Mosaic tabernacle, and in the second temple [1 Macc. as above], but ten in Solomon's temple, see 2 Chron. iv. 8; also ib. ver. 19; 1 Chron. xxviii. 16; 1 Kings vii. 48), and the shew of the bread (so literally. There can be little doubt that Tholuck and Delitzsch are right, who understand this not of the custom of exhibiting the bread, but, seeing that the Writer is speaking of concrete objects, as the heap of bread itself thus exhibited); which tabernacle ("that tabernacle namely, which") is called the holy place (literally, places or parts: there is no substantive expressed). 3.] But (as bringing out by anticipation the same contrast which we have in vv. 6, 7) after (i. e. in entering: "behind," as we should say, if regarding it 'in situ') the second veil (or curtain hanging before the sanctuary. There were in reality two of these, as described in Exod. xxvi. 31—37: one before the holy of holies itself [vv. 31—35], the other before the tabernacle door [vv. 36, 37]) the (not "a," see above) tabernacle which is called holy of holies (literally holies); having (see below) a golden censer [or, altar of incense] (there is considerable difficulty here. The word used may mean either an altar upon which, or a censer in which, incense was burnt. On the side of the latter meaning it is remarkable, that much stress is laid by the Mishna upon the censer to be used on the day of expiation, as distinguished from that used on any other day: on the fact of its being of gold, and of a particular and precious kind of gold. But if this latter interpretation be adopted, we are involved in the following difficulty. This golden censer is nowhere named in the law: the



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

ark of the covenant overlaid round  
about with gold, wherein was <sup>h</sup>a

*the ark of the covenant  
overlaid round about with  
gold, wherein was the golden*

<sup>h</sup> Exod. xvi. 33,  
34.

word rendered "*censer*" by A. V. in Levit. xvi. 12, is a shallow basin, in which the high priest on the day of atonement was to take incense from the incense-altar into the holy place. Besides which, it is not specified as golden; nor was it kept in the Holy of holies. Indeed it could not have been, or the high priest would have been obliged to fetch it from thence before burning incense in it, which is most improbable. Of these, the first-mentioned objection is not decisive; for our Writer is speaking, not of Mosaic usage only, but of several things outside the provisions of the law itself; and thus our explanation of any difficulty need not be sought in the provisions of the law only, but also in subsequent Jewish usage. If now, influenced by the above difficulties, we adopt the interpretation "*altar of incense*," a difficulty arises, certainly not less than any of those adduced above. On the one hand the word **having** at first sight seems to admit of no other meaning than a local one, "*containing*." The parallelism with **wherein was** above appears to demand this, and the fact that the other things mentioned are beyond question intended to be *in*, not merely belonging to, the Holy of holies. On this, see more below. Taking it as our first impression, we are startled by the fact, that the altar of incense was *not* in the Holy of holies, but *outside it*. Hence Bleek, De Wette, and Lünemann, suppose that the Writer has fallen into a mistake, and Bleek infers from this that he was not an inhabitant of Palestine, but an Alexandrine. But as Delitzsch observes, whichever he were, he must have been a perfect monster of ignorance, to have fallen into any such error. "Then," continues Delitzsch, "since we cannot submit him to such an imputation, is there any intent which our Writer may have had, inducing him to ascribe the altar of incense to the Holy of holies, notwithstanding that he knew its local situation to be in the Holy place?" There is such an intent, recognized even by Bleek himself. "The Author," says Bleek, and after him Tholuck, "treats the Holy of holies, irrespective of the veil, as symbolical of the heavenly sanctuary, and had also a motive to include in it the altar of incense, whose offerings of incense are the symbol of the prayers of the saints, Rev. viii. 3 ff." And even so it

is. Not only the New Test. writings, but the Old Test. also, Isa. vi. 6, speak of a heavenly altar, which is the antitype there of the earthly. Considering the fact that this antitypical altar belonged to the Holy of holies, into which Christ entered through the torn veil, it was obvious for our Writer to reckon the typical altar also among the things belonging to the Holy of holies. Our second question then is, whether our Writer is justified, having this motive, in reckoning the altar of incense among the furniture of the Holy of holies. And our answer is, Entirely so: the following considerations have weight: a) that the altar of incense, by Exod. xxx. 6, xl. 5, is to be placed before the ark of the covenant, or before the Capporeth [mercy-seat], i. e. in the middle between the candlestick on the right and the table of shewbread on the left, so that its place is subordinate to the ark of the covenant: b) that on the day of atonement, it, as well as the mercy-seat, was sprinkled with the blood of the sin-offering: c) that in 1 Kings vi. 22, as well as by our Writer, it is reckoned to the Holy of holies, being there called the altar belonging to the sanctuary [A. V. "*the altar that was by the oracle*"]. The solution to be gathered from this would be, that the altar of incense, being appointed by the Mosaic ordinance to stand in immediate contiguity to the veil separating the Holy of holies, and being destined in its use especially for the service of the Holy of holies [for this, notwithstanding the objection brought by Delitzsch, might have weight; the exterior altar of burnt-offering did not belong in any such strict sense to the sanctuary and mercy-seat], and being described in more than one place of Scripture [e. g. Exod. xxx. 6; 1 Kings vi. 22] as connected with the sanctuary, is taken by the Writer as appertaining to the Holy of holies: he chooses, thus to describe it, the somewhat ambiguous word **having**, and not "*wherein was*," as before. I have thus given both views of the solution to be sought: and will now state the result. 1) On either hypothesis, **having** cannot be kept to its stricter meaning of *containing*. For neither the censer nor the incense-altar was *kept in* the Holy of holies. 2) The language of the Mishna concerning the golden censer is very strong, and more weight still is



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; <sup>3</sup> and over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat; of which

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

golden pot containing the manna, and <sup>1</sup> Aaron's rod that budded, and <sup>k</sup> the tables of the covenant; <sup>5</sup> and <sup>l</sup> over it the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat; of which

2 Chron. v. 10.

f Exod. xxv. 18, 22. Lev. xvi. 2. 1 Kings viii. 6, 7.

f Numb. xvii. 10.  
k Exod. xxv. 10, 21, & xxxiv. 29, & xl. 20. Dent. x. 2, 5.  
l Kings viii. 9, 21.

given to it when we reflect that it is especially of the day of expiation that our Writer is preparing to speak. 3) The word **golden** should not be overlooked in the consideration. When the ark of the covenant by and by is spoken of, which like the altar of incense was overlaid with gold, it is not said to be *golden*, but only "overlaid all round with gold." And this predicate being thus emphatically thrown forward, it is hardly possible to help feeling that a stress is laid on it, and it is not used without design. And if we enquire what this design is, we can hardly find fault with the reply which says that it is to distinguish a *golden censer* from some other kinds of censers. 4) On the whole then I should say that the balance inclines towards the "censer" interpretation, though I do not feel by any means that the difficulty is removed, and should hail any new solution which might clear it still further), and the ark of the covenant (see Exod. xxv. 10 ff., xxxvii. 1 ff.: called by this name, Josh. iii. 6 and in other places) covered round on all sides ("within and without," Exod. xxv. 11) with gold (the ark, a chest, was of shittim [acacia] wood, overlaid with plates of fine gold, Exod. as above. The ark of the covenant was in the Holy of holies in the Mosaic tabernacle, and in the temple of Solomon, 1 Kings viii. 4, 6. In the sack by the Chaldeans, it disappeared. See a legend respecting its fate in 2 Macc. ii. 1—8, where curiously enough "the tabernacle, and the ark, and the altar of incense," are classed together. The second temple did not contain it, but it was represented by a stone basement three fingers high, called "the stone of foundation"), in which [was] a golden pot (Ex. xvi. 32—34. The word "golden" is added by the Septuagint: so also Philo: the Hebrew has merely "a pot," as A. V.) containing the manna (viz. an omer, each man's daily share laid up for a memorial, see Exod. xvi. 32 with ib. 16. That this pot was to be placed in the ark, is not said there, but it was gathered probably from the words "before the Lord." In 1 Kings viii. 9; 2 Chron. v. 10, it is stated that there was nothing in the ark in

Solomon's temple, except the two tables which Moses put therein at Horeb. But this, as Delitzsch observes, will not prove any thing against the pot of manna and the rod having *once* been there; nay rather, from the express declaration that there was *then* nothing but the tables of stone, it would seem that formerly there had been other things there. The Rabbis certainly treat of the pot of manna, as of the rod, as *being in the ark*), and the rod of Aaron which budded (see Numb. xvii. 1—11. It was to be laid up "before the testimony," in which Ben Gershom sees a proof that it was in the ark. The Gemara mentions a tradition that with the ark disappeared the pot of manna, and the cruse of anointing oil, and the rod of Aaron with its almonds and blossoms, and the chest which the Philistines sent for a trespass-offering, 1 Sam. vi. 4, 8), and the tables of the covenant (viz. the tables of stone on which the ten commandments were written by the finger of God, Exod. xxv. 16, xxxi. 18; Dent. x. 1—5; 1 Kings viii. 9; 2 Chron. v. 10, as above. It will be seen from these references, that these tables were ordered to be put in the ark); 5.] and over above it (the ark of the covenant) [the] cherubim (the well-known fourfold animal forms, fencing from human approach, and at the same time bearing up and supporting the glory of God: symbolizing, as I believe and have elsewhere maintained [Hulsean Lectures for 1841. Lect. i. See also note on Rev. iv. 6—8], the creation of God. See more below) of glory (the glory, is the Shechinah, or bright cloud of glory, in which Jehovah appeared between the cherubim forms, and to which, as attendants and watchers, and upholders, they belonged) overshadowing (casting shadow down upon, causing to be shadowed) the mercy-seat (the mercy-seat of Exod. xxv. 17: the massive golden cover of the ark of the covenant, on which the glory of Jehovah appeared between the cherubim. It was that upon which especially the blood of the propitiatory sacrifice was sprinkled on the day of atonement, Levit. xvi. 15, and from this circumstance apparently, the propitiation taking place on it, it obtained its name of

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

we cannot now speak particularly. <sup>6</sup> Now these things being thus arranged, <sup>m</sup> the priests enter always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God; <sup>7</sup> but into the second the high priest alone <sup>n</sup> once every year, not without blood, <sup>o</sup> which he offereth for himself, and for the ignorances of the people: <sup>8</sup> <sup>p</sup> the Holy Ghost this signifying, that <sup>q</sup> the way into the holy place hath not yet been made manifest, while the first tabernacle is as yet standing: <sup>9</sup> the which tabernacle is a

*we cannot now speak particularly.* <sup>6</sup> *Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.* <sup>7</sup> *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: <sup>8</sup> 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: <sup>9</sup> which was a figure for*

m Numb. xxviii. 3.  
Dan. viii. 11.

n Exod. xxx. 10.  
Lev. xvi. 2.  
11, 12, 15, 34.  
ver. 25.  
o ch. v. 3. &  
vii. 27.  
p ch. x. 19, 20.

q John xiv. 6.

*mercy-seat, or place of propitiation.* It was the footstool of God, 1 Chron. xxviii. 2; Ps. xcix. 5, xxxiii. 7; Lam. ii. 1; the spot where He, the God of the covenant, met with Israel, the people of the covenant: see Exod. xxv. 22; Lev. xvi. 2; Numb. vii. 89; concerning which it is not [opportune] now to speak one by one (i. e. particularly. The clause refers evidently not to the cherubim only, but to all the contents of the Sanctuary just mentioned).

6, 7.] We now have that whereunto the above details have been tending, viz. *the use made of the Sanctuary by the High Priest on the day of atonement.* But (transitional) **these things being thus arranged, into the first (foremost) tabernacle [indeed] continually** (i. e. day by day, at any time, without limits prescribed by the law: certainly, twice at least in every day, see Exod. xxx. 7 ff.) **enter** (on the *present*, see above. It must not be rendered by an imperfect, as A. V., 'went') **the priests** (the ordinary priests), **accomplishing the services** (the services meant are the morning and evening care of the lamps, the morning and evening offering of incense, and the weekly change of the shewbread); 7.] **but into the second** (innermost, the Holy of holies) **once in the year** (i. e. on the day of atonement, the 10th day of the 7th month; the same expression is used in *reff.* Exod. and Levit. The entrance took place, *on that day*, twice at least, from Levit. xvi. 12—16: the Mischna says, four [three?] times, Joma v. 1; vii. 4. Much trouble has been spent by antiquarians on the question: see the whole treated in Bleek, if it be

thought worth while: it may suffice here to say that the Writer follows the ordinary way of speaking among the Jews and ourselves, meaning by "once," *on one occasion.* No one would think, if I said I was in the habit of seeing a certain person but once in every year, of asking how long I spent in his company during that day, and how often I looked upon him) **the High Priest alone, not without** (see ch. vii. 20) **blood, which he offers** (see ch. viii. 3) **on behalf of himself, and the ignorances** (sins of ignorance, see ch. v. 2. But the word may have a wider meaning than mere sins of ignorance) **of the people** (I have in my Greek Test. discussed the question whether this sentence will bear to be taken "for his own ignorances, and for those of the people:" and have found it not improbable, that this may have been intended): 8.] **the Holy Spirit signifying** (by the typical arrangement of the sanctuary, excluding all from it except the High Priest once a year: the reference of "*signifying*" is not to be referred back to the prophecy of Jeremiah above quoted. We often have the verb in this meaning of "*signifying by a representation*:" so in ch. xii. 27) **this** (which follows), **that the way to the holy place** (i. e. the true holy places in heaven: for it is of antitype, not of type, that the Writer is here speaking. Hence there is no danger of mistaking *the holy place* here for the outer tabernacle: it is as in Ezek. xli. 23; Lev. xvi. 16, 17, 20, 23, 27, *the holy place*, par excellence) **has not yet been manifested** (not, *had not*: the present form is maintained throughout:

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*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;*<sup>10</sup> which stood only

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

parable for the time now present; according to which are offered both gifts and sacrifices,<sup>r</sup> having no power to perfect in conscience him that serveth;<sup>10</sup> consisting only in<sup>s</sup> meats<sup>s</sup>

<sup>r</sup> Gal. iii. 21.  
ch. vii. 18, 19.  
& x. 1, 11.

<sup>s</sup> Lev. xi. 2.  
Col. ii. 16.

see below), while the first tabernacle is as yet standing (*what first tabernacle? That which was first in time, or first in order of space?* Clearly the latter, which has already been used in ver. 6: no reason can be given for changing the sense to the temporal one, especially as the Writer is regarding the whole as present, and drawing no contrast as to time. In fact, if time be regarded, the heavenly, not the earthly tabernacle is the first. Still less can we understand the tabernacle in the wilderness, as distinguished from the temple: which would yield no assignable sense. Bleek supposes that *the first tabernacle*, thus understood, symbolizes the whole Jewish Levitical worship which took place in the first or outer tabernacle: Ebrard, that the whole, exterior and interior tabernacle, is symbolical, the exterior of relative, the interior of absolute holiness. But both of these ideas are well refuted by Delitzsch, who reminds us that the first as well as the second tabernacle was symbolical of heavenly things): the which (viz. the first or anterior tabernacle, and that especially considered as obstructing, by its yet remaining, the way into the holiest) is (not, "was," see above) a parable for (in reference to) the time (period, or season, with reference to the divine dispensations) now present (so Primasius,—“for what was then done in the temple, was a figure and similitude of that truth which is now fulfilled in the church.” And thus recently, and to my mind decisively, Delitzsch. But observe, the first tabernacle was not a parable of the present time, so that *the present time* should be the thing represented:—but a parable,—for, reserved unto, or given in reference to, the present time,—of heavenly things, to which the access is in the present time revealed.

This application of the expression to *the time now present*, has not been the general view of Commentators. Chrysostom and others have interpreted it of the time *then* present, the time before the coming of Christ. But this meaning, “*the time which was instant*,” would not agree with the present tense, are offered, to which consequently those interpreters are

obliged to do violence. Accordingly we have modifications of this view, e. g. that of Ebrard, and others, that the time meant is the present time of offering Old Test. sacrifices, in which the readers of the Epistle were still taking a part. “The author might have called the time of the Old Test. worship ‘the past time,’ and he would doubtless have so called it, had he been minded to speak from his own standing-point: but with practical wisdom he here speaks from that of his readers, who yet joined in the temple worship, and for whom the period of sacrifices was not yet passed away.” Ebrard:—that of Bleek, Tholuck, and Lünemann, “This *first tabernacle* is, or there lies in its establishment, a parabolic setting forth of the character of the present time in general, i. e. of the time of the Old Test.,—of Judaism.” Bleek. And so A. V., “which was a figure for the time then present.” See more below under “*the time of reformation*”); according to which (i. e. in accordance with which typical meaning; a specification accounting for and justifying the profitless character of the ordinances about to be spoken of) both gifts and sacrifices are offered (the *present* implies only the matter-of-fact endurance of the Levitical offerings, not their subsistence in the divine plan), having no power to perfect in conscience (see below) him that serveth (i. e. not the priests, but the people, who offered through them. “The offering Israelite assures, —doing, as he does, that which God’s law requires,—his part, as a member, in the people of the law and of the promised salvation: he obtains also, if he does this with right feeling, operations of divine grace, which he seeks in the way prescribed: but, seeing that the Holy of holies is not yet unveiled, the offerings cannot perfect him in conscience, i. e. cannot put his moral-religious consciousness, in its inward feeling, into a state of entire and joyful looking for of salvation, so that his conscience should be an onward-waxing consciousness of perfect restoration, of entire clearing up, of total emancipation, of his relation to God.” Delitzsch:

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

t Numb. xix. 7, and drinks, and <sup>t</sup>divers washings,  
&c.  
u Eph. ii. 15. <sup>u</sup> ordinances of the flesh, imposed on  
Col. ii. 20. them until the time of reformation.  
ch. vii. 16.

<sup>11</sup> But Christ having appeared  
x an high priest <sup>y</sup> of the good things  
to come, <sup>z</sup> through the greater and

x ch. iii. 1.  
y ch. ii. 5. &  
vi. 5. & x. 1.  
& xi. 20.  
z ch. viii. 2.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*in meats and drinks, and  
divers washings, and car-  
nal ordinances, imposed  
on them until the time of  
reformation. <sup>11</sup> But Christ  
being come an high priest  
of good things to come, by  
a greater and more perfect*

who continues, "The material offerings of animals are only parables, referring to the time when that which is parabolically set forth becomes actual, and passes into reality. They are, considered of themselves, incapable of any action on the inner part of a man; they are"; 10.] only consisting in (on the ambiguity of construction, see in my Greek Test.) meats and drinks, and divers washings (probably the Writer has in mind both the legal and the Talmudical conditions imposed upon *them who served*. See the very parallel place, Col. ii. 16. The law prescribed much about eating: nothing about drinking, except some general rules of uncleanness, such as Lev. xi. 34,—and in peculiar cases, such as the prohibition of wine to the Nazarite, Numb. vi. 3,—and to the priests when on actual service in the tabernacle, Lev. x. 9. But subsequent circumstances and usage added other observances and precedents: as, e. g. Dan. i. 8; Hagg. ii. 13. See Matt. xxiii. 24; Rom. xiv. 21. So there is no necessity to suppose that the allusion is to the feasts after sacrifice [ch. xiii. 10], or to the passover. The *divers washings* may refer to all the various washings ordained by the law, Exod. xxix. 4; Lev. xi. 25, 28, 32, 40; xiv. 6—9; xv. 5 ff.; xvi. 4, 24 ff.; Numb. viii. 7; xix. 17 ff. But it seems likely that not the sacerdotal washings, so much as those prescribed to or observed by the people, are mainly in view: such as those mentioned in Mark vii. 4), ordinances of [the] flesh (i. e. belonging to flesh, as opposed to spirit. They regarded material things, gifts, sacrifices, meats, drinks, washings, which from their very nature could only affect the outward not the inward man), imposed until the season of rectification (i. e. when all these things would be better arranged, the substance put where the shadow was before, the sufficient grace where the insufficient type. The expression probably refers to ch. viii. 8 f.,—the time when God would make with His people a better covenant. I need hardly remind the reader who has kept

pace with what has been said on "*the time now present*" above, that this time of reformation is one and the same with that. Those who give another meaning there, yet agree in referring these words to Christian times).

11, 12.] *The fulfilment of these types by Christ. But* (the contrast is to the ineffectiveness and the merely provisional nature of the Levitical offerings) *Christ* (not "Jesus" here: because the Writer will introduce with emphasis that name which carries with it the fulfilment of all type and prophecy. Nor again "*the Christ*," because he will not say that 'the Messiah' was come, but will use that well-known name as a personal name belonging to Him whom now all Christians know by it) *having appeared* (the verb here used is the usual word for *appearing* or *coming forward* as a historical person: appearing on the stage of the world. And it is of this appearance of Christ in history that the word is here used. That appearance was the point of demarcation between prophecy and fulfilment, between the old covenant and the new. So that the expression is rather to be taken of the whole accomplished course of Christ summed up in one, than either of His first incarnation upon earth, or of His full inauguration into His Melchisedec High Priesthood in heaven) *as High Priest of the good things to come* (i. e. in this case, the blessed promises of the Christian covenant, different in the very nature of the case, from *their* "good things to come," but still, in formal expression, a term common to them and us: so that the expression, "high priest of the good things to come," might in its scantiness of sense have been used of a Jewish High Priest, just as it is in its fullness of completed sense used of Christ now. It is hardly necessary to add that I take to *come* as meaning not, which were future *in respect of the law*, but which are *now* future; the "*incorruptible inheritance*" of 1 Pet. i. 4, the "*things hoped for*" of our ch. xi. 1: see our Writer's usage in refl. The genitive

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; <sup>12</sup> neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemp-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; <sup>12</sup> nor yet through <sup>a</sup> the blood of goats and calves, but <sup>b</sup> through his own blood he entered <sup>c</sup> once for all into the holy place,

a ch. x. 4.

b Acts xx. 8.

Eph. i. 7.

Col. i. 14.

1 Pet. i. 19.

Rev. i. 5. &amp;

v. 9.

c Zech. iii. 9. ver. 28, 28. ch. x. 10.

after the word **High Priest** is not an attributive, but an objective one: the *good things to come* are the objects and ultimate regard of His High Priesthood, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is, not of this creation (1) *How are these words to be constructed?* 2) *to what tabernacle do they refer?* 1) they belong to entered below, not to *what went before*. For in that case neither would be left without any preceding member of the negation to follow, or it must be considered as the sequence to "*not made with hands*," or to "*not of this creation*," either of which would be absurd. 2) the **through** is local: as the Jewish High Priest passed through the first tabernacle in entering into the earthly holy place, so our High Priest has passed through the greater and more perfect tabernacle to enter into the heavenly holy place. But, this settled, 2) *what is this greater and more perfect tabernacle?* The Fathers for the most part interpret it of *Christ's body or human nature*. Ebrard takes it of *Christ's holy life*, and "*the holy place*" of His exaltation; passing, in fact, from reality into symbol: others explain it of *the Church on earth*: others, of *the whole world*: Hofmann, of *the glorified Body of Christ*, which, and not the Body of His flesh, he maintains can alone be said to be *not of this creation*, and in which dwells [Col. ii. 9] all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; Bleek, De Wette, Lünemann, and Stier, of *the lower region of the heavens*, through which Christ passed in ascending to the throne of God. Tholuck thinks it to be merely a superadded feature, having no representation in reality, but serving only to complete the idea of a heavenly sanctuary. Delitzsch keeps to his interpretation in ch. viii. 2 [which see discussed in note there], as against Hofmann. But here, as there, I believe that his and Hofmann's views run up into one; though perhaps here the weight is on his side, as it was there on Hofmann's. The *tabernacle* here, as in ch. viii. 2, is

the *heavens* [see ch. iv. 14] through which Christ passed not only locally, but conditionally, being the abode of blessed spirits and just men made perfect: corresponding to His mystical Body [see on ch. viii. 2: and below, on the other epithets of this tabernacle], and the *holy place* is the *heaven itself* [ver. 24], the especial abode of the invisible and unapproachable God. As regards the epithets of this *tabernacle*, first it is distinguished by the article *the*, "*that tabernacle of which we know*." Then it is called **greater**, in contrast with the small extent and import of that other, and **more perfect**, in contrast with its ineffectiveness and its exclusion from the divine presence: perhaps also with its merely symbolical, and its transitory nature. "The indeterminate **not made with hands**, a word of St. Luke in similar connexion, Acts vii. 48; xvii. 24, is explained by the Writer himself by **not of this creation**, and serves as an apposition to the preceding. That tabernacle is not built by hands of men, but by the Lord Himself, ch. viii. 2; it is of His own immediate placing, not belonging to this creation, not only not to this material creation which surrounds us, out of which we get our building materials, but altogether not to this first and present creation: it belongs to the age of the future, to the glorified world." Delitzsch. The rendering "*not of this building*," A. V., is wrong, and misses the idea, giving in fact a tautological explanation for "*not made with hands*"; nor yet (as if it were said, "no, nor with any of the typical accompaniments of that other tabernacle") **through** (as a medium of preparation and approach. The instrumental sense very nearly approaches the local: so that there need be no scruple about the apparently different senses given in the two clauses: see above) **blood of goats and calves** (the plurals are simply generic: for this portion of the ceremonies of the day of atonement, see Lev. xvi. 14, 15), **nay rather** (strongly contrasting) **through** (see above: through, as His medium of entrance: it was as a



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>d</sup> and obtained eternal redemption for us. <sup>13</sup> For if <sup>e</sup> the blood of goats and of bulls, and <sup>f</sup> ashes of an heifer sprinkling the defiled, sanctifieth to the purity of the flesh: <sup>14</sup> how much more <sup>g</sup> shall the blood of Christ, <sup>h</sup> who through the eternal

<sup>d</sup> Dan. ix. 24.

<sup>e</sup> Lev. xvi. 14, 16.

<sup>f</sup> Numb. xix. 2, 17, &c.

<sup>g</sup> 1 Pet. i. 19.

<sup>h</sup> John i. 7.

Rev. i. 5.

<sup>h</sup> Rom. i. 4.

1 Pet. iii. 18.

key opening the holiest to Him) **His own blood entered once for all** (see ch. vii. 27) **into the holy place, and obtained** (not "having obtained," as A. V. The redemption was not accomplished *when He entered*, but accomplished *by His entering*. Here, as there, the contemporaneous *completion* of the two acts must be kept in view, and any such rendering as Ebrard's, "in bringing about," carefully avoided) **eternal redemption for us** (eternal, answering to "once for all" above: as Hofmann remarks, the *redemption* is the aim and end of the approach of our High Priest to God: if then this approach has once for all taken place, the *redemption* is therewith for ever accomplished. In the word **redemption**, as applied to our final redemption at the coming of Christ, the idea of ransom is rather in the background, and that of deliverance prevails over it: but in both, as applied to the redemption which Christ wrought by His death, the idea of price paid for redemption and redemption by that price, is kept prominent. The price paid for our redemption is His *death* [ver. 15] as the sacrifice of Himself. Titus ii. 14; 1 Tim. ii. 5 f.,—His *blood*, Eph. i. 7, as the sacrifice of His life, Matt. xx. 28; 1 Pet. i. 19. And here also it is His blood which is the *price paid*).

13—X. 18.] *Enlargement upon, and substantiation of, this obtaining of eternal redemption*; on which then follows, x. 19 ff., the third or directly hortatory part of the Epistle. "For the blood of His self-offering purifies inwardly unto the living service of the living God [vv. 13, 14]: His redeeming death is the inaugurating act of a new covenant and of the heavenly sanctuary [vv. 15—23]: His entrance into the anti-typical holiest place is the conclusion of his all-sufficing atonement for sin [vv. 24—26], after which only remains his reappearance to complete the realization of Redemption [vv. 27, 28]. In distinction from the legal offerings which were constantly repeated, He has, by his offering of Himself, per-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

tion for us. <sup>13</sup> 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: <sup>14</sup> how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the

formed the actual will of God which willed salvation [ch. x. 1—10]: our Sanctification is now for ever accomplished, and the exalted Saviour reigns in expectation of ultimate victory [x. 11—14]: and the promised new covenant has come in, resting on an eternal forgiveness of sins which requires no further offering [x. 15—18]." Delitzsch,

13, 14.] *Argument*, from the less to the greater, to show the *cleansing power of Christ's blood*. For (rendering a reason for 'the obtaining of eternal redemption') if (with the indicative "sanctifieth," 'as we know it does') the blood (*the blood*, compared with *the blood* below, because it is not the one blood compared with the other in its quality, but the shedding of the one blood compared with the shedding of the other: the articles then *distribute the subject* in each case) of goats and bulls (viz. the yearly offering on the day of atonement, Levit. xvi.), and ashes of an heifer (see the whole ordinance, full of significance, in Num. xix. 1—22. ashes has no article, because the ashes were to be laid up, and a portion used as wanted) sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctifieth to (so as to bring about) the purity (not "purifying," as A. V.) of the flesh (it is evident, that the Writer speaks only of the Levitical rites in their matter-of-fact results as works done, not of any divine grace which might accrue to the soul of the faithful Israelite from a spiritual partaking in them. The outward effect of the sacrifices of the day of atonement, as well as of the sprinkling of the ashes of the heifer, was, to render ceremonially pure before God, in the one case from the imputation of the defilement of sin on the whole people, in the other, from the defilement actually contracted by contact with death or uncleanness. These effects they had in themselves: what others they had, out of themselves, belonged not so much to them, as to that great Sacrifice which they represented): how much more (see the logical connexion at the end) shall the blood of [the] Christ, who through the



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the*

*early testimony. See note.*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

Spirit <sup>i</sup> offered HIMSELF without fault <sup>i</sup> to God, <sup>k</sup> purify † our conscience <sup>k</sup> from <sup>l</sup> dead works <sup>m</sup> to serve the <sup>†</sup>

1 ch. vi. 1.

m Luke i. 74. Rom. vi. 13, 22. 1 Pet. iv. 2.

<sup>i</sup> Eph. v. 2.  
<sup>Tit. ii. 11.</sup>  
<sup>ch. vii. 27.</sup>  
<sup>k</sup> ch. i. 3. & x.  
<sup>22.</sup>  
<sup>†</sup> *No the weightier*

eternal Spirit offered HIMSELF (emphatic) without fault to God (first, *when* did He offer Himself? Clearly not, as Socinus, and others, when he presented himself to God in heaven. For, as Delitzsch rightly observes, when Christ is antitypically or by way of contrast compared with the *victims* of the Old Test. sacrifices, as the ritual term *without fault* here shews that He is, then beyond question the offering on the cross is intended, which corresponds to the slaying the victim and offering him on the altar. Besides which, the 'oblation in the holy place' was but the completion of the 'oblation on the altar,' and, when Christ's self-offering is spoken of generally, we are to take the whole from the beginning, not merely that which was the last act of it. This will guide us to the meaning of the somewhat difficult words, *through the eternal Spirit*. The animals which were offered had no will, no *spirit* of their own, which could concur with the act of sacrifice. Theirs was a transitory life, of no potency or virtue. They were offered *through the law* rather than *through* any consent, or agency, or counteragency, of their own. But Christ offered Himself, with His own consent assisting and empowering the sacrifice. And what was that consent? The consent of what? of the spirit of a man? such a consent as yours or mine, given in and through our finite spirit whose acts are bounded by its own allotted space in time and its own responsibilities? No: but the consenting act of His divine Personality—His "*eternal Spirit*," His Godhead, which from before time acquiesced in, and wrought with, the redemption-purpose of the Father. Thus we have *spirit* contrasted with *flesh* in speaking of our Lord, in several places: see Rom. i. 3, 4; 1 Tim. iii. 16; 1 Pet. iii. 18. This divine Personality it was, which in the Resurrection so completely ruled and absorbed His *flesh*: this, which causes Him to be spoken of by St. Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 45 as a "*life-giving Spirit*," and in 2 Cor. iii. 17 f. as absolutely "*the Spirit*." Not however that any confusion hence arises in the distinction of the divine Persons: "*the eternal Spirit*" is not the Spirit of the Father dwelling in Christ, nor is it the Holy Spirit given without measure to Christ, but it is the divine Spirit of the

Godhead which Christ Himself had and was in His inner Personality. And the relevancy of such a clause here is, that the eternal Spirit is absolute spirit, divine spirit, and thus self-conscious, laying down its own course purely of itself unbound by conditions, simply and entirely free: so that Christ's offering of Himself *through the Eternal Spirit*, is, as such, a moral act of absolute worth. *through*, i. e. by virtue of: so that His divine Spirit was the agent in the offering, penetrating and acting on the Humanity. *without fault*, as above observed, is the regular word of the ritual in reference to the victims which must be without spot when offered. Therefore to understand it of the perfection of the glorified human nature of the ascended Saviour, as the Socinian interpreters, is clearly beside the meaning, and contrary to analogy), *purify our* (the question of reading, *our* or *your*, is one not easy to settle. At the word "*purify*" we unfortunately lose the evidence of the great Vatican MS.: as it terminates there, and has been completed by a later hand. From all analogy it would seem that we must infer our to have been its reading here) *conscience* (our English word *conscience* does not reach the fulness of the term here used, the *self-consciousness as regards God*, the inner consciousness of relation to Him. This is, by the blood of Christ, shed in the power of the divine Spirit, thoroughly purified, freed from the terror of guilt, cleared from alienation from Him and from all selfish regards and carnal pretences, and rendered living and real as He is living and real) *from dead works* (just as death was under the old law the fountain of ceremonial pollution, and any one by touching a dead body became unclean, so carnal works, having their origin in sin, with which death is bound up, pollute the conscience. They are like the touching of the dead body, rendering the man unclean in God's sight, as not springing from life in Him: inducing decay and corruption in the spirit. See on ch. vi. 1, and Chrysostom there quoted. Here, the reference to the dead body can hardly be set aside, being more pointed than there, where I have rather advocated the general sense. The Writer does not here set

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

n 1 Tim. ii. 5. living God? <sup>15</sup> <sup>n</sup> And for this cause  
 o ch. vii. 22. & he is the mediator of a new cove-  
 viii. 6. & xii. nant, <sup>p</sup> in order that, death having  
 24. p R-m. iii. 25. taken place, for the propitiation of  
 & c. 6. the transgressions under the first  
 1 Pet. iii. 18. covenant, <sup>q</sup> they which have been  
 q ch. iii. 1. called may receive the promise of the  
 eternal inheritance. <sup>16</sup> For where a  
 testament is, there must also of  
 necessity be implied the death of  
 r Gal. iii. 15. him that made it. <sup>17</sup> For <sup>r</sup> a testa-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

living God? <sup>15</sup> And for  
 this cause he is the medi-  
 ator 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 eter-  
 nal inheritance. <sup>16</sup> For  
 where a testament is, there  
 must also of necessity be  
 the death of the testator.  
<sup>17</sup> For a testament is of

forth *how* this blood of Christ acts in purifying the conscience: it is not his aim now to speak of *our* way of participation of its benefits, but merely of *its* cleansing power itself) in order to the serving (ministering to, which the unclean might not do in the ceremonial sanctuary, nor can the unclean do in heart and life) the living God (God in His spiritual reality and absolute holiness: not a God concealed by veils and signs, but approached in his verity by the sanctified soul)?

15.] See summary above at ver. 13. This pre-eminent spiritual virtue of His redeeming blood constitutes his fitness to be the Mediator of the new covenant, the main blessing of which, forgiveness, extends even back over the insufficient former one, and ensures the inheritance to the called. And on this account (on account of this virtue of His blood: or if it seem better, extend the reference further back still, over vv. 11—14, on account of the great work which He hath accomplished by his death: "because these things are so") is He mediator of a new covenant (see ch. viii. 6 and note), in order that,—death having taken place, for the propitiation of the transgressions under the first covenant,—they who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance (first, the object of the new covenant is an eternal inheritance,—see ver. 11; ch. ii. 5: and therefore the idea of inheritance having once come in, gives to the word covenant [*diatheké*] that shade of meaning which is deepened and insisted on below, viz. that of a TESTAMENTARY covenant or arrangement. receiving the promise is to be taken in the sense of receiving the fulfilment of a promise, not merely of having the promise granted. Then, the called are the "partakers in the heavenly calling"

of ch. iii. 1: compare also "the high calling" of Phil. iii. 14. Calvin well remarks, "He speaks of the called, that he may the better conciliate the Jews, who were partakers of this calling." This end, of the called being put in possession of the promise of the eternal inheritance, is to be attained "by death having taken place for the propitiation of the transgressions under the first testament." Without this death, it could not be attained. The full reason of this, that death must take place first, is presently gone into: it is with the concluding words of this clause that we are at present concerned. These transgressions under the first covenant are in fact those of all mankind. Israel was a pattern of God's dealings with all: and His revelation of His will to Israel extended categorically to all mankind. Against this will, primævally revealed, revealed to the patriarchs, revealed in the law, our parents and the antediluvian earth, the sons of Noah and the postdiluvian earth, Israel itself as a people, had deeply and repeatedly transgressed: and before a new inheritance by testament could come in, there must be a propitiation of all these former transgressions. All the propitiatory sacrifices, so called, of the former covenant, were but imperfect and typical: but as this is to be a real inheritance, so there must be real and actual propitiation. See the remarkable parallel, Acts xiii. 39). 16.] For (justification of the death taking place, by an appeal to common usage) where a testament is (that it is quite vain to attempt to deny the testamentary sense of *diatheké* in this verse, see my Greek Test.), there is necessity that the death of him who made it (the testator, as A. V., but it is important to mark that it is him that made it, not him that maketh it, as it

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

force after men are dead : otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. <sup>18</sup> Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. <sup>19</sup> 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

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

ment is of force in the case of the dead, seeing that it is of no strength at all while he that made it is alive. <sup>18</sup> Whence neither hath the first testament been dedicated without blood. <sup>19</sup> For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, <sup>t</sup> he took the blood of the calves and of the goats, <sup>u</sup> with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both

<sup>s</sup> Exod. xxiv. 6, &c.

<sup>t</sup> Exod. xxiv. 5, 6, 8. Lev. xvi. 14, 15, 18.

<sup>u</sup> Lev. xiv. 4, 6, 7, 40, 51, 52.

ought to be on Ebrard's, &c. interpretation. In the meaning, Christ is He that made it : and this agrees wonderfully with St. Luke's manner of speaking in that text which is in fact the key-text to this : *I appoint unto you, as my Father appointed unto me, a kingdom* : the same verb being used as here, Luke xxii. 29) be implied (as literally given, i. e., he who speaks of a testament, at the same time, carries in to, involves in, that assertion, the death of him that made it. On the logical connexion, see below). 17.]

For (renders a fresh reason within the domain of the former "for," explaining the axiom of ver. 16) a testament is of force (see on ch. ii. 2, and Rom. iv. 16) in the case of the dead (literally, over dead men, the thing predicated being the substratum or condition of the subject. Doubtless in choosing the plural, and indeed the word itself, the Writer has in his mind the transition which he is about to make from the death of the New Testament to the typical deaths of the Old, which were of animals, between which and men dead things, not those who had died, would be the common term), seeing that it (a testament) is never availing when he that made it is alive. 18.]

Whence (because death must precede the validity of a testament) neither has the first (testament) been inaugurated (perfect, inasmuch as the rites, &c., belonging to it were still subsisting. Notice that the reference is, here, simply to the first inauguration of the law when it was put forth as new; not to any subsequent renewal of sacrifices by death : this is presently alluded to, vv. 21 ff.) without (apart from, free from the exhibition of) blood.

19.] For (explanation of the assertion in last verse) when every com-

mandment had been spoken according to the law (these last words, according to the law, belong not to precept, but to spoken, spoken according to the law, i. e., as the law directed, not varying from it in any point) by Moses to all the people (see Exod. xxiv. 3), taking the blood (the additional detail of Exod. xxiv. 5 is omitted, viz. that "he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the Lord." It was of this blood that Moses took) of the calves and goats (the former only are mentioned in Exodus. But this is only said of the peace-offerings. The burnt-offerings [see above], after the analogy of the rites on the day of atonement, might be presumed to be goats. Indeed the key to the additions made here to the text of Exodus is, that the account is filled up by subsequent usage. We may presume, that the solemn legal appointment of various ceremonial details was in fact only a divine sanction of practices already existing : sacrifice having been long in use, and that under the direction and approval of God Himself), with water (prescribed, in Numb. xix. 6, 17, to be mixed with the ashes of the red heifer which were to be kept for purifying : compare also Lev. xiv. 50 f. : see above), and scarlet wool, and hyssop (see Lev. xiv. 49 ff. : by comparing which with Numb. xix. as above, it may fairly be inferred, as our text here assures us was the fact, that these instruments where the ordinary ones in cleansing and sprinkling, even before their positive enactment as such by the law. The hyssop indeed we find thus prescribed, Exod. xii. 22, in sprinkling the blood on the doorposts at the Passover. As to the manner of using, the stalk or bunch of hyssop

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

the book itself, and all the people,  
 x Exod. xxiv. <sup>20</sup> saying, x This is the blood of the  
 S. Matt. xxvi. 28. testament which God enjoined unto  
 you. <sup>21</sup> Moreover y he in like man-

y Exod. xxix.  
 12, 30. Lev.  
 viii. 15, 19. &  
 xvi. 14, 15, 16, 18, 19.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

both the book, and all the  
 people, <sup>20</sup> saying, This is  
 the blood of the testament  
 which God hath enjoined  
 unto you. <sup>21</sup> Moreover he

was wrapt round with scarlet wool to make it absorb the blood, being tied with the same wool to a staff of cedar-wood to keep it stiff. On *hyssop* itself, there are various opinions. The most approved makes it to be a plant growing on walls, '*hyssopus officinalis*,' with small lancet-formed woolly leaves, about an-inch long, a knotty stalk from 1 to 1½ foot high, with blue [sometimes white] flowers), he sprinkled both the book itself (nothing is said of this in Exod. xxiv. The book is of course that out of which he had just read the ordinances of God. If, as Stier supposes, Moses took the book [Exod. xxiv. 7] from off the altar where it was lying when he sprinkled the altar with blood, then the book was sprinkled likewise: but nothing in the text of Exodus implies this), and all the people (of course the words *all the people* are not to be taken to mean that he sprinkled every individual; but merely the whole mass, as they stood), saying, **This is the blood of the testament** (in Exod. xxiv. 8, "*Behold the blood . . .*" It has been suggested, that the change has been made by the Writer after the tenor of the New Test. inauguration of the testament by our Lord, "This cup is the New Testament in my blood," Luke xxii. 20) **which God** (in Exod. xxiv. 8, "*the Lord*;" Jehovah: changed apparently to preserve more completely the Old Test. character of the saying) **commanded in regard to you** (it is much disputed, how the logic of this passage can cohere: seeing that how properly soever the latter *diatheké* may be spoken of and argued on as being a testament, the former one could have no such character, and consequently cannot be thus argued on. And the question is very variously answered according to the standing point of different Commentators. The matter seems to stand thus. The word *diatheké* has the double sense of a covenant and a testament. Both these senses may be applied to both *covenants*: to the latter more properly belongs the testamentary sense, but to the former also in as far as it was typical of and foreshadowed the other. In the latter, all is clear. Christ, the heir

of all things, has bequeathed to us His people an everlasting inheritance; has died, sealing the testament with His blood. In the former all this is formally, though inadequately represented. The *inheritance*, faintly shadowed forth by temporal possessions, had yet a recognized blessed meaning far beyond those possessions: the testator was imperfectly, but still was formally represented by the animals slain in sacrifice: *there* was a death, *there* was a sprinkling of and sealing by blood: and surely it requires no more stretch of concession to acknowledgè the victim in sacrifice to represent the Lamb of God in his sonship and his heritorship, than it does in his innocence and propitiatory power. The one idea is just as poorly and inadequately set forth by it as the other. But in both cases there is an inheritance, and in both it is the same. In both it is bequeathed: in the latter actually by One who has come in person and died: in the former, only typically, by the same One ceremonially present. So that, if our *whence* in ver. 18 were to be filled up, it would be, "Whence, i. e. since the former covenant also had its testamentary side, and thus was analogous to as well as typical of the latter." The charge brought against the Writer on account of his transition of meaning in *diatheké*, is equally without foundation. He is thinking in Greek. In Greek, the word has these two meanings: not divided off from one another by any such line of demarcation as when expressed by two separate words, but both lying under one and the same word. What more common, or more ordinarily accepted, than to educe out of some one word its various shades of meaning, and argue on each separately as regards the matter in hand? Take the very word "Testament" as an example. In our common parlance it now means a *book*; the *Old Testament*, the book of the former covenant, the *New Testament*, the book of the latter. But we do not therefore sink the other and deeper meaning; nay, we rather insist on it, that it may not become lost in that other and more familiar one. I cannot see how the Writer's method of

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.* <sup>22</sup> *And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.* <sup>23</sup> *It was therefore necessary that the patterns*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

ner sprinkled with the blood the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. <sup>22</sup> And one may almost say, that all things are according to the law purged with blood; and that <sup>z</sup> apart from shedding of blood remission cometh not. <sup>23</sup> It was there-

procedure here differs essentially from this).

21.] And moreover he in like manner sprinkled with the blood the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry (this cannot be spoken of the same occasion as that referred to in the previous verses: for at that time the tabernacle did not exist. Nor again can it be said of any practice of sprinkling with blood which existed throughout the legal ordinances: for the tense in the original shews the reference to be to some one act, and the subject of the verb is, as before, Moses. This being so, we must look beyond the ordinances of the law itself for the fact here detailed. For all that we have in the law respecting the dedication of the tabernacle and its vessels is in Exod. xl. 9, 10, where Moses is commanded to take the anointing oil, and to anoint the tabernacle and all that is therein, and to hallow it, and all the vessels thereof. So that our Writer is probably referring to some traditional account, which added to this anointing with oil, the sprinkling with blood. And this is not merely a hypothesis. For Josephus gives an account agreeing with ours almost verbatim. In Levit. viii. 30, from which the account of anointing Aaron and his sons is taken, distinct mention is made of sprinkling on them, and on their garments, the blood which was on the altar. It was a natural addition, to extend that sprinkling to the tabernacle and its vessels: especially as [Levit. ver. 15] the altar was already to be touched with the blood. 22.] And almost (one may say, that) in [with] blood all things are purified (there is a combination throughout of the ideas of the inheritance by testament, whereof the death is a condition, and the purification by covenant, whereof the death is the efficient cause. The combination is not a rhetorical figure in the mind of the Writer, but a deep truth in the verity of God. The same Death which purifies us from guilt, makes us partakers of the kingdom of glory; the same Blood which cleanses us from sin, seals the testament of our inheritance.

The fact that *almost* in all cases the law purified by blood, provides for such exceptions as Exod. xix. 10; Lev. xv. 5 ff.; xvi. 26, 28; xxii. 6; Numb. xxxi. 22—24) according to the law (i. e. receive legal purification); and that apart from shedding (literally, pouring out) of blood (there has been a question, whether this pouring out imports the shedding of blood in the slaughter of the victims, or the pouring out of the blood at the foot of the altar, so often enjoined in the ordinances of legal sacrifice. "It seems most probable that the Writer here has the *shedding of blood* in mind. It would not by any means follow, that he treats this blood-*shedding* as a propitiation. He does not directly call it the *medium* of forgiveness, he says only, that apart from it there was no remission, that it is the indispensable means to obtain the expiatory life's blood. . . . One thing which determines the reference to be to the *shedding of blood*, is the expression, '*which is being shed for you*,' in the institution of the Lord's Supper in Luke xxii. 20,—at all events the close parallel in word and in thought to this. It is hardly probable that the Writer would mean a *pouring out of blood*, of which that so called on Christ's part is not the antitype: not to say that since ver. 13, *blood and death* have been ideas most closely connected," Delitzsch) there cometh not (taketh not place) remission (*viz. of sins*). As to the fact, Lev. xvii. 11 sufficiently proves it: and the Rabbis deduced from that passage an axiom almost verbatim the same as our text: "There is no expiation except through blood." The case of the poor man, who cannot afford the animal victim, Lev. v. 11—13, seems to present an exception, and to justify the application of the "*one may almost say*" to this clause). 23.] There [was] (more probably than '*is*' seeing that he was before speaking, not of the renewed cleansing year by year, but of the solemn inauguration: and much more, now that he is coming to speak of the heavenly



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

a ch. viii. 5.

fore necessary that the <sup>a</sup> figures of the things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. <sup>24</sup> For <sup>b</sup> Christ entered not into holy places made

of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. <sup>24</sup> For Christ is not entered into the holy places

b ch. vi. 20.

sanctuary, must he be asserting a necessity not of continually renewed cleansing, but of a past one, once for all necessity therefore (this first inference follows from the facts just mentioned: and is introduced only to lead the way to the second, "*but the heavenly things themselves, &c.*," which itself is a conclusion from the analogy between type and antitype, and is the converse of the proposition of verses 13, 14) that the delineations (or figures; not, "*patterns*:" at least not in the present acceptance of that word. The heavenly things themselves would be the patterns, or antitypes. See on ch. viii. 5) of the things in the heavens (i. e. of the heavenly tabernacle with its contents: see below) should be purified (for the "*dedication*" was in fact not only an inauguration, but a purification likewise: and the proposition of ver. 22,—"*wherever there is remission, there is blood-shedding*,"—will bear converting,—wherever there is a sprinkling with blood, there is remission, and consequently, purification) with these (i. e. not the various purifications mentioned up to this time, the ashes of the red heifer included; for these last were never used to purify the tabernacle or its vessels: nor again, "*blood and the like*," e. g. the oil which was used with it; for this has not been mentioned: nor, with such things, viz. Levitical ordinances, which is far too vague. It is the blood, and that only, which is meant: the plural being used most probably to indicate the animals slain, the "*goats and calves*"); but the heavenly things themselves (i. e. heaven and the things therein: see the next verse, of which Bleek well remarks, that the junction to this by "*for*" can only then be valid when those words refer to the same as our "*heavenly things themselves*." But it has appeared difficult to Commentators to understand, how heaven itself should need this cleansing. Consequently various expedients have been adopted: and various meanings given, which I have discussed in my Greek Test., and have found all equally futile. We must rest in the plain and literal sense:

that *the heaven itself needed, and obtained, purification* by the atoning blood of Christ. And if we enquire how this could be, we may find an answer in reflecting on the consequence of man's sin on the mind and aspect of God towards him. That unclouded benignity wherewith the Creator contemplated his creation, Gen. i. 31, had become overcast by the divine anger on account of sin, but was again restored by Him in whom the Father *was well pleased*, the darkness being by His blood turned into light, the frown into an eternal smile. So Delitzsch beautifully: "If I see aright, the meaning of the Writer is, in its ground-thought, this: the supernal holiest place, i. e. as ver. 24 shews, *heaven itself*, the uncreated eternal heaven of God, although in itself untroubled light, yet needed a *purification* in so far as the light of Love towards man was, so to speak, outflared and obscured by the fire of wrath against sinful man; and the heavenly tabernacle, i. e. the place of God's revealing of His majesty and grace for angels and men, needed a *purification*, in so far as men had rendered this place, which was destined for them from the beginning, unapproachable by reason of their sin, and so it must be changed into an approachable place of manifestation of a God gracious to men") with sacrifices (categoric plural of an abstract proposition: not therefore implying that the sacrifice was repeated: applicable in its reality, only to the one Sacrifice of the body of Christ once for all, and most emphatically designating that *as a sacrifice*) better than (see on ch. i. 4) these.

24.] He now reasserts, under the fuller light which has since been cast upon it, that which was enounced in verses 11, 12, and by it shews at what the term *heavenly places* above pointed. In fact, as Delitzsch observes, the proposition of vv. 11, 12, has been in course of elucidation ever since: in vv. 13, 14, he explained "*through his own blood*," in vv. 15—23 the "*high priest of the good things to come*," and now the "*entered once for all into the holy place*." For (resumption of *the heavenly things* above) not into



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: <sup>25</sup> nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; <sup>26</sup> for then must he often have suffered since the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

with hands, counterfeits of <sup>c</sup>the c ch. viii. 2.  
true; but into heaven itself, now  
<sup>d</sup>to be made manifest before the d Rom. viii. 34. ch. vii. 25. 1 John ii. 1.  
face of God for us: <sup>25</sup> nor yet that  
he may offer himself often, as <sup>e</sup>the e ver. 7.  
high priest entereth into the holy  
place every year with blood of  
others; <sup>26</sup> for then it were necessary

holy places made with hands (such as those into which the Jewish high priests entered: see above, ver. 11: and the two expressions Acts vii. 48; xvii. 24) did Christ enter, counterfeits of the true [holy places] (literally, **antitypes**, correspondent to the *type*; either, as in this case, *copies from a pattern*, viz. the *type* shewn in the mount, however understood, ch. viii. 5, also Rom. v. 14, or the *reality corresponding to a previously shewn figure*, as baptism in 1 Pet. iii. 21, where baptism is the *antitype* to the flood of Noah: which latter is our more usual English sense of antitype. The *true*, genuine *holy places* are those in heaven, where God's presence is manifested. See below); but into the heaven itself (none of the heavens, all of which the Lord *has gone through*, ch. iv. 14,—but the very holiest place, where God peculiarly reveals Himself, and which is uncreated. Delitzsch quotes from Sebastian Schmidt, "The heaven into which Christ hath entered is not any form of the created heaven, but the heaven in which God is irrespective of any created heaven,—the very divine glory itself." Hence what follows), now (in the present dispensation: almost equivalent to *henceforth*. It is an anticipation of the next verse) to be manifested (as to the peculiar propriety of the term to be made manifest. It is one found mostly in St. Luke (Acts). It is there principally in the sense of *making manifest*, giving information: in Matt. xxviii. 53, it is used of the bodies of the saints appearing to many: and in John xiv. 21, 22, of Jesus manifesting himself to his people. But the key-text to the understanding of it here is Exod. xxxiii. 13. Moses desired to advance beyond the mere *vision* of God, and prayed "*manifest thyself to me*" [so in the Greek of the Septuagint, the same verb being used as here]. This, which might not be granted to Moses [nor to any man, compare Lev. xvi. 13]—this

open sight of God, is that which takes place between the Father and the Son. "None knoweth the Son but the Father." There is no veil hiding the Father's face from the Son: so completely does this *manifestation* take place, that he is the perfect image of the Father: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father:" "No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him") to (before) the face of God (see Rev. xxii. 4, where it is said that the servants of God shall see *His face*) for us (this is the intent of His entrance into the heavenly sanctuary, to appear and to plead for us: see ch. vii. 25. "He brings before the face of God no offering which has exhausted itself and, as only sufficing for a time, needs renewal; but He himself is in person our offering, and by virtue of the eternal Spirit, i. e. of the imperishable life of His person, now for ever freed from death, our eternally present offering before God." Delitzsch). 25—28.] In ver. 24, His having entered into a mere typical sanctuary was denied: now it is denied, that His sacrifice needs, as those others did, to be repeated continually. Nor yet (did He enter into heaven) that He may (i. e. with this intent, to) oftentimes offer Himself (before God in the holiest place: continue, as those High Priests, year by year coming in before the face of God in His sanctuary. This *offering himself* is not to be understood of Christ's death, nor confounded, as many have done, with *his suffering*, below: see there), just as the (Jewish) High Priest entereth into the holy (holiest) place year by year with (literally, in: not instrumental, but elemental: he enters, furnished with, as it were clad with, that which follows. We use our "*in*" of even the lesser articles of personal wear in a similar sense: "a man in spectacles") blood of others (i. e. "not his own," which is an important point of contrast with Christ: see this

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

that he should oftentimes suffer since the foundation of the world : but now <sup>f</sup>once <sup>g</sup>at the end of the world hath he been manifested for the putting away of sin by His sacrifice.

f ver. 12.  
ch. vii. 27. &  
x. 10. 1 Pet.  
iii. 18.  
g 1 Cor. x. 11.  
Gal. iv. 4.  
Eph. i. 10.

brought in in the argumentation below) : since (in that case) it were necessary that He should oftentimes suffer (not, 'have suffered,' as A. V.; by it were necessary we are already carried back to a time antecedent to the supposed repeated acts indicated by *suffering*, and therefore do not need another carrying back in time. Notice, as against the Commentators mentioned above under the words "offer Himself," and others, that this *suffering* is here not equivalent to that *offering*, but is emphatically placed as a new necessity, involved in that; and the *often* being common to both: the *often offering* necessitated the *often suffering*. If Christ's view in entering heaven was, to offer, present, himself often to God, then, as a condition of that frequent presentation, there would be an antecedent necessity for Him to *suffer* often : because that self-presentation is in fact the bringing in before God of the Blood of that his suffering : and if the one was to be renewed, so must the other be likewise. So that the meaning is not, that Christ must again and again have descended on earth and died. To such a descent there is no allusion, as there is none to a renewed entrance into the *holy places* in heaven. That entrance Christ has effected once for all : this lies, as a 'fait accompli,' at the ground of the hypothesis. But the rejected hypothesis is, that *once being* in the celestial *holy place*, Christ intended to renew often his oblation of Himself. And in that case, says our Writer, it would be necessary that He should often suffer, often die : because each such oblation necessitated as its condition a corresponding *suffering*. When, as in the case of the Jewish high priests, the *blood* was *that of others*, such repetition was possible [see Lev. xvi. 14, 15] : but not so, when the blood was *His own*) since the foundation of the world (why this addition ? Not, as often understood, so as to bring under the merits of the Suffering, all the sins of mankind past as well as future,—which thought arising from the erroneous view of a frequently-repeated entrance into heaven being supposed, has nothing whatever to do with

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*foundation of the world : but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the*

the argument ; but, inasmuch as the theatre of Christ's sufferings is of necessity this present world, pointing out that those supposed repeated sufferings must necessarily in that case take place within the temporal limits indicated by the phrase "*from the foundation of the world :*" that such sufferings would be spread over the space of time from the *foundation of the world* till He entered into the presence of God, each oblation of Himself there being the sequel of, and conditioned by, one such *suffering* since the world has been. I may mention, that no parenthesis is here admissible. The words of this clause are strictly and indispensably a link in the argument) : **now, however** (**now**, not *temporal*, but meaning, "as the state of the case is"), **once** (for all without need of renewal) **at** (as close upon, put in immediate contiguity with) **the end of the ages of time** (i. e. when the whole period above indicated by *from the foundation of the world* is gathered up and brought to an end. Between the first and second coming of Christ, the New Test. Scriptures know of no intermediate interposition of the divine dealings with men : in Him we are *perfect*, and at His appearing, our *ages* had their *accomplishment*. All these centuries which have been since, are merely the lengthening out of the time in the mercy of God. The first Christians universally spoke of the second coming of the Lord as close at hand, as indeed it ever was and is : the *fallings* are *sacrificed*, and all is ready : but the long-suffering of God waits while the guests are being gathered in : or, in the other view of His coming, while the ark is a preparing) **hath He been manifested** (viz. at His first coming in our flesh : the *manifestation in the flesh*, spoken of 1 Tim. iii. 16 ; 1 Pet. i. 20. On the other meaning given, see below) **for the putting away of sin** (see ch. vii. 18 note : putting away, i. e. abrogation, "both of the guilt and power of sin") **by means of His sacrifice** (i. e. in the *sense*, 'the sacrifice of Himself,' but not here so expressed in the original. By very many expositors, the construction of this verse is dif-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

sacrifice of himself. <sup>27</sup> And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: <sup>28</sup> 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.

<sup>27</sup> <sup>h</sup> And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, <sup>i</sup> but after that, judgment: <sup>28</sup> so also the <sup>k</sup> Christ, once having been <sup>l</sup> offered to bear the sins <sup>m</sup> of many, shall appear a second time without sin, to them that <sup>n</sup> wait for Him, unto salvation. 
<sup>h</sup> Gen. iii. 19.  
<sup>i</sup> Eccles. iii. 20.  
<sup>j</sup> 2 Cor. v. 10.  
<sup>k</sup> Rev. xi. 12, 13.  
<sup>l</sup> k Rom. vi. 10.  
<sup>m</sup> 1 Pet. iii. 18.  
<sup>n</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 24.  
<sup>o</sup> 1 John iii. 6.  
<sup>p</sup> Matt. xxvi. 28.  
<sup>q</sup> Rom. v. 15.  
<sup>r</sup> Tit. ii. 13.  
<sup>s</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 12.

ferently taken. Some understand "hath been manifested" of His appearance before God. But this cannot be for a moment maintained. Analogy is wholly against it, and so is the *second appearance*, mentioned below: not to mention that had it been so, we should certainly have had *before God*, or some such qualification, added). **27, 28.]** It is

shewn by a comparison with our human lot in general, of which Christ, Himself man, is partaker, that this often suffering (dying) and often offering Himself, has no place: that as in our case, we die once only, and after that comes the judgment, for us *who are to be judged*, so for Him there was one death from sin, and after that no repetition of it, but the judgment, for Him *who is to judge*. But in this latter member of the comparison, the bright and saving side only is put forward (see below): it is not said he shall appear to judge the world, but He shall appear *without sin* (and therefore with no more purpose to expiate sin) *to them that wait for Him, unto salvation*: these last words carrying with them a hortatory force, that the readers might thus wait for Him.

**27.]** And inasmuch as (seeing that Christ is not only a *fit object of comparison* with man, but *is man*) it is appointed to men (all men) once (and no more) to die, and after that, judgment (not necessarily here to be taken on its unfavourable side: the word is perfectly general: nor is there, as Böhme imagined, any opposition between men here and those that wait for Him below. Such opposition indeed would mar the whole context, which has a totally different object, and deals with the general and inevitable fate of all men indiscriminately. Nor again must the question, whether judgment is spoken of as immediately to follow death, or after an interval, be imported into the consideration of the text. The indefinite *after that* does not admit of any such question being raised. Next to death, with no more like

events between, comes judgment: this is the fact contemplated—the appointed destiny of man, according to which that of the man Christ Jesus also, as far as it is applicable to Him, is appointed): **so also the Christ** (not Christ, without the article, but **the Christ**, that man who was God's Christ—the *Christ*, it being plain and palpable to all that *the Christ* belongs to the category, *men*. In ver. 24, the case was different), **once** (for all) **having been offered** (not the same as 'having offered himself.' The form and the meaning are both passive; and the reason of this is, I believe, to be found in the fact that it is in this verse not so much the agency, as the destiny of Christ, that is spoken of; that which, though the expression itself is avoided with regard to Him, *is appointed* for Him as for us. It is hardly necessary to mention, that the very terms of the context here necessitate the understanding this *offering* of the death of Christ, —not as in ver. 25, where the context, as there insisted, confines it to His offering of Himself to God in the heavenly sanctuary) to bear the sins of many (a plain allusion to Isa. liii. 12: and here, as there, importing the "bearing," "carrying on Himself;" see also Lev. xxiv. 15, "Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin;" Numb. v. 31, "The woman shall bear her iniquity;" xiv. 34, "Each day for a year shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years." And so in ver. 33, "shall bear your whoredoms." On many, and its supposed contrast to *all*, see above, ch. ii. 10, and Schlichting's true distinction, "*Many* is opposed here, not to *all*, but to *few*." Many is, as Delitzsch says, the qualitative designation of *all*: *all men* are many in number. There is reference in it to "*once for all*:" He was offered, One, for all: and once for all, shall appear (the usual verb of the appearances of Christ after his resurrection) a second time without (separate from) sin (in order to understand this, we must remember what it is that the Writer is

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

a Col. ii. 17.  
ch. viii. 5. &  
ix. 23.  
b ch. ix. 11.

X. <sup>1</sup>For the law having <sup>a</sup> a shadow <sup>b</sup> of the good things to come, not the very image of the things, <sup>c</sup> can never year by year with the same sacrifices, which they

X. <sup>1</sup>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

c ch. ix. 9.

proving: viz. that Christ's death, the repetition of which would be the condition of a repeated offering of Himself in heaven to God, admits of no such repetition. It was a death in which He bore the sins of many—but He shall appear the second time with no sin upon Him, and consequently the whole work of atonement done and accomplished by that first offering. So that there is no need of any far-fetched explanation, either of *sin*, or of *without sin*. At His first appearance in the world He came *with sin*, not in him, but on him: He was *made to be sin*: but this sin has been once for all taken away by his bearing it as our Sacrifice: and at his second appearance He shall appear *without*, having done with, separate from, *sin*, to them that wait for Him,—unto (to bring in: for the purpose of) *salvation* (these last words belong to shall appear, not, to them that wait for Him. The object of Christ's second appearance shall be, to bring in *salvation*; this is the bright and Christian side of His appearing, the side which we, who ought to be *waiting for Him*, should ever look upon).

CHAP. X. 1—18.] SOLEMN CONCLUSION OF THE ARGUMENT: 1) *Christ's voluntary self-offering, as contrasted with the yearly offerings of victims under the law, is the carrying out of God's real will* (vv. 1—10): 2) *Christ's priestly service, in contrast to the daily repeated service of the priests of the law, is for ever perfected by one high-priestly act, which has issued in His Kingly exaltation and waiting till His foes be subdued under Him* (vv. 11—14): 3) *Christ's finished work is the inauguration of that new covenant before referred to, in which, the law being written on the heart, and sin put away and forgotten, there is no more need for sin-offering* (vv. 15—18). And so, as Delitzsch observes, in this passage the leading thoughts of the whole argument are brought together in one grand finale, just as in the finale of a piece of music all the hitherto scattered elements are united in an effective whole. 1—10.] See above.

1.] For (connects with the whole pas-

sage, ch. ix. 24—28: hitherto has been shewn the impossibility of Christ's offering being repeated as were those of the law: now is to be shewn its absolute perfection as compared with those of the law) **the law having** (as it has; the participle has a reasoning force, which passes on upon what follows) **a shadow** (or, 'the shadow,' which in sense would be much the same. The putting forward of the word to the beginning of the sentence would render it anarthrous. I prefer, however, 'a shadow,' because of the meaning of the word, presently to be treated of: see below) **of the good things to come** (viz. the same good things of which, in ch. ix. 11, Christ is said to be the High Priest,—which belong to the "age to come" of ch. vi. 5, whose powers are working in the present dispensation,—and to the *completion* of the "world to come" of ch. ii. 5: the good things which are still future to us as they were to those under the law, but are now made sure to us in and by Christ), **not the very image of the things** (every representation of *good things to come* must be an *image*, whether it be in words, or in types, or in any other method of representation. The full description and entire revelation of the things thus designated will be "*the very image*" of the things: which we possess in the gospel covenant: the very setting forth and form of the heavenly realities themselves. But the law had no such "*image*" constructed out of the heavenly realities themselves: it had merely a *shadow*, merely a rough sketch or outline, **year by year with the same sacrifices** (in the A. V. the words year by year are placed in the next clause. But there is no need to disturb the plain order of the sentence, in which **year by year** belongs to the verb, "*can never*." "This," says Delitzsch, "is more accordant with the sense of the Writer: for he does not say, that the law by means of the offerings which were always the same year by year never was able to perfect, &c.,—but that the law, year by year, by the repetition of the same offerings, testified its inability to perfect, &c., viz. on the day of atonement, on which the same expiatory

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

*year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. <sup>2</sup> For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because at the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. <sup>3</sup> But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. <sup>4</sup> For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. <sup>5</sup> Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith,*

offer continually, make <sup>d</sup> perfect them <sup>d ver. 14.</sup> that draw near. <sup>2</sup> For then would they not have ceased to be offered, because that the worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins? <sup>3e</sup> But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins year by year. <sup>4</sup> For <sup>f</sup> it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. <sup>5</sup> Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith,

<sup>6</sup> Lev. xvi. 21.  
ch. ix. 7.

<sup>f</sup> Mic. vi. 6, 7.  
ch. ix. 13,  
ver. 11.

offerings were always repeated, being necessary, notwithstanding the many offerings brought throughout the year, and after which the same round of offerings again began anew." It will be evident that the words **with the same sacrifices** must refer, not to the daily offerings, but to those of propitiation on the great day of atonement) **which they** (the ministering priests) **offer continually** (the offering of these sacrifices is looked upon as continuous, being unbroken from year to year. When I say, "the celebration of the day of atonement continued unbroken till the destruction of Jerusalem," I use the same method of expression) **never** (not even at any time) **is able to perfect** (see on ch. ii. 10, where I have entered into the meanings of this verb, to perfect, in our Epistle) **those who draw near** (to God, by means of them).

2.] For (if it were so, if the law were able to perfect the worshippers) **would they** (*the same sacrifices*) **not have ceased being offered, on account of the worshippers** (the servers in the service of the tabernacle, used here in a wide sense, including priests and people) **having no longer any conscience of sins** (guilt of sin on the conscience, consciousness of the guilt of sin), **if once** (for all) **purified?**

3.] Which cessation is far from being the case, as is the having no more conscience of sin:—But (on the contrary, opposes the whole question of ver. 2, in both its clauses) **in them** (the sacrifices: not in the fact of their being offered, but in the course of their being offered on the day of atonement, see below) **there is a recollection** ("recalling to mind;" better than 'public mention,' as some, thinking on the solemn confession of the sins of Israel made by the High Priest, Lev. xvi.

20 f. But the other is simpler, and suits the context better. Where sins are continually called to mind, there clearly the conscience is not clear from them) **of sins year by year.** 4.] And that on account of inherent defect in the sacrifices themselves. For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin (the Writer by no means denies the typical virtue of the Old Test. sacrifices, but asserts that which the schoolmen explained by saying that they wrought remission of sin not "by their proper virtue," but "by an accident," viz. by means of something not inherent in them, viz. the grace of the true Propitiation which was to come, and of faith directed to it. And thus only is it said, Lev. xvii. 11, that the blood upon the altar makes an atonement for the soul: it was shed, as Ebrard well observes, not as the instrument of complete vicarious propitiation, but as an exhibition of the postulate of vicarious propitiation).

5 - 10.] *Christ's voluntary self-offering shewn to be the perfect fulfilment of the will of God.* Wherefore (seeing that the animal sacrifices of the Old Test. had no power to take away sin, and that for that end a nobler sacrifice was wanting) **coming into the world, he saith** (first, on the citation from Ps. xl. That Psalm, which is inscribed "A Psalm of David," seems to be a general retrospect, in some time of trouble, of God's former mercies to him, and of his own course of loving obedience as distinguished from mere expression of outward thankfulness by sacrifice and offering. Thus understood, there will be no difficulty in the direct application of its words to Him, of whose sufferings and of whose obedience all human experiences in suffering and



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

Ps. xl. 6,  
Ec. & l. 5, &c.  
Isa. i. 11.  
Jer. vi. 20.  
Amos v. 21,  
22.

8 Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body didst thou prepare me: 6 in whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hadst no pleasure. 7 Then said I, Lo, I am come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God. 8 Above when he saith, Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst 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 wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure*

obeying are but a faint resemblance. I have entered on this subject in speaking of the Messianic citation in ch. ii., and need not lay down again the principles there contended for, further than to say, that the more any son of man approaches, in position, or office, or individual spiritual experience, the incarnate Son of God, the more directly may his holy breathings in the power of Christ's Spirit be taken as the utterances of Christ Himself. And of all men, the prophet-king of Israel thus resembled and out-shadowed Him the most. The Psalm itself seems to belong to the time of David's persecution by Saul; and the sentiment of this portion of it is, as Delitzsch observes, an echo of Samuel's saying to Saul in 1 Sam. xv. 22,—“Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord?” Next, what is **when he cometh into the world?** It expresses, I believe, the whole time during which the Lord, being ripened in human resolution, was in intent devoting himself to the doing of his Father's will: the time of which that youthful question, “Wist ye not that I must be *among the things of my Father?*” was one of the opening announcements. See also Isa. vii. 16), **Sacrifice** (of slain animals) and **offering** (of any kind) thou wouldst not (similar declarations are found frequently in the Old Test., and mostly in the prophets: see Ps. l. 7—15; li. 16 f.; Isa. i. 11; Jer. vi. 20; vii. 21—23; Hos. vi. 6; Amos v. 21 f.; Micah vi. 6—8), but a **body didst thou prepare for me** (in the Hebrew, “*mine ears hast thou opened,*” i. e. to hear and obey Thee. The idea of there being any allusion to the custom of boring through the ear of a slave who voluntarily remained subject to his master, Exod. xxi. 6: Deut. xv. 17, seems to be a

mistake. The difficulty is, how such a clause can be rendered by a **body hast thou prepared for me**, as it is in the Septuagint. The various solutions of this difficulty, and their unsatisfactory nature, may be seen in my Greek Test. I would leave the difficulty an unsolved one, not being satisfied by either of the above views, and having no other to propound. As Christian believers, our course is plain. How the word **body** came into the Septuagint version, we cannot say: but being there, it is now sanctioned for us by the citation here: not as *the*, or even *a* proper rendering of the Hebrew, but as a prophetic utterance, equivalent to and representing that other): **whole burnt-offerings** (offerings of whole animals to be burnt on the altar) and (**sacrifices**) for sin thou didst not approve. Then I said (viz. when Thou hadst prepared a body for me), Behold, I am come, in the volume of the book it is written concerning me, to do, O God, thy will (the connexion and construction are somewhat differently given from those in the Septuagint, Hebrew, and A.V. See the passage in the A. V. volume, as its name imports, is a roll). 8.] The Writer now proceeds to expound the prophecy; and in so doing, cites it again, but in a freer form, and one accommodated to the explanation which he gives. Saying (as he does) **above**, that (mere particle of recitation, not expressed in an English version) **sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices concerning sin thou wouldst not, nor yet didst approve** (observe that the two distinct clauses of the previous citation are now combined, for the sake of throwing into contrast the rejection of legal sacrifices and the acceptable self-sacrifice of the Son of God);



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

therein; *which are offered by the law*; <sup>9</sup> then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. <sup>10</sup> By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. <sup>11</sup> And every priest standeth daily mi-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

therein; such as are offered by the law; <sup>9</sup> then saith he, Lo, I am come to do thy will †. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. <sup>10</sup> <sup>h</sup> In pursuance of which will we have been sanctified, <sup>i</sup> through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once-for-all. <sup>11</sup> And every † high priest standeth <sup>k</sup> day by day

† O God is omitted by all our oldest MSS.  
<sup>h</sup> John xvii. 19. ch. xvii. 12.  
<sup>i</sup> ch. ix. 12.

authorities.

<sup>k</sup> Numb. xxviii. 3. ch. vii. 27.

of such sort as (the word used does not, like the simple relative, identify, but classifies, the antecedent) are (habitually) offered according to (in pursuance of) the law; then (more logical than chronological; but used probably in allusion to that then above, in the passage itself) hath he said, Behold, I am come to do thy will. He (Christ again) taketh away the first (the sacrifices), that he may set up (establish) the second (the will of God).

10.] In (the course of, the fulfilment of: not properly "by:" the instrumentality belongs more to the offering, mentioned below) which will (viz. the will and purpose of God towards us by Christ: the will which He came to fulfil. There is no real difference, between the will of God to redeem us by the sufferings and death of Christ, and the will of God as fulfilled by Christ's obedience: the one includes the other: the latter was the condition of the former) we have been sanctified (see on the word to sanctify, and on the use of the present and past passive participles of it, note on ch. ii. 11. Here the perfect is used, inasmuch as it is the finished work of Christ in its potentiality, not the process of it on us, which is spoken of: see ver. 14: that final completion is here indicated by the perfect). through the offering of the body (some read, "of the blood." But this would, besides losing the reference to the words, "a body hast thou prepared me," introduce an inaccuracy into the typology. It is by the Blood of Christ that we are reconciled to God, but by the offering of His Body that we are made holy. The one concerns our acceptance as acquitted from sin; the other our perfection in holiness by union with Him and participation in His Spirit. Thus we distinguish the two in the Communion Service: "that our sinful bodies may be

made clean by His Body, and our souls washed through His most precious Blood") of Jesus Christ once for all (this is to be taken with the words, "the offering, &c.," not with "we have been sanctified," as is done by many. See the discussion in my Greek Test.).

11—14.] See summary at ver. 1. And (introduces a new particular of contrast: 'and besides') every high priest (much has of late been said against the reading high priest, as bringing in an inaccuracy which our Writer could not be guilty of, seeing that the high priests did not officiate in the daily sacrifice. But all such arguments are worthless against our most ancient MSS., and tend indeed the other way, viz. to shew how natural it was to alter high priest to priest, on account of this very difficulty. With regard to the alleged inaccuracy, I really think that if closely viewed, it will prove rather to be a fine and deep touch of truth. The high priesthood of our Lord is to be compared with that of the Jewish legal high priests. On the one side is Jesus, alone in the glory of his office and virtue of his sacrifice; on the other is the Jewish high priesthood, not one man but many, by reason of death; represented in all its acts, personal or delegated, by its holder for the time, by "every high priest," offering not one, but many sacrifices. This High Priest is the representative of the whole priesthood. Whether he ministered in the daily service of the temple himself or not, it is he who embodies the acts and sufferings of Israel in his own person. How Delitzsch can say that such an idea is foreign alike to the Bible and the Jewish mind, I am at a loss to understand, considering the liberation at the death of the High Priest, not to insist on the ceremonies themselves at the day of atonement, when he was clearly the centre and representative of the priest-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, the<sup>1</sup> which can never take away sins: <sup>12</sup> <sup>m</sup> but He, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever sat down on the right hand of God; <sup>13</sup> from henceforth expecting <sup>n</sup> till his enemies be made his footstool. <sup>14</sup> For by one offering <sup>o</sup> he hath perfected for ever them that are being sanctified. <sup>15</sup> And the

1 ver. 4.

m Col. iii. 1.  
ch. i. 3.n Ps. cx. 1.  
Acts ii. 35.  
1 Cor. xv. 25.  
ch. i. 13.

o ver. 1.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: <sup>12</sup> but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; <sup>13</sup> from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. <sup>14</sup> For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. <sup>15</sup> Whereof

hood, and indeed of all Israel. In treating of the Head of so compact a system as the Jewish priesthood, it is clearly allowable, if any where, to bring in the principle, that he who acts by another acts himself. See ch. vii. 27, where the very same daily service is predicated of the high priest) standeth (no priest nor other person might sit in the inner court of the temple, except the king. There is perhaps more than a fortuitous contrast to "sat down" below: the one posture being proper to worshipping, the other to being worshipped, as Chrysostom remarks) day by day ministering (see note, ch. viii. 2) and (brings out that in the service, which the Writer wishes most to emphasize) often offering the same sacrifices, the which (i. e. of a sort which, such as) can never take away (literally, "strip off all round." Such a word is peculiarly fitting to express the removal of that of which it is said, ch. v. 2, "He is surrounded with infirmity," and which is called, ch. xii. 1, "sin which is easily [naturally] cast about us." The sacrifice might bring sense of partial forgiveness: but it could never denude the offerer of sinfulness—strip off and take away his guilt) sins: <sup>12.</sup> but He ('this [man],<sup>2</sup> or, [priest]: but such rendering should be avoided if possible, as should all renderings which import a new generic idea into the text, as always causing confusion: see for a notable example, 1 Cor. ii. 11 end, in A. V.—where there is nothing corresponding to "man" in the original), having offered one sacrifice for sins for ever (for ever may be joined either with the preceding or with the following words. See the matter discussed in my Greek Test. It will there be seen that I incline to join them with what follows, but would leave it an open question. My ground is that the words seem

better to refer to an enduring state, than to a past act. The objection taken to this arrangement, above, that there will be change in the nature of a session at the end, when all things shall have been put under His feet, may be met by saying that such change, being obviously included in His ultimate state of reception into God's presence in heaven, does not here count as a change, where the question is of renewal of sacrifice, with regard to which that session is eternal) sat down on the right hand of God; henceforth waiting until his enemies be placed as footstool of his feet (there is no real discrepancy between this passage and 1 Cor. xv. 23—26. If this seems to date the subjection of all to Christ before the second advent, and that places it after the same event, we may well say, that the second advent is not here taken into account by the Writer,—whose object is the contrast between the suffering and triumphant Christ,—as it is by St. Paul, who is specially giving an account of the resurrection, which is so inseparably bound up with that advent. The second advent is no break in Christ's waiting till his enemies be subdued to him, but it is the last step but one of that subjection; the last of all being the subjection of Himself, and his mystical Body with him, to Him that did put all things under him. For among the enemies are His own elect, who were enemies: and they are not thoroughly subject to Him, till He with them is subject to the Father, the mediatorial veil being withdrawn, and the One God being all in all). <sup>14.</sup> And He need not renew his sacrifice: For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them who are being sanctified ("the Writer says not 'them that are being perfected,' but 'them that are being sanctified.' Sanctification, i. e. the imputed and implanted

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,*  
<sup>16</sup> *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; <sup>17</sup> and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. <sup>18</sup> Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said, <sup>16</sup> *This* p. Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. ch. viii. 10, 12. is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, putting my laws into their hearts, and on their mind will I write them; <sup>17</sup> and, their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. <sup>18</sup> Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

purification from sins [for both these are alike contained in the idea], is the way whereby the objective perfection already provided in the self-sacrifice of Christ gradually renders itself subjective in men." Delitzsch).

15—18.] See summary at ver. 1. The prophetic word testifies the same, making absolute and final forgiveness of sins a characteristic of the new Covenant. Moreover the Holy Spirit also testifies to us (Christians in general): for after having said (then the citation proceeds much as in ch. viii. 10 ff. with some differences, noticed below. On the common points, see notes there), **This is the covenant which I will make with them** (in viii. 10, "*with the house of Israel.*" Here the prophecy is taken out of its national limits and universalized) after those days, saith the Lord, giving my laws into their hearts (ch. viii. 10, "*their mind*"), and on their mind ("*their heart,*" ch. viii. 10) will I inscribe them (now comes the finish of the sentence after the words "*after that he had said before:*" a whole clause, expressed in ch. viii. 10, 11, being omitted [see below], he further says); and, **their sins and their transgressions will I remember no more** (ver. 17 carries the whole burden of the citation with it. This is the object of the citation, to prove that there needs no more sacrifice for sins. And the previous portion of it is added to shew that this, *the oblivion of sins*, does form an integral part of the prophecy of the introduction of the new and spiritual covenant).

18.] But (or, now: it is the '*but*' of the demonstration, referring to a well-known axiomatic fact as contrasting with the contrary hypothesis) where there is remission of these, there is no longer offering concerning sin.

"Here ends the finale (x. 1—18) of the great tripartite arrangement (vii. 1—25, vii. 26—ix. 12, ix. 13—x. 18) of the middle portion of the Epistle. 'Christ a High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec,' this was its great theme, now brought to a conclusion. That the Priesthood of Christ, as Melchisedecite, is as high above the Levitical as God's heaven is above the earth,—that Christ, with His One High-priestly self-sacrifice, has accomplished that which the Levitical priesthood with its sacrifices was unable to accomplish,—that henceforth, both our present possession of salvation, and our future completion of salvation, are as certain to us as that He is with God, ruling as a Priest and reigning as a King, once more to appear, no more as a bearer of our sins, but in glory as a Judge;—these are the three great fundamental thoughts, now brought to their full development. What it is, to be a high priest after the order of Melchisedec and not of Aaron, is set forth, ch. vii. 1—25. That Christ however as High Priest is Aaron's antitype, ruling in the true holy place by virtue of His self-sacrifice here on earth,—and Mediator of a better covenant, whose essential character the old covenant only shadowed forth and typified, we learn, vii. 26—ix. 12. And that the self-sacrifice of Christ, offered through the eternal Spirit, is of everlasting power, as contrasted with the unavailing cycle of legal offerings, is established in the third part, ix. 13—x. 18: the second half of this portion, x. 1—18, being devoted to a reiterated and conclusive treatment of the main position of the whole,—the High Priesthood of Christ, grounded on His offering of Himself,—its Kingly character, its eternal accomplishment of its end, confirmed by Ps. xl. 1's. cx.; Jer. xxxi." Delitzsch.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>19</sup> Having therefore, brethren, <sup>q</sup> boldness to enter <sup>r</sup> into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup> by <sup>s</sup> a new and living way, which he inaugurated for us, <sup>t</sup> through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; <sup>21</sup> and having <sup>u</sup> a great priest over <sup>x</sup> the house of God; <sup>22</sup> <sup>y</sup> let us draw near

q Rom. v. 2.  
Eph. ii. 18, &  
iii. 12.  
r ch. ix. 8, 12.  
s John x. 9. &  
xiv. 6, ch. ix.  
8.  
t ch. ix. 3.

u ch. iv. 14.  
x 1 Tim. iii. 15.  
y ch. iv. 16.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

<sup>19</sup> Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup> by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; <sup>21</sup> and having an high priest over the house of God; <sup>22</sup> let us draw

CHAP. X. 19—XIII.] THE THIRD GREAT DIVISION OF THE EPISTLE: OUR DUTY IN THE INTERVAL OF WAITING BETWEEN THE BEGINNING AND ACCOMPLISHMENT OF OUR SALVATION. And herein, x. 19—39, exhortation to enter boldly into the holiest place, 19—22: to hold fast our profession, 23: to stir up one another, 24, 25: in consideration of the fearful punishment which awaits the rejectors of Christ, 26—31: and in remembrance of the previous sufferings which they underwent when first converted, 32—34. Finally, exhortation not to cast away confidence, for the time until His coming is short, and during that time, faith is the life of the soul.

There has been no *exhortation*, properly speaking, since ch. vii. 1, i. e. during the great doctrinal argument of the Epistle. Before that, argument and exhortation were rapidly alternated. But so exquisite is the skill of arrangement and development, that the very exhortation with which he closed the former portion of the Epistle, where first he began to prepare the way for his great argument, ch. iv. 14—16, is now resumed, deepened indeed and expanded by the intervening demonstration, but in spirit and substance the same: "*let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith*" here, answering to "*let us approach with boldness to the throne of grace*" there, and "*let us hold fast the confession of our hope*" here, to "*let us hold fast our confession*" there.

19.] **Having** (placed first as carrying the emphasis: "possessing, as we do . . .") **therefore** (as above proved: it collects and infers), **brethren** (see on ch. iii. 1), **confidence** (see on ch. iii. 6) as regards the (our: see below) **entering into the holy place** (or, **by**: see below) **the blood of Jesus** (He having once entered in with His blood as our High Priest, and thereby all atonement and propitiation having been for ever accomplished, it is in that blood that our boldness to enter in is grounded. To understand in, with Bleek and Stier,

as in ch. ix. 25, is in fact to make us, as priests, renew Christ's offering of Himself. "We enter," says Stier, "with the blood of Jesus, even with the same, wherewith He entered before us:" which is very like a contradiction in terms, and is at all events inaccurate theology. We do not take the blood of Christ with us into the presence of God: it is there already once for all, and our confidence of access is therein grounded, that it is there. See note on ch. xii. 24), **which He initiated** (first opened: better than A. V. '*consecrated*,' which seems as if it existed before) **for us**, (as) **a way recent** (*new*, 'of late origin.' "None before Him trod this way; no believer under the Old Test. dared or could, though under a dispensation of preparatory grace, approach God so freely and openly, so fearlessly and joyfully, so closely and intimately, as we now, who come to the Father by the blood of Jesus, His Son." Stier. The rendering given here in the notes is the literal one, and the only one which gives the force of the original. But in an English *version*, it is absolutely necessary to invert the clauses and disturb the meaning) **and living** (as contrasted with the mere dead ceremony of entrance into the earthly holy place. This entrance is a real, living, and working entrance; the animated substance of what is imported, not the dead shadow. Most Commentators make *living* mean "*life-giving*," producing, or leading to life. Others interpret it "*everlasting*:" so Chrysostom), **through** (in its primary, local meaning, 'through,' not in its derived instrumental one) **the veil, that is, his flesh** (on *the veil*, see note, ch. vi. 19. The flesh of Christ is here spoken of as the veil hung before the holiest place; that weak human mortal flesh was the state through which He had to pass before He could enter the holiest in heaven for us, and when He put off that flesh, the actual veil in the temple was rent from top to bottom, Matt. xxvii. 51); and ('having') **a great Priest** (i. e. a great

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

*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.* <sup>23</sup> *Let us hold fast*

with a true heart <sup>z</sup> in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled <sup>a</sup> from an evil conscience, and <sup>b</sup> our body washed with pure water. <sup>23 c</sup> Let

<sup>z</sup> Eph. iii. 12.  
James I. 6.  
1 John iii. 21.  
  
<sup>a</sup> ch. ix. 11.  
<sup>b</sup> Ezek. xxxvi.  
25. 2 Cor.  
vii. 1.  
<sup>c</sup> ch. iv. 14.

High Priest; but here his Priesthood, not his High Priesthood, is more brought into prominence. He is a *great Priest*, because He is a Priest on his throne, a kingly Priest, and priestly King) over the house of God (the house of God here need not be more limited in meaning than in the similar passage ch. iii. 2. It is alleged that the expression here must mean the heaven. But Delitzsch well observes that the one meaning, the narrower, need not exclude the other, the wider. It is hardly probable, to begin with, that our Writer should in two places describe Christ as set over the house of God, in meanings entirely different from each other. Clearly, the heavenly sanctuary is regarded by him as also including the earthly, the church above as the home of the church below: see ch. xii. 22 ff.);

22.] let us approach (*draw near to God*). So that the clauses which follow are best regarded as both belonging to this *approach*, since they also describe requisite preparations for worship: see this further treated below, on ver. 23) with a true heart (*without hypocrisy*, Chrysostom. So Hezekiah pleads, Isa. xxxviii. 3, "I have walked before thee in truth with a perfect (Septuagint, 'true') heart") in full assurance (ch. vi. 11: see note there) of faith (with no doubt as to the certainty of our access to God by the blood of Jesus), having our hearts sprinkled from (meaning, "sprinkled, and by that sprinkling cleansed from") an evil conscience (a conscience polluted with the guilt of sin: for "if a man's practice be bad, his conscience, in so far as it is the consciousness of that practice, is *evil*"), and having our body washed with pure water (both these clauses refer to the legal purifications of the Levitical priests, which took place by means of blood and water. At their first dedication, Aaron and his sons were sprinkled with blood, their bodies and their clothes, Exod. xxxi. 21; Lev. viii. 30. And so are we to be as God's priests, having access to Him, sprinkled with blood, not outwardly with that of the ram of consecration, but inwardly with that of the Lamb of God: the first could only produce *purity of the flesh* [ch. ix. 13],

but the second, pureness of heart and conscience in God's sight. The washing with water also [Exod. xxix. 4] was to be part of the cleansing of Aaron and his sons: nor only so, but as often as they entered the holy place or approached the altar, they were to wash their hands and feet in the brazen laver, Exod. xxx. 20; xl. 30—32: and the High Priest, on the day of atonement, *was to wash his whole body with water*, Lev. xvi. 4. There can be no reasonable doubt that this clause refers directly to Christian baptism. The "*font of the water*" of Eph. v. 26, and the "*font of regeneration*," Tit. iii. 5, are analogous expressions: and the express mention of *body* here, as distinguished from "*heart*" before, stamps this interpretation with certainty. This distinction makes it impossible, with Calvin, and others, to spiritualize away the meaning into "the Spirit and doctrine of Christ,—the spiritual water with which Christ sprinkles his own: even His blood is not here excluded" [Schlichting]; for the word *body* confines the reference to an outward act. And so the majority of Commentators. Still in maintaining the externality of the words, as referring, and referring solely, to Baptism, we must remember, that Baptism itself is not a mere external rite, but at every mention of it carries the thought further, viz. to that spiritual washing of which it is itself symbolical and sacramental. Notice here that the word is *body*, and not "*flesh*," as ch. ix. 13: our whole natural life, and not the mere outside surface: that in which our soul dwells and works, the seat of the emotions and desires: this also must be purified in those who would approach God in Christ. So that I would understand with Delitzsch, that the *sprinkling the heart from an evil conscience* is, so to speak, intra-sacramental, a spiritual application of the purifying Blood, beyond sacramental rites, and the *washing the body with pure water* is purely sacramental, the effect of baptism taken in its whole blessed meaning and fulfilment as regards our natural existence. The end of his note is very beautiful: "As priests we are sprinkled, as priests we are bathed: sprinkled so that



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering; for <sup>d</sup> he is faithful that promised; <sup>24</sup> and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: <sup>25</sup> <sup>e</sup> not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but using exhortation: and <sup>f</sup> so much the more, as ye see <sup>g</sup> the day ap-

d 1 Cor. i. 9. & x. 13.  
1 Thess. v. 24. 2 Thess. iii. 3. ch. xi. 11.

e Acts ii. 42.  
Jude 19.

f Rom. xiii. 11.

g Phil. iv. 5.  
2 Pet. iii. 9, 11, 14.

our hearts are freed from an evil conscience, and thus from self-condemnation, sprinkled with Christ's Blood, to be sprinkled with which and to be certain of and joyful in justification before God is one and the same thing,—washed in Holy Baptism, whose pure water penetrates with its saving power not only into the depths of our self-conscious life, but also into the very foundation of our corporeity, and thus sanctifies us not only in the flesh, but in the body and in the spirit: so bringing us, in our whole personal existence, through the Blood speaking in the Sanctuary, through the Water welling forth out of the Sanctuary, into so real a connexion, so close an union with the Sanctuary itself, that we are at all times privileged to enter into the Sanctuary, and to use, in faith, the new and living way").

23.] Let us hold fast (ch. iv. 14: let us hold with full and conscious possession: see ch. iii. 6, 14) the confession (see on ch. iv. 14: subjective, but in a pregnant sense,—that which we confess, held in our confession of it) of our hope (see ch. iii. 6: and bear in mind that hope is used also for the object of hope subjectivized: our hope [subj.], as including that on which it is fixed).

We have here an extraordinary example of the persistence of a blunder through centuries. The word "*faith*," given here by the A. V., instead of hope—breaking up the beautiful triad of vv. 22, 23, 24,—faith, hope, love,—was a mere mistake, hope being the original, without any variety of reading, and hope being accordingly the rendering of all the English versions previously to 1611. And yet this is the version which some would have us regard as infallible, and receive as the written word of God!) so that it may be without wavering; for He is faithful that promised (viz. God, see ch. vi. 13, xi. 11, xii. 26, as referring to Him the title of "*the Promiser*");

24.] and ("how beautifully

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)* <sup>24</sup> and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: <sup>25</sup> 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

does this chain of exhortations of our Writer fall into a triple division, according to St. Paul's triad of the Christian life, 1 Cor. xiii. 13; 1 Thess. i. 3, v. 8; Col. i. 4 f.! Next to an exhortation to approach God in full assurance of *faith*, follows one to hold fast the confession of *hope*, and now comes one to emulate one another in *love*." Delitzsch) let us consider one another (all of us have all in continual remembrance, bearing one another's characters and wants and weaknesses in mind) with a view to provocation (usually in a bad sense, but here in a good one) of (tending to produce: or we may say that it is a provocative of the love itself being thereby excited) love and good works;

25.] not deserting the assembling together of ourselves (in the only other place, 2 Thess. ii. 1, where this substantive, "*assembling together*," occurs, it is of our gathering together to Christ at His coming, just as the verb is commonly used in the Gospels, Matt. xxiii. 37, xxiv. 31; Mark xiii. 27; Luke xiii. 34. Here, the question is, whether it is to be understood of the congregation of the faithful generally, the church,—as the word *congregation* has come from the act of assembling to signify the body thus assembled,—or of the single acts of assembling and gathering together of the various assemblies of Christians at various times. The latter is held by most Commentators, and seems far most appropriate here), as is the habit with some (this pretty plainly shews that not formal apostasies, but habits of negligence, are in the Writer's view. How far these might in time lead to the other, is a thought which no doubt lies in the background when he says, "*let us consider one another*," and "*using exhortation*;" and is more directly suggested by the awful cautions which follow); but using exhortation: and so much the more (this is better taken as belonging to the two preceding



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

approaching. <sup>26</sup> For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, <sup>27</sup> but a certain fearful looking for of judgment

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

approaching. <sup>26</sup> For <sup>h</sup> if we sin wilfully <sup>1</sup> after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, <sup>27</sup> but a certain fearful receiv-

<sup>h</sup> Numb. xv. 30. ch. vi. 4.  
<sup>1</sup> 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21.

clauses only, to which it is attached, than as belonging to the whole from ver. 23), as (*in proportion as*, 'the more:' must be joined with *ye see*, not with "*approaching*," 'the nearer ye see') *ye see* (this *ye see*, in the *second* person, is unexpected in the midst of a sentence in the *first* person. It appeals at once to the watchfulness and discernment of thereaders as regards the signs of the times. That Day, indeed, in its great final sense, is always near, always ready to break forth upon the church: but these Hebrews lived actually close upon one of those great types and foretastes of it, the destruction of the Holy City—the bloody and fiery dawn, as Delitzsch finely calls it, of the Great Day) the day (this shortest of all designations of the day of the Lord's coming, is found only in 1 Cor. iii. 13; 1 Thess. v. 4. "It is the Day of days, the ending-day of all days, the settling-day of all days, the Day of the promotion of Time into Eternity, the Day which for the Church breaks through and breaks off the night of this present world." Delitzsch) *approaching*.

26—31.] *Caution*, arising from the mention of that day,—which will be not a day of grace, but a day of judgment,—of the fearful peril of falling away from Christ. The passage finds a close parallel in ch. vi. 4 ff., and much of what was there said will apply here.

26.] For if we willingly sin (contrast to the "*ignorant and erring*," ch. v. 2. The sin meant is sufficiently defined by the connexion [for] with the preceding exhortations, and by the description of one who has so sinned in ver. 29. Neglect of assembling together, and loss of mutual exhortation and stimulus, would naturally result in [as it would be prompted by an inclination that way at first] the "*departing from God*" of ch. iii. 12; the "*falling away*" of ch. vi 6. It is the sin of apostasy from Christ back to the state which preceded the reception of Christ, viz. Judaism. This is the ground-sin of all other sins. The verb is in the present, not the past. "If we be found wilfully sinning," not "if we have wilfully sinned," at that Day. It is not of an act or of any number of acts of sin, that the

Writer is speaking, which might be repented of and blotted out: but of a *state* of sin, in which a man is found when that day shall come) after the receiving (having received) the knowledge ("the word used for knowledge is one which of necessity means a *thorough, heart-knowledge*. And the Writer, by the use of this word, gives us to understand that he means by it not only a shallow historical notion about the Truth, but a living, believing knowledge of it, which has laid hold of a man and fused him into union with itself." Delitzsch. It is most important here to keep this cardinal point distinctly in mind: that these sinners willingly are not mere professors of religion, but real converts, or else ver. 29 becomes unintelligible) of the truth (the truth of God, as so often in St. Paul and St. John), there is no longer left remaining (see on ch. iv. 6) a sacrifice for sins (for there is but One true sacrifice for sins: if a man, having availed himself of that One, then deliberately casts it behind him, there is no second left for him. It will be observed that one thing is not, and need not be, specified in the text. That he has exhausted the virtue of the One Sacrifice, is not said: but in proportion to his willing rejection of it, has it ceased to operate for him. He has in fact, as Delitzsch observes, shut the door of repentance behind him, by the very fact of his being in an abiding state of willing sin. And this is still more forcibly brought out when, which Delitzsch does not notice, the scene of action is transferred to the great day of the Lord's coming, and he is found in that impenitent state irreparably. This verse has been misunderstood, 1) by the Fathers, who apply it to the Novatian controversy, and make it assert the impossibility of a second baptism: 2) by Theodore of Mopsuestia and others, who interpret it only of those in a state of impenitence, understanding that on penitence they will again come under the cleansing influence of the blood of Christ), but (there is left remaining: this is common to both clauses) a certain (some one, out of all that might befall various men

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

ing of judgment, and a <sup>k</sup> fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. <sup>25</sup> <sup>1</sup> He that hath despised the law of Moses dieth without mercy <sup>m</sup> under two or three witnesses: <sup>29</sup> <sup>n</sup> of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be found worthy, who trampled under foot the Son of God, and <sup>o</sup> accounted common the blood of the covenant, wherewith

<sup>k</sup> Ezek. xxxvi. 5. Zeph. i. 18. & iii. 8. <sup>2</sup> Thess. i. 8. ch. xii. 29. i ch. ii. 2.

<sup>m</sup> Deut. xvii. 2, 6. & xix. 15. Matt. xviii. 16. John viii. 17. 2 Cor. xlii. 1.

<sup>n</sup> ch. ii. 3. & xii. 25.

<sup>o</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 29. ch. xiii. 29.

and dispositions. The indefiniteness makes the declaration more awful) fearful (objective,—tremendous, not timid: fearful to think of, frightful) reception (i. e. *meed*, *doom*: not, as I believe universally interpreted without remark, *expectation*. The word used (*ecdoché*) appears never to have this sense, and this is the only place where it occurs in the New Test. All which *remains* is, the reception of the doom of judgment, and the *fiery indignation*, &c.) of judgment (i. e. by the *context*, unfavourable judgment), and fervour of *fire* (so literally. In an English version we cannot give it well, except by paraphrasing, as in the text: the stress is on *fire*, and *fire* is personified. It is the fire of God's presence, identified with Himself exactly as in ch. xii. 29: and it is the zeal, the fervour, the excandescence of this consuming fire, which awaits the apostate from Christ), which shall (in using this future, the Writer transfers himself again to the present time: as if he had said, 'the fire which is destined to . . .') *devour* (and therefore finally and entirely) *the adversaries*.

28, 29] *Argument from the less to the greater, to shew how grievous will be the punishment of the apostate from Christ.* There is a very similar inference in ch. ii. 2, 3; xii. 25. **Any one having set at nought the law of Moses** (we must not take this as a general assertion, as true of whoever in any way broke the Mosaic law: but as an alleging of a well-known fact, that in certain cases a breaker of that law was subject to the penalty following. The form of the sentence might be changed thus, "If Moses' law could attach to violations of it the inexorable doom of death," &c. The reference is especially to Deut. xvii. 2—7, where the punishment of death is attached to the same sin as is here in question, viz.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. <sup>25</sup> He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: <sup>29</sup> 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 un-

apostasy: see ver. 3) dies (the normal present) **without benefit of** (apart from: not implying that no one felt compassion for him, but that such compassion, be it what it might, could not affect his doom) **mercies** (so literally: the merciful feelings of any who might be interested for him) **before two or three witnesses** (the allusion is to Deut. as above, where it is thus prescribed): **of how much worse punishment, think ye** (an appeal to the judgment of the readers themselves), **shall he be found worthy** (i. e. by God), **who trampled under foot** (the verb is in the past tense, as spoken at that day, and looking back upon this life. By "trampling under foot" is meant that flagrant contempt which those shew who deliberately abandon the Lord and His precepts. Stier remarks: Some of us remember the cry, "Ecrasez l'infame!") **the Son of God** (the higher title of the Mediator of the new covenant is used, to heighten the enormity of the crime), **and accounted common the blood of the covenant** (being the "*precious blood*" of Christ Himself, far above all blood of sprinkling under the old covenant. Even that [Lev. xvi. 19] had hallowing power: how much more this. But the apostate "*accounted common*" this blood—deemed it mere ordinary blood of a common man, and if so, consented to its shedding, for then Christ deserved to die as a blasphemer. And this, of that holy Blood, by which we have access to God! So that we have quite enough for the solemn sense, by rendering the word literally *common*, without going to the further meaning, *unclean*. Compare Acts x. 28, where the two are distinguished. The old Syriac version has "hath counted the blood of the covenant of him by whom he hath been sanctified as that of every man." The reader will recall our Lord's own expression, "*the blood of the new*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

*holy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?* <sup>30</sup> 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.* <sup>31</sup> It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. <sup>32</sup> But call to re-

he was sanctified,<sup>p</sup> and insulted the Spirit of grace? <sup>30</sup> For we know him that said, <sup>q</sup> Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, <sup>r</sup> The Lord shall judge his people. <sup>31</sup> It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. <sup>32</sup> But

<sup>p</sup> Matt. xii. 31  
<sup>32</sup> Eph. iv. 30.

<sup>q</sup> Deut. xxxii. 53.  
Rom. xii. 19.

<sup>r</sup> Deut. xxxii. 36. Ps. l. 4.  
& cxxxv. 14.  
<sup>s</sup> Luke xii. 6.

*testament (covenant),*" Matt. xxvi. 28), in which (so literally: as sprinkled with which; as his element and condition of sanctification) he was sanctified (see Lev. xvi. 19 Septuagint, and our ch. xiii. 12 and ix. 13. He had advanced so far in the reality of the spiritual life, that this blood had been really applied to his heart by faith, and its hallowing and purifying effects were visible in his life: which makes the contrast the more terrible. And Delitzsch<sup>1</sup> finely remarks, as against the assertors of mere shallow supralapsarianism, that without former experience of grace, without a life of faith far more than superficial, so irrecoverable a fall into the abyss is not possible. It is worthy of remark how Calvin evades the deep truth contained in the words *wherewith he was sanctified*:—"It is most unworthy to profane the blood of Christ, *which is the material of our sanctification*: and this those do who apostatize from the faith:" thus making *he was sanctified into we are sanctified*), and insulted the Spirit of grace (for the Spirit of grace, see Zech. xii. 10. No two things can be more opposed, as Delitzsch remarks, than *insolence and grace*. And this remark guides us to the answer to the question whether of *grace* here is a genitive *objective or subjective*: whether it is the *spirit* which belongs to *grace*, so that it is the gift of the divine *grace* [so most of the moderns], or *grace* which belongs to *spirit*, so that it is the gift of and the character of the *spirit*. The latter is much the more probable, both on account of the prophecy of Zechariah which is referred to, "*I will pour out the spirit of grace and supplication,*" and on account of the verb *insulted*, which is most naturally referred to a Person as its object)? <sup>30, 31.</sup> And this *reception of judgment and fervour of fire* are certainties, testified to by God Himself. For we know Him who said, "*To me belongeth vengeance, I will repay, saith the Lord*" (the citation is

from Deut. xxxii. 35, and is given not in agreement with the Hebrew text nor with the Septuagint ["in the day of vengeance will I recompense:" so also in the Samaritan Pentateuch, and in Philo], but, remarkably enough, in verbal accordance with St. Paul's citation of the same text, Rom. xii. 19, even to the adding of the words "*saith the Lord,*" which are neither in the Hebrew nor the Septuagint. Two solutions of this are possible: 1) that the expression had become a common saying in the church: 2) that our Writer takes it from St. Paul's citation. A third alternative is of course open; that it is St. Paul himself, who quotes here as there. For a solution, see Introduction, on the authorship of this Epistle). And again, *The Lord will judge His people* (no doubt quoted primarily from the passage where it primarily occurs, in Deut. xxxii. 36. The *judging* there expresses another function of the judge from that which is adduced here. There, He will judge for rescue and for defence: here, for punishment and for condemnation. But the *office of Judge*, generally asserted, involves all that belongs to a judge: and if there it induces the comforting of those of whom He saw that their power is gone, and that there is here shut up or left, here the same general office of judgment also induces the punishment of the wilful sinner and apostate).

<sup>31.</sup> *Axiomatic conclusion of these solemn warnings. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God* (yet in 2 Sam. xxiv. 14, David says, "Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are great; and let us not fall into the hand of man:" and in Ecclus. ii. 18 we have "we will fall into the hands of the Lord, and not into the hands of men; for as His majesty is, so is His mercy." But the two sentiments are easily set at one. For the faithful, in their chastisement, it is a blessed thing to fall into God's Hands: for the unfaithful, in their doom, a dreadful one. On *living*, as

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

t Gal. iii. 4.  
 2 John 8.  
 u ch. vi. 4.  
 x Phil. i. 29, 30.  
 Col. ii. 1.  
 y 1 Cor. iv. 9.  
 z Phil. i. 7. &  
 iv. 14.  
 1 Thess. ii.  
 14.  
 † *This is the more probable reading: the ancient authorities are divided.*  
 a Phil. i. 7.  
 2 1 Tim. i. 16.  
 b Matt. v. 12.  
 Acts v. 41.  
 James i. 2.  
 c Matt. vi. 20.  
 & xix. 21.  
 Luke xii. 33.  
 1 Tim. vi. 10.  
 † *So, and omitting in heaven, most of our early authorities.*

call ever to remembrance the former days, in which, <sup>u</sup> when first enlightened, ye endured <sup>x</sup> a great fight of afflictions; <sup>33</sup> partly, in that ye were made <sup>y</sup> a gazingstock both by reproaches and tribulations; and partly, in that <sup>z</sup> ye became partakers with them that were so used. <sup>34</sup> For ye both had compassion of † them that were <sup>a</sup> in bonds, and <sup>b</sup> took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing that <sup>c</sup> ye have † of your own a better and an enduring substance. <sup>35</sup> Cast not away therefore your confidence, <sup>d</sup> for it hath great recompence of reward. <sup>36</sup> <sup>e</sup> For ye have

d Matt. v. 12. & x. 32.

e Luke xxi. 19. Gal. vi. 9. ch. xii. 1.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; <sup>33</sup> partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. <sup>34</sup> 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. <sup>35</sup> Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. <sup>36</sup> For*

a characteristic of *God*, see on ch. iii. 12. Here, the idea of life and energy, attached to the name of God, brings vividly out the *ferveur* with which He will consume His adversaries).

32—34.] As in ch. vi. 9—12, so here, the Writer turns from solemn exhortation and warning to *encouragement arising from the conduct of his readers in the past*. This their firmness did not look likely to end in apostasy: and accordingly by the memory of it he now cheers and invigorates them.

32.] But (in contrast to these fearful things which have been spoken of) call ever to mind (call over in your minds, one by one) the former days, in which when (first) enlightened (see on this, note, ch. vi. 4), ye underwent (with fortitude: which though not implied in the word, signifying mere endurance, yet is in the context) much contest of sufferings (the genitive may be either subjective, implying that your contest consisted of sufferings: or objective, that it was waged with sufferings, as the foe to be contended against: the former perhaps is the more probable from what follows); 33.] (the nature of these sufferings is now specified) partly, being made a spectacle (literally, exposed in a theatre, the theatre being the place where conspicuous punishments were inflicted, on account of the multitudes there assembling. See Acts xix. 29. The word may therefore be *literally* taken, if [see Introd. § ii. and § iii. 3] the Epistle was

written to Rome, after the Neronian persecution. Compare 1 Cor. iv. 9) in reproaches (the *in* gives the manner in which) and tribulations; partly also, having become (there is something of purpose in this: "having made yourselves." It is a fine encomium on their Christian sympathy and love) partakers with them who were thus living (*viz.*, in reproaches and afflictions). 34.] Illustration, in reverse order, of the two particulars mentioned in ver. 33. For ye both sympathized with (see on ch. iv. 15) them who were in bonds, and ye took with joy the plundering of your goods, knowing that ye have for yourselves a better possession and abiding (that cannot be plundered: compare Matt. vi. 20).

35—39.] Hortatory conclusion, enforced by [ver. 36] the need of endurance, which itself is recommended by the assurance of the speedy coming of the Lord, and the knowledge that we are not of the number of the backsliders, but of those who live by that faith by which our hope is substantiated. 35.] Cast not away therefore your confidence, the which (the simple relative would predicate what follows of the one preceding individual antecedent only, whereas *the which* predicates it of a whole class of which that antecedent is one. For it expresses it well: "being of such sort, as" . . .) hath (*present*, although the reward is future: hath set down over against it: possesses in reversion) great

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. <sup>37</sup> For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. <sup>38</sup> Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. <sup>39</sup> But we are not of them who draw back

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

need of endurance, that ye may do the will of God <sup>f</sup> and receive the promise. <sup>37</sup> For <sup>g</sup> yet a very little while, and <sup>h</sup> he that is coming shall come, and shall not tarry. <sup>38</sup> But <sup>i</sup> † my just man shall live by faith: but if he draw back, my soul hath no pleasure in him. <sup>39</sup> But we are not of <sup>k</sup> backsliding unto perdition;   
† to faith. <sup>k</sup> 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21.

<sup>f</sup> Col. iii. 24.  
 ch. ix. 16.  
<sup>g</sup> 1 Pet. i. 9.  
<sup>h</sup> Luke xviii. 8.  
<sup>i</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 9.  
<sup>h</sup> Hab. ii. 3, 4.  
<sup>i</sup> Hab. ii. 4.  
 Rom. i. 17.  
 Gal. iii. 11.  
 † So our earliest MSS.: one however, and the ancient Syriac version, join my  
<sup>k</sup> 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21.

recompence of reward. **36.]** For (justification of the foregoing exhortation) of endurance (this in the original is placed first, carrying the main emphasis. "By degrees," says Bengel, "the Apostle from this verse to ver. 38 introduces the prophetic citation." In the Septuagint, in Hab. ii. 3, 4, the whole passage runs thus: "Though it tarry, wait for it: because it will surely come, it will not tarry. If any man draw back, my Lord hath no pleasure in him: but the just by my faith shall live") ye have need, that ye may do the will of God and receive the promise (this is the most correct rendering of the original: and thus it certainly ought to be taken here. No endurance or patience would be wanted, when they had done the will of God, to receive the promise: because such interval as should elapse between their *having done the will of God* in this sense, and *receiving the promise*, would be not here, but in the intermediate state. But that which they really do want *endurance* for, is that they may "prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God," and thus receive the promise: see ch. xiii. 21. The promise means, not the word of promise, but the substance of the promise, the promise in its fulfilment).

**37, 38.]** Encouragement to this endurance, by the fact of the time being short, and at the same time further proof of the necessity of it by God's renunciation of him that draws back: all from the same prophecy of Habakkuk. For yet a little little while (so literally. This expression is not in Habakkuk, but is found in Isa. xxvi. 20, to which the Writer probably alludes) He that is coming (the solemn prophetic title, 'He that is to come.' The Apostle paraphrases the prophetic words, and thus inserts Christ into the place of the vision in Habakkuk) shall come, and shall not tarry. **38.]** Con-

tinuation of the paraphrase: the two clauses of Hab. ii. 4 being transposed. In the original it runs as in A. V.: "Behold, his soul (which) is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith:" or, an ambiguity extending to all three places where the saying is quoted, here, and *reff. Rom., Gal.*, "The just by his faith, shall live." But the other is more probable. The transposition is apparently made on purpose. But my just man (there is much controversy about the word *my*, whether to insert it, and where to insert it. See in my Greek Test. Placed as in our text, *my* will point out, that man who is just before God, who belongs to God's people) shall live by faith: and if he (i. e. the just man, as Delitzsch very properly insists: not as in A. V., understood, "any man," but, in the true spirit of this whole cautionary passage, the very man himself who was justified, and partakes of the Christian life, by faith. The possibility of such a fall is, as he observes, among the principal things taught us by this Epistle) draw back, my soul ("whose soul? That of God, according to Scripture usage, as in this saying, My soul hateth your solemn feasts [Isa. i. 14],—or perhaps, that of Christ." Chrysostom. The former reference is doubtless right, not the latter, nor that given by Calvin, that "the Apostle is speaking in his own person") hath not pleasure in him. **39.]** Here again he returns from that which is threatening in appearance to that which is encouraging and reassuring. But we (emphatic; bringing with it, in its mention, all that we are as Christians and that God has made us: you and I, partakers of the heavenly calling, ch. iii. 1) are not of backsliding (i. e., do not belong to the category of backsliding) unto (as its result: so Rom. vi. 19, unto iniquity, unto sanctification) destruction (everlasting perdition); but of



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

<sup>1</sup> Acts xvi. 30, 31. <sup>1</sup> Thess. v. 9. <sup>2</sup> Thess. ii. 14.

but of <sup>1</sup> faith unto the saving of the soul.

unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

XI. <sup>1</sup> Now faith is the confidence of things hoped for, the evidence

XI. <sup>1</sup> Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. <sup>2</sup> For by it the

<sup>a</sup> Rom. viii. 24, 25. <sup>2</sup> Cor. iv. 18. & v. 7. <sup>b</sup> ver. 39.

had the elders testimony borne to

elders obtained a good re-

faith unto [the] preservation of [the] soul ("the soul is the subject of life and salvation. Faith saves the soul, by linking it to God, the living One. The unbelieving man loses his soul: for not being God's, neither is he his own: all that his personality has in itself, and round itself, is fallen under wrath and the powers of wrath." Delitzsch).

CHAP. XI.—"We are of FAITH" concluded the last chapter. And now this great word comes before the mind of the Writer for its *definition*, its *exemplification*, its *triumphs*. By this, all the servants of God from the first have been upheld, and stimulated, and carried through their glorious course. By this exemplification the Writer evermore warmed and carried forward, breaks out at last into a strain of sublime eloquence, in which he gathers together in one the many noble deeds of faith which time and space would not allow of his specifying severally.

1.] Now Faith is (notice that it is of *faith* in general, *all* faith, not here of faith in God in particular, that the Writer is speaking) **confidence** (there has been much difference concerning the meaning of this word [*hypostasis*]). The ancients for the most part understand it here as substance, the real and true essence: faith gives reality to things not yet seen, so that they are treated as veritably present. Others have rendered it *foundation*. On the other hand the majority of modern Commentators have preferred the meaning which the word bears in ch. iii. 14, where see note: viz. "confidence." And there can be no reasonable doubt, that this is the true rendering here. Thus only do the two descriptions given correspond in nature and quality. The one being subjective in both these cases of parallel, it is but reasonable that the other should be also) of **things hoped for**, **demonstration** (*conviction*, or *proof*). The modern Commentators are divided: some have taken the subjective sense of *conviction*,—*inward persuasion of the truth of*. But this sense of the word is hardly borne out by usage. And therefore we seem driven back

on the objective meaning as referred to things, viz. *proof*, or *demonstration*. As far as the *sense* is concerned, both come to the same in the end. It is faith, an act of the mind, which *is* this demonstration: it is therefore necessarily subjective in its effect,—is the demonstration *to him who believes*) of **matters not seen** (this is a much wider designation than *things hoped for*, embracing the whole realm of the spiritual and invisible, even to the being and essence of God Himself: see below, ver. 6: and compare Rom. viii. 24, where St. Paul's expressions differ slightly in form from these. There is no ground whatever for saying that our Writer makes faith identical with hope. Faith is the *confidence of things hoped for*: Hope *exists* independently of it, but derives its reality, and is ripened into confidence, by its means. And faith is the demonstration to us of that which we do not see: compare the beautiful words of Calvin: "Eternal life is promised to us, but after death: we are told of a blessed resurrection, but we meantime become the prey of decay: we are pronounced righteous, and yet sin dwells in us: we hear ourselves called blessed, and meantime are overwhelmed with infinite miseries: we are promised affluence of all good things, but are all our days in hunger and thirst: God proclaims that He will be ever present to help us, but seems deaf to our cries. What would become of us if we leant not on hope, and unless our mind, guided by the Word and Spirit of God, emerged through the midst of the shades, above this present world?")

2.] For ("and-so high a description of faith is not undeserved, seeing that . . .") The *for* does not bring in any *proof* of the foregoing description, only shews that faith is noble enough to be dignified with the offices just named) in (not, *by*, merely: but elemental; in the domain, or region, or matter of) **this** (in this it was, that . . .) the elders (i. e. not merely those who lived before us, but those ancients whom we dignify with the name of elders. So also

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

port. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

them. <sup>3</sup> By faith we understand that <sup>c</sup> the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that <sup>†</sup> that which is seen was not made of things which do appear. <sup>4</sup> By faith <sup>d</sup> Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained

<sup>c</sup> Gen. i. 1.  
P's. xxxiii. 6.  
John. 1. 3.  
ch. i. 2.  
<sup>†</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 5.  
<sup>†</sup> So our most ancient MSS.  
<sup>d</sup> Gen. iv. 4.  
1 John iii. 12.

"the fathers," see Rom. ix. 5; Heb. i. 1) were testified of (it is of course implied, that the testimony was a good one).

3.] The Writer now begins his series of examples of the power of faith. But instead of opening them with the example of our first parents, which he probably passes over as not sufficiently recorded in Scripture, he adduces the great and primary postulate of faith, which has regard to a fact contemporaneous indeed with them, and holding this first chronological place in the series: viz. the creation of the world itself. By faith (*faith* is the instrumental cause, and the expression is nearly equivalent to *through faith*, with which indeed it is interchanged in ver. 33) we perceive (we have intellectual perception. The world itself, and the things therein, are *seen* by us: but the fact of its creation by God is *apprehended*, with our rational or spiritual faculties) the ages (see note on ch. i. 2, where I have maintained that this expression includes in it all that exists under the conditions of time and space, together with those conditions of time and space themselves, conditions which do not bind God, and did not exist independently of Him, but are themselves the work of His word) to have been framed (so A. V.: and we cannot perhaps do better. It is rather however, *furnished forth*, "made to be, and to be what we find them") by the word of God (the *spoken word*, the command, as throughout Gen. i.:—the term in the Greek is not *logos*. Nor must it here be taken for the personal word: ch. i. 2, is on a different matter), so that not out of things apparent hath that which is seen (i. e. the visible world) been made (in all that we see with our sense, of recreation and reproduction, *that which is seen is made out of that which appears*. The seed becomes the plant: the grub, the moth. But that which is above sight, viz., faith, leads us to apprehend, that this has not been so in the first instance: that

the visible world has not been made out of apparent materials). 4.] By faith (see above) Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice (literally, more sacrifice) than Cain (than Cain did. But how a more excellent sacrifice? First, there can be no doubt that the adjective must be taken not of quantity, but of quality: it was not a more abundant, but a more excellent. But how was it so? Our text answers us: *because of, by, faith*. The more excellence must be looked for then rather in the disposition with which the sacrifice was offered, than in the nature of the sacrifice itself. Gregory the Great [cited by Delitzsch] says well, "All that is given to God, is weighed according to the disposition of its giver: whence it is written, 'God had regard to Abel, and to his gifts, but had no regard to Cain and his gifts.' The Scripture does not say, 'He regarded the gifts of Abel, and did not regard the gifts of Cain,' but first says, that 'He regarded Abel,' and then adds, 'and his gifts.' So we see that it was not the gifts which made Abel to be acceptable, but Abel who made the gifts to be so." This beyond doubt is the principal ground of the designation *more excellent*. With regard to the sacrifices themselves; with our present knowledge of type and sacrifice, many reasons might be alleged why that of Abel should be more according to God's will than that of Cain; but none of those reasons can be safely or decisively applied here. That Abel's consisted of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof—the *first and the best*, whereas Cain's was merely an offering of the fruit of the ground, perfunctory and common-place, may be a circumstance not without weight in appreciating the term *by faith*. That Abel's was an offering of slain animals, God's own appointed way, so soon after, of the sinner's approach to Him, whereas Cain's was only a gift, as if he could approach God without shedding of blood,—this may also be an

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead <sup>e</sup> yet speaketh. <sup>5</sup> By faith <sup>f</sup> Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God translated him: for before his translation a testimony is borne to him, that he had pleased God. <sup>6</sup> But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he

<sup>e</sup> GEN. iv. 10.  
Matt. xxiii.  
35. ch. xii.  
24.  
<sup>f</sup> GEN. v. 22, 24.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God

important element in the term by faith. But it would not be safe here to insist on either of these), by means of which (viz. which faith, not, which sacrifice: by which must apply to the same as by it below, and that surely can refer to nothing but the faith, which is the great leading idea of the chapter) he was testified (see above, ver. 2) to be righteous (when? by whom? not, by our Saviour, nor by St. John [1 John iii. 12], though in both places such testimony is borne to him: but as explained in the next clause, at the time of his sacrifice, and by God Himself), God bearing testimony upon (in regard to) his gifts (of what kind this testimony was, there can be little doubt. Theodotion's rendering of the text in Genesis, "*and God consumed them by fire,*" though wrong as a rendering, is probably right in fact. Compare Exod. xiv. 24; 1 Kings xviii. 24, 28): and by means of it (his faith, again, not, his sacrifice: see above) having died he yet speaketh (viz., as interpreted by the parallel place, ch. xii. 24, where it is said of the "*blood of sprinkling,*" that it *speaketh better things than Abel,*—by means of his blood, of which it is said by God in Gen. iv. 10, "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the ground.") Some have taken it in the sense of 'speaks to us to follow his example.' And perhaps Stuart may be partly right, who recognizing the allusion to Gen. iv. 10, says, "The form of expression only in our verse seems to be borrowed from Gen. iv. 10, for here it is the faith of Abel which makes him speak after his death; viz. to those who should come after him, exhorting and encouraging them to follow his example." I say partly right, for however this may be in the background the cry of his blood is ob-

vously primary in the Writer's thought, from ch. xii. 24, where the voice of Abel is contrasted with that of the Christian blood of sprinkling).

5, 6.] *The example of Enoch: and axiomatic declaration upon it.* By faith ("how was he translated by faith? Because his well-pleasing to God was the ground of his translation, and faith was the ground of this well-pleasing." Chrysostom) Enoch was translated not to see death (see the Septuagint version of Gen. v. 24, after which this verse is framed: "And Enoch pleased God, and was not found, because God translated him." was translated, by a sudden disappearance from this earth. This translation was hardly, as Calvin thinks, "some extraordinary death," though he means this in no rationalistic sense, as is plain from his accompanying remarks:—but rather a change which passed upon him altogether without death, from corruptibility to incorruptibility, from the natural body to the spiritual); and was not found (see above), because God translated him: for before his translation a testimony is given to him (the expression implies the continued existence of the testimony in the text of Scripture), that he hath (had) pleased God. But apart from faith it is impossible (it is a general axiom, not a mere assertion regarding Enoch; it it were, we should expect it was impossible for him) to please (Him, as is evident) at all (to do a single act well pleasing to God): for it behoves him that cometh to God (that approach which is elsewhere designated by *drawing near to God*, ch. vii. 19,—for the purposes of worship or of communion, or of trust, or service generally) to believe (literally, to have believed, because it is not here the state in which the comer

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> By faith Abra-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

is, and that he becometh a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. <sup>7</sup> By faith <sup>g</sup> Noah, being warned of <sup>g</sup> God of things not seen as yet, taking forethought, <sup>h</sup> prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by which he condemned the world, and became heir of <sup>i</sup> the righteousness which is according to faith. <sup>8</sup> By faith

is at his coming, but the state which has originated his coming, of which that coming is the fruit, which is insisted on) that He is (exists: his faith being to him thus a demonstration of a thing not seen), and becomes (is eventually) a renderer of reward (ch. ii. 2) to them that seek Him out (thus his faith is also to him the confidence of things hoped for: God's existence is realized to him by it, and by it his future reward assured).

7.] Example of NOAH. Gen. vi. 8 ff. By faith Noah, having been warned (viz. by God, Gen. vi. 13 ff.) concerning the things not yet seen, taking forethought (many interpret this word "fearing God:" and most, "fearing;") but the distinction is important, which is brought out in ch. v. 7, where the same word occurs, that this is the fear of caution or reverence, and not of terror) prepared the ark (not "an ark") for the preservation of his house; by means of which (to what does which refer? to "preservation," to "ark," or to "faith?") Certainly not to the former: for thus Noah's preservation would be the inheriting of the righteousness which is by faith. Possibly, to the ark; for it was by the building of it that he condemned the world in its unbelief, and by it that in some sense, as the manifested result of his faith, he became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. But it must be confessed that this latter part of the interpretation halts considerably. And on this account, as well as on account of its inadequacy to the spirit of the passage, I do not hesitate, with most of the recent Commentators, to prefer "faith" as the antecedent: "by which faith," as above, ver. 4. It is true, that the word *faith*, as last mentioned, here is somewhat far off; but it is the burden of the chapter, and continually before the Writer's mind, and it was by

his *faith*, rather than by the results of that faith, that he condemned the world, and became, &c.) he condemned (the sense may be either *imperfect*, he condemned, while building the ark, the unbelieving world around,—or, *past*, he once for all condemned the unbelieving then, and in them, the world, which lies in unbelief. Better perhaps the latter. On the sense, Limborch says, "He is said to condemn another who by his deed shews what another ought to have done, and because he did not do it, convicts him of a fault, and shews his liability to punishment") the world (so also in Matt. xii. 41, 42), and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith (Noah is the first in Scripture who is called "*righteous*" or "*just*," Gen. vi. 9. See Ezek. xiv. 14, 20, where he is named together with Daniel and Job as an example of *righteousness*: and Wisd. x. 4, 6; Ecclus. xlv. 17; 2 Pet. ii. 5; where he is called a *preacher of righteousness*. And this righteousness, which is matter of history in the Old Test., our Writer refers to his faith as its measure. So Calvin: "Moses relates that he was righteous: that the cause and root of this righteousness was faith, is not told in the history, but is proved by the Apostle from the facts." This *righteousness according to faith* seems to be altogether in St. Paul's sense, the righteousness which is *by faith*, Rom. iv. 13, though the expression itself is foreign to St. Paul. The idea of its being *matter of inheritance* is also according to St. Paul. It should be noticed that the whole expression is used, in an Epistle in which righteousness by faith forms no part of the main subject, as one *familiar* and well known to the readers).

8—22.] Thus far the examples have been taken from the antediluvian world. Next, he takes them from the patriarchs of

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>k</sup> Gen. xii. 1, 4, <sup>k</sup> Abraham, when called, obeyed, in going out into a place which he was afterwards to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he was going. <sup>9</sup> By faith he sojourned in the land of the promise, as in a strange country, <sup>1</sup> dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, <sup>m</sup> the heirs with him of the same promise: <sup>10</sup> for he looked for <sup>n</sup> the city which hath the foundations, <sup>o</sup> whose builder and maker is God. <sup>p</sup> <sup>11</sup> By faith <sup>p</sup> Sara herself also re-

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xii. 8, & xiii. 3, 18, & xviii. 1, 9.

<sup>m</sup> ch. vi. 17.

<sup>n</sup> ch. xii. 22, & xiii. 14.

<sup>o</sup> ch. iii. 4, Rev. xxi. 2, 10.

<sup>p</sup> Gen. xvii. 19 & xviii. 11, 14, & xxi. 2.

Israel; with whom *the promise* was ever the object of faith: a *land*, in which they were strangers: a son, who was not yet born: a people, who were yet to be. 8.] ABRAHAM'S *example*. By faith Abraham, being called (viz. by God, Gen. xii. 1 ff. Another reading, having considerable authority, is, "he that was called, named, Abraham." And the sense thus would be very good,—whatever Bleek and Delitzsch have said against it,—when we take into account the meaning of the name Abraham, a *father of nations*. That this change of name did not take place till twenty-five years after his removal from Haran, is no objection, but is just what would be the point raised: "By faith, he who was [afterwards] called Abraham, father of nations, &c." But on the whole, I adhere to the received text), obeyed, to go out (the infinitive explains *wherein* he obeyed) to a (or, *'the'* place which he was hereafter to receive for an inheritance (not that he was conscious even of this promise when he went out, for it was made to him afterwards in Canaan, see Gen. xii. 7); and went out, not knowing whither he was going (coming). 9, 10.] By faith he sojourned in the land of the promise (concerning which the promise, Gen. xii. 7, had been given), as a stranger's (as if it did not belong to him, but to another: see Acts vii. 6, which is strictly parallel, and Gen. xv. 13), dwelling in tents (see Gen. xii. 8; xiii. 3; xviii. 1 ff.) with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise (what is implied is, not so much that the promise was renewed to them, as that all three waited for the performance of the same promise, and in this waiting,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

ham, 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. <sup>9</sup> 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: <sup>10</sup> for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. <sup>11</sup> Through faith also Sara herself re-

built themselves no permanent abode) 10.] for (reason of his sojourning in the land of promise as in a strange land) he waited for the city which has the foundations (beyond doubt, the heavenly city, the "*Jerusalem which is above*," thus contrasted with the frail and moveable tents in which the patriarchs dwelt. No other interpretation will suit the language here used. The "*city of the living God*" of ch. xii. 32, and the "*city which is to come*" of ch. xiii. 14, must be here meant also. Of the earthly Jerusalem indeed it is said, Ps. lxxxvii. 1, "*its foundation is in the holy mountains*:" but it is impossible, that the earthly Jerusalem can be meant here. The lives of the dwellers in her rather corresponded to the precarious dwelling in tents than to the abiding in a permanent city: and the true reference of the expression "*having the foundations*" is to be found in Rev. xxi. 14, 19. As having these foundations, it forms a contrast to the tent, placed on the ground and easily transported. Ebrard objects to this view, that it is unhistoric to say that the patriarchs looked for the heavenly city: but Delitzsch well answers, that it is not the mere historic question, what they knew and expected, with which our Writer is concerned, but the question what it was that their faith, breaking through this knowledge in its yearnings for the future, framed to itself as matter of hope. The expectation of the literal fulfilment of a promise is one thing: the hopes and prospects and surmises built upon the character of that promise, another. The one is mere belief: the other is faith), of which the architect and master-builder is God (very similarly)



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

ceived strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> For they that say such things declare plainly that they

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

ceived strength to conceive seed <sup>a</sup>† even when she was past age, because she judged him <sup>r</sup> faithful who had promised. <sup>12</sup> Therefore sprang there even of one, and <sup>s</sup> him as good as dead, <sup>t</sup> so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. <sup>13</sup> These all died in faith, <sup>u</sup> not having received the promises, but <sup>x</sup> having seen them afar off †, and greeted them, and <sup>y</sup> confessed that they were strangers and sojourners on the earth. <sup>14</sup> For they that say such things <sup>z</sup> declare plainly

<sup>a</sup> See Luke i. 36.  
<sup>†</sup> No our oldest MSS.  
<sup>r</sup> Rom. iv. 21. ch. x. 23.  
<sup>s</sup> Rom. iv. 10.  
<sup>t</sup> GEN. xxii. 17. Rom. iv. 18.  
<sup>u</sup> ver. 30.  
<sup>x</sup> ver. 27. John viii. 56.  
<sup>†</sup> and were persuaded of them is omitted apparently by all our authorities.  
<sup>y</sup> GEN. xxiii. 4 & xiv. 9. 1 Chron. xxix. 15. Ps. xxxix. 12 & cxix. 19.  
<sup>z</sup> ch. xiii. 14.

1 Pet. I. 17. & II. 11.

ch. viii. 2: see also ver. 16 below).

11.] Example of SARAH, whose faith worked with that of Abraham to produce Isaac. By faith Sara herself also (the words herself also merely indicate transition from one personal subject to another, the new subject being thus thrown out into prominence) received power for the deposition of seed (power, to fructify seed deposited), and that beyond (in inconsistency with, contrary to the law of) the time of age (proper for such fructification), seeing that she esteemed Him faithful who had promised.

12.] Wonderful result of this faith of Abraham and Sarah. Wherefore also from one sprung there, and that one deadened (past that vital power which nature requires), even as the stars of the heaven in multitude, and as the sand which is by the lip (margin) of the sea which is innumerable (so ran the promises to Abraham, Gen. xiii. 16, and more fully Gen. xxii. 17. The comparison with the sand as indicating great number is frequently found in the Old Test., e. g., Gen. xli. 49; Josh. xi. 4; 1 Sam. xiii. 5; 2 Sam. xvi. 11; 1 Kings iv. 29; Isa. x. 22).

13-16.] Before the Writer passes on to more examples of faith, he looks back over the patriarchal age, and gathers in one the attributes of their faith. In (according to, consistently with, in the course of: not this time by faith, because their deaths were not the results of their faith, but

merely according to and consistent with it) faith died these all (there is no need to say with some of the ancient commentators, "except Enoch:" the promises began with Abraham, and it is evident from the end of our verse, and from ver. 15, that the reference is solely to the patriarchs), not having received (in their fulfilment, that is) the promises (plural, because the promise was again and again repeated to the patriarchs, see the citations from Gen. above, and add Gen. xvii. 5-8, xxvi. 3, 4, xxviii. 13, 14), but having seen them from afar, and greeted them ("from afar they saw the promises in the reality of their fulfilment, from afar they greeted them as the wanderer greets his longed-for home even when he only comes in sight of it at a distance, drawing to himself as it were magnetically and embracing with inward love that which is yet afar off. The exclamation, 'I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord,' Gen. xlix. 18, is such a salutation, such a greeting of salvation from afar." Delitzsch), and confessed that they were strangers and sojourners upon the earth (this Abraham did, Gen. xxiii. 4, in these very words, in the Greek of the Septuagint, to the children of Heth, and Jacob, Gen. xlvii. 9, to Pharaoh . . . . See Ps. cxix. 19; Eccles. xii. 5).

14.] For (justification of the assertion, that it was according to faith that they ran and finished their course, by

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

that they seek after a home. <sup>15</sup> And truly, if they were mindful of that from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to return. <sup>16</sup> But now they desire a better home, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed <sup>a</sup> to be called their God: for <sup>b</sup> he prepared for them a city. <sup>17</sup> By faith <sup>c</sup> Abraham, being tempted, hath offered up Isaac: and he that had accepted the promises <sup>d</sup> offered up his only begotten son, <sup>18</sup> he to whom it was said,

<sup>a</sup> Exod. iii. 6.  
15. Matt.  
xxii. 32.  
Acts vii. 32.  
<sup>b</sup> Phil. iii. 20.  
ch. xiii. 14.  
<sup>c</sup> Gen. xxii. 1.  
9.

<sup>d</sup> James ii. 21.

the inference from their own confession) **they who say such things make manifest that they seek after a home** (our English word 'country,' without some possessive pronoun, does not give the idea strongly enough). <sup>15.</sup> And if indeed they were mindful of that (home) from which they went out, they would continually be having opportunity to return. <sup>16.</sup> But now (as the case now is: the logical "now:": see 1 Cor. xiii. 13 note, and our ch. viii. 6) **they desire a better (home), that is, a heavenly one** (the justification of this assertion, which seems to ascribe New Test. ideas to the Old Test. fathers, must be found in such sayings as that of the dying Jacob, Gen. xlix. 18, which only represent a wide class of their faithful thoughts): **wherefore God is not ashamed of them to be called their God** (from the present tense, is not ashamed, and especially from the clause which follows, it is probable, as Bleek has well remarked, that the Writer intends not merely to adduce that God did once call Himself their God, but that he is *now* not ashamed to be so called, they enduring and abiding with Him where He is: in the same sense in which our Lord adduces the same circumstance, Matt. xxii. 31 ff. See below): **He prepared for them a city** (permanent and eternal, in contrast to the tents in which they wandered. There are two ways of understanding this clause: 1) to take the verb as a pluperfect, "for God had prepared for them a city:": 2) God is not ashamed of them, nor to be called their God: and we find proof of this not only in His thus naming Himself, but in His *preparing* for them a city: the home for which

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*seek a country.* <sup>15</sup> *And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.* <sup>16</sup> *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.* <sup>17</sup> *By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, <sup>18</sup> of whom it was said,*

they yearned: He did not deceive their hopes, but acted as their God by verifying those hopes. Thus, and thus only, does the *preparing* keep its proper emphasis, and the past tense its proper time: *they looked for a city*: and God refused not to be called their God, for He *prepared* for them that city, verified those their hopes. And if we ask for the *interpretation* of this *preparing*, I answer, in the preparation of the way of Christ, and bringing in salvation by Him, of which salvation they in their anticipation of faith were partakers (John viii. 56). <sup>17—31.</sup> Having spoken thus generally of the faith of the patriarchs, he returns to *individual instances*, and begins again with Abraham, recounting the severest test to which his faith was put. Chrysostom remarks, that he here proceeds to a far greater triumph of faith, in a matter in which God seemed to contradict Himself, and faith contended with faith, and command with promise. Compare Ecclus. xlv. 20; Wisd. x. 5; 1 Macc. ii. 52; James ii. 21. **By faith Abraham hath offered** (perfect tense, as if the work and its praise were yet enduring) **Isaac when tempted: and** (the and rises into climax: not only Abraham offered Isaac, but &c.) **he that had accepted the promises** (more than "had the promises," ch. vii. 6; he had as it were with open arms accepted and taken to himself each and all of the promises, the possession of Canaan, the multiplication of his seed, the blessing of all nations in his seed) **was offering** (now the Writer transforms the time into the purely temporal and strict one—he was in the act of offering—the work was begun) **his only begotten, he to**

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

That in Isaac shall thy seed be called; <sup>19</sup> accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure. <sup>20</sup> By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. <sup>21</sup> By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff. <sup>22</sup> By faith Joseph,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>e</sup> That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: <sup>19</sup> accounting that God <sup>f</sup> is able to raise up, even from the dead; from whence he also received him in a figure. <sup>20</sup> By faith <sup>g</sup> Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau even concerning things to come. <sup>21</sup> By faith Jacob, when dying, <sup>h</sup> blessed each of the sons of Joseph; and <sup>i</sup> worshipped upon the top of his staff. <sup>22</sup> By faith

<sup>e</sup> Gen. xxi. 12.  
Rom. ix. 7.  
<sup>f</sup> Rom. iv. 17,  
19, 21.

<sup>g</sup> Gen. xxvii.  
27, 29.

<sup>h</sup> Gen. xlviii. 5,  
16, 20.  
<sup>i</sup> Gen. xlvii. 31.

whom (this refers, not to Isaac, as many Commentators and our A. V. "of whom it was said," but to Abraham, the immediate antecedent in the text, and the immediately resumed subject, after the relative clause, "accounting," &c.) it was spoken (by God), In Isaac shall thy seed be called (in Isaac, through and in descent from him, shall thy seed be called thy seed: only Isaac's descendants shall be known as Abraham's seed): <sup>19.</sup>] (reason of this paradoxical conduct: because Abraham's faith was able, in anticipation, to clear the suspicion of God's faithfulness by the suggestion of His power. He could and would make a way to the keeping of His own promise) reckoning that God is (not, was, see below) able to raise (no supply of 'him' is admissible, as mistakenly inserted by many Commentators, and even by the A. V. It was not God's power to raise Isaac, but God's power, generally, to raise from the dead, that Abraham believed) even from [among] the dead; from whence (i. e. from the dead) he also (besides the conviction in his mind) received him back in a parable (figuratively).—I have discussed at length in my Greek Test. the various interpretations, and seen cause to adhere to this, the ordinary one. We may with reason ask, *What was the figure or parable?* if it is meant merely, that though not actually, yet in some sense, Abraham received Isaac from the dead, would not "so to speak," or a similar phrase, be the more obvious way of expressing this? The true identification of the *parable* is I am persuaded to be found in the figure under which Isaac was sacrificed, viz. the ram, as already hinted by Chrysostom. Abraham virtually sacrificed his son: God designated Isaac for the burnt-offering, but provided a ram in his stead. Under the figure of that ram, Isaac was

slain, being received back by his father in his proper person, risen from that death which he had undergone in a *figure* or *parable*, in, under the figure of the ram).

<sup>20.</sup>] By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau even concerning things future (or, concerning things future also,—blessed them concerning not only things present, but things future. Jacob is named before Esau, as the worthier and more important in the theocratic sense; perhaps also as having gained the greater portion of the blessing). <sup>21.</sup>] By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph (the faith consisted in transposing his hands wittingly, laying the right hand on the head of the younger, Ephraim, who was to become the greater tribe); and he worshipped (this incident is not connected with the other, but took place before it, on another occasion, when Jacob made Joseph swear to him that he would bury him with his fathers, and not in Egypt, Gen. xlvii. 31. Perhaps the Writer inverts the order of the two, to bring the two acts of blessing, that of Isaac and that of Jacob, together. This act of worship was one of faith, inasmuch as it was connected with a command, the point of which was, God's promise respecting the land of Canaan. And the faith was shewn by the turning of his aged and dying body in a posture of thankful adoration) on the top of his staff (an incalculable quantity of idolatrous nonsense has been written on these words by Roman-Catholic Commentators, taking as their starting-point the rendering of the Vulgate, "and adored the top of his staff," and thence deriving an argument for the worship of images, assuming that there was an image or symbol of power upon Joseph's staff, to which they apply the words. But first, it must be Jacob's, not Joseph's staff, which is intended, as re-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>k</sup> GEN. I. 24, 25. <sup>k</sup> Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the sons of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones. <sup>23</sup> By faith <sup>1</sup> Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was comely; and they were not afraid of the king's <sup>m</sup> commandment. <sup>24</sup> By faith <sup>n</sup> Moses, when he was come to

<sup>1</sup> EXOD. II. 2.  
ACTS VII. 20.

<sup>m</sup> EXOD. I. 16,  
22.

<sup>n</sup> EXOD. II. 10,  
11.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.* <sup>23</sup> *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.* <sup>24</sup> *By faith Moses, when he was come to years, re-*

marked by Augustine. In his comment on the place, he has nothing of adoring the staff or the top of the staff. What Jerome thought of such an idea, is plainly seen: for he derides it, and treats it simply as a mistranslation of the Hebrew, which he explains as it stands in our A. V. Chrysostom has the idea, but not a word of the *image*: thinks that Jacob worshipped the power, symbolized by Joseph. I will only cite the inference from the above ancient data in Cornelius-a-Lapide, as most instructive regarding the grounds on which age after age the chief abominations of the church of Rome have been introduced: "Rightly therefore do the Fathers of the second Nicene Council prove, from this adoration of Joseph's staff, the adoration and culture of images, and teach that it does not stop with the image, but is referred and passed on to its prototype." The real question with regard to the passage is confined within very narrow limits. The same Hebrew word signifies a *staff*, or a *bed*, according as it is pointed. And, as there are no points in the ancient Hebrew texts, it is an open question, which meaning we are to take. The Septuagint have taken "*staff*," though, as Jerome notices, they have rendered the same word "*bed*" in Gen. xlviii. 2, two verses after. Our A. V. has taken this latter: "And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head." And so almost all the moderns agree in taking it. Stuart, it is true, has argued at some length for the meaning "*staff*," on the ground that the eastern beds have no head properly so called, being merely a carpet or rug spread on the ground. But he has in his mind in thus objecting, a *bedstead*, not a bed. The head of a bed, be it where or what it may, is that part of it where the person's head lies: and Delitzsch has made it probable, that Jacob turned himself in his bed so as to lay his

face to the pillow: compare Isa. xxxviii. 2. If the 'staff' is to be taken, then it must be his own, not Joseph's staff, which is indicated, and the gesture might have had a meaning correspondent to the thought in Gen. xxxii. 10, "*with my staff I passed this Jordan*;" viz. the recognition of that God who had supported him through life, and declaration of his having done with all human supports. It is due to the better Roman-Catholic Commentators, such as Estius and Justiniani, to say, that no such inference as that cited above is to be found in them.

Some have expressed surprise that no mention is made of the far more important blessings of the twelve sons of Jacob in Gen. xlix. But Delitzsch says well, "He plucks, so to speak, only the flowers which stand by his way, and leaves the whole meadow-full to his readers".

22.] *By faith Joseph, when dying, made mention of the exodus (by this time technically so known, from the title of the second book of Moses) of the sons of Israel; and commanded concerning his bones (even Joseph, who had attained such eminence and power in Egypt, did not account it his country, but in faith spoke of the promise of God as certain, Gen. I. 24, and realized it so as to enjoin the removal of his own remains when it should come to pass).* 23.]

Now the Writer passes on to Exodus, and its chief example, Moses, who even in his preservation by his parents was the child of faith. *By faith Moses, when born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw the child was comely; and they feared not the command of the king (to destroy all the male children, Exod. i. 22. Their faith was, loving trust in God who had given them so fair a child, which led them to perform, as far as in them lay, the duties of parents to it, and not the cruel part which the tyrant prescribed).*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; <sup>25</sup> choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; <sup>26</sup> esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. <sup>27</sup> By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king:

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; <sup>25</sup> choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; <sup>26</sup> esteeming <sup>p</sup> the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto <sup>q</sup> the recompence of reward. <sup>27</sup> By faith <sup>r</sup> he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured,

o Pa. lxxxiv. 10.

p ch. xiii. 13.

q ch. x. 35.

r Exod. x. 29,  
20. & xii. 37.  
& xiii. 17, 18.

24—28.] *The faith of Moses when come to man's estate. By faith Moses, when grown up (literally, become great. The expression is from the Greek of the passage in Exodus), refused to be called son of a (or, the) daughter of Pharaoh (there is no record in the Old Test. of this refusal of Moses: but the fact of the adoption was matter of Jewish traditionary belief: and the refusal is fairly gathered from his whole conduct); choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to possess a temporary enjoyment of sin; esteeming (this comes in with a slightly ratiocinative force—"esteeming, as he did") the reproach of Christ (what is this? Certainly not, with some, merely reproach similar to that of Christ: nor again does the more usual explanation, reproach on account of Christ, satisfy the meaning; nor even the modification of it which makes Moses thus choose, from a principle of faith in the Messiah to come. Far better is Bleek, "reproach which Christ had to bear in his own person, and has to bear in his members." And in this view, we may say, that all Israel's reproach was Christ's reproach: Israel typified Christ: all Israel's sufferings as the people of God were Christ's sufferings, not only by anticipation in type, but by that inclusion in Christ which they, His members before the Head was revealed, possessed in common with us. Christ was ever present in and among God's people: and thus De Wette well and finely says here, "The Writer calls the reproach which Moses suffered, the reproach of Christ, as Paul, 2 Cor. i. 5; Col. i. 24, calls the sufferings of Christians the sufferings of Christ, i. e. of Christ dwelling, striving, suffering, in his Church as in His body; to which this reproach is referred*

according to the idea of the unity of the Old and New Testaments, and of the eternal Christ [the Logos] already living and reigning in the former") greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked (the verb means, "so to look at any thing, as to be by waiting for it, or generally by the regard of it, determined or strengthened in a course of action") to the recompence of reward (viz. the great eternal reward spoken of vv. 39 f.: not the possession of Canaan merely).

27.] *By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king (when? This is much disputed. Was it when he fled after the murder of the Egyptian? or when he left Egypt with the children of Israel? Against the latter, it seems a decisive objection, that the Exodus was made, not in defiance of the king of Egypt, but with his consent, and at his urgent instance. It is also a lesser objection to it, that thus the chronological order is broken, the next particular, the institution of the Passover, having taken place previously to the Exodus. A third objection is, and one not easily got over, that the singular, he left Egypt, cannot well be referred to an event in Israel's history, but must refer to the personal history of Moses. Otherwise we should expect "he crossed," and not "they crossed," below in ver. 29. Regard being had to these objections, I cannot but think that to understand this of the Exodus is altogether impossible. It must then refer to the former flight. And this is the view of all the ancient expositors: and of many among the moderns. But we are here met by a startling difficulty. In Exod. ii. 14, we read that on finding that his slaying of the Egyptian was known, "Moses was afraid:" here we*



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

s ver. 13. as <sup>s</sup> seeing him who is invisible.  
 t Exod. xii. 21, &c. <sup>28</sup> By faith <sup>t</sup> he hath kept the passover, and the sprinkling of the blood, that he that destroyed the firstborn should not touch them.  
 u Exod. xiv. 22, 29. <sup>29</sup> By faith <sup>u</sup> they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned. <sup>30</sup> By faith <sup>x</sup> the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. <sup>31</sup> By faith <sup>y</sup> the harlot Rahab perished not with them that were dis-

for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.  
<sup>28</sup> Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.  
<sup>29</sup> By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned. <sup>30</sup> By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. <sup>31</sup> By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them

read, "*not fearing the wrath of the king.*" Were it not for this difficulty, we may safely say that the other interpretation would never have been thought of; but standing as it does, it is no wonder that it has driven Commentators to another resource. Still, if owing to other circumstances in the text it is, as we have seen it to be, necessary to refer it to that first leaving of Egypt, we have no right to set those aside on account of this difficulty: rather should we say that there must be some solution of it, however difficult to find. In attempting to give a solution, I may confess that I see as yet no *satisfactory* one. It may be that the truth is, that though the fact of his flight was the effect of his fear, the same flight itself, the dereliction of Egypt and reserving himself for further action, shewed that that fear did not *possess* nor bear him away. But on any solution, the difficulty remains. Had it stood "*fearing,*" instead of *not fearing*, the whole would have been plain enough: "when he feared the anger of the king"): for he endured, as seeing the invisible One (or, "the King who is invisible:" compare 1 Tim. i. 17). <sup>28.</sup>] By faith he hath celebrated (the perfect is used, on account of the Passover being a still enduring feast) the Passover (not as some interpret, in faith of the Redeemer to come, which point does not enter into consideration here: but by that faith which was to him the evidence of things unseen, viz. of the promise that the Destroyer should *pass over* and not hurt them), and the effusion of the blood (viz. of the blood of the paschal lamb on the lintel and

door-posts. This word is ordinarily used of those cases where the blood was sprinkled round the altar, e.g. Lev. i. 5; vi. 32, &c. So that the word applies well to this ordinance, where the blood was sprinkled by means of a bunch of hyssop), that he who destroyed the firstborn might not touch them. them, of a subject not before expressed, is to be understood out of the context as meaning the Israelites, who sprinkled the blood. It prepares the way for the change into the plural, at the next verse. <sup>29.</sup>] By faith they (see above) crossed the Red sea as through dry land: of which the Egyptians making experiment were swallowed up. <sup>30.</sup>] *A second example of the strength of faith in Israel generally.* By faith (of Israel, who obeyed the command of Joshua through all the days, which to the unbeliever would seem irrational. Chrysostom says, "For there is no power in the sound of a trumpet to throw down stones, even if a man go on blowing for a thousand years: but faith can do all things") the walls of Jericho fell (see Josh. vi. 5, 20), having been compassed about (see the narrative in Josh. vi.) during seven days. <sup>31.</sup>] *The last example* is one connected with the taking of Jericho, just mentioned. By faith (shewn in her confession, Josh. ii. 9, "I know that Jehovah hath given you the land:" and ver. 11, "Jehovah your God, He is God in heaven above and in earth beneath") Rahab the harlot (not to be softened into an *inn-keeper*, as some have done. Clement of Rome devotes to her a whole chapter of his Epistle to the Corinthians, and has no

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. <sup>32</sup> 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: <sup>33</sup> who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, <sup>34</sup> quenched the violence

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

obedient, because <sup>z</sup> she had received <sup>z</sup> JOSH. II. 1. the spies with peace.

<sup>32</sup> And what shall I more say?

for the time will fail me if I tell

of <sup>a</sup> Gideon, and of <sup>b</sup> Barak, and

of <sup>c</sup> Samson, and of <sup>d</sup> Jephthah; of

<sup>e</sup> David also, and <sup>f</sup> Samuel, and of

the prophets: <sup>33</sup> who through faith

subdued kingdoms, wrought right-

eousness, <sup>g</sup> obtained promises, <sup>h</sup> stop-

ped the mouths of lions, <sup>34</sup> <sup>i</sup> quenched

a JUDG. VI. 11.  
b JUDG. IV. 6.  
c JUDG. XIII. 24.  
d JUDG. XI. 1.  
& XII. 7.  
e 1 SAM. XVI. 1.  
& XVII. 45.  
f 1 SAM. I. 20.  
& XII. 20.

g 2 SAM. VII. 11, &c.  
h JUDG. XIV. 5, 6. 1 SAM. XVII. 34, 35.  
i DAN. III. 25.

DAN. VI. 22.

idea of her other than as an harlot. See note, Matt. i. 5) did not perish with them who were disobedient (the inhabitants of Jericho were disobedient to the will of God manifested by the signs and wonders which he had wrought for Israel: as is implied by Rahab's speech, Josh. ii. 9—12), having received (viz. to her house: they lodged there, Josh. ii. 1) the spies (sent by Joshua to Jericho, Josh. ii. 1) with peace (so that they had nothing hostile to fear from her). On the introduction of Rahab in James ii. 25, as an example of justification by works, see note there.

32—40.] The Writer breaks off, feeling that such an illustration of faith by examples would be endless, and gathers up those many which remain in one.

32.] And what say I yet (more, any) further? for the time (which might be reasonable for writing an epistle) will fail me narrating (if I narrate) concerning Gideon (see Judges vi.—viii.), and Barak (Judges iv. v. Barak was not so strong in faith as he might have been, though he did believe and go to the fight, and triumph: see Judg. iv. 8, 9), and Samson (Judges xiii.—xvi.), and Jephthah (Judges xi. 1—xii. 7); and David, and Samuel, and of the prophets; who (does not strictly identify the antecedents: for many of the actions which follow were done by others than those previously mentioned) through faith (through faith, instead of "by faith," for the first time in the chapter, suits perhaps better the miscellaneous verbs of predication which follow, e.g. quenched the violence of fire) subdued kingdoms (the acts referred to may be Gideon's victory over the Midianites [Judges vii.], Barak's over the Canaanites [ib. iv.], Samsou's over the Philistines

[ib. xiv. ff.], Jephthah's over the Ammonites [ib. ix.], David's over the Philistines [2 Sam. v. 17—25; viii. 1; xxi. 15 ff.], Moabites, Syrians, Edomites [ib. viii. 2 ff.], Ammonites [ib. x. xii. 26 ff.]), wrought righteousness (so Samuel, the righteous judge, 1 Sam. xii. 3, 4: David, the righteous king, 2 Sam. viii. 15; 1 Chron. xviii. 14: and indeed in a wide sense all of them, see Jer. xxiii. 5; Ezek. xlv. 9), obtained promises (the words are capable of two senses: 1) got from God spoken promises, as e.g. the prophets: or 2) obtained the fulfilment of promises. 1) is taken by Chrysostom [referring it to the promise to David that his seed should sit on his throne], and others. But it seems to me altogether improbable that the Writer should thus illustrate faith by a fact which, though it may have accompanied faith in the recipient, was certainly no fruit or direct triumph of it: and that in the face of such sayings as Josh. xxi. 45; 1 Kings viii. 56, and of Gideon's trials of God. The objection which is brought against 2), that it is inconsistent with "not having received the promises," ver. 13, and with "received not the promise," ver. 39, is very simply answered: it is not said that they obtained the promises, or the promise, but anathously: they obtained promises, but not the promises which were yet future. And so most Commentators), stopped the mouths of lions (referring principally, it may be, to Daniel, of whom it is said, Dan. vi. 22, that God sent his angel and stopped the mouths of the lions: where notice also the addition "because he believed in his God." But reference may be also to Samson, Judges xiv. 6, and David, 1 Sam. xvii. 34: and I may add, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, 2 Sam. xxiii.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

the power of fire, <sup>k</sup> escaped the edge of the sword, <sup>l</sup> out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, <sup>m</sup> turned to flight armies of aliens. <sup>35</sup> <sup>n</sup> Women received their dead raised to life again: but others were <sup>o</sup> tortured, not accepting de-

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. <sup>35</sup> Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accept-

20; 1 Chron. xi. 22). **34.] quenched the power of fire** (so the three companions of Daniel,—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Dan. iii. Theophylact says, “He does not say, extinguished fire, but the power of fire, which is even greater: though it remained kindled, yet it had no power against them to burn them.” It is said of them, 1 Mace. ii. 59, that they “by believing were saved out of the flame.” Delitzsch reminds us that one of the two martyrs at Brussels, Henry Voes and Joh. Esche, when the flames of the faggots rose round him, said, that it felt to him as if they were strewing roses under him), **escaped the edge** (literally, mouths, or edges, plural, because the Writer has various examples in mind) **of the sword** (e. g. David from Saul, 1 Sam. xviii. 11; xix. 10, 12; xxi. 10; Elijah, 1 Kings xix. 1 ff.: Elisha, 2 Kings vi. 14 ff., 31 ff.: Jeremiah, Baruch, Jer. xxxvi. 26; Ebedmelech, Jer. xxxviii. 8 ff., compared with xxxix. 18), **were made strong out of weakness** (so Samson, after his hair grew, Judges xvi. 28 ff.: David, who ends so many of his plaintive psalms with jubilant thanksgiving: Hezekiah, who after deadly sickness was restored to fifteen years of health, 2 Kings xx.; Isa. xxxviii. The ancient expositors refer the words, not so probably, to the strengthening of Israel after the return from the captivity), **were made strong in war** (Theodoret says, “Both those mentioned before, and the sons of Mattathias, Judas, and Jonathas, and Simon.” It is not improbable that these later glories of the faith were also before the Writer’s mind: they unquestionably are in the next verse), **put to flight armies of aliens** (the word is common in the Septuagint, of Gentiles, aliens from God’s people. The reference of the fact may be general, to many who have preceded: but I should rather regard it as describing the Maccabæan victories. Delitzsch would understand all from “escaped the edge of the sword” of those times; the escape of Mattathias and his sons into the

mountains, the increase and success of the little band that strengthened itself in God, the first victories of Judas Maccabæus over Apollonius, Seron, and others, the formal and victorious war of the Asmonæan heroes with the Syrians and neighbouring people. “That the Writer,” he continues, “should recognize these as illustrious deeds of faith, is no wonder. In our times indeed it is the custom to represent the mighty revival of the Maccabæan period rather as human than divine, rather as patriotic and popular than theocratic and national: but the book of Daniel shews us, in prophetic delineation of that time, the holy people of the Most High, conflicting with the atheistic and antichristian prince of this world, and ascribes to this conflict the highest imaginable importance in reference to the sacred history. Therefore I hold that these clauses pass beyond ‘the prophets,’ and over the book of Daniel to the first of Maccabees, which in the Septuagint is attached to it: which indeed is generally acknowledged with regard to the two last clauses, and is the more certain because the unusual word here used for armies, as well as that for aliens, are of frequent occurrence in the first book of Maccabees.” And perhaps, after all, this may be the true view).

**35.] Women received their dead by** (out of, by means of, their reception springing out of it as its cause) **resurrection** (not, the resurrection: see below. The cases alluded to seem to be those of the widow of Zarephath, 1 Kings xvii. 17 ff., and the Shunamite, 2 Kings iv. 17 ff., whose sons were raised, the former by Elijah, the latter by Elisha. The faith must be that of the women themselves, the subject of the sentence, not merely that in the prophets): **but** (for the contrast, see below) **others were broken on the wheel** (the case especially referred to is that of Eleazar, 2 Mace. vi. 18—end; and the *tympanum* here mentioned seems to have been an instrument like a wheel or drum-head, on which the victim was stretched and scourged to death. Josephus makes Eleazar say to

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

ing deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: <sup>36</sup> and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: <sup>37</sup> they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wan-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

liverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection: <sup>36</sup> others again had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover <sup>p</sup> of bonds and imprisonment: <sup>37</sup> <sup>q</sup> they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: <sup>r</sup> they wandered about <sup>s</sup> in

<sup>p</sup> Gen. xxxix.  
29. Jer. xx.  
2. & xxxvii.  
15.  
<sup>q</sup> 1 Kings xxi.  
13. 2 Chron.  
xxiv. 21.  
Acta vii. 58.  
& xiv. 19.  
<sup>r</sup> 2 Kings i. 8.  
Matt. iii. 4.  
<sup>s</sup> Zech. xiii. 4.

Antiochus, "Now then prepare thy wheel" . . . And in the deaths of the seven brothers, which are related differently from the account in 2 Macc. vii., we read of the first [4 Macc. ix. 12], "they put him upon the wheel," and similarly of several of the others), not accepting the deliverance (offered to them: see in the deaths of the seven brethren, 2 Macc. vii. Eleazar himself says, 2 Macc. vi. 30, "Whereas I might have been delivered from death, I now endure sore pain, &c."), that they might obtain a better resurrection (there can, I think, be little doubt that Chrysostom's explanation of better is right,—better, i. e. not such as the dead of the women before mentioned. Those sons were raised by a kind of resurrection to a life which should again end in death: but these expected a glorious resurrection to endless life. See 2 Macc. vii. 9, "The King of the world shall raise us up, who have died for this law, unto everlasting life:" also ib. vv. 11, 14, 20, 23, 36. Hence we may perhaps understand the others again, distinguishing these even higher triumphs of faith from these former): others again had trial of cruel mockings (so the A. V. well: for the word must mean insult accompanied with cruelty, judging from its use in the place here referred to, viz. 2 Macc. vii. 7, 10. See also 1 Macc. ix. 26) and of scourgings (see 2 Macc. as before), yea, moreover of bonds and prison (so Jonathan, 1 Macc. xiii. 12. But perhaps he now speaks more generally, e. g. of Hanani, 2 Chron. xvi. 10, Micaiah, the son of Imlah, 1 Kings xxii. 26, and Jeremiah, Jer. xxxii. 2, 3, &c.): they were stoned (so Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, 2 Chron. xxiv. 20—22, referred to by our Lord, Luke xi. 51, Matt. xxiii. 35. There was a tradition, reported by Tertullian and other fathers, that Jeremiah was stoned at Daphne in Egypt, by the people: and perhaps the Writer refers to this also. It cannot refer still to the Maccabæan times,

seeing that stoning was not a Greek but purely Jewish punishment. Some imagine it to refer to Naboth, 1 Kings xxi.: but this is hardly probable), they were sawn asunder (the traditional death of Isuah at the hands of king Manassch. There seems no reason to doubt, that this tradition was known in the apostolic times: Jerome calls it a "most certain tradition among the Jews," and mentions the general reference of these words to it by Christians. The punishment was used sometimes in the case of captives in war: see 2 Sam. xii. 31, 1 Chron. xx. 3), were tempted (certainly it is surprising, to meet with so mild a word in the midst of torments and ways of dreadful death. Our surprise is not much mitigated by the sense given, e. g. by Stuart, "temptations presented by persecutors to the victims of their torture, in order to induce them to forsake their religion, and worship the gods of the idolaters." And this surprise having been all but universally felt, various have been the conjectures resorted to. Some have been for leaving out the word altogether. And other proposals have been made, consisting of the substitution of other Greek words somewhat like this one, and bearing the sense of were burned, or were mutilated, &c. As it stands, I do not see how any appropriate meaning can be given to the mere enduring of temptation, placed as it is between being sawn asunder and dying by the sword), died in the murder of the sword (i. e. were slain by the sword: see reff. One prophet only perished by the sword in the kingdom of Judah, viz. Urijah, Jer. xxvi. 23: but under Israel it is said, 1 Kings xix. 10, "They [the house of Omri] have slain thy prophets with the sword." Perhaps the Maccabæan persecutions may again be before the Writer's mind: see 2 Macc. vii. 4. Chrysostom says beautifully, "What means this? what sayest thou? Some escaped the edge of the sword, and some died in the murder of

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, in misery; <sup>38</sup> (of whom the world was not worthy): wandering in deserts, and mountains, and <sup>t</sup> dens, and in the caves of the earth. <sup>39</sup> And these all, <sup>u</sup> being borne witness to through faith, received not the promise: <sup>40</sup> God having provided <sup>x</sup> some bet-

*dered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; <sup>38</sup> (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. <sup>39</sup> And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: <sup>40</sup> God having provided*

<sup>t</sup> 2 Kings xviii.  
& xix. 9.

<sup>u</sup> ver. 2, 13.

<sup>x</sup> ch. vii. 22.  
& viii. 6.

the sword? what does this mean? which praisest thou? which admiest thou? the last, or the first? Yea, he replies, both one and the other: for double are the wonders of faith: it both does great things, and it suffers great things without seeming to suffer any thing”): <sup>37</sup> b, <sup>38</sup>.]

*Examples of those who, though not put to violent death, lived lives of apparent wretchedness in the endurance of faith.*

**They wandered about in sheepskins** (the garment spoken of was the skin of any small kine with the hair on. The Septuagint use the word for Elijah’s garment, to whom the allusion seems principally to be) **and goatskins** (this, coming after *sheepskins*, which may mean the same, has surprised some, and has seemed to them a mere gloss on that word. Perhaps the Writer regarded the former as merely the sheepskin, and mentioned the other because goats were as often kept and their skin as often worn); **destitute, afflicted, in misery** (see ver. 25); <sup>38</sup>.] **of whom** (viz. those who wandered about as in ver. 37: for the construction is resumed below, and in reference to these same persons. **These** all first occurs in the next verse) **the world was not worthy** (the world, by casting them out and persecuting them, proved that it was not fit to have them in it: condemned itself, in condemning them); **wandering in deserts, and mountains, and caves, and the chinks of the earth** (the Holy Land was especially calculated, by its geological formation, and its wildernesses, to afford shelter to persecuted persons: so did it to a hundred of the Lord’s prophets whom Obadiah hid by fifty in a cave, 1 Kings xviii. 4, 13: to Elijah, ib. xix. 9, 13: to Mattathias and his sons, who fled to the mountains 1 Macc. ii. 28 f., and many others in the wilderness: to Judas Maccabæus, who fled with others *into the wilderness* and there lived *in the mountains*,

like the wild beasts, 2 Macc. v. 27. See also ib. vi. 11, x. 6). <sup>39</sup>.]

**And these all** (“these, every one of them.” All, viz. all that have been named or referred to throughout the chapter: not only those *others* since ver. 35), **borne witness to by their faith** (the emphasis is on *being borne witness to*, not on *by their faith*: and the sense is rather, “*though borne witness to*,” than “*being*” or “*because*, borne witness to”), **did not receive the promise** (many promises indeed they did receive, ver. 33: but not THE PROMISE, the promise of final salvation, or as it is called, ch. ix. 15, “*the promise of the eternal inheritance*,” the perfection, to which without us they were not to attain. “But,” says Delitzsch, “do we not read ch. vi. 15, of Abraham, *he obtained the promise*?” Certainly, he has obtained the promise, yet not this side the grave, but, as we there maintained, in his life on the other side the grave: the general and actual salvation of the New Test. is, in their heavenly estate, the joy of the patriarchs. And this view is confirmed by looking forward to ch. xii., where the Old Test. believers translated into heaven are called the “*spirits of just men made perfect*,” or at all events are included in that designation. And another question arises. It is said of the Old Test. saints, that they did not obtain the promise: but is it not plain, from ch. x. 36, that *the obtaining the promise* is for us also a thing future? Doubtless, but with a significant difference. For them, final salvation was a thing purely future: for us, it is a thing present as well as future: present, in that it is once for all brought about by Christ’s offering of Himself,—future, inasmuch as the unfolding of all the fulness of that which we possess, and the taking possession of it, when unfolded in its fulness, is for us yet to come: compare ch. ix. 28 with x. 1-4”), <sup>40</sup>.]



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.*

XII. <sup>1</sup> *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

ter thing for us, that they without us should not be <sup>y</sup> made perfect.

XII. <sup>1</sup> Wherefore let us also, having so great a cloud of witnesses encompassing us, <sup>a</sup> laying aside every <sup>a</sup> Col. iii. 8. <sup>1</sup> Pet. ii. 1.

y ch. v. 9. &  
xii. 23.  
Rev. vi. 11.

God having provided (foreseen from afar) concerning us (viz. the Writer and his readers, as belonging to the New Test. church) something better (what is this? The Fathers generally interpret it of the ultimate state of glorious perfection, which shall only then come in, when all the number of the elect shall be accomplished. On this view, as Delitzsch says, the something better would consist in this, that the history of mankind has not been cut short, as it would have been if the ancients had received the promise in this sense, but has been continued for us to partake of our present privileges under the New Test. But, he continues, this narrow acceptation of the promise, as referring to the last things only, has against it not only what is said of Abraham in ch. vi. 15, that he "obtained the promise," but also the whole spirit of the Epistle, which regards final salvation as brought in with the propitiation of Christ, and the "end of the days" as begun with His first Advent. The Writer cannot be ignoring this all-inclusive beginning of the New Test. fulfilment of the promises, in attributing to us something better than the Old Test. believers had. And consequently we must understand by the expression, something better than they had, viz. the enjoyment, here, of the fulfilment of the promise, which they never had here, and only have there since Christ's descent into Hades and ascension into Heaven. It is that "something better" for which the Lord felicitates his disciples, Matt. xiii. 17, the revelation of the Son of God, ch. i. 1, the "salvation" of ch. ii. 3), that they should not apart from us be made perfect (the design of God in this provision of something better for us was, that they, the Old Test. saints, should not be perfected without us, i. e. independently of the New Test. salvation of which we are partakers,—cut off from Christ's universal Church, of which we are members. But we read, ch. xii. 23, of them as "made perfect" now. And therefore the Writer implies, as indeed ch. x. 14 seems to testify, that the Advent and work of Christ has changed the estate of the Old Test. Fathers and saints into greater

and perfect bliss; an inference which is forced on us by many other places in Scripture. So that their perfection was dependent on our perfection: their and our perfection was all brought in at the same time, when Christ "by one offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified." So that the result with regard to them is, that their spirits, from the time when Christ descended into Hades and ascended up into heaven, enjoy heavenly blessedness, and are waiting, with all who have followed their glorified High Priest within the veil, for the resurrection of their bodies, the Regeneration, the renovation of all things. This thought naturally leads on to the opening verses of the next chapter).

CHAP. XII. 1—11.] EXHORTATION, mixed with reproof, on looking back at all these witnesses, and looking also to Jesus, who has come to glory through suffering, not to faint in the conflict with sin; nor to forget the love of our Father, who visits us with chastisement that we may bring forth the fruit of righteousness. This exhortation was begun at ch. x. 19, and broken off by the insertion of all those examples of the nature and triumphs of faith. It is now resumed, having, so to speak, accumulated new momentum by the interruption, and is pressed home directly on the readers.

1.] Wherefore (the word used is one of earnest and solemn inference;—"these things then being so . . .") we also (as well as those just enumerated), having so great a cloud (see below) of witnesses surrounding us (in order to understand this aright, we must bear in mind both the similitude here used, and the connexion with the preceding chapter. "This verse is altogether made up of words derived from the games," says Hammond. And this being so, who can help referring this cloud of witnesses which surrounds us to the scene in the games which is depicted, and regarding them as lookers on while our race is run? Whoever denies such reference, misses, it seems to me, the very point of the sense. But even thus we have not exhausted the meaning of the word witnesses. It is im-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

weight, and sin, which doth naturally enwrap us, <sup>b</sup>run <sup>c</sup>with en-

<sup>b</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 24.  
<sup>c</sup> Phil. iii. 13,  
 14.  
<sup>c</sup> Rom. xii. 12. ch. x. 36.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with

probable, as Delitzsch well observes, that the Writer should have used the word "*witnesses*" so closely upon "*borne witness to*," ch. xi. 39, without any reference to that idea. See also ib. vv. 2, 4, 5. So that we can hardly help giving to '*witnesses*' a sense not confined to their looking on upon us, but extending to their ethical condition of witnesses for the faith. But we may notice, that Delitzsch in contending for this double sense, has in fact a triple reference of the word to justify: they are *borne witness to*, they have their *testimony*, ch. xi. 5: and by this they become *witnesses*: and they carry out that office in being witnesses of our conflict here below. And now the propriety of the other words used at once appears. *cloud*, not only an immense multitude, and that number as it were pressing us all around as the spectators did the combatants in the circus,—but also fitly compared to a cloud from the fact of its being *above us*, they looking on from that heavenly bliss which they entered at Christ's triumph. So that the words must be taken as distinctly so far implying community between the church triumphant and the church below, that they who have entered into heavenly rest are conscious of what passes among ourselves. Any interpretation short of this leaves the exhortation here tame and without point. If they are merely quasi-witnesses, merely witnesses in a metaphor, the motive, as far as this clause supplies one, is gone. The best note on the whole idea and imagery is that of Schlichting: "He introduces us as it were into an immense theatre, where a vast crowd of spectators has assembled, which fills all the benches and spaces, seeming like a dense cloud poured around those contending in the middle. Before the eyes of such a multitude, and so many spectators, he represents us as contending. Now as of old such a multitude of spectators added courage to the combatants, and was a great stimulus to use every effort for victory: so to us also, so many witnesses, who also themselves have toiled in the same conflict, ought to add alacrity, and cause us to run with all our force the race which we have begun. And he calls them *witnesses*, not only in a figure, allusive to the spectators of a contest, as we have said, who are wit-

nesses of the prowess of those who contend; but, and much more, because they witness concerning God and His goodness and justice, and all as with one mouth declare that God is, and is a rewarder of those who seek Him: that with Him, as the Chief Lord of the games, there is laid up a prize for earnest contenders: that He is true in His promises: that even after death He can render those happy who for His sake have given their lives. For, thirdly, they are specially to be understood in this place by the name, who by their blood, witness to the faithfulness and goodness of God. Whence they are par excellence called *martyrs*, i. e. witnesses"), *laying aside all superfluous weight* (the word means, *any superfluous mass or burden*). It is used doubtless here with direct reference to athletes, who before running trained themselves so as to get rid of all superfluous flesh: and also of weight accessory from without, as well as of weight carried on the person. So that the word may be taken of every weight of every kind which may weigh down the runner. Though, on account of what follows, I should understand it rather of weight of the person than weight on the person. See below), and *sin, which doth naturally enwrap* (the word thus rendered is used only here in all Greek literature, and is therefore somewhat difficult to interpret. The sum of what I have said on it in my Greek Test. is this, that it may best be understood "*easily surrounding*," And so the A. V., "*which doth so easily beset us*:" and by far the greater part of expositors, some with, some without the sense of active hostility. The word being thus taken, the various acceptations of the similitude intended are well summed up by Bleek: we must understand *sin* either as our inner propensity to sin, which clings fast to us, and will not part from us: or as a cumbersome garment girding us round and hindering us from running, or personified, as an adversary, who surrounds us on all sides, and waylays us to make us his prey; or generally, as something which lies about us and is ever ready to catch us: or which is ever from all sides standing in the way so as to entangle and impede our course. But the connexion with the verb, *laying aside*, which evidently De-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

patience the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

duration the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> looking unto the author and perfecter of the faith, even Jesus; <sup>d</sup> who for the joy set before him

<sup>d</sup> Luke xxiii. 28, & xxiv. 20. Phil. ii. 8, &c. 1 Pet. i. 11.

litzsch feels, seems to me fatal to his view, and indeed to all views except that which makes *sin to lie about us, as a garment, or beset us, as an inward propensity*. Of both these laying *aside* may be said; of the former literally, of the latter figuratively. And in choosing between these two, I have no hesitation in preferring the former. The Writer is speaking of our *race*: and having expected us to lay aside all superfluous weight of body, which the athletes did, he passes to their other lightening for the race, viz., *stripping naked*, and exhorts us to put off sin, which lies so easily about us. Most likely perhaps the word *sin* alludes especially, though it need not exclusively, to apostasy. There does not seem to be any allusion to the different sins which may, in the sense now so common, and originally derived from this passage in A. V., "*beset*" various persons: though, of course, such an *application* of the passage is quite admissible, let us through (not merely '*with*,' although we must so express ourselves in an English version, but as *the state in, by means of which*) endurance run the race set before us, 2.] looking unto (so A. V. very exactly. There does not appear to be in the word here used any intimation of looking off from every thing else unto, as sometimes asserted) the Leader (one who precedes others by his example, they following him. But see note on ch. ii. 10. *Author* seems the best English word here, as there) and *Perfecter* (this is variously interpreted. The most likely meaning is that He *perfected the faith*, inasmuch as He perfected faith in his own person and example: but He *perfected the faith* also, inasmuch as He became the Author of perfect salvation to them that obey Him. His going before us in faith has made faith possible for us: His perfecting faith in his own person and example, has made faith effectual for us) of the faith (viz. that faith of which we have been speaking through ch. xi.: and thus rather "*the faith*" than "*our faith*," which latter is liable to the mistake so often made in English, viz. to being taken as if it meant *faith in us*, so that Jesus

should be said to be "*author and finisher*" of each individual Christian's faith which he has within him. The word here may be rendered merely "*faith*" without the article; but it would seem most probable that the article here used in the original, whereas it was not throughout ch. xi., is intended to have a definite force. Besides which, the ascription of faith to our Lord is so plain in our Epistle, compare ch. ii. 13; iii. 2, that we must not seem to exclude this sense in our rendering, which we certainly do by "*our faith*:" whereas "*the faith*" includes both, and satisfies that which follows, in which His own example of endurance in prospect of triumph is set before us), [*even*] *Jesus, who for* (literally, *instead of*: see below) *the joy set before Him* (the words of the original thus rendered have been otherwise interpreted both by ancients and moderns. The ancient Syriac version, Beza, and others, take it to mean, "*instead of the joy which He had before His incarnation*." But this, though not an incorrect rendering, seems to me doubly objectionable. First, which many have not noticed, *joy* which He already had could not well be designated as *set before Him*: and then, which I have not seen noticed, the term *joy* can hardly be used of a state of bliss in which one already is, a quiescent or pre-existent joy, but more naturally applies to joy prompted by some cause of active rejoicing. Then another modification of this same view is found in Chrysostom, viz., that the preferable alternative of escaping the cross was before Him, and He might have taken it, if He would. And so Luther, Calvin, and others. But this again, though it might satisfy the "*set before Him*," falls short of the above sense maintained for *joy*. Erasmus and others explain it, that He *despised the joys of this life*. This makes *joy* identical with *pleasure*, besides giving a low and unworthy sense to the *joy set before Him*, in making it to mean the pleasures of this life. The sense given above, "*for the joy set before Him*," i.e. as in comparison with, as in exchange for, the joy which was to come after, in the day of His triumph, is adopted by most Cou-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

e Ps. cx. 1.  
ch. i. 3, 13.  
& viii. 1.  
1 Pet. iii. 22.  
f Matt. x. 24, 25.  
John xv. 20.

g Gal. vi. 9.

h 1 Cor. x. 18.  
ch. x. 32, 33,  
34.

i Job v. 17.  
Prov. iii. 11.

endured the cross, despising shame, and <sup>e</sup> is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. <sup>3 f</sup> For consider him that hath endured such contradiction at the hands of them that sinned against him, <sup>g</sup> that ye be not wearied, fainting in your souls. <sup>4 h</sup> Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. <sup>5</sup> And ye have quite forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto sons, <sup>i</sup> My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord,

cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. <sup>3</sup> For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. <sup>4</sup> Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. <sup>5</sup> And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord,

mentators, and is fully borne out both by usage, and the context) **endured crucifixion, despising shame** (or, "*the shame*:" but most probably every kind of shame, even to that of the shameful death which He died), and is set down (the perfect tense gives the state of triumph as it now endures, having happened) **on the right hand of the throne of God** (i. e. on the throne of God, at His right hand: see on ch. viii. 1; and compare Rev. iii. 21).

3.] For (meaning, "and there is reason in what I say;" *looking to Him*, for He like yourselves had much and continual conflict with the sinners of His day) **compare** (with yourselves: think on, by way of comparison: "consider Him, as set in comparison with yourselves") **Him who hath endured** (*perfect* again, to set before them Christ as not merely a character of the past, but one ever present) **such contradiction** (the *contradiction* need not be confined to *words*, but may also be in deeds) **by the sinners against Himself** (the A. V. is ambiguous: in it, the sentence may mean either "*the contradiction* | of sinners | against Himself," "*against*" being taken with "*contradiction*," which is wrong,—or "*the contradiction* | of sinners against Himself," "*against*" being taken with "*sinners*," which is right. In the text, the ambiguity is removed), **that ye weary not, fainting in your souls.** 4.]

Bengel's remark, which De Wette charges with pedantry, "from the *race* he comes to *boxing*, as Paul, 1 Cor. ix. 26," is nevertheless a just one. **Not yet have ye resisted unto blood** (many take this to mean, have not yet sacrificed your lives: so Chrysostom, "ye have undergone spoiling

of your goods, defamation, banishment, but not yet this." And it may be so: but I would rather abide by the idea of the pugilistic figure being intended, and apply **unto blood** to the figure, not to the interpretation. Seneca says: "An athlete cannot bring great courage to the contest who has never been bruised. He who has seen his own blood, whose teeth have crashed beneath the fist, he who has been thrown and borne the weight of his adversary on him, and has not been prostrated in his spirit, who as often as he has fallen has risen more indomitable in spirit, he it is who comes down to the fight with great hope." On the relation of such passages as this to the date of the Epistle, see in the Introduction, § ii. 29 ff.), **tending against sin** (personified, as an adversary: not to be limited in its meaning to sin in themselves, or to sin in their persecutors, but understood of both. Delitzsch, who would confine it to the latter, says that it was not sin in themselves which would *shed* their blood, but rather, which would *spare* its being shed. Yes, and for this very reason the *resisting* that sin of unfaithfulness which would lead them to *spare* their blood, would, if carried far enough, lead to the shedding of it. Similarly, the sin in their persecutors, which they were to resist, would, if yielded to, spare their blood by seducing them into apostasy).

5, 6.] **And ye have completely forgotten** (or, **have ye completely forgotten . . . ?** but the affirmative form is more probable than the interrogative) **the exhortation, the which** (that kind of exhortation, of which the following is a specimen) **discourses with you as with**

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: <sup>6</sup> for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. <sup>7</sup> If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? <sup>8</sup> But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. <sup>9</sup> 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? <sup>10</sup> For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: <sup>6</sup> for <sup>k</sup> whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, yea, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. <sup>7</sup> † It is for chastisement that ye are enduring: God is dealing with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? <sup>8</sup> But if ye are without chastisement, <sup>m</sup> whereof all have been made partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. <sup>9</sup> Furthermore we once had the fathers of our flesh as chastisers, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto <sup>n</sup> the Father of spirits, and live? <sup>10</sup> For they verily for a few days chastened us after their

<sup>k</sup> 1's. xciv. 12. & cxix. 75.  
 Prov. iii. 12.  
 James i. 12.  
 Rev. iii. 19.  
 Deut. viii. 5.  
 2 Sam. vii. 14.  
 Prov. xiii. 24.  
 & xix. 18. & xxiii. 13.  
 † So all our ancient MSS.

<sup>m</sup> Ps. lxxiii. 15.  
 1 Pet. v. 9.

<sup>n</sup> Numb. xvi. 22. & xxvii. 16. Job xii. 10. Eccles. xii. 7. Isa. xiii. 5. & lvii. 16. Zech. xii. l.

sons, My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when corrected by Him (in the Hebrew, "and have no aversion to His correction"): for whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth, yea, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth (this clause is very different in the Hebrew and our English Bible: "even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." See on the difference in my Greek Test. Receiveth, i. e., takes to him as a veritable son, receives in his heart and cherishes).

7, 8.] *Application of the passage of Scripture to the readers.* 7.] The

question of the various reading here can hardly be made intelligible to the English reader. The meaning is, "It is for chastisement that ye are enduring, not for punishment, not for any evil purpose." "Your *endurance*, like His *endurance*, will not be thrown away. He had joy before Him, you have life (ver. 9) before you."

It is for chastisement that ye are enduring: as with sons God is dealing with you. For what son is there whom the (i. e., his) father chasteneth not?

8.] But if ye are without (separate from, no partakers in) chastisement, of which all (God's sons: or those above mentioned, ch. xi., which is better, on account of the perfect verb) have been made partakers, then ye are bastards (beneath the attention and affectionate superintendence of the

father), and not sons.

9.] Then again (this brings in a fresh argument: "furthermore," as A. V.) we once had (the tense is imperfect, and is used of a state of former habit) the fathers of our flesh (see below) as chastisers (the fathers is the object, chastisers the predicate: not as A. V., "we have had fathers of our flesh who corrected us," which is an ungrammatical rendering), and revered them: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits (or, of our spirits. But [see also below] the other is more majestic, and more in accord with the text which probably was before the Writer's mind, Numb. xvi. 22, and again xxvii. 16), and live (viz. in life, eternal)? An inquiry arises out of the expression here used, in what sense our earthly fathers are said to be the fathers of our flesh, and God the Father of (our) spirits. I have given in my Greek Test. the various opinions, and have come to this conclusion, that I would understand the expression as an exalted contrast of God, a Spirit Himself, and the Creator of spirits, His like, to men, flesh themselves, and the progenitors of fleshly bodies, their like.

10.] The argument from the stronger consideration is strengthened, by bringing out the difference between the two chastisements as to their character. For they indeed (our earthly parents)



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

own pleasure; but he for our profit,  
 o that we may be partakers of his  
 holiness. <sup>11</sup> Now no chastening for  
 the present seemeth to be matter of  
 joy, but of grief: nevertheless after-  
 ward it yieldeth <sup>p</sup> the peaceable  
 fruit of righteousness unto them.

o Lev. xl. 44. &  
 xix. 2.  
 i Pet. i. 15,  
 16.

p James iii. 18.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

our profit, that we might  
 be partakers of his holi-  
 ness. <sup>11</sup> Now no chastening  
 for the present seemeth  
 to be joyous, but grievous:  
 nevertheless afterward it  
 yieldeth the peaceable fruit  
 of righteousness unto them

for a few days (see the meaning below) chastised us after their own pleasure (according to that which seemed good to them: their standard and rule of action in the matter was at best their own view of what was right, and too often their own caprice or temper); but He in order to that which is profitable, in order to our partaking of His holiness (the becoming partakers of God's holiness is manifestly to be taken subjectively: becoming holy like Him). Two questions arise regarding this verse, 1) what is the intended reference of for a few days? 2) What are the clauses opposed to one another? The former of these questions in fact involves the latter. for a few days has been understood by many of the duration of our natural life, as the term to which the chastisement of our natural parents had reference, whereas that of our heavenly Father regarded eternity. But this cannot be the meaning of the Writer. For in the first place it is not true that all earthly correction had regard only to the present life. And in the next, there is not one word in the latter clause expressing the eternal nature of God's purpose, which surely there would have been. The other interpretation, 'during and in reference to the time of our being subject to their chastisement,' is certainly the right one. Then we come to the second question, how the antitheses are to be arranged. Some have thought that "for a few days" is to be supplied in the second member of the sentence also: seeing that the divine chastisement, like the human, lasts for a few days only, i. e. for the term of this time of trial. Others again would supply in the second member some contrast to the term "for a few days." Surely the true antithesis is that pointed out by the order of the clauses themselves, and by their correspondence: 1) "for a few days," and "for our profit," 2) "after their pleasure," and "that we may be partakers of his holiness." In 1), we have set over against one another, — the short time

during which, the temporary reference with which, their chastisement was inflicted,—and the great purpose implied as eternal from its very expression as *that which is profitable* for an immortal being, for which He chastises us: and in 2), are opposed,—their purpose and standard of action, to satisfy their own seeming, be it good or bad,—and His purpose, to make us partakers of His holiness, which holiness, absolute and pure, is His rule of acting, and no mere pleasure of His own. Thus all is straightforward, and no clause need be supplied. 11.] Recurrence to the common ground of ver. 8, in describing the attribute of *all* chastisement, divine as well as human. In asserting what he does of *all* chastisement, the Writer lets fall out of view the capricious nature and uncertain result of human chastisement, and regards it more as a type and representative of that which is divine:—*all* chastisement, properly so called, and answering its proper purpose. This is brought out in the second clause: the first is equally true of every sort of chastisement. Now (introducing an axiom to which all will assent) all chastisement for ('during and in respect of') the time present seems (the reality, as Chrysostom remarks, being otherwise) not to be matter of joy, but of grief: but afterwards it yields peaceable fruit of righteousness (the genitive is one of apposition; the righteousness is the fruit, the chastisement being the tree. The words are sometimes otherwise taken, making righteousness that which yields the fruit. But seeing that chastisement yields fruit, it must be its own fruit, and not that belonging to righteousness, that it yields. And this fruit, thus considered, is the practical righteousness which springs from faith, not the forensic righteousness which comes by faith [as in Rom. v. 1]). And this fruit is called *peaceful*, in contrast to the *contest* by which it is won: it is, as Tholuck expresses it, "fruit of righteousness to be enjoyed in peace after the conflict") to those who have been exer-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

which are exercised thereby. <sup>12</sup> Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; <sup>13</sup> and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. <sup>14</sup> Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: <sup>15</sup> looking diligently lest any man

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

which have been exercised thereby. <sup>12</sup> Wherefore <sup>q</sup> lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; <sup>13</sup> <sup>r</sup> and make straight paths for your feet, that that which is lame be not turned out of the way, <sup>s</sup> but may rather be healed. <sup>14</sup> <sup>t</sup> Follow peace with all men, and sanctification, <sup>u</sup> without which no man shall see the Lord: <sup>15</sup> <sup>x</sup> looking dili-

<sup>q</sup> Job iv. 3, 4.  
<sup>Isa.</sup> xxxv. 3.

<sup>r</sup> Prov. iv. 26,  
27.

<sup>s</sup> Gal. vi. 1.  
<sup>t</sup> Ps. xxxiv.  
<sup>14.</sup> Rom. xii.  
<sup>15.</sup> & xiv. 19.  
<sup>2</sup> Tim. ii. 22.  
<sup>u</sup> Matt. v. 8.  
<sup>2</sup> Cor. vii. 1.  
<sup>Eph.</sup> v. 5.  
<sup>x</sup> 2 Cor. vi. 1.

cised by it (viz. chastisement. The word exercised is a clear reference to the conflict alluded to in the former verses).

12—17.] Further exhortation rather to promote the running the Christian race, and to take care, following peace and holiness, that there be no bitter root of sin among them, which, as in Esau's case, might deprive them of the promised blessing.

12.] Wherefore (connects with the reasoning, and also with the imagery, of the foregoing verses:—because suffering chastisement is the part of God's sons—because the running the race successfully brings joy and peace) put straight again (into their proper places) the relaxed hands, and the paralyzed knees; 13.] and

make straight tracks for your feet (these words are quoted in substance from Prov. iv. 26. In the Septuagint the A. V. has "ponder the paths of thy feet." The word means properly the mark left by the wheel, the rut or wheel-mark, indicating a track or road. The meaning seems to be, Let your walk be so firm and so unanimous in the right direction, that a plain track and highway may be thereby established for those who accompany and follow you to perceive and walk in. Compare Isa. xxxv. 8), that that which is lame be not turned out of the way, but rather be healed ("that which is lame," indicates that part of the church which was wavering between Christianity and Judaism: answering to the "weak" of the Epistle to the Romans. If the whole congregation, by their united and consistent walk, trod a plain and beaten path for men's feet, these lame ones, though halting, would be easily able to keep in it, and by keeping in the straight track, would even acquire the habit of walking straight onward, and so be healed: but if the tracks were errant and confused, their erratic steps would deviate

more and more, till at length they fell away out of the right way altogether. It should be noticed that the Writer has still the image of a race before him. The making a beaten track for all is, that they may not miss the way and lose the prize).

14.] Follow peace with all (with all belongs to peace, not to the verb. Some have understood all to refer not only to the brethren, but to unbelievers also. But thus taken, the exhortation would lose much of its proper force here. For it is introduced by a caution that the lame be not turned out of the way, and followed by taking heed that none fail of the grace of God: and between these two an exhortation to follow peace with all mankind would come in very flat and disjointed. It is clearly the brethren who are here meant by all. The sentiment thus is the same as in Rom. xiv. 19), and sanctification (holiness is not sanctification, but the putting on of it and becoming holy. Many Commentators, misled by the peculiar contextual reference of the word in 1 Thess. iv. 3, have restricted the meaning here to chastity. But the wider meaning, as a rule, must always be kept where the context does not require a narrower. And thus understood, the reference of it is well given by Limborch: "That they should not, while anxious for peace, by too great wish to please others, commit any fault against Christian holiness"), without (apart from) which none shall see the Lord (whether the Lord is to be applied to Christ, or to the Father, is uncertain. It is clearly the Father in ch. viii. 2: as clearly the Son in ch. ii. 3. But here it would seem that the Father is intended. For we know, Matt. xxiv. 30; Rev. i. 7, that every eye shall see the Son, even in His glory: whereas we have our Lord using, in an ethical sentence not much unlike this one, the expression "they shall see God"):

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

gently <sup>y</sup> lest any man falling short of the grace of God,—<sup>z</sup> lest any root of bitterness springing up,—trouble you, and thereby the greater number be defiled; <sup>16</sup> <sup>a</sup> lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, <sup>b</sup> who for one meal sold his own birthright. <sup>17</sup> For ye know how that afterward, <sup>c</sup> when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: <sup>d</sup> for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it

<sup>y</sup> Gal. v. 4.  
<sup>z</sup> Deut. xxix.  
18. ch. iii.  
12.

<sup>a</sup> Eph. v. 3.  
Col. iii. 5.  
1 Thess. iv. 3.

<sup>b</sup> Gen. xxv. 33.

<sup>c</sup> Gen. xxvii.  
34, 36, 38.

<sup>d</sup> ch. vi. 6.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; <sup>16</sup> lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. <sup>17</sup> 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*

looking well lest any one falling short of the grace of God (see on ch. iv. 1. The whole sentence is imitated from Deut. xxix. 18: and the sense passes on to the verb trouble you below),—lest any root of bitterness (not the same as “*bitter root*,” but *bitterness* is the origin and the ingrained character of the root, not its mere attribute. So Chrysostom well, “He says not, ‘*bitter*,’ but, of *bitterness*. For a bitter root might bring forth sweet fruit, but a root and fount and foundation of bitterness can never bear sweet fruit: for all things are bitter, it has nothing sweet; all is bitter, all is unsweet, all is full of hate and abomination”) springing up,—trouble you, and by its means the many (the whole congregation: see Gal. v. 9 quoted below) be polluted (how? by intercourse, by compromise, by over-persuasion, by imitation. The kind of pollution he explains in the next verse to arise from fornication and profanity); lest (there be) any fornicator (to be taken literally, not as alluding to spiritual fornication, see Deut. xxxi. 16; Exod. xxxiv. 15 f.: for as Delitzsch observes, this sense is foreign to the New Test., except in the Apocalypse: and it is very unlikely that the Writer should have used a meaning lying so far from the context, and not suggested either by the passage of Deut. to which he was before alluding, or by the history of Esau which he is now introducing. Nearly connected with the question of the sense of fornicator, is that of the punctuation: whether by a comma after it we are to sever it from connexion with Esau, or not. Most Commentators join it with what follows: and explain it partly of the gluttony of Esau, partly of his having wedded strange women, partly by the cha-

acter of a fornicator which is given him by later Jewish tradition. But others divide the word *fornicator* from what follows. It seems hardly possible to decide. The character of Esau, from Scripture as well as tradition, will very well bear the designation *fornicator*: and the balance of the sentence is better preserved by applying both to him, than by leaving the word *fornicator* insulated, or *profane person* (a man of low views, who has no appreciation of any high or divine thing), as Esau, who for one meal sold his own birthright (the reflexive *his own*, which must be read, may seem to be superfluous; but it serves to intensify the unworthiness of the act). <sup>17</sup>] For (gives a reason for the caution, from the terrible result in Esau’s case) ye know (it was a fact of which no Hebrew could be ignorant) that when he afterward on his part (he dishonoured his inheritance, but was in his turn rejected from the blessing) wished to inherit the blessing, he was rejected (some supply *by God*, some *by his father*. But there is no reason why both should not be joined. His father’s blessing was God’s blessing; his father’s rejection was God’s rejection): for he found not place of repentance (whose repentance, *his own*, or *his father’s*? The former is held by all the Greek expositors: by Luther, Calvin, and many others. The latter, by Beza, and most of the moderns. But the former I believe to be the only admissible sense. It is no mean argument for it, that the Fathers thought not of the other, though it would have been so useful to them in the Novatian controversy. Theodore of Mopsuestia, though he wrests the passage from those who wished to preclude repentance, never hints at any other mean-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

tears. <sup>18</sup> For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, <sup>19</sup> 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

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

carefully with tears. <sup>18</sup> For ye have not drawn near unto <sup>e</sup> the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, <sup>19</sup> and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard <sup>f</sup> intreated that the word should not be spoken to them

<sup>e</sup> Exod. xix. 12, 18, 19. & xx. 18. Deut. iv. 11. & v. 22. Rom. vi. 14. & viii. 15. <sup>2</sup> Tim. i. 7.

<sup>f</sup> Exod. xx. 19. Deut. v. 5, 25. xviii. 16.

ing. And thus referred to Esau himself, it will mean, that he found no way open to reverse what had been done, by repentance: the sin had been committed and the consequence entailed, irrevocably. He might change, but the penalty could not, from the very nature of the circumstances, be taken off. So that *repentance*, in its full sense, had no place. And such is the meaning of a *place for repentance*, wherever occurring. We do not mean by it an opportunity to repent in a man's own bosom, to be sorry for what he has done, for this may be under any circumstances, and this might have been with Esau: but we mean, a *chance, by repenting, to repair*. So when a condemned criminal has a *place for repentance* allowed him, we do not mean that he may die penitent, but that he is reprieved. I see not how else to understand this, and what follows: and thus understood nothing can be plainer), although he earnestly sought it (*what? not the blessing, as many think, for this would be, as Ebrard characterizes it, most unnatural, the antecedent being thus separated from the pronoun "it" by a whole intervening clause, which will not bear parenthesizing. . . . Regarding repentance then as the only admissible antecedent for it, the explanation will be very simple. Place for repentance is, in fact, repentance. He found no place for repentance: if he had found one, repentance would have been secured: this was what he sought) with tears (Gen. xxvii. 38. It is obvious, that our passage, rightly understood, cannot by any means favour the exclusion of any sinner from repentance. In Esau's case the *place for repentance* was closed, by circumstances themselves: the blessing had been given and could not be recalled. And this is our warning. It may be so, in many cases, with us. That it is always so, is not even hinted: but warning is given us that a path is not safe where*

even such a possibility may be encountered. See Prov. i. 24—32).

18—29.] Connected with what has preceded by *for*. *Take heed that there be not such* [as in vv. 15, 16] *among you: for (not only have we the solemn warning of Esau, but) we are not under the law with its terrors, but under the Gospel with its promises,—hearing one who speaks for the last time, who speaks from heaven—and receiving a kingdom which shall not be moved.*

18, 19.] *For* (see above) *ye have not drawn near to* ('in your approaching unto God [in the original text], it has not been to . . . .' The A. V. 'ye are not come to,' omits the approach to God, implied in the words *draw near*) that **which was being touched** (so literally as "*mountain*" must be understood, which is expressed below with *Zion*, and hence has come in as a gloss here. **That might be touched** has been variously interpreted. Some understand it, *touched* by the fire of God, compare Ps. ciii. 32, "*He toucheth the hills, and they smoke.*" But this seems hardly consistent with the present participle, nor indeed at all with the sense of the word itself, which is to touch by feeling about, as a blind man does. And this sense will I believe fit our passage very well. Mount Sinai was a material mountain, which not only *might* be touched,—but *was being touched*, would have been touched by the people had it not been forbidden), and **which was burnt** (kindled) **with fire** (the same expression occurs in Deut. iv. 11, v. 23, where nearly the same words, "darkness, clouds, and thick darkness," follow), and **to blackness, and darkness, and tempest** (see Deut. iv. 11, cited above), and **to sound of trumpet** (see Exod. xix. 16. The Writer avoids the word "*voice*" there used, having so soon to speak of "*the voice of words*"), and **the voice of words; which they who heard intreated that (more) discourse should not**

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

any more: <sup>20</sup> (for they could not endure that which was commanded, <sup>g</sup> Exod. xix. 13. <sup>g</sup> And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned: <sup>h</sup> Exod. xix. 16. <sup>21</sup> <sup>h</sup> and,—so terrible was the sight, Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) <sup>22</sup> but ye have drawn near <sup>i</sup> unto mount Sion, <sup>k</sup> and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, <sup>l</sup> and to an innumerable company, the whole host of angels <sup>m</sup> Exod. iv. 22. <sup>23</sup> and the assembly of <sup>m</sup> the first-

*them any more: <sup>20</sup> (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: <sup>21</sup> and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) <sup>22</sup> 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, <sup>23</sup> to the general*

be added to them (so literally. See Deut. v. 25. Calvin explains the sense, "We must not understand that the people refused to hear the words of God, but deprecated hearing them from God Himself. The person of Moses being interposed, in some degree mitigated their fear"): <sup>20, 21.</sup> *Parentetical, explaining the reason of this horror on the part of the hearers. For they could not bear that which was commanded, Even if a beast (much more if a man) touch the mountain, it shall be stoned (an abbreviation of Exod. xix. 12, 13): and (this clause is diversely punctuated. Before Beza, there was no comma at and, and the sense was read straight on, "And so terrible was the sight, [that] Moses said"—as in A. V. And thus, as Bleek well observes, should we have punctuated in an Epistle of St. Paul, who is full of these broken constructions. But nothing can be more different than the style of this Epistle, which is weighed and rhetorically balanced with constant care. There can be little doubt in any who take this style into account, that the punctuation which began with Beza is right, viz. the setting a comma at and, and regarding so terrible was the sight, as a parenthesis),—so fearful was that which was revealed (which appeared to them as a vision of the glory and majesty of Jehovah), Moses said, I am in great terror and in trembling (no such saying of Moses at this time is to be found in the sacred narrative. In Deut. ix. 19, he says, "I was afraid" (in the Septuagint, "I am afraid"): but this refers to the time when Moses went up to the mount after he had broken the tables. Our Writer probably transfers these words from that time to this, indicative of the terror which Moses felt at the*

divine presence on Sinai. Some have supposed that the saying is taken from some tradition: but none has been found to justify the idea):

<sup>22—24.</sup> *Contrast to the above negation, in setting forth that to which they are come. But ye have drawn near) both congregations drew near, Deut. iv. 11: the difference is in that, to which. So that Chrysostom misses the mark when he says, "They drew not near, but stood afar off: so even did Moses (but ye have drawn near") to mount Sion (here at length the word mountain is expressed: see above. Mount Sion, the abode of God which He loved and where He will abide continually, is used to signify, not its mere representative, which men know by that name, but the reality, God's own abode in heaven. See Ps. lxxviii. 68, ex. 2, cxxxii. 13 ff.; Isa. ii. 2 f., xxviii. 16; Joel ii. 32; Micah iv. 1 f.; Obad. 17, &c.), and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem (as the earthly Jerusalem, situate on Mount Zion, was the city of the great King, Matt. v. 35, so in a more blessed sense is that heavenly city the city of the living God. He is its maker and builder, ch. xi. 10: nor only so, but also evermore dwells in it with the light of His presence, cf. Rev. xxi. 22—24):*

<sup>23.</sup> *The difficult question of the punctuation has been dealt with in my Greek Testament. The matter would be unintelligible to the English reader. It is enough to say that the Writer begins with the innumerable company (literally myriads), in order afterwards to say of what these myriads consist. Adopting then this arrangement, the verse will stand,—and to myriads (the word is commonly used of the angelic company surrounding Jehovah),*



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, <sup>24</sup> and to

the festal host (so the word imports) of angels, and the assembly of the firstborn which are written in heaven (who are these? Why are they put with the angels? Why does the Writer place God the Judge of all between the assembly of the firstborn and the spirits of just men made perfect? These, says Delitzsch, are three closely connected questions, and among the very hardest in our Epistle. The answers to them are very various. Many understand the assembly of the firstborn of the firstfruits of the Christian church (Rev. xiv. 4): so De Wette, "those who are fallen asleep in the faith of Christ, and possibly also glorified by martyrdom, who have entered earlier than others, as it were the firstborn, into blissful union with God and Christ." As Delitzsch observes, if we hold them to be martyrs, the following words, and to God the Judge of all, might have a certain propriety from Rev. vi. 9 f., where the souls of the martyrs under the altar cry, "How long . . . dost thou not judge and avenge our blood, &c.?" But this view seems altogether to fail when we attempt to explain by it the words, written in heaven. Those of whom our Lord says, Luke x. 20, "Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven," are yet living on earth. According to St. Luke's manner of speaking, the firstborn are hereby designated as enrolled (in Luke ii. 1, 3, 5, he uses the word here rendered "written" for enrolling in the census) in the heavenly roll: and Scripture usage seems to demand that we consider one thus described, as not yet in possession of everlasting life in the fullest sense, but as destined to life [see Acts xiii. 48]. This would forbid us from thinking of the 144,000 whom St. John saw with the Lamb on the heavenly Zion, who bore on their foreheads the name of the Lamb and of the Father. For this sealing was among the insignia of their eternal glorification: whereas the being enrolled in the book of life is the token to us, while here below, of our heavenly citizenship, and seems to lose all its significance, as soon as we have entered the heavenly city and need no assurance of our citizenship either for ourselves or for others. So that though we are tempted, both by the fact of their being classed with the angels, and by their being

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

born <sup>n</sup> which are written in heaven, and to God <sup>o</sup> the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men <sup>p</sup> made perfect, <sup>24</sup> and to <sup>q</sup> the mediator of

<sup>n</sup> Luke x. 20.  
<sup>o</sup> Phil. iv. 3.  
<sup>p</sup> Rev. xiii. 8.  
<sup>q</sup> Gen. xviii. 25.  
<sup>r</sup> Ps. x. iv. 2.  
<sup>s</sup> Phil. iii. 12.  
<sup>t</sup> ch. xi. 40.  
<sup>u</sup> ch. viii. 6. & ix. 15.

firstborn (so we have "firstfruits from among men," Rev. xiv. 4), to identify these with the thousands seen by St. John, we must give up the parallel, these persons written in heaven being not yet citizens of heaven who have taken up their full citizenship by passing through death, but persons to whom their citizenship is assured, they being as yet here below. Add to which, that they are distinguished from the spirits of just men made perfect, by the term assembly or church [*ecclesia*]: and that it would be difficult or rather impossible, on this hypothesis, to give any account of the sense or arrangement of the two following clauses. Just as inadmissible is it, or even more so, to understand by the firstborn the patriarchs and saints of the Old Test., and then by spirits of just men made perfect, not the Old Test. but the New Test. saints. So that, to say nothing of other varieties of interpretation not worth mentioning, there is no way left but to see, in the words, the assembly of the firstborn written in heaven, THE CHURCH BELOW. And this view, far from being a last refuge, is justified by every consideration. For 1) thus *ecclesia* is explained, which every where, when used of men and not of angels, Ps. lxxxix. 5, designates the assembly of saints on earth: 2) the adjunct written in heaven is accounted for, indicating as it does the heavenly charter of the church below, the invisible side of their sonship and citizenship (see 1 John iii. 2), with which in this description of heaven we are mainly concerned: 3) we get an explanation of the choice of the term firstborn to describe Christian believers. The Writer having given the warning example of Esau, who for a morsel of meat sold his birthright, has prepared the way for such a designation, while at the same time, as Knapp rightly remarks, the long sentence beginning at ver. 18 aims at this "that Christians may be defended against unbelief, and may learn to know their rights of inheritance." There is no distinction between first-born and later-born Christians, but all Christians as such are called firstborn because of their heritorship of the heavenly inheritance. We may also remark that thus the analogy with the firstborn of Israel is completely fulfilled. They were dedicated

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

the new covenant, even Jesus, and  
to <sup>r</sup> the blood of sprinkling, speaking

*Jesus the mediator of the  
new covenant, and to the  
blood of sprinkling, that*

<sup>r</sup> Exod. xxiv  
ch. x. 22.  
1 Pet. i. 2.

to God specially as his priests (Exod. xiii. 1, 2, 11—15), and royal succession was in the firstborn: so that in the word *firstborn* we have that which St. John says: "He made us a kingdom, priests to God and His Father." This primogeniture, which belonged to Israel as such (Exod. iv. 22), belongs to Christians as such, and to every one of them: they are enrolled not merely in an earthly register, Num. iii. 42, but in the book of life in heaven. We also thus 4) obtain an explanation of the juxtaposition in the sentence of the myriads of angels and the myriads of the firstborn: the key to it being found in ch. i. 14, where God is said to have apportioned the angels as *ministering spirits* to minister to the *heirs of salvation*. Thus we have the heavenly spirits and the firstborn whose names are in heaven, the jubilant choir above and the militant church below, ranged together. But 5) we also get, what we find on no other hypothesis, an explanation of the sequence of **God the judge of all on the assembly of the firstborn**, and of that of **spirits of just men made perfect on God the judge of all**. The key to the words is in ch. x. 30, "*The Lord shall judge His people*." The church militant here below brings to mind those enemies and persecutors, for deliverance and righting from whom she looks to the righteous judgment of God. And he who is in fellowship (1 John i. 7) with the great Judge has no judgment to fear, but is *justified*; thereby leading on to the "*spirits of just men made perfect*" which follows), and to **God the Judge of all** (this clause comes between the mention of the elect, written in heaven, and the spirits of the *just*, shewing that the *enrolment in heaven* is no arbitrary selection,—the *justification* no unreasonable procedure. It is not improbable that the Writer may have had in view Abraham's question Gen. xviii. 25, "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" Some Commentators understand this, "*God, the Judge of all*," of Christ: but it is a characteristic of this Epistle that all judgment is formally, and in words, referred to God the Father: see ch. iv. 11 f., x. 30 f.: ver. 29: ch. xiii. 4), and to the **spirits of just men who have been perfected** (i. e. the whole number of the just who have passed into their rest,

from righteous Abel downwards; not yet absolutely called "*just men made perfect*," because they are as yet disembodied and awaiting the resurrection, but "*the spirits of just men made perfect*." This *making perfect* has been through sufferings, through trials, through running and having ended their race. All is accomplished, their probation, their righteousness, God's purposes respecting them. They are not sleeping, they are not unconscious, they are not absent from us: they are perfected, lacking nothing, except, and that is our defect because we are as yet imprisoned in an un-spiritual body, communion with us: their spirits are perfect, and therefore not suspended from the spirit life, but waiting only for bodily perfection also), and to the mediator of the latter covenant, **Jesus** (the mention of the *just made perfect* at once introduces that of Him who was Himself *made perfect*, ch. ii. 10, and who is the *perfecter of the faith*, ver. 2. See ch. vii. 22. Our Writer especially loves to use the name **JESUS**. To *Christ*, all that is predicated of our Lord belonged officially: but when it is predicated of Jesus, it becomes personal fact, realized in one whom we know and who loves us. That Christ is the mediator of the new covenant, is a theological truth: that Jesus is, is a glorious token of God's love manifested to us men), and to the **blood of sprinkling** (naturally following on the mention of the *covenant*, for no *covenant* is consecrated without blood, ch. ix. 18, 22. And if Moses had blood wherewith to sprinkle the people, much more Jesus, of whom Moses was a shadow. And therefore the Writer, enumerating the great differences of our Sion from their Sinai, though he has not recounted their blood of sprinkling, as not being worthy of mention in the face of the terrors of God's law, mentions ours, by which we were redeemed unto God, and assigns it a place in the heavenly city, next to, but separate from, Jesus Himself in His glorified state. If we come to enquire how this can be, we enter on an interesting but high and difficult subject, on which learned and holy men have been much divided. Our Lord's Blood was shed from Him on the Cross. And as His Body did not see corruption, it is obvious to suppose, that His Blood did not corrupt as that of ordinary men, being

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*speaketh better things than that of Abel.* <sup>25</sup> 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 :

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

better things <sup>s</sup> than Abel. <sup>25</sup> See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For <sup>t</sup> if they escaped not for refusing him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven :

<sup>n</sup> Gen. iv. 10.  
ch. xl. 4.

<sup>t</sup> ch. ii. 2, 3.  
& iii. 17. &  
x. 28, 29.

as it is so important a portion of the body. Hence, and because His resurrection Body seems to have been bloodless,—see Luke xxiv. 32; John xx. 27, and notes,—some have supposed that the Blood of the Lord remains, as it was poured out, incorruptible, in the presence of God. On such a matter I would neither affirm nor deny, but mention, with all reverence, that which seems to suit the requirements of the words before us. By that Blood we live, wherever it is: but as here it is mentioned separately from the Lord Himself, as an item in the glories of the heavenly city, and as “yet speaking,” it seems to require some such view to account for the words used. Bengel has here a long excursus on the point, in which he takes strongly the above view. Chrysostom also seems to have done so. The blood of Christ is called “*the blood of sprinkling*,” inasmuch as, like that sacrificial blood of old materially, it is spiritually sprinkled on the conscience of those who come unto God by Him, compare ch. ix. 13 ff.; x. 22; xiii. 12) speaking better (adverbially; as in 1 Cor. vii. 38, *doing better* is opposed to *doing well*. And the adverb refers not to the manner of the speaking, but to the matter spoken; so that “*better things*” in the English expresses well the meaning) than Abel (not, “*than that of Abel*,” for in ch. xi. 4, it is Abel himself who speaks, in his blood: see note there). <sup>25</sup>] This voice of the blood of sprinkling, just mentioned, leads naturally to the caution not to despise that voice, nor put it by as they of old did the “*voice of words*” from Sinai. Take heed that ye decline not (see above on ver. 19) him that speaketh (i. e. God in Christ, see below). For if they did not escape (how? in one of two senses: either 1) they did not escape hearing the voice on account of this their refusal: or 2) which seems more probable, they did not escape God’s vengeance in punishment: the Writer taking this their refusal of the divine voice as a sort of sample of their disobedient and unbelieving spirit), declining as they did (not “*who refused*”) him who spoke on

earth (on Mount Sinai), much more we (shall not escape), who are turning away from him (who speaks) from (the) heavens:—We now come to the somewhat difficult question, the answer to which we have taken for granted in the rendering of this verse: viz., *who are intended by the various objects, “him that speaketh,”—“him that speaketh on earth,”—“him from heaven.”* Let us take the second of these first, as furnishing the key to the others. “Whom does he mean (says Chrysostom)? It seems to me, Moses.” But this cannot well be. For the participle refusing, manifestly refers back to ver. 19: where it was not Moses, but God, whom they refused. It must be laid down then as certain, that he that speaketh on earth is God. Then if so, who is he from heaven, or in other words who is he that speaketh, for these two are manifestly the same? Clearly, not Jesus: for by the words whose voice, which follow, the voice of this same speaker shook the earth at the giving of the law: and it can by no ingenuity be pretended, that the terrors of the law proceeded from the Son of God; especially in the face of the contrast drawn here, and in ch. ii. 2 ff. And it would be against all accuracy and decorum in divine things, to pass from the speaking of the God of Israel to that of our Lord Jesus Christ in the way of climax as is here done, with “much more shall we not escape.” Add to which, that, if Christ is to be understood as the subject of vv. 26 ff., we shall have Him uttering the prophetic words, “yet once more, &c.,” whereas both from our Writer’s habit of quoting prophecy [compare ch. i. 1; iv. 7; vi. 13; viii. 8; xi. 11], and from the context of the prophecy itself, they must be attributed to the Father. How then are these difficulties to be got over? Simply by taking as above, the speaker in both cases to be God: in the first, as speaking from Mount Sinai by His Angels: in the second, as speaking from His heavenly throne through His exalted Son. Thus it is true we lie open to one objection, viz. that the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

u Exod. xix. 18. <sup>26</sup> u whose voice then shook the earth :  
but now he hath promised, saying,  
x Hag. ii. 6. <sup>x</sup> Yet once more I shake not the  
earth only, but also the heaven.  
<sup>27</sup> And this word, Yet once more,  
signifieth <sup>y</sup> the removing of those  
things that are shaken, as of things  
that have been made, in order that  
those things which cannot be shaken

<sup>26</sup> whose voice then shook  
the earth : but now he hath  
promised, saying, Yet once  
more I shake not the earth  
only, but also heaven.  
<sup>27</sup> And this word, Yet once  
more, signifieth the re-  
moving of those things  
that are shaken, as of  
things that are made, that  
those things which cannot  
be shaken may remain.

giving of the law is ever regarded in the Old Test. as a speaking from heaven : so Exod. xx. 22 ; Deut. iv. 36 ; Neh. ix. 13. But this objection, though at first sight weighty, is by no means decisive. The "heaven" spoken of there is surely nothing but the material heaven, as apparent to the Israelites in the clouds and darkness which rested on Sinai, and totally distinct from the "heaven" here, the site of our blessed Lord's glorification, who is spoken of, ch. iv. 14, as "*having passed through the heavens.*" Thus the words have been explained from early times. <sup>26.]</sup>

whose voice (see on last verse) shook the earth then (so in Judg. v. 5, in Deborah's Song, "*The earth trembled ; the mountains melted from before the Lord, even that Sinai from before the God of Israel.*" See also Ps. cxiv. 7. In Exod. xix. 18, where the A. V. has, after the Hebrew, "the whole mount quaked greatly,"—the Septuagint render, "*The whole people was much astonished.*" Some take this shaking of the earth to be meant of a figurative excitement of men's minds. But there can be little doubt, that the material explanation is the true one): but now (now, not only in an argumentative sense, "as the case now is," but here in a more temporal sense, as opposed to then : now, under the prophetic revelations since the captivity,—under the New Test. dispensation in which those prophecies will find their fulfilment) hath He (God : see above) promised, saying, Yet once (more) and I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven. The prophecy in Haggai is uttered, like the whole of his prophecies, with reference to the second temple, which was then rising out of the ruins of the first, smaller indeed and poorer, but destined to witness greater glories. It was to be the scene of the last revelation of Jehovah to His people : and the house of David, then so low, was to rise above the

ruins of the thrones of the earth, and endure as the signet on God's right hand (Hagg. ii. 21—23). It is this ruin of earthly powers, this antitypical shaking of the earth and all that is in it, after the typical material shaking at Sinai, of which the prophet speaks. And the result of this shaking was to be, that the desire, or best treasures, of all nations (not to be understood personally of Christ, but as in the Septuagint, "the chosen things of all the nations shall come") should be brought to adorn that temple. The expression here (as in the Septuagint) rendered "yet once . . ." is in the Hebrew, "yet once, it is a little while, and:" i. e. the period which shall elapse shall be but one, not admitting of being broken into many ; and that one, but short. Thus the prophecy seems to point to the same great final bringing of all the earth under the Kingdom of God, which is spoken of in Zechariah xiv., when the Lord shall come and all His saints with Him, the great antitype of Sinai (see Deut. xxxiii. 2), so often the subject of ancient prophecy. It is clearly wrong, with some interpreters, to understand this shaking of the mere breaking down of Judaism before the Gospel, or of any thing which shall be fulfilled during the Christian economy, short of its glorious end and accomplishment. The not only . . . but, which the Writer has substituted for the simple "and" of the Septuagint, is adopted for the sake of bringing out the point which is before him, the earth, and the speaking from the earth, on the one hand, the heaven, and the speaking from the heaven, on the other. But the heaven here, that is to be shaken, is the material heaven stretched above this earth.

<sup>27.]</sup> But (now) this Yet once (more) indicates the removal of the things shaken, as of things which have been made, in order that the things which

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

<sup>28</sup> *Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: <sup>29</sup> for our God is a consuming fire.*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

may remain. <sup>28</sup> Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have thankfulness, whereby let us serve God acceptably with reverent fear: <sup>29</sup> for indeed <sup>2</sup> our God is a consuming fire.

<sup>2</sup> Exod. xxiv.  
17. Deut. iv.  
24. & ix. 3.  
Psa. l. 3. &  
xxvii. 3. Isa.  
xvii. 3. 18a.

Lxvi. 15. 2 Thees. i. 8. ch. x. 27.

are not (i. e. cannot be) shaken may abide (the great final shaking which is to introduce the accomplished kingdom of God is that after which there shall be no other. To what does in order that belong? Two ways of taking the sentence are possible. 1) That given above, to the consideration of which I will presently return. 2) We may join in order that, &c., not with the fact pointed at, the removal of the things shaken, as its purpose, but with the verb, have been made; 'as of things which have been made in order that the things which cannot be shaken may remain:' i. e. the scope of Creation has been, the establishing of the kingdom of Redemption: that it, the transitory and baseless, may pass away when its work is fulfilled, and give place to that which shall never pass away. This view is strongly taken by Delitzsch, after Grotius, Bengel, Tholuck, and others. But I cannot accede to it, beautiful as is the thought, and strictly true, that Creation was made but to subserve Redemption: the things removeable, to give place to the things unremoveable. For, a) the word remain will thus have an exceedingly awkward elliptic sense, "that the things which cannot be shaken may remain," i. e. "may come into the place of those removed, and thus abide for ever:" for things which cannot be shaken remaining merely, would be a matter of course. b) the logical propriety as well as the rhythm of the sentence is thus destroyed. For we should on this rendering have the clause beginning with "in order that" entirely subordinated to the word made, and indicating, not the purpose of the main action of the sentence, but that of the creation, a matter lying quite out of the present record. So that, it seems to me, we must fall back on 1), viz. the making in order that to belong to "the remaining," the action of the sentence. This, it is true, is not without difficulty. For, a) even thus we must go some little out of

our way for a sense for remain, though not so far as in the other case. It must then mean, *may remain over*, when the things shaken are gone: may be permanently left: to which sense there is no objection, but it does not exactly fit the requirements of the sentence: b) if the term which have been made be taken absolutely, we might be met by the citation from Isa. lxvi. 22, to shew that the new heavens and the new earth are also made: see also Isa. lxxv. 17, 18. The answer to this must be, though I own it is not altogether a satisfactory one, that the making is not the same in the two cases: that this word carries rather with it made with hands, of this creation, as that word is explained, ch. ix. 11: whereas the other I make rests in the almighty power of God, by which the spirit-world as well as the world of sense was called into existence. See by all means, on the whole, Luke xxi. 26). <sup>28.]</sup> Wherefore (gathers its inference, not from the whole preceding paragraph, but from the yet once more shaking and consequent removing of earthly things before those things which shall remain) receiving as we do a kingdom which cannot be shaken (the participle, receiving, is descriptive of our Christian state of privilege and expectation: designating us by anticipation as in possession of that, whose firstfruits and foretastes we do actually possess), let us have thankfulness (so Chrysostom, and most Commentators, ancient and modern. Others render, as the A. V., "let us have, or hold fast grace," which is hardly a legitimate rendering. So the Syriac, Beza, Estius, Schlichting, Grotius, and others. On the sense, see Ps. l. 23, "Whoso offereth me thanks and praise, he honoureth me"), by which (thankfulness) let us serve (this cannot be taken as in A. V., "by which we may serve," but must be hortatory like the other) God well-pleasingly with reverent submission and fear (see on ch. v. 7). <sup>29.]</sup> For



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

XIII. <sup>1</sup> Let <sup>a</sup> brotherly love continue. <sup>2</sup> <sup>b</sup> Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby <sup>c</sup> some entertained angels unawares. <sup>3</sup> <sup>d</sup> Remember them that are in bonds, as if bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body. <sup>4</sup> Let your marriage be held in honour in all things, and let your bed be undefiled: <sup>e</sup> † for whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. <sup>5</sup> Let

<sup>a</sup> Rom. xii. 10.  
<sup>1</sup> Thess. iv.  
 9. 1 Pet. i.  
 22. & ii. 17. &  
 iii. 8. & iv. 8.  
<sup>2</sup> Pet. i. 7.  
 1 John iii. 11,  
 &c. & iv. 7,  
 20, 21.  
<sup>b</sup> Matt. xxv.  
 35. Rom.  
 xii. 13.  
 1 Tim. iii. 2.  
 1 Pet. iv. 9.  
<sup>c</sup> Gen. xviii. 3.  
 & xix. 2.  
<sup>d</sup> Matt. xxv.  
 xii. 15.  
 1 Cor. xii. 26.  
 Col. iv. 18.  
 1 Pet. iii. 8.  
<sup>e</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 9.  
 Gal. v. 19, 21.  
 Eph. v. 5.  
 Col. iii. 5, 6.  
 Rev. xxii. 15.  
 † So most of our oldest MSS.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

XIII. <sup>1</sup> Let brotherly love continue. <sup>2</sup> Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. <sup>3</sup> Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body. <sup>4</sup> Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. <sup>5</sup> Let your conver-

moreover our God is a consuming fire (the words are taken from Dent. iv. 24. Compare also Dent. ix. 3. And thus the fact that God's anger continues to burn now, as then, against those who reject his Kingdom, is brought in; and in the background lie all those gracious dealings, by which the fire of God's presence and purity becomes to His people, while it consumes their vanity and sin and earthly state, the fire of purity and light and love for their enduring citizenship of His kingdom).

CHAP. XIII. 1—16.] *Various exhortations to Christian virtues: more especially to the imitation of the faith of their leaders who had departed in the Lord: to firmness in the faith: and following of Jesus, who suffered outside the camp to teach us to bear His reproach.*

1.] **Let brotherly love** (the word signifies, in the classics, the love of brothers and sisters for one another; in the New Test., the love of the Christian brethren) remain (we learn from the Acts,—on the hypothesis of this Epistle being addressed to the church at Jerusalem [on which however see Introd.],—how eminent this brotherly love had been in that church, and, without any hypothesis as to the readers, we see from our ch. x. 32 ff., that the persons here addressed had exercised it aforesaid, and from ch. vi. 10, that they still continued to exercise it. Let it then remain, not die out. And it is put first, as being the first of the fruits of faith. The exhortations in ch. iii. 12 f.; x. 24 f.; xii. 12 ff., point the same way). 2, 3.] **Brotherly love** is now specifically urged in two of its departments, hospitality, and care of prisoners. **Forget not hospitality**

to strangers (so in 1 Pet. v. 9, after recommending earnest love to one another, he proceeds to recommend hospitality. Compare also Rom. xii. 13; and Tit. i. 8; 1 Tim. iii. 2. Bleek remarks, that the notices found in the writings of the enemies of Christianity shew how much this virtue was practised among the early believers): **for thereby** (by exercising it) **some unawares entertained angels** (viz. Abraham, Gen. xviii., Lot, Gen. xix. Certainly it would appear at first sight from the former account, that Abraham regarded the "three men" from the first as angels: but the contrary view has nothing against it in the narrative, and was taken by the Jewish expositors. On the motive propounded, Calvin remarks, "If any one objects that this is a rare occurrence, the reply is ready, that not angels alone are received, but Christ Himself, when we receive the poor in His name"). 3.] **Remember them that are in bonds, as if bound with them** (compare 1 Cor. xii. 26: as fully sympathizing with them in their captivity): **those in distress** (a general idea, including captives and any other classes of distressed persons), **as also yourselves being in the body** (i. e. bound up with a body which has the same capacity of suffering). 4.] *Exhortation to chastity.* **Let your marriage be held in honour in all things** (see below) **and your marriage bed be undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God shall judge.** There are several debateable matters in this verse. First, is it a command or an assertion? The latter view is taken in the ancient Syriac version: "Honourable is marriage among all, and their bed is undefiled:"

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

sation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. <sup>6</sup> So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. <sup>7</sup> 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

your conversation be without covetousness; <sup>f</sup> be content with such things as ye have. For he himself hath said, <sup>g</sup> I will never leave thee, neither will forsake thee. <sup>6</sup> So that we ever boldly say, <sup>h</sup> The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear; what shall man do unto me? <sup>7</sup> <sup>i</sup> Remember them which had the rule over you, such as spoke unto you the word of God: the end of whose life considering, imitate <sup>k</sup> their faith.

<sup>f</sup> Matt. vi. 25, 34. Phil. iv. 11, 12. 1 Tim. vi. 6, 8.  
<sup>g</sup> Gen. xxviii. 15. Deut. xxxi. 6, 8. Josh. i. 5. 1 Chron. xxviii. 20. Ps. xxvii. 1. & lvi. 4, 11, 12. & cxviii. 6.  
<sup>h</sup> Ps. xxvii. 1. & lvi. 4, 11, 12. & cxviii. 6.  
<sup>i</sup> ver. 17.

<sup>k</sup> ch. vi. 12.

also in the A. V. and by some Commentators, Chrysostom included. But the arrangement of the words in the original is against this: and so is the context, in which the whole is of a hortatory character: the very same collocation of words immediately follows in ver. 5, where no one suggests the indicative rendering. The imperative view has accordingly been taken by very many ancient Commentators, and the great mass of moderns. That in all is to be supplied not with "men," but with "things," I have endeavoured to shew in my Greek Test. The latter clause carries with it the anticipation of *condemnation* in the term *shall judge*. Man may, or may not, punish them: one thing is sure: they shall come into judgment, and if so into condemnation, when God shall judge all.

5, 6.] St. Paul usually couples with filthy desire, *filthy lucre*, as both of them incompatible with the kingdom of God: e. g. 1 Cor. v. 10, 11; vi. 9 f.; Eph. v. 3, 5; Col. iii. 5. Let your manner of life be void of avarice: contented (sufficed) with things present: for He (viz. He that promised: compare ch. x. 23, God, already named, ver. 4) hath said, I will not leave thee, no nor will I forsake thee (passages bearing some resemblance to this are found in the Old Test., but nowhere the words themselves: see Josh. i. 5: also, Gen. xxviii. 15; 1 Chron. xxviii. 20; Deut. xxxi. 6, 8. But in Philo we have the same quotation made, and in the very same Greek words. This is certainly singular, and cannot be mere coincidence. Bleek and Lünemann suppose the Writer to have made the citation direct from Philo

[see the Introd. § i., par 156], whereas Delitzsch believes that the expression was taken from Deut. xxxi. 6, and had become invowen into some liturgical or homiletic portion of the services in the Hellenistic synagogue): so that we say ('are in the habit of saying,' 'say always': not, 'can say' nor 'may say,' both which weaken the confidence expressed) with confidence, The Lord (*Jehovah* in the Psalm, and probably used of the Father, as in other citations in this Epistle, e. g. ch. vii. 21; viii. 8—11; x. 16, 30; xii. 5 al., and without a citation, ch. viii. 2) is my helper [and] (not in Hebrew, I will not be afraid: what shall man do unto me (such is the connexion, both in the Hebrew and here: not, "I will not be afraid what man shall do unto me," as the English Prayer Book, after the vulgate, which is an ungrammatical rendering) ?

7.] Remember (may be taken in two ways, as Theophylact says: either "remember to help them in their bodily wants," or, "remember to imitate them." The former meaning would agree with ver. 3: but it is plain from what follows here that the course of these *leaders* is past, and it is remembering with a view to imitation that is enjoined) your leaders (*leaders* in the faith) the which (of that kind, who) spoke to you the word of God (the past tense shews that this speaking was over, and numbers these leaders among those in ch. ii. 3: as those who heard the Lord, "by whom the salvation of the Gospel was confirmed to them"), of whom surveying (*contemplating*, or searching from one end to the other) the termination (by death. It is perhaps to be inferred that these died

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

1 John viii. 58. ch. i. 12.  
 Rev. i. 4.  
 m Eph. iv. 14. & v. 6. Col. ii. 4, 5.  
 † 1 John iv. 1.  
 † So all our oldest MSS.

8 Jesus Christ is <sup>1</sup> the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. <sup>9</sup> <sup>m</sup> Be not carried † away with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; <sup>n</sup> not with meats, in which they who walked were not profited. <sup>10</sup> <sup>o</sup> We have an altar,

by martyrdom, as Stephen, James the brother of John, and possibly [but see the matter discussed in *Introd. to James*] James the brother of the Lord: and possibly too, St. Peter [see *Introd. to 1 Pet.*] of their conversation (i. e. their Christian behaviour, walk, course. No English word completely gives it), imitate the faith. 8.] Jesus Christ is yesterday and to-day the same, and for ever (the verse stands as a transition from what has passed to what follows. "It was Christ whom these leaders preached, when they spoke the word of God: Christ who supported them to the end, being the author and finisher of their faith; and He remains still the same with regard to you,—the same: be not then carried away &c.") As to the meaning of the words, yesterday refers to the time past, when their leaders passed away from them, to-day to the time present, when the Writer and the readers were living. In our A. V., this verse, by the omission of the copula "is," appears as if it were in apposition with "the end of whose conversation:" and in the carelessly printed polyglott of Bagster, the matter is made worse, by a colon being substituted for the period, after 'conversation.' Observe Jesus Christ, not common with our Writer: only e. g. ver. 21, where he wishes to give a solemn fulness to the mention of the Lord: Jesus, the Person, of whom we have been proving, that He is the Christ, the Anointed of God. Compare also ch. x. 10). Be not carried away (the fixed point from which they are not to be carried away, is clearly that given in the last verse, viz. Jesus Christ) by various and strange (strangers to the truth)<sup>e</sup> doctrines (teachings, Matt. xv. 9; Col. ii. 22; 1 Tim. iv. 1): for it is good that the heart be confirmed with grace (God's grace, working on us by faith), not with meats (it is a question whether this be meant of meat eaten after sacrifices, or of "meats" as spoken of so much by St. Paul, meats partaken of or abstained from as a matter of

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

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

conscience: see 1 Cor. viii. 8, 13: ib. vi. 13: Rom. xiv. 15, 20. The former view is taken by Schlichting, Bleek, Lünemann, &c., on the grounds, 1) that the expression will not suit meats *abstained from*, only those partaken of: 2) that ver. 10, which is in close connexion with this, speaks of an altar and of partaking of meats sacrificed: and 3) that this same reference, to meats offered in sacrifice, is retained throughout, to ver. 15. The other view is taken by Chrysostom, &c., the great body of later Commentators, and recently by Böhme, Tholuck, and Delitzsch. And I own the reasons urged in its favour incline me strongly to this view, to the exclusion of the other), in which (the observance of which: the word meats being used for the observance of rules concerning meats and drinks, &c.) they who walked were not profited (these, who walked in such observances, are the whole people of God under the Old Test. dispensation [notice the past tenses], to whom they were of themselves useless and profitless, though ordained for a preparatory purpose: so that Calvin's objection is answered, that "the discipline of which the distinction between meats was a part, was useful to the fathers under the law." Yes, and so was the shedding of the blood of bulls and goats part of the discipline: but it was useless to take away sin). 10.] What is the connexion with ver. 9? It is represented as being entirely done away by our interpretation of meats above. If I regard it aright, it is not only not done away, but established in its proper light. Those ancient distinctions are profitless: one distinction remains: that our true meat is not to be partaken of by those who adhere to those old distinctions: that Christianity and Judaism are necessarily and totally distinct. See more below. We have an altar (to what does the Writer allude? Some have said that no distinct idea was before him, but that he merely used the term altar, to help the figure which he was

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. <sup>11</sup> For the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. <sup>11</sup> For

about to introduce. And this view has just so much truth in it, that there is no *emphasis* on the word altar. The altar bears only a secondary place in the figure; but still I cannot think that it has not a definite meaning. Others understand by the altar, *Christ himself*. This again has so much truth in it, that the Victim is so superior to the altar, as to cast it altogether into shade; but still is not Himself the altar. Some again understand, *the table of the Lord*, at which we eat the Lord's Supper. This is so far true, that that table may be said to *represent* to us the Cross whereupon the Sacrifice was offered, just as the bread and wine, laid on it, represent the oblation itself: but it is not the altar, in any propriety of language, however we may be justified, in common parlance, in so calling it. Some again have interpreted it to mean the *heavenly place*, where Christ now offers the virtue of His Blood to the Father for us. This again is so far true, that it is the antitype of the Cross, just as the Cross is the antitype of the Lord's table: but we do not want, in this word, the heavenly thing represented by, any more than the enduring ordinance representing, the original historic concrete material altar: we want that altar itself: and that altar is, the Cross, on which the Lord suffered. That is our altar: not to be emphasized, nor exalted into any comparison with the adorable Victim thereon offered; but still our altar, that wherein we glory that for which as for our altars, we contend: of which our banners, our tokens, our adornments, our churches, are full: severed from which, we know not Christ; laid upon which, He is the power of God, and the wisdom of God. And so it is here explained by most of the best Commentators) to eat of which (see esp. 1 Cor. ix. 13) they have not licence who serve the tabernacle (who are these? Some, as Schlichting, Morus, and strange to say recently Hofmann, understand by them the same, viz. Christians, as the subject of we have. We Christians have an altar whereof [even] they who serve the [Christian] tabernacle have no right to eat: i. e. as explained by Hofmann, as the high priest himself did not eat of the sin-offerings whose blood was brought into the tabernacle, but they were burnt without the camp, so we Christians have no sacrifice of which we have any right

to eat, no *further profit* to be derived from that one sacrifice, by which we have been reconciled to God. But this is 1) false in fact. We *have a right* to eat of our Sacrifice, and are commanded so to do. All that our Lord says of eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood [explain it how we will] would be nullified and set aside by such an interpretation. And 2) it is directly against the whole context, in which the meats, whatever they are, are pronounced profitless, and they who walked in them contrasted with us who have higher privileges. To what purpose then would it be to say, that we have an altar of which we *cannot* eat? that we have a sacrifice which brings us no profit, but only shame? I pass over the interpretation which understands by the words some particular class of Christians among the Hebrews, because it involves the anachronism of a distinction between clergy and laity which certainly then had no place: and also because it would furnish no sense at all suiting the passage, referring as it then would to *some* Christians only, not to all. The only true reference of our words, as also that which has been all but universally acknowledged, is that to the Jewish priesthood, and in them to those who have part with them in serving the rites and ordinances of the ceremonial law. These have no right to eat of our altar: for just as the bodies of those beasts whose blood was brought into the sanctuary were burnt without the camp, so Jesus suffered altogether without the gate of legal Judaism. Let us then not tarry serving that tabernacle which has no part in Him, but go forth to Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. For we cleave not to any abiding city, such as the earthly Jerusalem, but seek one to come. Let us then not tarry in the Jewish tabernacle, serving their rites, offering their sacrifices; but offer our now only possible sacrifice, that of praise, the fruit of a good confession, acceptable to God through Him. Thus, and thus only, does the whole context stand in harmony. Thus the words in *they that serve the tabernacle* keep their former meanings: see ch. viii. 5, where we have "*such as have the delineation and the shadow of heavenly things:*" and remember that "*the tabernacle,*" barely so placed, cannot by any possibility mean any part of the Christian apparatus of worship, nor

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>p</sup> Exod. xxix. 14. Lev iv. 11, 12, 21, & vi. 30. & ix. 11. & xvi. 27. Numb. xix. 3. <sup>†</sup> for sin is omitted, or variously placed by two of our oldest MSS.

<sup>q</sup> John xix. 17, 18. Acts vii. 58.

<sup>r</sup> ch. xi. 26. 1 Pet. iv. 14.

<sup>p</sup> the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest <sup>†</sup>, are burned outside the camp. <sup>12</sup> Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people through his own blood, <sup>q</sup> suffered outside the gate. <sup>13</sup> Let us go forth therefore unto him outside the camp, bearing <sup>r</sup> his reproach.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. <sup>12</sup> Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. <sup>13</sup> Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing*

have any antitypical reference, but can only import that which throughout the Epistle it has imported, viz. the Jewish tabernacle: see ch. viii. 5, ix. 21, &c.).

11.] For (reason why this exclusion has place: because our great Sacrifice is not one of those in which the servants of the tabernacle had any share, but answers to one which was wholly taken out and burnt: see below) of the animals of which the blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest, of these the bodies are consumed by fire outside the camp (there was a distinction in the sacrifices as to the subsequent participation of certain parts of them by the priests. Those of which they *did partake* were: 1) the sin-offering of the rulers [a male kid], and the sin-offering of the common people [a female kid or lamb], Lev. iv. 22 ff., 27 ff. [compare the rules in ch. vi. about eating and not eating the sacrifices]: 2) the dove of the poor man, Lev. v. 9: 3) the trespass-offering, Lev. vii. 7: 4) the skin of the whole burnt-offering, ib. ver. 8: 5) the wave-breast and heave-shoulder of the peace-offerings: 6) the wave-offerings on the feast of weeks, entire. But those of which they *did not partake* were 1) the sin-offering of the high priest for himself, Lev. iv. 5—7, esp. ver. 12: 2) the sin-offering for sins of ignorance of the congregation, Lev. iv. 16—21, see Num. xv. 24: 3) the sin-offering for high priest and people combined, on the great day of atonement, the blood of which was brought not only into the holy but into the holiest place, Lev. xvi. 27. Besides which we have a general rule, to which doubtless the Writer here alludes, Lev. vi. 30, "No sin-offering, whereof any of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of the congregation to reconcile withal in the holy place, shall be eaten: it shall be burnt in the fire." As regards particular expressions: the holy place here, as in ch.

ix. 8, 12, 24, 25, and x. 19, probably means not the holy place commonly so called, but the holy of holies, into which the blood of the sin-offering was brought on the day of atonement, and which only typified heaven, whither Christ as High Priest is entered with His Blood. Without the camp refers to the time when Israel was encamped in the wilderness: the enclosure of the camp was afterwards succeeded by the walls of Jerusalem, so that without the gate below answers to it).

12.] Wherefore (as being the antitype of the sin-offering on the day of atonement) Jesus also, that He might sanctify (see on ch. ii. 11) the people (see on ch. ii. 17) through His own blood, suffered outside the gate (of Jerusalem. It is necessary in order to understand this verse rightly, to trace with some care the various steps of the symbolism. The offering of Christ consists of two parts: 1) His offering on earth, which was accomplished on the cross, and answered to the slaying of the legal victim and the destruction of its body by fire, the annihilation of the fleshly life: and 2) His offering in the holy place above, which consisted in His entering heaven, the abode of God, through the veil, that is to say his flesh, and carrying His blood there as a standing atonement for the world's sin. This, the sanctifying of the people through His own blood, was the ulterior end of that sacrifice on earth: and therefore whatever belonged to that sacrifice on earth, is said to have been done in order to that other. This will sufficiently account for the clause indicating purpose here, without making it seem as if the ultimate end, the sanctification of God's people, depended on the subordinate circumstance of Christ's having suffered outside the gate. It did depend on the entire fulfilment by Him of all things written of Him in the law: and of them this was one). So then let us go forth to Him outside



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*his reproach.* <sup>14</sup> For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. <sup>17</sup> Obey them that have the rule

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>14</sup> For we have not here an abiding city, but we seek that which is to come. <sup>15</sup> Through him therefore let us offer up <sup>u</sup> a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, <sup>x</sup> the fruit of lips giving thanks to his name. <sup>16</sup> <sup>y</sup> But to do good and to communicate forget not: for <sup>z</sup> with such sacrifices God is well pleased. <sup>17</sup> Obey them that have the rule

<sup>s</sup> Mic. ii. 10.  
<sup>t</sup> Phil. iii. 20.  
<sup>u</sup> ch. xi. 10, 16.  
& xii. 22.  
<sup>v</sup> Eph. v. 20.  
<sup>w</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 5.  
<sup>x</sup> Lev. vii. 12.  
<sup>y</sup> Ps. i. 14, 23.  
& lxix. 30, 31.  
& cvii. 22. & cxvi. 17.  
<sup>z</sup> Hos. xiv. 2.  
<sup>1</sup> Rom. xii. 13.  
<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. ix. 12.  
<sup>3</sup> Phil. iv. 18.  
ch. vi. 10.  
<sup>a</sup> Phil. ii. 20.  
<sup>b</sup> 1 Thess. v.  
12. 1 Tim. v. 17. ver. 7.

the camp ("meaning, outside the polity which is according to the law." Theodoret. This is certainly intended, and not the meaning given by Chrysostom ["let us take up His cross, and remain outside the world"], nor that of Schlichting, and others ["let us undergo exile, reproach, and the like, with Him"]. Both these may be involved in that which is intended; the latter particular is presently mentioned: but they are not identical with it. Possibly there may be a reference to Exod. xxxiii. 7, "It came to pass, that every one which sought the Lord went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp." Bleek objects that if so, we should not expect the tabernacle to have been so shortly before mentioned as representing the Jewish sanctuary, in distinction from the Christian. But this seems hardly sufficient reason for denying the reference. The occasion in Exod. xxxiii. was a remarkable one. The people were just quitting Sinai, the home of the law; and the term, "every one which sought the Lord," seems to bear more than ordinary solemnity, bearing His reproach (see on ch. xi. 26). <sup>14.</sup> For (reason why such going forth is agreeable to our whole profession: not why the word "camp," and not "city," is used above) we have not here (on earth: not, in the earthly Jerusalem) an abiding city, but we seek for that (abiding city) which is to come ("he calls the city, one to come, because it is future to us. To God, Christ, the angels, it is already present." Schlichting. Yet this is not altogether true. The heavenly Jerusalem, in all her glory, is not yet existing, nor shall be until the number of the elect is accomplished. Then she shall come down out of heaven as a bride prepared for her husband, Rev. xxi. 2. This verse certainly

comes with a solemn tone on the reader, considering how short a time the *abiding city* did actually remain, and how soon the destruction of Jerusalem put an end to the Jewish polity which was supposed to be so enduring). <sup>15.</sup> Through Him (placed first, as carrying all the emphasis—through Him, not by means of the Jewish ritual observances) therefore (this gathers its inference from the whole argument, vv. 10—14) let us offer up a sacrifice of praise (this, a sacrifice of praise, is in the Septuagint version. It is the term for a thank-offering in the law. The Commentators quote an old saying of the Rabbis, "In the future age all sacrifices shall cease, but praises shall not cease") continually (not at fixed days and seasons, as the Levitical sacrifices, but all through our lives) to God, that is, the fruit of lips (from Hosea [ref.]: the literal meaning of the Hebrew is, "we will account our lips as calves" [for a sacrifice]: A. V., "we will render the calves of our lips." The fruit of the lips is explained by the next words to be, a good confession to God) confessing to His name (i.e. the name of God, as the ultimate object to which the confession, through Him, Jesus, is referred). <sup>16.</sup> But (as if it were said, the fruit of the lips is not the only sacrifice: God must be praised not only with the lips, but with the life) of beneficence and communication (of your means to others who are in want: an usage of the word which, as Bleek remarks, sprung up in the primitive Christian Church, as also the corresponding one of the verb: see on ch. ii. 14) be not forgetful (ver. 2): for with such sacrifices (viz. beneficence and communication, not including ver. 15, which is complete in itself) God is well pleased.

<sup>17</sup>—end.] Concluding exhortations and

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

over you, and submit to them: for they <sup>b</sup>keep watch on behalf of your souls, as having to give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with lamentation, for that is unprofitable for you. <sup>18</sup> <sup>c</sup>Pray for us: for we trust we have <sup>d</sup>a good conscience, desiring in all things to behave ourselves with seemliness. <sup>19</sup> But I the more abundantly exhort you <sup>e</sup>to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

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. <sup>18</sup> Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. <sup>19</sup> But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner. <sup>20</sup> Now the God of peace, that brought again

<sup>20</sup> But <sup>f</sup>the God of peace, <sup>g</sup>that

Gal. i. 1. Col. ii. 12. 1 Thess. i. 10.

<sup>b</sup> Ezek. iii. 17. & xxxiii. 2, 7. Acts xx. 26, 28.  
<sup>c</sup> Rom. xv. 30. Eph. vi. 19. Col. iv. 3. 1 Thess. v. 25. 2 Thess. iii. 1.  
<sup>d</sup> Acts xxiii. 1. & xxiv. 16. 2 Cor. i. 12.  
<sup>e</sup> Philem. 22.  
<sup>f</sup> Rom. xv. 33. 1 Thess. v. 23.  
<sup>g</sup> Acts ii. 24, 32. 1 Pet. i. 21.

Rom. iv. 24. & viii. 11. 1 Cor. vi. 14. & xv. 15. 2 Cor. iv. 14.

*notices.* 17.] Having already in ver. 7 spoken of their deceased leaders in the church, and thereby been reminded of their steadfastness in the faith, he has taken occasion in the intervening verses to admonish them respecting the danger of apostasy to Judaism, and to exhort them to come fearlessly out of it to Christ. Now he returns to their *duty to their leaders*. Obey your leaders, and submit (to them) (obey, in the regular course of your habits, guided by them, persuaded that their rule is right: submit, where that rule interferes with your own will: obey has more of free following, submit of dutiful yielding): for they (on their part) keep watch on behalf of your souls (not the same as *on behalf of you*, but rather equivalent to "*on behalf of you for your salvation*:" the word soul bringing in the idea of immortality), as having to give an account (by these words, as Theophylact well observes, bestir up the rulers also to diligence, and remembering their own responsibility): that they may do this (*viz. watch*, not give an account, for thus the present tenses which follow would be inapplicable) with joy, and not lamenting (over your disobedience): for this (their having to lament over you) is unprofitable for you. 18.] Pray for us (here, as elsewhere, it is probably a mistake to suppose that the first person plural indicates the Writer alone. As Delitzsch observes, the passage from the *rulers* to the Writer individually would be harsh. And when Bleek finds in ver. 19 a proof that the Writer only is meant, he misses the point, that this us, in-

cluding the Writer and his companions, is in fact a transition note between ver. 17 and ver. 19. See Eph. vi. 19; Rom. xv. 30; 2 Cor. i. 11): for we are persuaded that we have a good conscience, desiring in all things to behave ourselves with seemliness (i. e. to live without giving offence or scandal. This appears to point at some offence of the same kind as we know to have been taken at the life and teaching of St. Paul with reference to the law and Jewish customs). 19.] But I the more abundantly (see on ch. ii. 1) exhort you to do this (i. e. to pray for us), that I may be the sooner restored to you (on the inferences from this and the other notices in this concluding passage, see Introduction.)

20, 21.] *Solemn concluding prayer.* "He first asks their prayers, then prays for all blessings on them." Chrysostom.

20.] But (breaking off, as we use the same term: see again ver. 22) the God of peace (so often, at the end of St. Paul's Epistles: see Rom. xv. 33; xvi. 20; 1 Cor. xiv. 33; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; Phil. iv. 9; 1 Thess. iv. 23; and 2 Thess. iii. 16. In the presence of so many instances of the expression under different circumstances, it would perhaps be hardly safe to infer from it here any reference to danger of strife within the church addressed. Still the words are not a mere formula, and in all the above places, some reference is made, doubtless, to circumstances either of internal discussion or external tribulation. And certainly both the exhortations in vv. 17—19 point to a state in which there was danger of disobedience within and suspicion to-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, <sup>21</sup> 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

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

brought up from the dead, <sup>h</sup> through the blood of the everlasting covenant, <sup>1</sup> the great shepherd of the sheep, even our Lord Jesus, <sup>21</sup> <sup>k</sup> make you perfect in every good work to do his will, <sup>1</sup> doing in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; <sup>m</sup> to whom be the

<sup>h</sup> Zech. ix. 11.  
ch. x. 20.

<sup>i</sup> Isa. xl. 11.  
Ezek. xxxiv.  
23. & xxxvii.  
24. John x.  
11, 14. 1 Pet.  
ii. 25. & v. 4.  
<sup>k</sup> 2 Thess. ii.  
17. 1 Pet. v.  
10.  
<sup>l</sup> Phil. ii. 13.

<sup>m</sup> Gal. i. 5.  
2 Tim. iv. 18.  
Rev. i. 6.

wards the Writer and those who were on his part. So that 'peace' was a natural wish for them, even without taking into account those troubles which harassed and threatened them from without, in regard of which it would be also a haven, where they would be), who brought up from the dead (perhaps this is said not of the Resurrection only, but of the Ascension also. "This is the only place where our Writer mentions the Resurrection. Every where else he lifts his eyes from the depth of our Lord's humiliation, passing over all that is intermediate, to the highest point of His exaltation. The connexion here suggests to him once at least to make mention of that which lay between Golgotha and the throne of God, between the altar of the Cross and the heavenly sanctuary, the resurrection of Him who died as our sin-offering") the great Shepherd of the sheep (the passage before the Writer's mind has been that in the prophetic sixty-third chapter of Isaiah [ver. 11], where speaking of Moses, it is said, "Where is He that brought them up out of the sea unto the Shepherd of his flock?" In Isaiah, the shepherd is Moses; and the comparison between Moses and Christ is familiar to our Writer, ch. iii. 2—6. The addition of **great** as applied to Christ, is correspondent to His title **great Priest**, ch. x. 21. To deny this reference, with Lünemann, seems impossible, with the remarkable conjunction of "*the Shepherd of the sheep.*" The connexion here in which this title of our Lord is brought in, may be, that *the Rulers* having been just mentioned, and himself also, and his labours and theirs for the settlement of the Church in peace being before his mind, he is led to speak of Him who is the Chief Shepherd [1 Pet. v. 4], who was brought again from the dead by the God of Peace), in the blood of the everlasting covenant (but in what sense? Theodoret says, "He calls the new Covenant ever-

lasting; for that there shall be none after it." Then, the expression itself can hardly but be a reminiscence of Zech. ix. 11, "*By (in) the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoner out of the pit wherein is no water:*" and if so, the import of the preposition **in** here will be at least indicated by its import there. And there it is, by virtue of, in the power of, the blood of thy covenant, i. e. of that blood which was the seal of the covenant entered into with thee. So also we must understand it here. The instrumental, conditioning-element force of *in* seems to predominate: **through**, or in virtue of, the blood [Acts xx. 28]. See on the whole, Isa. lv. 3; lxi. 8; John x. 11—18), even our Lord Jesus (here the personal name, Jesus, is joined with the assertion of His lordship over us: below, where the inworking of the Spirit through Him is spoken of, it is "*through Jesus Christ,*" His office as Christ at God's right hand having made Him the channel of the Spirit to us: the anointing on Him, the Head, flowing down to the skirts of the raiment. See Acts ii. 36) **perfect you in every good work, towards the doing His will** (see ch. x. 36. Here as there, it is not a *habit* which is spoken of, but the accomplishment of the whole course of obedience), **doing in you (doing, chosen expressly as taking up the doing of His will, in exact correspondence with St. Paul's saying, Phil. ii. 13) that which is wellpleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ** (the reference is variously given: to "*well-pleasing,*" — well-pleasing &c. through Jesus Christ: or to the verb, "*doing.*" The latter is by far the more probable, as the former would introduce a superfluity): **to whom** (i. e. to God, the chief subject of the whole sentence, God, who is the God of peace, who brought up the Lord Jesus from the dead, who can perfect us in every good work, to accomplish His will, and works in us that which is well-pleasing to Him through

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

glory for ever and ever. Amen.

<sup>22</sup> But I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of my exhortation: for

<sup>n</sup> 1 Pet. v. 12. <sup>a</sup> I have written a letter unto you in few words. <sup>23</sup> Know ye that

<sup>o</sup> 1 Thess. iii. 2. <sup>VI</sup> Tim. vi. 12. <sup>o</sup> our brother Timothy <sup>p</sup> is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you. <sup>24</sup> Salute

<sup>q</sup> ver. 7, 17. all them <sup>q</sup> that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They from

<sup>r</sup> Tit. iii. 15. Italy salute you. <sup>25</sup> <sup>r</sup> Grace be with you all. Amen.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

for ever and ever. Amen.

<sup>22</sup> And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have

written a letter unto you in few words. <sup>23</sup> Know ye

that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you. <sup>24</sup> Salute all them

that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.

<sup>25</sup> Grace be with you all. Amen.

Jesus Christ. The whole majesty of the sentence requires this reverting to its main agent, and speaks against the referring to whom be glory to our Blessed Lord, who is only incidentally mentioned. See the very similar construction of 1 Pet. iv. 11, where however the reference is not by any means equally certain) be (in 1 Pet. iv. 11, "is:" and possibly also here: but perhaps "be" is the more probable supplement) the glory for ever. Amen. <sup>22.</sup> But (breaking off, see above, ver. 20) I beseech you, brethren, endure the word of my exhortation (or, of exhortation. The expression applies without doubt to the whole Epistle, from what follows: not as Beza, and others, to the few exhortations preceding, nor as Grotius, to ch. x.—xiii. only: nor as Kuinoel, and others, to the exhortations scattered up and down in the Epistle); for also (besides other reasons, there is this) in (by means of, in the material of) few [words] (few in comparison of what might have been said on such a

subject) I have written to you. <sup>23.]</sup>

Know (not, "ye know," see in my Greek Test.) that our brother Timothy is dismissed (the word thus rendered does not occur in St. Paul, but is frequent in St. Luke; e. g., Luke xxii. 68; xxiii. 16 ff.; Acts iii. 13; iv. 21, of dismissal from prison or custody; Acts xiii. 3; xv. 30, of official sending away; Acts xv. 33, of solemn dismissal; and Acts xix. 41, xxiii. 22, of simple dismissal), with whom, if he come ("to me: it is probable, that Timothy had been discharged from prison, but had not yet reached St. Paul [or, the writer, whoever he was]." Eusebius) soon, I will see you (by going to you). <sup>24.]</sup> Salute all your leaders,

and all the saints. They from Italy salute you (on this, see *Introd.*, § ii. 13).

<sup>25.]</sup> Grace (literally, *the grace*, viz. of God. "He does not express *whose* grace and favour he wishes for them, as that was a matter notorious to all Christians." Schlichting) be with all of you. Amen.

# THE GENERAL EPISTLE

OF

## JAMES.

### AUTHORIZED VERSION.

I. <sup>1</sup> *JAMES, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.* <sup>2</sup> *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;*

### AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

I. <sup>1</sup> <sup>a</sup> *JAMES, <sup>b</sup> a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>c</sup> to the twelve tribes <sup>d</sup> which are in the dispersion, greeting.* <sup>2</sup> *My brethren, <sup>e</sup> count it all joy <sup>f</sup> when ye fall into*

<sup>a</sup> Acts xii. 17. & xv. 18.  
Gal. i. 19. & ii. 9. Jude 1.  
<sup>b</sup> Tit. i. 1.  
<sup>c</sup> Acts xxvi. 7.  
<sup>d</sup> Deut. xxxii. 26. John vii. 35. Acts ii. 5. & viii. 1.  
<sup>e</sup> 1 Pet. i. 1.  
<sup>f</sup> Matt. v. 12. Acts v. 41.  
1 Pet. i. 6.

Heb. x. 34. 1 Pet. iv. 13, 16.

CHAP. I. 1.] ADDRESS AND GREETING. James (for all questions who the Author of this Epistle was, see the Introduction. I assume here that which I have there endeavoured to establish, that it is "James the Lord's brother," the first president or bishop of the church at Jerusalem, an Apostle, but not one of the Twelve), **servant** (not necessarily, as Huther, an official appellation; but implying, as he also confesses, devotion to God and His work alone, irrespectively of self-will or other men's will) of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ (not "of the God and Lord, J. C.," but, as Ecumenius, "by God, he means the Father: by Lord, the Son." Huther remarks, that in all the addresses of Epistles, the whole name *Jesus Christ* is given. St. James mentions our Lord only here and ch. ii. 1 in this Epistle, and not at all in his speeches in Acts xv. and xxi. Bengel says, "It might have seemed, if he had often named Jesus, as if he did it to exalt himself as the brother of our Lord. For that very reason, he 'knew Christ according to the flesh' less than others"), to the twelve tribes (of Israel: nor can there be any reasonable doubt that this Epistle was addressed to Jewish Christians in the first place. Not however to them, as distinguished from Gentile Christians: for the two classes appear to have

been not as yet distinct. If the later date of the Epistle be taken [see Introd.], then the Jewish Christians are addressed as the nucleus and kernel of all Christendom. But to my mind, the former is more probable) which are in the dispersion (the most likely reference of this word is to the literal and actual Jewish dispersion: and the Epistle must be considered as addressed, from the head of the mother church in Jerusalem, to the Jewish believers, residing among the dispersed tribes of Israel), **greeting** (the formula thus rendered is not found in the address of any other apostolical Epistle; but it occurs in the Epistle drawn up under the direction of James to the Gentile churches in Acts xv. 23).

2—12.] *Exhortations regarding the endurance of trials. Think it all joy* (the word *joy* is taken up out of the word rendered greeting, which literally means *to rejoice*. It is a characteristic of the style of this Epistle thus to take up again words just used: so "endurance. But let endurance," ver. 3, 4: "deficient . . . is deficient," ver. 4, 5: "doubting . . . he that doubteth," ver. 6: "slow to wrath: for the wrath," ver. 19, 20: "the implanted word . . . but be ye doers of the word," ver. 21, 22: "that man's religion is vain . . . pure religion," ver. 26, 27, &c., &c. all joy, i. e. all conceivable joy—a matter on all hands



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

<sup>g</sup> Rom. v. 3. divers temptations; <sup>3 g</sup> knowing this, that the proof of your faith worketh endurance. <sup>4</sup> But let endurance have a perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, in nothing deficient.

<sup>h</sup> 1 Kings iii. 9, 11, 12. Prov. ii. 3. <sup>1</sup> Matt. vii. 7, & xxi. 22. Mark xi. 24. Luke xi. 9. John xiv. 13, & xv. 7, & xvi. 23. <sup>k</sup> Jer. xxix. 12. <sup>1</sup> John v. 14, 15. <sup>1</sup> Mark xi. 24. <sup>1</sup> Tim. ii. 8. <sup>5 h</sup> But if any of you is deficient in wisdom, <sup>1</sup> let him ask of God, that giveth to all simply, and upbraideth not; and <sup>k</sup> it shall be given to him.

<sup>6 l</sup> But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting. For he that doubteth is

<sup>3</sup> knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. <sup>4</sup> But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. <sup>5</sup> If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. <sup>6</sup> But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that

joyful, my brethren (this is the constant address in our Epistle. It betokens community of origin and of faith), **whenever ye fall into various temptations** (these are not only what we properly call *temptations*, but any kind of distresses which happen to us, from without or from within, which in God's purpose serve as *trials* of us: the latter word being, in this its now common general meaning, a word derived from the Christian life. See 1 Pet. i. 6, which is strictly parallel): <sup>3.]</sup> *ground of this joy: knowing* (as you do) **that the proof of your faith worketh endurance** (perseverance: more than *patience*. But does not St. Paul, Rom. v. 3, 4, state precisely the converse, viz. that "*tribulation worketh endurance, and endurance approval?*") Doubtless: but it is really the same that is said: *tribulation* there is equivalent to *proof* here. As De Wette observes, the thought is not carried to its end as in Romans, but the Apostle breaks away at *endurance* to exhort respecting it).

<sup>4.]</sup> **But** (as if it had been said, and be not weary of enduring: but) **let endurance have a perfect work** (the allusion seems to be to our Lord's saying, Matt. xxiv. 13, "*He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.*") So that the words are to be taken simply and literally; **endurance** as the abstract, mere endurance, and **work** as the work wrought out by *endurance* in its continuance. And **perfect** is not to be understood as *enduring to the end*, but in its ordinary sense of 'perfect,' fully brought out and accomplished), **that ye may be perfect** (for the work of God in a man is the man. If God's teaching by patience have had a perfect work in you, you are perfect: His is an *implanted word*, ver. 21. And the purpose of that work is, to make us perfect) **and entire** (that in which every part is present in its place), **deficient in**

nothing (the subjoining a negative corroboration to a positive clause is characteristic of St. James: compare vv. 5 and 6).

<sup>5.]</sup> **But** (i. e., but this perfection and entireness, this defect in nothing, will not be yet attained; and you will find, when you aim at it, that you are lacking in the very first requisite) **if any of you is deficient in wisdom** (for what is meant by wisdom here, see ch. iii. 15—17), **let him ask** (either supply '*it*,' or take the verb absolutely, which is better: so A. V., see below) **from God who giveth** (asking and giving are put forward as belonging to us and God in the abstract, and we do not want any object, as "*it*," or "*wisdom*," supplied) **to all men simply** (so Rom. xii. 8, "*He that imparteth, with simplicity:*" which is perhaps better than "*with liberality:*" we must here interpret by what follows, and understand it of *simply giving*, and adding nothing afterwards which may take off from the graciousness of the gift) **and upbraideth not** (in what sense is rather doubtful. Many interpret it of sending away with a refusal: the word will not bear this meaning. By far the greatest part of Commentators understand it of reproaching by the recounting of benefits bestowed. But this again does not reach the full and general nature of the expression here. The real meaning here is just as in Ecclus. xx. 15, "*He giveth little, and upbraideth much,*" and in Ecclus. xli. 22, "*After thou hast given, upbraid not,*" viz. upbraiding with any kind of reproaches, as God might well do, so unworthy are we to approach Him with any request. This of course would include that other), **and it shall be given to him** (viz. *wisdom*, see 3 Kings iii. 9—12. The whole verse seems to be written in remembrance of Matt. vii. 7—12).

<sup>6.]</sup> **But let him ask in faith** (persuasion that God can and will give: see Matt. xxi. 22:

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. <sup>7</sup> For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. <sup>8</sup> A double minded man is unstable in all his ways. <sup>9</sup> Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: <sup>10</sup> but the rich, in that he

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. <sup>7</sup> For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing from the Lord. <sup>8</sup> <sup>m</sup> He <sup>m ch. iv. 8.</sup> is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. <sup>9</sup> Let the brother who is low glory in his exaltation: <sup>10</sup> but the rich [glorieth] in his humilia-

and compare "the prayer of faith," ch. v. 15), nothing doubting (compare Matt. xxi. 21, from which this is evidently taken, "If ye have faith, and doubt not," &c. Huther says well, "Doubt is not unbelief [Luke xxiv. 11], but includes in it the essential character of unbelief: while faith says 'Yes,' and unbelief 'No,' doubt is the union of 'Yes' and 'No,' but so that 'No' is the weightier: it is that inward giving way which leans not to faith, but to unbelief. The deep-lying ground of it is pride"): for he that doubteth is like a wave of the sea (see Eph. iv. 14 and Isa. lvii. 20) driven by the wind and tossed about (the word forms a synonym with the former, "driven by the wind:" and the use of these synonymous expressions so close to one another is again a characteristic of St. James. A good explanation of the figure is quoted by Wiesinger from Heisen: "Sometimes he is cast on the shore of faith and hope, sometimes he is rolled back into the deep of distrust: now he is borne up into the height of worldly pride, now he is mingled with the lowest sands of desperation and trouble"): for (takes up and repeats the former for) let not that man (said with a certain slight expression of contempt) think that he shall receive any thing (viz. of what he asks: some things, as life, food, raiment, &c., he does continually receive) from the Lord (i. e. as usually in this Epistle, from God. So ch. iv. 10, 15; v. 4, 10, 11: see at each of those places. On the other hand, "the Lord," ch. v. 7, 14, 15, is used of Christ. Hofmann remarks that where the Father is not expressly distinguished from the Son by the context, the Godhead, in its unity, is to be understood by the word God: and the same may be said of the Lord).

8.] He is a man with two minds, unstable in all his ways (such is the best way of taking this sentence, making it all predicate and all to apply to that man as its subject. The common way, to take "a double-minded man" as a new subject, as

A. V. 'a double-minded man is unstable,' has this against it, that it makes the very unusual word "doubled-souled," found here and in ch. iv. 8 for the first time in Greek literature, to be a mere usual epithet and word of passage).

9.] The connexion appears to be this: we must not pray before God, we must not be before God, double-minded; in our trials, we shall get no heavenly wisdom, if this is so. This double-mindedness, one soul drawn upwards to God, the other drawn downwards to the world, causes nothing but instability, and cannot result in that joy which is to be our attitude in trial. And it arises from misapprehension of our appointed state in trial: the poor and humble forget the exceeding honour thus done to him, which ought to be to him ground of boasting, far more worthy than (see below) the rich in this world have in their riches which shall so soon fade away: whereas (ver. 12) he that is tried shall receive a crown of life from the Lord. But (contrasted with the double-mindedness above) let the brother (the Christian believer) who is low (poor and afflicted; not merely, low in station: this explanation disappears with the view that the rich man [below] is Christian also) glory in his exaltation (which he has obtained by being admitted into the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, and which he has further in reversion in the glorious crown of life hereafter, ver. 12): but the rich (not the rich brother, nor is the rich to be understood any otherwise than in the rest of the Epistle, compare ch. ii. 6 ff., v. 1 ff. There are difficulties either way; but on mature consideration I find those on the usual hypothesis, of the rich man being also a brother, insuperable. For in that case 1) a most unnatural change in the sense is necessary at "because:"—'Let the rich brother glory in his humiliation, for, or because, considered merely as a rich man, &c.' So that he is a Christian

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

n Job xiv. 2.  
Ps. xxxvii. 2.  
& xc. 5, 6, &  
cii. 11. & ciii.  
15. Isa. xl.  
6. 1 Cor. xvii.  
31. ch. iv.  
14. 1 Pet. i.  
24. 1 John  
ii. 17.

o Job v. 17.  
Prov. iii. 11.  
12. Heb. xii.  
5. Rev. iii.  
19.  
p 1 Cor. ix. 25.  
2 Tim. iv. 8.  
ch. ii. 5.  
1 Pet. v. 4.  
Rev. ii. 10.  
q Matt. x. 22.  
& xix. 28, 29.  
ch. ii. 5.

tion: because <sup>n</sup> as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. <sup>11</sup> For the sun arose with its heat, and dried up the grass, and the flower thereof fell off away, and the beauty of the form of it perished: so also shall the rich man wither in his ways. <sup>12</sup> <sup>o</sup> Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is approved, he shall receive <sup>p</sup> the crown of life, <sup>q</sup> which He promised to them that love him. <sup>13</sup> Let no

is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. <sup>11</sup> For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways. <sup>12</sup> Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. <sup>13</sup> Let no

brother at first, and then a mere rich man in the next clause: 2) such a meaning will not suit the concluding words of ver. 11: which are simply predicated of the rich man, the subject enunciated above, and cannot with any probability be supposed to be said of him merely as regards his riches. Whereas on the other view the difficulties are no more than arise from a confessedly elliptical parallelism. After the rich we must supply *glorieth*: 'let the low glory in his exaltation, whereas the rich man glories in his debasement,' compare Phil. iii. 19, "*whose glory is in their shame*" glories (see above) in his humiliation (see Phil. iii. 19, above,—in that which is in reality his debasement, just as in the other case the lowly Christian is called on to boast in what is in reality his exaltation. Thus, and thus only, the parallelism coheres. On the ordinary view, the exaltation of the low brother is, that which is really but not apparently his exaltation, whereas the humiliation of the rich brother is that which is apparently but not really his debasement); because as a flower of the grass he shall pass away. 11.] For (justification of the last words) the sun arose (it is given in the form of a tale, a narration of what happened and ever does happen: see Isa. xl. 7, from which the whole is adapted) with the heat (or, the hot east wind: this interpretation seems approved by the Greek of Jonah iv. 8, where the same word is used for that which we render "*a vehement east wind.*" I prefer the other meaning, the arid scorching which accompanies the increasing power of the sun), and dried up the

grass, and the flower thereof fell away (all from Isaiah), and the beauty of its appearance (literally, *face*, i. e. external appearance) perished: thus also shall the rich man (the same as was spoken of ver. 10) wither (the verb continues the similitude) in his ways (Ps. lxxviii. 24; and Prov. ii. 8). 12.] We now return to the suffering and tempted Christian, who has his *blessedness*, and a possession more precious and more sure than worldly wealth. Blessed is the man who endureth (the emphasis is on this verb, which distinguishes this saying from that in ver. 2; it is not the mere *falling among temptations*, but the *enduring temptation*, which is felicitated) temptation: because when he has become approved (by the trial: when he has undergone the *proof*, ver. 2) he shall receive the crown of life (of life is genitive of apposition: the crown is life eternal. No image derived from athletes must be thought of in the verse, as is done by many: such an image would be foreign to the ideas of Jews, with whom the receiving a crown from God was a familiar image, irrespective of any previous contest for a prize: see Ps. xxi. 3; Wisd. v. 16, "*They shall receive the kingdom of glory and the diadem of beauty from the hand of the Lord*"), which He promised to them that love Him (who promised it, is understood: God, repeatedly, in substance: whenever a kingdom is foretold as the future inheritance of His people: to them that love Him, 2 Tim. iv. 8; and the same words again in ch. ii. 5. It is a formula frequently occurring in the law and the prophets: compare Exod. xx. 6;

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: <sup>14</sup> but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. <sup>15</sup> Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. <sup>16</sup> Do not err, my

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

man say when he is tempted, I am tempted from God: for God is unversed in evil, and He tempteth no man: <sup>14</sup> but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away and enticed by his own lust. <sup>15</sup> Then <sup>r</sup>lust having conceived, bringeth forth sin: and sin, when finished, <sup>s</sup>bringeth forth death. <sup>16</sup> Do not err, my beloved

<sup>r</sup> Job xv. 35.  
<sup>s</sup> Ps. vii. 14.

<sup>s</sup> Rom. vi. 21.  
23.

Deut. vii. 9; Judg. v. 31; Neh. i. 5; Ps. v. 11, cxliv. 20; Dan. ix. 4; Eccles. xxxi. [xxxiv.] 16, xlvi. 22). **13, 14.]** Let no one when tempted (in the manner hitherto spoken of through the chapter. There is no warrant for changing in the slightest degree the reference of the word. The *temptation* is a trying of the man by the solicitation of evil: whether that evil be the terror of external danger, or whatever it be, all *temptation* by means of it arises not from God, but from ourselves—our own *lust*. God ordains the temptation, overrules the temptation, but does not tempt, is not the spring of the solicitation to sin) say that I am tempted from [by] God (by agency proceeding out and coming from God: very different from “of God,” which would represent God as the agent. Thus the man would transfer his own responsibility to God. There does not seem to be any allusion to the fatalism of the Pharisees, as some seem to think: the fault is one of common life, and is alluded to Eccles. xv. 11, “Say not thou, It is through the Lord that I fell away”): for God is unversed in things evil (the meaning usually given, “untempted,” or “not able to be tempted,” is against the usage of the word. Besides, there is no question here of God being tempted, but of God tempting. It seems that we must take refuge in the ordinary meaning of the word, and render it ‘unversed in,’ having no experience of), but HE tempteth no man: but each man is tempted, being (slightly causal, ‘in that he is’) drawn out and enticed by (it is the same preposition in the Greek as above, ver. 13: the source rather than the agent: but we cannot here render it from, as the sentence would thus become ambiguous) his own lust (James is not here speaking of the *original* source of sin in man, but of the actual source of temptation to sin, when it occurs. The “*sin*” of St. Paul, the sinful principle in

man, is not here in question: we take up the matter, so to speak, lower down the stream: and the *lust* here is the *lust* there, itself the effect of sin [abstr.] in the members, and leading to sin [concrete] in the conduct): **15.]** then lust having conceived, bringeth forth sin: and sin, when completed, bringeth forth death (it has been questioned whether *sin* is here in one, or in two senses. De Wette holds that the first *sin* is the purpose, or inner act, of sin,—the *completion*, carrying this *sin* out into an act, which act brings forth death, the wages of sin. But this is decidedly wrong. Wiesinger has disputed it, and insisted rightly that the *inner act* is the union of the will with the *lust*, the “*bringing forth*” denoting extrusion into outward act: then the second *sin*,—which Huther rightly maintains to be the sinful act when brought to perfection in all its consequences, in a series of results following on one another and bringing a man under bondage to his sin,—being thus perfected, brings forth eternal death. The imagery is throughout consistent. The harlot *lust* draws away and entices the man: the guilty union is committed by the will embracing the temptress: the consequence is that she conceives sin, sin, in general, of some kind, of that kind to which the temptation inclines: then [so literally], the *sin*, that particular sin, when grown up and mature, herself bringeth forth, as if all along pregnant with it, Death, the final result of sin. So that *temptation to sin* cannot be from God, while *trial* is from Him. The one, being our proof, works endurance, and endurance, when she has a perfect work, life: the other, being a bait and excitement arising from lust, “brings forth sin, and sin being completed, brings forth death.” The English reader will not fail to remember Milton’s sublime allegory in *Paradise Lost*, where Satan, by his

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

t John iii. 27.  
1 Cor. iv. 7.

brethren. <sup>17</sup> Every good gift and every perfect gift cometh down from above, from the Father of the lights of heaven, <sup>u</sup> with whom is no variability or shadow of turning. <sup>18</sup> <sup>x</sup> Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, <sup>y</sup> that we should be a kind of <sup>z</sup> firstfruit of his

u Numb. xxiii. 19. 1 Sam. xv. 29. Mal. iii. 6. Rom. xi. 29.  
x John i. 13. & iii. 31. 1 Cor. iv. 15. 1 Pet. i. 23.  
y Eph. i. 12.  
z Jer. ii. 3.  
Rev. xiv. 4.

beloved brethren. <sup>17</sup> Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variability, neither shadow of turning. <sup>18</sup> Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

own evil lust, brings forth sin: and then by an incestuous union with Sin [which doubtless may be said to lie here also in the background, no cause being assigned for the *conception*] causes her to bring forth Death).

16—18.] The idea that God tempts to sin has been as yet only negatively contradicted. But so far is it from this being so, that *He is the Author of all good*. Do not err (some have ended the paragraph with these words: some have begun a new one. But this formula thus used seems invariably to look to what follows), my beloved brethren (both this earnest address, and the caution, shew how important the Writer feels this to be, which he is about to enunciate): every good gift (properly, *act of giving*) and every perfect gift (properly, *thing given*). But we cannot express the two by two words in English) descendeth from above (not as A. V., is from above, and descendeth, &c.), from the Father of the lights (of heaven) (it seems now generally agreed that by the lights here is meant the heavenly bodies, and by Father the creator, originator, as in Job xxxviii. 28, “*Who is the father of the rain?*” Being this, being the Father of those glorious fountains of light, and thus [see below] purer and clearer than they all, it cannot be that He should tempt to evil. Our very life, as renewed in Christ, is of His begetting, and we are a firstfruit of His new world), with (‘chez,’ in the presence of whom) whom there is no change (none of that uncertainty of degree of light which we see in the material heavenly bodies, but which is not in God their Creator) or shadow (a shadow, the dark mark of shadow, the result of being overshadowed, and cast from any object) of turning (arising from turning: from that *revolution* in which the heavens are ever found: by means of which the moon turns her dark side to us, in a constant state of *change*, and shadow of turning: by means of which the moon

is eclipsed by the shadow of the earth, and the sun by the body of the moon, or, if you will, though this is hardly so likely to have been in view, is hidden from us during the night. From all these God, the Father of lights, is free; as 1 John i. 5, “*God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all*”).

18.] *The greatest example of this position*, that all good and perfect gifts come from Him: mentioned not merely as an example, but as leading on to the following context. Because He willed it (the past participle is 1) contemporary with the verb: 2) slightly causal, involving the condition of the act which follows. It was of His own mere will, ‘*proprio motu*,’ and the emphasis is on this word) begat He (the spiritual birth, not the natural, is meant, as is evident by what follows) us (signifies the Writer and his readers, not Christians in general: not especially as *Jewish Christians*, for that is not [see below] the reference here) with the word of truth (the genitive is one of apposition; compare John xvii. 17, “*Thy word is truth*.” And the word of truth is the gospel, preached, and implanted as below: compare 1 Pet. i. 23, “*born again . . . by the word of the living God*”), that we should be (aim, but not the primary aim, of the *begetting*. His gracious purpose with regard to us in particular was, that we should be, &c. His great purpose with regard to all Christians is not here in question) a kind of firstfruit (this, a kind of, does not appear to be intended, as Bengel, “to be said in modesty, because properly and absolutely, *Christ* is the firstfruit.” Rather, I should say, it would point to the early date of our Epistle, in which an idea afterwards so familiar is thus introduced as it were with an apologetic explanation. The figure is from the appointment of the law by which the firstborn of man, of cattle, of fruits, &c., were to be consecrated to God; and the word must be taken with this sacred meaning, not merely as



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

<sup>19</sup> *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak,*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

creatures. <sup>19</sup> Ye know it, my beloved brethren; <sup>a</sup> but let every man <sup>a</sup> be swift to hear, <sup>b</sup> slow to speak, <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Eccles. v. 1.  
<sup>b</sup> Prov. x. 10.  
& xvii. 27.  
Eccles. v. 2.

an ordinary word indicating priority. The first Christians, to whom St. James is writing, were as firstborn of the great family, dedicated as firstfruits to God. Weisinger beautifully says, "The thought fully given would be this: they by Regeneration were dedicated as the firstfruits of a sacrificial gift which shall only be completed with the offering up of all *creatures*" of His creatures (this expression manifestly extends wider than merely to the great multitude of the regenerated whom no man can number; it embraces all creation, which we know shall partake in the ultimate glorious perfection of the sons of God: see Rom. viii. 20, 21. Wiesinger has an important note, shewing from this verse what must be the right understanding of much which follows in this Epistle. "This passage," he says, "is among those which reveal the depth of Christian knowledge in which the practical and moral exhortations of the Writer are grounded: lying as it does expressly ('wherefore,' ver. 21) at the basis of them. We will here bring together in a few words the teaching of the passage, for the sake of its important bearing on the rest of the Epistle. It teaches us 1) as a positive supplement to vv. 14, 15, that the life of man must be renewed, from its very root and foundation: 2) it designates this renewal as God's work, moreover as an imparting of the life of God, as only possible by the working of the Spirit, only on the foundation of the objective fact of our Redemption in Christ, which is the content of the *word of truth*: 3) it sets forth this re-generation as an act once for all accomplished, and distinguishes it from the gradual penetration and sanctification of the individual life by means of this new principle of life imparted in the re-generation: 4) it declares also expressly that the re-generation is a free act of God's love not induced by any work of man (Eph. ii. 8, 9; Tit. iii. 5), so that man is placed by God in his right relation to God, antecedently to all works well-pleasing to God: for this the expression *begat He us* involves: and in so far as this *begotting* necessarily implies the justification of the sinner (to use the language of St. Paul), it is plain also, that St. James cannot, with-

out contradicting himself, make this *justification*, in the sense of St. Paul, dependent on the works of faith. 5) *the word of truth* is specified as the objective medium of re-generation: and herewith we must have *faith* as the appropriating medium on the part of man himself: of the central import of which *faith* in St. James also we have already seen something (vv. 3, 6), and shall see more (ch. ii. 5, 14 ff.).

6) Together with this act of re-generation proceeding from God, we have also the high destination of the Christian, which the Apostle gives so significantly and deeply in these words, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. And that which God has done to him, is now in the following verses made the foundation of that which the Christian has on his part to do: by which that which we said under 3) and 4) receives fresh confirmation. This passage is one to be remembered, when we wish to know what the Apostle understands by the *perfect law* (i. 25, ii. 12), and what he means, when (ii. 14 ff.) he deduces *justification* from the works of faith. As regards the dogmatical use, which some make of this passage, wishing to shew that re-generation is brought about by the word, as distinguished from the Sacrament of Baptism (Tit. iii. 5—7), we may remark, that seeing that the *word of truth* designates the gospel, as a whole, without any respect to such distinction, nothing regarding it can be gathered from this passage. The word of the Lord constitutes, we know, the force of the Sacrament also. And is it meant to be inferred that the readers of this Epistle were *not baptized*?"

19—27.] *Exhortation to receive rightly this word of truth.* (See the general connexion in the introduction.) 19.] On the reading,—whether "*Wherefore*, my beloved brethren," or "*Ye know it*, my beloved brethren,"—see my Greek Testament. **Ye know it, my beloved brethren; but (consequently) let every man be swift to hear (the word of truth, which has so great power for good and for life: the verb is absolute and general, having only reference to the word of truth), slow to speak (the meaning is, be eager to listen, not eager to discourse: the former may lead to implanting or strengthening the new life,**

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>c</sup> Prov. xiv. 17. <sup>c</sup> slow to wrath: <sup>20</sup> for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. <sup>21</sup> Wherefore <sup>d</sup> putting off all filthiness and superabundance of malignity, receive with meekness the implanted word, <sup>e</sup> which is able to save your souls. <sup>22</sup> But <sup>f</sup> be ye

AUTHORIZED VERSION.  
*slow to wrath: <sup>20</sup> for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. <sup>21</sup> Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. <sup>22</sup> But be ye*

<sup>d</sup> Col. iii. 8.  
<sup>1</sup> Pet. ii. 1.

<sup>e</sup> Acts xiii. 26.  
 Rom. i. 16.  
 1 Cor. xv. 2.  
 Eph. i. 13.  
 Tit. ii. 11.  
 Heb. ii. 3.

1 Pet. i. 9.

f Matt. vii. 21. Luke vi. 40. & xi. 28. Rom. ii. 13. 1 John iii. 7.

the latter to wrath and suddenness of temper, so often found in the wake of swift rejoinder and ready chattering. (Ecumenius reminds us that a certain divine man says, He that talketh repenteth often, he that holdeth his peace never), **slow to wrath** (the reference is general, as the precept is. The quick speaker is the quick kindler):

**20.] for the wrath** (any wrath, all wrath) of man worketh not ('practiseth not,' 'worketh not habitually') the righteousness of God (that which is righteousness in God's sight. We must not interpret the righteousness of God the state of righteousness before God, as some, or that righteousness *in another*, into which God begets men by his word of truth, as Hofmann and Wiesinger. When this latter asks, What relevance here has the remark that anger doeth not that which is right in the sight of God?—an easy answer can be given. Be not intemperately zealous, hastily rash to speak and to be angered, even in God's behalf [for this is implied]: be humble, ready to listen:—for your angry zeal, your quick speaking, work not God's righteous purposes—serve not Him, are not carriers forward of that righteousness which is the characteristic of His kingdom, ch. iii. 18. How many an endeavour, which might have ended in *working the righteousness of God*, has been diverted and blighted by hasty speaking and anger, and ended only in disgracing ourselves, and Him whom we would have served, before men!).

**21.] Wherefore** (consequence from ver. 20: seeing that *wrath* excludes you from having a share in the righteous work of God) **putting off** (it must be done as a single act, antecedently to that which follows. The previous putting off is the condition of the subsequent reception) **all filthiness** (here figurative, as Rev. xxii. 11. Some Commentators take it here as standing alone: others join it with *and superabundance*, as belonging to the genitive "*of malignity*," and this seems better for the

context, which concerns not the putting away of moral pollution of all kinds, but only of that kind which belongs to *malignity*: see below. And, thus taken, it will mean that *malignity* pollutes the soul, and renders it unfit to receive the *implanted word*. It is very possible that the agricultural similitude in the word *implanted* may have influenced the choice of both these words, *filthiness* and *superabundance*. The ground must be ridged of all that pollutes and chokes it, before the seed can sink in and come to maturity; must be cleaned and cleared) and *abundant* ('*superfluous*' is perhaps too strong: it is, if the above figure be allowed, the rank growth, the abundant crop) of **malignity** (evil disposition towards one another. The word carries on the "*wrath*" above: which springs from *malignity*, evil disposition, which is inherent in our hearts, and requires putting off before we can receive the word of God. That this is so, is evident from the recommendation of *mildness* which follows. However the exhortation may apply in the wider sense, it is not its sense here, as the context plainly shews), in **mildness** (towards one another) **receive** (so Mark iv. 20, of the good ground) **the implanted word** (the word spoken of is beyond doubt the same as the *word of truth* above—i.e. the Gospel, in its fulness. But the epithet makes some little difficulty. First of all, it clearly is not, as Ecumenius seems to take it, 'innate:' for this would stultify the command to *receive* it, we having it already. Nor can it mean "the word which has been planted in the whole of Christendom," seeing that individuals are here being dealt with: but the allusion is apparently to the parable of the sower, and it is the word implanted [equivalent to which has been sown], the word whose attribute and *virtue* is to be *implanted*, and which *is implanted*, awaiting your reception of it to spring up and take up your being into it and make you new plants) **which is able to save your souls**

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. <sup>23</sup> For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: <sup>24</sup> for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. <sup>25</sup> But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and con-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

<sup>23</sup> Because, <sup>g</sup> if any is a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man contemplating his natural face in a glass: <sup>24</sup> for he contemplateth himself, and departeth, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. <sup>25</sup> But <sup>h</sup> whoso hath looked into the perfect <sup>i</sup> law of liberty, and continueth,

<sup>g</sup> Luke vi. 17, &c. See ch. ii. 14, &c.

<sup>h</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 18.

<sup>i</sup> ch. ii. 12.

(so Rom. i. 16, where the *Gospel* is said to be the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Observe "your souls." It is the *soul* which carries the personality of the man: which is between the *spirit* drawing it upwards, and the *flesh* drawing it downwards, and is saved or lost, passes into life or death, according to the choice between these two. And the *implanted word*, working through the *spirit*, and by the divine Spirit, is a spiritual agency, able to save the *soul*,—to complete the work, and to have done it for ever).

22.] The *swiftness to hear*, and the *reception of the truth* are qualified, at the same time that they are enforced, by a caution. But be ye doers of the word (viz. of the *implanted word*, the *word of truth*). Observe, not only "do," but be doers: the substantive means more than the verb; it carries an enduring, a sort of official force with it: 'let this be your occupation', not hearers only, deceiving yourselves (the "hearer only" does this, when he infers that the mere sound of the word received in his outward ear will suffice for him).

23—25.] *Justification of the expression*, "deceiving your own selves," and of the foregoing exhortation. Because, if any is a hearer of the word, and not (strictly, it is 'if any one is a hearer, and a not-doer') a doer, this man (the demonstrative pronoun points more markedly at the individual in whom the hearing and not-doing are united) is like to a man contemplating (probably the example was meant to have a general reference: for though it may be true, as De Wette says, that many men remember well their appearance in the mirror, the common rule is that men forget it) the countenance of his birth (i. e. as A. V., his natural face: the face he was born

with. The expression is to be explained apparently as Wiesinger: "Not that he can see in the glass any other than his natural face, but the addition serves more plainly to point out the sphere of mere material perception from which the comparison is taken, as distinguished from the ethical sphere of 'hearing the word,' and at the same time hints at the easy translation of the remark from the one department to the other, in which 'the word of God is a mirror in which we may and ought to see our moral visage,' as De Wette") in a mirror: for (this seems to stamp the example as a general one, applying to all, not merely taking some possible man who may do this; see above) he contemplated himself, and has departed, and immediately forgot of what appearance he was (viz. in the mirror. It is to be observed, that the *contemplating* answers to the hearing of the word: the *going away* to the relaxing the attention after hearing—letting the mind go elsewhere, and the interest of the thing heard pass away: and then the forgetfulness in both cases follows. In the next verse we pass to one who looks and does not depart). But he who looked into (here we have the figure mingled with the reality, the comparison being dropped. Probably the verb used here, which signifies to *stoop and look in*, has reference to a mirror being placed on a table or on the ground, to contemplate which steadily, a man must put his face near to it. But we must not perhaps urge this too strictly: for in 1 Pet. i. 12, it is used of looking closely into any thing. It is here the opposite of *contemplating*: attention bestowed for a time only and then withdrawn. And this opposition is strengthened by the words which follow: see below) the perfect law which is (the law) of our (Christian)

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

he being not a forgetful hearer, but  
 k John xiii. 17. a doer of work, <sup>k</sup> this man shall be  
 blessed in his deed. <sup>26</sup> If any man  
 among you thinketh that he is re-  
 ligious, and <sup>l</sup>bridleth not his tongue,  
 l Ps. xxxiv. 13. & xxxix. 1. but deceiveth his heart, this man's  
 l Pet. iii. 10. religion is vain. <sup>27</sup> Pure religion  
 and undefiled before Him who is  
 m Isa. i. 16, 17. our God and Father is this, <sup>m</sup>To  
 m Matt. xxv. 36. visit the fatherless and widows in  
 n Rom. xii. 2. their affliction; <sup>n</sup>to keep himself  
 l John v. 18. unspotted from the world.

tinueth therein, *he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.* <sup>26</sup> *If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.* <sup>27</sup> *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*

liberty ("the perfect law," not, the gospel as contrasted with the law, nor the covenant of faith as more perfect than that of legal obedience: but the rule of life as revealed in the gospel, which is perfect and perfecting, but not in contrast with the former law as being not perfect, and not able to make perfect: that distinction is not in view here: see below. The whole Epistle is founded on this perfect law of Christ, more especially on that declaration of it contained in the Sermon on the mount: see *Introd.* And that this law here is meant, the *implanted word, the word of truth*, as it is a rule of conduct, is evident from what follows, where *deeds*, and they only, are spoken of. It is the law of our liberty, not as in contrast with a former law of bondage, but as viewed on the side of its being the law of the new life and birth, with all its spontaneous and free development of obedience. Huther remarks, "Ever in the Old Test. the sweetness of the law was subject of praise [Ps. xix. 8-11], but the life-giving power belonged to the law only in an imperfect manner, because the covenant on which it rested, was as yet only one of promise, and not of fulfilment", and remains there (remains looking in, does not depart as the other. As Wiesinger remarks, the matter spoken of here is not so much observing the law in act, as observing it in attention—not letting it pass out of the thoughts. That leads to action, as below), being (not, *having become*: see above on ver. 22) not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of work (not, *of the work*, but abstract, of *work*, something which brings a result with it), this man shall be blessed in his doing (the words imply that even in the act

there is blessing: the life of obedience is the element wherein the blessedness is found and consists).

26, 27.] The Apostle is still on the command in ver. 19. As yet he has been exemplifying the being *swift to hear*, in connexion with the *slow to wrath*. From this he passes to that which is again so nearly connected with it, —the being *slow to speak*. If any man imagines that he is (our A. V. 'seem to be' is ambiguous: it may mean 'to others,' whereas the word really means only, 'to himself:' 'thinks that he is') religious (in the sense of 'observant of God's outward service,' marking the external manifestation of a religious mind. We have no word at all adequately expressing the original term), not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his heart (see above on "*deceiving yourselves*," ver. 22: viz., by imagining such a character consistent with true religion), of this man the religious service is vain (idle and fruitless). Religious service pure and unpolluted (the two adjectives seem merely to bring out the positive and negative sides of purity, as in the two acts described below) in the estimation of (Rom. ii. 13; Gal. iii. 11) Him who is our God and Father (or, according as the original is read, "(our) God and Father." That the paternal relation here ascribed to God must be understood as referring to us, is evident) is (consists in) this, To visit orphans (perhaps in reference to the appellation "*Father*," which has preceded: so Ps. lxxviii. 5, God is called "*father of the fatherless, and judge of the widows*") and widows in their affliction (shews at the same time the reason for the *visit*, and

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

II. <sup>1</sup> My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. <sup>2</sup> For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; <sup>3</sup> and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

II. <sup>1</sup> My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>a</sup> the Lord of glory, with <sup>b</sup> respect of persons. <sup>2</sup> For if there have come unto your assembly a man with gold rings, in gay clothing, and there have come in also a poor man in vile clothing; <sup>3</sup> and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay cloth-

a 1 Cor. ii. 8.  
b Lev. xiv. 16.  
Deut. i. 17. &  
xvi. 19.  
Prov. xxiv.  
23. & xxviii.  
21. Matt.  
xxii. 16.  
ver. 9.  
Jude 16.

the object of it); to (there is no coupling conjunction. These uncoupled clauses are found in our Epistle especially, where various particulars are enumerated which go to make up a whole, or apply to the description of one thing: as e. g., ver. 19; ch. iii. 6: see also ch. v. 5, 6) preserve himself unspotted from the world (not merely earthly things as far as they tempt to sin: still less the natural evil disposition of men; but, as in ch. iv. 4, *the whole earthly creation*, separated from God, and lying in sin, which, whether considered as consisting in the men who serve it, or the enticements which it holds out to evil lusts, is to Christians a source of continual defilement. They, by their new birth under God, are taken out of the world; but at the same time, by sin still dwelling in them, are ever liable to be enticed and polluted by it: and therefore must keep themselves [1 Tim. vi. 14], for fear of such pollution. This keeping is indeed in the higher sense God's work: John xvii. 15; but it is also our work, 1 Tim. v. 22).

CHAP. II. 1—13.] THE SIN OF RESPECT OF PERSONS: as the first of a series of reproofs for errors in practice which spring out of the mention of the "*perfect law of liberty*:" compare ch. i. 25, and ver. 12. The Apostle begins, as is his wont, with strong blame of the sin: then illustrates it vv. 2—4: then gives the ground of its sinfulness vv. 5—11, and concludes vv. 12, 13 with a reference again to the law of liberty.

1—4.] *The warning and its practical ground.* My brethren, do not in respectings of persons ('in,' i. e. in the practice of, in the midst of. The substantive in the original is plural, to point out the various kinds and occasions of the fault. The fault itself, as here intended, is easily explained by the context, where an example is taken of one kind of it. Theile says well, that it is the fault of measuring

individual Christians not by their Christian graces, but by their fortune, and external qualities,—and of preferring some to others according to this standard) hold the faith (not merely 'faith in,' but *the faith of*, thus setting before them more forcibly the utter inconsistency of such respect of persons with the service of Christ) of our Lord Jesus Christ, [the Lord] of glory (these words [the Lord] do not exist in the original. See the question, what is to be supplied, discussed in my Greek Test.).

2, 3, 4.] *Hypothetical example*, to explain to them that to which he especially points. The hypothesis carries however in itself a foundation of fact, and appeals to the consciences of the readers whether it were not so. For (as if it were said, "that which I mean, is") if there chance to have come (the entrance is accomplished when that which is alleged takes place) into your assembly (the word in the original is *synagogue*: but from this some have too hastily inferred from the word that the *Jewish synagogue* is meant. This, in the face of the organization of the church implied in ch. v. 14, would be impossible. The word may well be understood of a Christian assembly, or as merely an assembly in general. But it is most likely here, from the allusions to sitting and standing below, a place of Christian worship, the name being a natural one, considering by whom the Epistle was written, and to whom it was addressed) a man with gold rings (we have evidence of the practice of overloading the fingers with rings. Martial speaks of a certain Charinus, who wore six rings on each finger, and never took them off, not even at night, nor in the bath: and Lucian mentions sixteen heavy rings being worn on the fingers at once), in a splendid garment (glittering, either in colour, or with ornaments), and there have come in also a poor man in a vile garment;



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

† unto him is omitted by all our oldest MSS.

c John vii. 48.  
1 Cor. i. 26,  
28.

† So all our MSS.

d Luke xii. 21.  
1 Tim. vi. 18.

Rev. ii. 9.

e Exod. xx. 6.  
1 Sam. ii. 30.

Prov. viii. 17.  
Matt. v. 3

Luke vi. 20, & xii. 32. 1 Cor. ii. 9. 2 Tim. iv. 8. ch. i. 12.

f 1 Cor. xi. 22.

ing, and say, † Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit under my footstool: <sup>4</sup> is not this to doubt within yourselves, and to become judges, of evil thoughts? <sup>5</sup> Hearken, my beloved brethren, <sup>e</sup> Did not God choose out the poor of † the world to be <sup>d</sup> rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom <sup>e</sup> which he promised to them that love him? <sup>6</sup> But <sup>f</sup> ye

unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: <sup>4</sup> are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? <sup>5</sup> Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? <sup>6</sup> But

and ye look upon (with respect: so as to take into consideration) the man wearing the splendid garment (thus designated, because it is this which wins for him the respect:—which attracts your notice), and say, Sit thou here (pointing out a spot to him: and that, as the contrast between *here* and *there* shews, in the midst, near [for the words must be supposed to be spoken by those who would be the mouth-piece of the assembly] those in honour) in a good place; and ye say to the poor man, Stand thou there, or sit under (i. e. not literally *underneath*; but ‘on the ground beside,’ ‘down by’) my footstool (thus it is implied that the speaker is in a good place, and furnished with a footstool. The question, argued at considerable length by Wiesinger and Huther, who these in-comers are supposed to be, whether Christians, or Jews who have looked in as strangers, is perhaps hardly worth the trouble spent upon it. The illustration merely requires that they should be strangers, not having a regular place in the congregation. Certainly so far I agree with Huther, that there appears nothing in the text which compels us to assume them to be Christians. They are taken merely as samples of a class, the rich and the poor: and these two are dealt with again in vv. 5 ff., as classes of persons, out of one of which God hath chosen His people for the most part, and out of the other of which the oppressors of His people arise. So that it is better to leave the examples in their general reference), <sup>4.</sup> (now comes the application, in the form of a question): did ye not (in the case supposed) doubt (such is the constant sense of the word here used, throughout the New Test. And here the sense seems very good: “Did ye not, in making such distinction between

rich and poor, become of the number of those who doubt respecting their faith, ch. i. 6? Your faith abolishes such distinction: you set it up in practice. You are not then whole in that faith.” See the other explanations discussed in my Greek Test.) within yourselves (in your own minds, being at issue with your own faith), and become judges (in the case of the rich and poor; judges of the ease before you), of evil thoughts (the genitive is one of quality. The evil thoughts are in the judges themselves, and consist in the undue preference given by them to the rich. The same blame, of being a judge when a man ought to be an obeyer of the law, is found in ch. iv. 11)? <sup>5.</sup> Listen, my beloved brethren (bespeaking attention to that which follows, as shewing them in a marked manner the sin of their *respecting of persons*), Did not God choose out (in His proceeding, namely, in the promulgation of the Gospel by Christ, Matt. v. 3 ff.; Luke vi. 20. See also 1 Cor. i. 27) the poor (as a class, set against *the rich* as a class, below) as regards the world (or, those who in the world’s estimation are accounted poor; but the other is most likely here) rich in faith (i. e. to be rich in faith, or so that they are rich in faith. In faith, as the element, *the world*, so to speak, in which they pass for rich, as in 1 Tim. i. 2: not as the material of which their riches consist, as in Eph. ii. 4. Wiesinger well says, “Not the measure of faith, in virtue of which one man is richer than another, is before the Writer’s mind, but the *substance* of the faith, by virtue of which substance every believer is rich. The riches are the treasures of salvation, and especially, owing to the following word *heirs*, the sonship in God’s family”, and heirs of the king-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? 7 Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? 8 If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy-*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

have despised the poor. Do not the rich oppress you, <sup>g</sup>and is it not they which draw you before the judgment seats? 7 Is it not they which blaspheme the goodly name by the which ye were called? 8 Yet if ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, <sup>h</sup>Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do

<sup>g</sup> Acts xiii. 50  
& xvii. 6. &  
xviii. 12.  
ch. v. 6.

<sup>h</sup> Lev. xix. 18.  
Matt. xxiii.  
30. Rom.  
xiii. 8, 9.  
Gal. v. 14. &  
vi. 2.

dom which He promised (Luke xii. 31, 32, &c.) to them that love Him?

6.] *Contrast to God's estimate of the poor. But ye dishonoured the poor man* (in the case just now put. "It is improper to debase those whom God extols, and to treat contumeliously those whom He counts worthy of honour. But God honours the poor: therefore he inverts God's order, who rejects them." Calvin. This is his first argument. Now, vv. 6, 7, he brings in another, deduced from the conduct of rich men towards Christians, and towards Christ Himself). **Do not the rich** (opposed as a class, to *the poor* above. This serves to shew that "*the rich man*," when generally spoken of in the Epistle, as e. g. ch. i. 10, is not the Christian rich man, but the rich man as such, in his worldliness and enmity to God) **oppress you** (literally, use power, or lordship, or licence, against you to your hurt), **and is it not they that drag you** (the term implies violence) **to courts of judgment** (see ch. v. 6. The words may refer either to persecutions, or to oppressive law-suits; or perhaps to both. See on the matter, 1 Cor. vi. 2, 4)?

7.] **Is it not they that blaspheme** (actually and literally, in words, it being, as we have maintained throughout, ungodly and heathens who are pointed at. Those who maintain them to be Christian rich men, would understand this *blasphemy* of disgracing by their lives) **the goodly name which was called on you** (i. e. which when you were admitted into Christ's Church by baptism was made yours, so that you are called *Christ's*, 1 Cor. iii. 23 [not necessarily "*Christians*:" no particular form of the appropriation of the name is alluded to, but only the fact of the name being called over them. The appellation may or may not have been in use at this time, for aught that this shews]. The name is of course that

of *Christ*: not that of God, as some think, nor that of 'brethren,' as others)! So that if ye thus dishonour the poor in comparison with the rich, you are 1) contravening the standard of honour which God sets up in His dealings: 2) opposing your own interest: 3) helping to blaspheme the name of Christ.

8—11.] *Proof that this behaviour is a transgression of God's law.* The connexion is somewhat reconдите. The adversative **yet** clearly takes exception at something, expressed or understood. Calvin and others suppose the Apostle to be meeting an objection of his readers:—"But thus, according to you, we should be breaking the injunction, Love thy neighbour, &c., for we should view the rich with hatred and contempt." Then he replies, "Certainly, if ye, &c. ye do well:" understanding **ye do well** as a very feeble approbation. But this seems to me very unnatural. It contains indeed the germ of the true view, which appears to be this: The Apostle is not replying to a fancied objection on the part of others, but is guarding his own argument from misconstruction: "All this is true of the rich. Still I do not say, hate them, drive them from your assemblies, &c.: if you choose to observe faithfully the great command, Love others as yourselves, in your conduct to all, well and good: but respect of persons, instead of being a keeping, is a breach of this law; for I have proved it to be sin, and he who commits sin is a transgressor of the law, of the whole law, by the very terms of legal obedience." Thus the context seems to run smoothly and naturally. **Yet** (for the connexion see above) **if ye fulfil** (if ye really choose to fulfil in its completeness that law) **the royal law** (the law which is the king of all laws, as the old saying makes *law itself king of all*).

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

i ver. 1.

well: <sup>9</sup> but <sup>1</sup> if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors.

*self, ye do well: <sup>9</sup> but if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. <sup>10</sup> For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. <sup>11</sup> For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. <sup>12</sup> So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.*

† So all our oldest MSS.

<sup>10</sup> For whosoever † hath kept the whole law, and yet † hath offended in one point, <sup>k</sup> hath become guilty of all. <sup>11</sup> For he that said, <sup>1</sup> Do not

k Deut. xxvii. 26. Matt. v. 19. Gal. iii. 10.

l Exod. xx. 13, 14.

commit adultery, said also, Do not commit murder. Now if thou committest no adultery, yet if thou committest murder, thou art become a transgressor of the law. <sup>12</sup> So speak ye, and so do, as being about to be

m ch. i. 25.

judged by <sup>m</sup> the law of liberty.

Love fulfils the whole law, Rom. xiii. 10), according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well (i. e. well and good; see above: if you choose to do this, I have nothing to object. But then, this you can never do, as long as you respect persons): 9.] but if ye respect persons, it is sin that ye are working (not obedience to this royal law); being (i. e. seeing that ye are) convicted by the law as transgressors (viz. by virtue of what I have already proved as wrong in your conduct. "For God commands us to love our neighbours, not to respect persons." Calvin). 10.] *The fact of transgression of this law is proved by its solidarity, not admitting of being broken in one point, and yet kept in the whole. "God," says Calvin, "will not be served with reservations, so that we might except from this law what happens not to please us." For whosoever shall have kept the whole law, but shall have offended (literally, stumbled) in (the matter of: as in ch. iii. 2: see there) one thing (one thing enjoined, one commandment, as by and by explained), has become guilty of (brought into the condemning power of, involved in) all (things mentioned as objects of prohibition—for such is the reference here, see below—in the law).*

11.] *Reason for this assertion:* the unity of the divine Author of the whole law, and of that law, as the exponent of His will: "He is one who made the whole law: those who violate His will in one thing, violate it all." Bengel. For He who said, Commit not adultery, said

also, Commit not murder. Now if thou committest no adultery, but committest murder, thou hast become a transgressor of the law. Various fanciful reasons have been given for the selection of these two commandments: 'because these two were punished with death,' Baumgarten: 'because no one had laid a charge of adultery against the readers, but the other they violated by violating the law of love,' Wiesinger. But it is far more likely that they are alleged as the two first which regard our duty to our neighbour generally: the prohibition of adultery being put first, as in Mark x. 19; Luke xviii. 20; Rom. xiii. 9; Philo also has this order, and lays a stress on it, as shewing that adultery is the greatest of social crimes. So that this order must have been one preserved in ancient tradition: or perhaps found anciently in the Septuagint. The Rabbis have the same sentiment as this. They say of the thirty-nine precepts of Moses, "If a man do them all, but omit one, he is guilty of all and every of them."

12, 13.] *Concluding and summary exhortations,* to speak and act as subject to the law of liberty and love. So speak, and so do (so both times does not regard what has gone before, but what follows. *Speaking* had been before hinted at in ch. i. 19: and will come again under consideration in ch. iii.), as being about to be judged by (by means of, as the measure by which your lives will be estimated) the law of liberty (the same as in ch. i. 25: that perfect expansion of God's will, resting on the free unrestrained principle of love,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>13</sup> For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment. <sup>14</sup> What doth

<sup>13</sup> For <sup>n</sup> the judgment shall be without mercy to him that wrought not mercy: † <sup>o</sup> mercy rejoiceth against judgment. <sup>14</sup> P What is the profit,

<sup>n</sup> Job xxii. 6, &c. Prov. xxi. 13. Matt. vi. 15 & xviii. 35. & xxv. 11, 42.

† and is omitted by our oldest MSS.

<sup>o</sup> 1 John iv. 17, ch. i. 25.

18.

p Matt. vii. 26.

which is the moral code of the Gospel. And the point of the exhortation is, "So do good, as not constrained by the law, but free agents").

<sup>13.</sup> Reason why we should be careful thus to speak and do: viz. that if we do not, we cast ourselves out of that merciful judgment at God's hands which is promised to the merciful: Matt. v. 7, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy;" which is the key to our verse. For the judgment (which is coming) (shall be) unmerciful to him who wrought not (the past tense is anticipatory, the Writer standing at the day of the judgment and looking back over life) mercy: mercy boasteth over judgment (without a copula, the sentence is introduced more emphatically and strikingly. The meaning is, the judgment which would condemn any and all of us, is, in the case of the merciful, overpowered by the blessed effect of mercy, and mercy prevails over it. The saying is abstract: to turn it into a concrete, 'the merciful man,' or to appropriate the mercy, 'the mercy of God,' is to limit that which is purposely and weightily left unlimited, as an universal truth).

<sup>14—26.</sup>] In close connexion with what has gone before, the Apostle sets forth that bare faith without works can never save a man. The following remarks of De Wette on the passage are important, and well condensed. They have been impugned by many, among whom are Neander, Schneckenburger, Theile, Thiersch, Hofmann: but they seem to me best to represent the simple and honest view of the matter, without any finessing to make the two Apostles in exact accord in their meaning of terms and their positions respecting them. "In order rightly to understand this polemical passage, it is necessary accurately to define St. James's ideas of faith, of works, and of justification, and to compare them with those of St. Paul. Faith is, according to St. James, the result of the reception of the Word (ch. i. 22), especially in a moral point of view: moral conviction (Rom. xiv. 23): and although he recognizes it also as belief in Christ (ch. ii. 1), as trust (i. 6; v. 15), and truth (i. 3), yet he makes these particulars here of so little moment, that he

regards it as theoretical belief only, and ascribes it to the evil spirits (ii. 19). Widely different from this is St. Paul's idea of faith, which presupposes self-abasement, the feeling of unworthiness and incapability (Rom. iii. 9 ff., 23), and consists in trust on the grace of God revealed in the atoning death of Christ (Rom. iii. 25; v. 8; 2 Cor. v. 18 f.). Of this faith, moral faith is a branch (Rom. xiv. 23): but this latter, which is the adoption of the working principle of love (Gal. v. 6), can only spring from the purification of the inner man by faith in the atonement. So that it is impossible to say, as some have done, that the idea of faith in the two Apostles is the same. Works, according to St. James, are not the works of the law in the lower sense, the mere observance of carnal ordinances and usages, — but an active life of practical morality, the rule of which is indeed found in the Mosaic law, and especially in the command to love one another, but so found, as apprehended, and appropriated by the spirit of liberty (see ch. i. 25; ii. 12). St. Paul also understands by 'the works of the law' not merely ceremonial observances, as plainly appears from Rom. vii. 14 ff.: but when he contends against the Jewish righteousness by works, and their pride, as in Rom. ix. 30 ff., he includes these observances in that to which he refers. As regards justification, St. James understands it in a proper, or moral sense (compare Matt. xii. 37), which St. Paul also recognizes. But in the latter Apostle's idea of justification, we must distinguish a threefold point of view: 1) the general moral, at which he stops, Rom. ii. 13 (compare ib. ver. 5 ff.), taking no account, how the highest aim of morality, there indicated, is to be attained, and is attained: 2) In his polemical point of view, as combating Jewish righteousness by works, he denies that we can, by the fulfilment of the law (even of its moral part, seeing that no man fulfils it aright), attain justification or well-pleasingness to God (Rom. iii. 20; Gal. ii. 16). 3) In the third point of view also, in the Christian life itself, St. Paul recognizes the inadequacy of a good conscience to give peace and blessedness to men (1 Cor. iv. 4), and

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? can his faith save him? <sup>15</sup> <sup>q</sup> If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, <sup>16</sup> and <sup>r</sup> one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what is the profit? <sup>17</sup> So also faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself.

<sup>q</sup> See Job xxxi. 19, 20. Luke iii. 11.

<sup>r</sup> 1 John iii. 18.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? <sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, <sup>16</sup> and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? <sup>17</sup> Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being

finds peace only in faith in God, who justifies him of His free grace, i. e. so looks on and accepts him, as if he were righteous. This higher kind of justification, St. James does not recognize." The whole question of fact, as to whether St. Paul's teaching, or some misunderstanding of it, or neither the one nor the other, was in St. James's view here, I have discussed in the Introduction, § iii. 5 ff. 14.] What is the profit (arising from that to be mentioned: the resulting profit), my brethren, if any man say (there is no emphasis on the word say, as many have supposed: the whole argument proceeds on the hypothesis of his possessing faith: and in ver. 19, faith is actually ascribed to him. At the same time it is not to be wholly passed over, that the Apostle has written not "have faith," but "say he hath faith." While this does not imply any want of genuineness in the faith, it perhaps slightly distinguishes the possession of such faith from the absolute having faith: or, perhaps belongs to the dramatic form of the hypothesis, in which the man is introduced boasting of and appealing to his faith) that he has faith, but have not works (i. e. those acts in his life which are proofs and fruits of faith: not mere ceremonial works: see De Wette's remarks cited above)? (a note of interrogation, not a comma, is to be placed here. The sentence contains two distinct but connected questions: "What is the profit, if &c.?" and, "Can &c.?" can (his) faith save him (him is noticeable, as confining the question within the limits of the hypothesis, by making this particular man, who has faith and not works, the object of the question, and not any, or every man. Here lies the true key to the nullity of the faith in question)?

15, 16.] *The quality, and unprofitableness, of such faith shewn, as in vv. 2, 3, by a familiar example. But* (so literally. It takes up the argument against the person supposed, or against his supporters. It is best rendered in English by beginning the sentence abruptly, not giving any word for it) *if a brother or a sister* (the case of a Christian brother or sister is supposed, to bring out more strongly the obligation to help, as a duty) *be* (found, on your access to them) *naked* (there is no need to interpret the word *badly clothed*, as so many Commentators: extreme destitution, and nakedness in the literal, or almost literal sense, might well go together) *and destitute of daily food, and* (literally, *but*: bringing in the slight contrast between the want and the manner of its supply) *some one from among you* (not, as Grotius, of you, "who believe faith to suffice for salvation," but generally; and put in this form to bring the inference nearer home to themselves) *say* ('shall have said'), *Go in peace* (see Judg. xviii. 6; 2 Sam. xv. 9. The words would imply, that the wants were satisfied), *be warmed* (as being *naked*) *and filled; but ye* (enlarging the former "one of you," and now applying the hypothesis to all) *give them not* (*have not given them*) *the necessaries of the body; what is the profit?*

17.] *Application of the similitude. So also faith, if it have not* (be not accompanied by as its proper result. Here, again, the quasi-identification of the *faith* with the man, and ascription of the *works* to it as a possession, shew in what relative places the two stand in the Apostle's estimate) *works, is dead in itself* (not as A. V., "being alone," but the words belong to and qualify *dead*; it is dead, not merely to this



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

alone. <sup>18</sup> Yea, a man may say, *Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.* <sup>19</sup> *Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.* <sup>20</sup> *But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?* <sup>21</sup> *Was not Abraham our father justified by works,*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>18</sup> But a man will say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without † works, <sup>8</sup> and I will shew thee my faith by my works. <sup>19</sup> Thou believest that † God is one; thou doest well: † the devils also believe, and tremble. <sup>20</sup> But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is idle? <sup>21</sup> Was not Abraham our father justified by

† *thy is omitted by our oldest MSS., and versions.*  
 8 ch. iii. 13.  
 † *So the most ancient MSS.; others read as A. V.*  
 † Matt. viii. 29  
 Mark i. 21 & v. 7. Luke iv. 34. Acts xvi. 17. & xix. 15.

extent, but absolutely, in itself: has no living root whereby it energizes).

18.] But (in any case of faith without works, analogous to that supposed above, of one of you having dismissed the naked and hungry with mere words) **some one will say** (he will be liable to this reproach from any one who takes the more effectual and sensible method, of uniting faith with works), **Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me** (not, 'prove to me,' but 'exhibit to me') **thy faith without the works** (which ought to accompany it), **and I will shew thee my faith by** (from the evidence of, out of, as the ground of the manifestation) **my works.** The whole difficulty found in this verse by Commentators has arisen from overlooking the fact that it continues the argument from the previous verses, and does not begin a new portion of the subject. And the reason why this has been overlooked, is, the occurrence between the two of the general clause in ver. 17. The same mistaken person is in the Apostle's view throughout, down to ver. 22: and it is as addressed to him, on the part of a chance objector to his inconsistency, that this saying is introduced: the **but** conveying the opposition of an objection not to the Apostle himself, but to him whom the Apostle is opposing. 19.] Still addressed to the same advocate of faith only, but now directly, and not in the person of the speaker just introduced. This is better than to suppose this last still speaking; on account of the length of argumentation before, the second person singular is dropped, and the analogy of the two arguments drawn from Abraham and Rahab, both of which most naturally come, as the latter on any view does, from the Apostle himself. **Thou believest** (better without an interrogation: see John xvi. 31, note) **that God is one**

(or, 'that there is one God.' The Apostle selects, from all points of dogmatic belief, that one which stands at the head of the creed of Jews and Christians alike. Compare especially Deut. vi. 4; Neh. ix. 6; Mark xii. 29, 32; Rom. iii. 30; 1 Cor. viii. 4, 6; ch. iv. 12); **thou doest well** (i. e. 'so far is well:' 'it is a good faith, as far as it goes'): **the devils also** (not, the *dæmoniæ*, nor *dæmons* in the *possessed*, who trembled at the sacred Name: but simply, as usually, the evil-spirits) **believe** (the verb is purposely used absolutely: not merely, 'believe this truth,' but, 'thus far, are believers in common with thyself'), and **shudder** (the word is used properly of the hair standing on end with terror. Their belief does nothing for them but certify to them their own misery. "This particular, inserted beyond the expectation of the reader, has immense force." Bengel).

20—23.] *Proof of the uselessness of faith without works, from the example of Abraham; introduced by a severe and triumphant appeal to the objector.* **But** (passing on to another example which is to prove it even more certainly) **wilt thou know** (the use of **wilt thou, dost thou, consent to, know**, serves to shew that the knowledge itself is plain and palpable, and the resisting it can only arise from perversity), **O empty** (void of knowledge and seriousness: content with a dead and bootless notion) **man** (so in Rom. ix. 20), **that faith** (here abstract: all faith, faith by itself: not merely faith, in any supposed case) **separate from works** (here again, abstract; and therefore, in subordination to the former abstract noun, the works which belong to it, which might be expected from it) **is idle** (bootless, without result)?

21.] *The example of Abraham.* **Was not Abraham our father** (the Apostle and

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

works, <sup>u</sup> when he offered Isaac his son upon the altar? <sup>22</sup> Thou seest <sup>x</sup> that faith wrought with his works, and by works faith was made perfect; <sup>23</sup> and the scripture was fulfilled which saith, <sup>y</sup> Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness: and he was called <sup>z</sup> God's friend. <sup>24</sup> Ye see † that by works a man is justifi-

<sup>u</sup> Gen. xlii. 9, 12.

<sup>x</sup> Heb. xi. 17.

<sup>y</sup> GEN. xv. 6.  
Rom. iv. 3.  
Gal. iii. 6.

<sup>z</sup> 2 Chron. xx.  
7. Isa. xli. 8.

† then is  
omitted by  
all our oldest  
MSS.

his readers being all Jews) justified (accounted righteous before God. No other meaning will satisfy the connexion, inevitable to any intelligent reader, between this *justification* and the *salvation* of ver. 14: which again is connected with the "*being about to be judged*" of ver. 12. Commentators have endeavoured to evade this full meaning, in various ways. On the difficulty itself, see in the Introduction) by (*out of*, as the ground of the justification: precisely as St. Paul so constantly uses the phrase *to be justified by, or out of, faith*) works (the category to which the ground of his justification belonged. It was one especial work, in matter of fact: and that work, itself springing out of pre-eminent faith), when he offered (not, as A. V., '*had offered*') Isaac his son at the altar? <sup>22.</sup>] Thou seest (better not a question: in which case the "*and*" of ver. 23 does not follow so naturally as when we couple the direct verb *seest* with the direct verb *was fulfilled*) that (not, *how*, as A. V.: it is not the manner in which, nor even '*how*,' in the sense of '*how that*,' which is meant. The assertion is, that the inference is indubitable, that the fact was *as stated*) faith wrought (at the time, '*was working*') with his works (this plural again is categorical, the work in the example being but one), and by (*out of*, as the ground and source) works (again categorical; the general proposition proved by the particular case. Doubtless this second time it *might be* '*by his works, his faith . . .*' but the other is more like St. James, who is singularly given to introduce abstract propositions as applicable to particular cases) faith (see above) was made complete (in one act, once for all. The Apostle's argument is, that faith is developed and brought to perfection by obedience: see below on ver. 26. And hence also is it

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? <sup>22</sup> Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? <sup>23</sup> And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. <sup>24</sup> Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by

evident, how faith wrought with his works. By the Apostle's own comparison, ver. 26, faith is the body, obedience the spirit: faith without obedience is dead, until obedience, the spirit, sets faith in motion: then faith, like the limbs of the body, moves with and works with the acts of obedience. Which is prior in time, which the ground of the other, is a point not touched by St. James at all; and the scripture was fulfilled which saith, But Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness (i. e. that saying of Scripture which long preceded the offering of Isaac, received its realization, not, it may be, its only realization, but certainly its chief one, in this act of obedience. It was not, until this, fulfilled, in the sense of being entirely exemplified and filled up. Wiesinger combats this sense as an unworthy one: no such objection as that which he brings [viz. that we make thus the truth of God's saying depend on Abraham's subsequent conduct] lies against our view, that the saying received on, and not till this occasion, its entire and full realization. It was true, when uttered: but it became more and more gloriously true of Abraham's life and acts till it reached this its culminating point, in his chief act of self-denying obedience): and he was called (couple with *was fulfilled*, not with *was reckoned*) God's friend (i. e. '*loved by God*,' not '*loving God*.' This appellation of Abraham is not found in the Septuagint. In Gen. xviii. 17, where they have "*Abraham my servant*," Philo cites it "*Abraham my friend*." And in Isa. xli. 8 the words "*the seed of Abraham whom I loved*" are rendered by the Vulgate and by the A. V. '*the seed of Abraham my friend*.' So also in 2 Chron. xx. 7). <sup>24.</sup>] General inference from the example of Abraham. Ye see that by (from, out of, as a source) works a man is justified

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*faith only.* <sup>25</sup> Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?

<sup>26</sup> For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

III. <sup>1</sup> My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. <sup>2</sup> For in many things we

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

fied, and not by faith only. <sup>25</sup> And in like manner <sup>a</sup> was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she received the messengers, and thrust them forth another way? <sup>26</sup> For as the body without spirit is dead, so faith without its works is dead also.

III. <sup>1</sup> My brethren, <sup>a</sup> be not many teachers, <sup>b</sup> knowing that we shall receive greater condemnation. <sup>2</sup> For

<sup>a</sup> Josh. ii. 1.  
<sup>b</sup> Heb. xi. 31.

<sup>a</sup> Matt. xxiii. 8,  
11. Rom. ii.  
20, 21. 1 Pet.  
v. 3.  
<sup>b</sup> Luke vi. 37.

(accounted righteous before God, as above), and not by (from) faith only (notice only: St. James never says that a man is not justified by faith, provided that faith include in it the condition of obedience: but by faith only, without works, is no man justified).

<sup>25</sup>] *The example of Rahab.* Various reasons have been assigned for this example being added. See the whole matter discussed in the Introduction, § 3. And in like manner (with Abraham) was not Rahab the harlot (to be taken literally: see on Heb. xi. 31) justified by works, when she received the messengers (spies, Heb. xi. 31), and thrust them forth (in haste and fear, Josh. ii. 15, 16: the term is not simply sent them forth) by another way (viz. through the window, Josh. ii. 15)? <sup>26</sup>]

*General conclusion to the argument,* but in the form of a comparison, as in ver. 17. For (for binds the verse on to the foregoing, and makes it rather depend on this axiom, than this axiom a conclusion from it: 'it must be so, Rahab must have been thus justified, seeing that . . .') just as the body without (separate from) spirit (or, the spirit) is dead, so also faith without works (or without its works, the works belonging to it: as in ver. 20) is dead. This comparison has been found matter of surprise to some Commentators, inasmuch as the things compared do not seem relatively to correspond. Faith is unquestionably a thing spiritual: works are external and material: so that it would seem as if the members of the comparison should have been inverted, and works made the body, faith the spirit. But the Apostle's view seems rather to be this: Faith is the body, the sum and substance, of the Christian life: works (obedience), the moving and quickening of that body; just as the spirit is the moving and quickening prin-

ciple of the natural body. So that as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead.

CHAP. III. a) 1—12.] *The danger,* as connected with the upholding of faith without works, of eagerness to teach: and, by occasion, the manifold and irremissible sins of the tongue. Then follows, b) 13—18.] *an exhortation, to prove a man's wisdom by mildness, not by a contentious spirit.*

1.] The more the idea prevailed, that faith, without corresponding obedience, was all that is needful, the more men would eagerly press forward to teach: as indeed the Church has found in all ages when such an opinion has become prevalent: for then teachers and preachers of their own appointing have rapidly multiplied. Be not ('become not' let not that state of things prevail among you, in which you become) many teachers (not, as A. V., 'masters,' which conveys a wrong idea: but teachers, persons imparting knowledge in the congregation. This in the primitive times might be done by all in turn, as we know from 1 Cor. xiv. 26—33: and St. James exhorts against the too eager and too general assumption of this privilege), my brethren, knowing (as ye do: or, as ye ought to do: it is a good remark of Huther's, that knowing, being closely joined to the imperative, is itself hortatory: 'knowing, as ye might know') that we (i. e. as many of us as are teachers) shall receive greater condemnation (than others who are not teachers. This being so, it has surprised some Commentators, that the Apostle includes himself with those whom he is dissuading: but the solution is easy,—viz. that he includes himself out of humility, and obviously on the assumption that the office of teacher is not faithfully performed. The sense might be thus filled up, as, indeed, it is virtually

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

c 1 Kings viii. 46. 2 Chron. vi. 36. Prov. xx. 9. Eccl. vii. 20.  
 d 1 John i. 8. 1 Ps. xxiv. 18. ch. i. 26.  
 e Matt. xii. 37. † So all our oldest MSS.  
 f Ps. xxxii. 9.

<sup>c</sup> oftentimes we all offend. <sup>d</sup> If any man offendeth not in word, <sup>e</sup> the same is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. <sup>3</sup> † But if in the mouths of horses <sup>f</sup> we put bits, that they may obey us; we turn about also their whole body. <sup>4</sup> Behold also the ships, though they be so great, and are driven by fierce winds, yet are turned about with a very small rudder, whithersoever the desire of the helmsman willeth. <sup>5</sup> So also <sup>g</sup> the tongue is a little member, and <sup>h</sup> boasteth great things. Behold, how great a forest is kindled by † how small a fire! <sup>6</sup> And <sup>i</sup> the

offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. <sup>3</sup> Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. <sup>4</sup> Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. <sup>5</sup> Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! <sup>6</sup> And the tongue

g Prov. xii. 18. & xv. 2.

h Ps. xii. 3. & lxxiii. 8, 9.

† So all our oldest MSS.  
 i Prov. xvi. 27.

filled up in ver. 2: "be not many teachers, for in such office there is great danger of failing, and if we teachers fail, our condemnation will be greater"). **2.]** For (see above: this supplies the ellipsis) **oftentimes we all** (without exception: the original word implies this) **offend** (to be taken in the widest moral sense, as an axiom applying to our whole conduct. It is in the next clause limited to the subject in hand, viz. the tongue). **If any man offendeth not in word** (in speaking: and therefore the hypothesis is applicable to these many who set up for teachers, seeing that thus their chances of offence would be multiplied many fold), **he [is] a perfect man** (explained by what follows), **able to bridle the whole body also** (the sense runs thus: We all oftentimes offend: and of those frequent offences, sins of the tongue are so weighty a part and so constant a cause, that he who is free from them may be said to be perfect, inasmuch as he is able to rule every other minor cause of offence: 'the whole body' standing for all those other members by which, as by the tongue, sin may be committed: which may be *instruments of unrighteousness for sin*, or, *instruments of righteousness for God*, Rom. vi. 13).

**3—6.]** *The importance and depravity of the tongue, so small a member, is illustrated by comparisons: 1) with the small instrument, the horse-bit, ver. 3: 2) with the small instrument, the ship-rudder, ver.*

*4: 3) with a small fire burning a great forest, vv. 5, 6.*

**3.]** This mention of *bridling*, and the situation of the tongue where the *bridle* also is placed, introduce this similitude: *bridle* and *mouth* being ideas already given by the context. **But** (transitional) **if** (as we do: in our vernacular, 'when,' 'as often as') **in the mouths of horses we put bits** (literally, the bits: i. e. which are in common use: the bits, of which every one knows), **in order to their obeying us** (thus shewing, by the expression of this purpose, that we recognize the principle of turning the whole body by the tongue,—now comes the result after the *if*: see below); **we turn about also** (in turning the bit one way or the other) **their whole body**.

**4.]** The *second comparison* takes up, not the supposition with its "*if*," but only the result foregoing. **Behold even (or also) the ships, though so great, and driven by fierce winds** (Bede interprets this as having a meaning respecting ourselves, the winds being the appetites and passions. But it is not likely that the Apostle had any such meaning), **are turned about by a very small rudder, whithersoever the desire of the steersman** (him who actually handles the tiller) **may wish**.

**5.]** *Application of the comparison.* Thus also the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things (vaunts great words, which bring about great acts of mischief). **Behold** (rendering the sentence literally:—for the purpose of

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. <sup>7</sup> For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

tongue is a fire, that world of iniquity: the tongue is that one among our members, <sup>k</sup> which defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. <sup>7</sup> For every nature of beasts, and winged things, and of creeping things, and things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed by the

<sup>k</sup> Matt. xv. 11,  
18, 19, 20.  
Mark vii. 15,  
20, 23.

an English version, it must be inverted), how small a fire kindleth how great a forest (the word also sometimes signifies "matter," and thus the A. V. But the ordinary meaning, forest, gives a far livelier and more graphic sense here)!

6.] Likewise the tongue is a fire, that world of iniquity (a complete repertory of all wickedness, as the world is of all things): the tongue is (literally, is constituted: but meaning no more than that it is) among our members, that one which defileth the whole body (thus justifying the title given to it of "that world of iniquity"), and setteth on fire (the other clause, the tongue is a fire, is now taken up) the orb (or, wheel) of the creation (in interpreting these difficult words, one thing must especially be borne in mind: that, like the whole body, they designate some material thing which agreeably to the figure used may be set on fire. This would at once set aside all figurative explanations. See the proposed meanings discussed in my Greek Test. The sense, the whole orb or cycle of creation, is that which I have seen cause to adopt: for other reasons, and because it fits well into the context. After the mention of the orb of creation, it is natural that the Apostle should take up, with the for (ver. 7), the details of creation, and assert that they might all be tamed by man, but that the tongue is untameable. Again, such sense is most agreeable to the similitude just used, of a small spark kindling a vast forest. The expression in the A. V., the course of nature, is sufficiently near the meaning, and expresses it in better English, perhaps, than any other); and is itself set on fire (in the original the verb is in the present tense, indicating that it is habitually, continually, so set on fire: see below) by hell (which is itself the hell of fire, in Matt. v. 22, and many other places. These words are not to be ex-

plained away: but are to be literally taken. It is the devil, for whom hell is prepared, that is the tempter and instigator of the habitual sins of the tongue. It is out of the question [see above] to regard the sentence as alluding to the original temptations of the fall: equally so, to suppose it to have a future reference, and to imply that the tongue shall be tormented in hell: as some have done. Wiesinger says: "This passage reminds us, in its general sense, of the Old Test. sayings, Prov. xvi. 27; Ps. cx. 2—4; Eccles. xxviii. 11 ff." This last clause is strikingly paralleled by the Targum on Ps. cx. 2, where the deceitful tongue is compared with coals of juniper, which are set on fire in hell beneath. But none of these passages treats of the destruction which the tongue brings on its own body).

7, 8.] The untameableness of the tongue. The thought in ver. 3, though not directly leading on to this, yet is a hint tending towards it. For (a fresh fact is adduced, substantiating the strong terms used of the mischief of the tongue) every nature (natural generic disposition and character; and so below, when joined to of man: not, kind, 'genus,' as A. V. and many Commentators) of beasts (quadrupeds, see below), and winged things, and of creeping things, and things in the sea (creation is divided into these four classes. The first then is not to be taken in its wide sense, as Acts xxviii. 4, 5, but as distinguished from the other three, i. e. as in quadrupeds, beasts of the earth, proper. The classification in Peter's vision, Acts x., is different: "Fourfooted things of the earth, and beasts, and creeping things, and winged things of heaven:" beasts there at least including the fishes), is (habitually) tamed, and hath been tamed (has long ago been reduced into subjection: such taming has become an enduring fact in the world's history, exemplified every day) by the



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

nature of man: <sup>8</sup> but the tongue can no one of men ever tame; it is a restless mischief; it is <sup>1</sup> full of deadly poison. <sup>9</sup> Therewith bless we † the Lord and Father; and therewith curse we men, <sup>m</sup> which are made after the similitude of God. <sup>10</sup> Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. <sup>11</sup> Doth a fountain send forth out of the same clift the sweet and the bitter? <sup>12</sup> <sup>n</sup> Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a vine, figs? † neither can salt

<sup>8</sup> but the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. <sup>9</sup> Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. <sup>10</sup> Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. <sup>11</sup> Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? <sup>12</sup> Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

† Ps. cxl. 3.

† So all our oldest MSS.  
m Gen. i. 26. & v. 1. & ix. 6.

n Matt. vii. 16.

† So all our oldest MSS.

nature (not, the great skill; nature means, as before, natural generic character) of man: 8.] but (exception) the tongue no one of men can tame (the assertion is absolute, not to be weakened by "without great labour," as some have done. The word in the original means, *even to tame*, even once: not, to tame habitually. Now we see fully the meaning of ver. 2): it is a restless mischief, [it is] (compare "adders' poison is under their lips," Ps. cxl. 3; the characteristic following refers not to the word mischief, but back to the tongue. It is therefore necessary to repeat "it is") full of death-bringing poison. 9, 10.] *Exemplification of the restless mischief, by the inconsistent use of the tongue.* The first person is used of mankind in general, considered as one agent. Therewith bless we (i. e. as applied to God, "praise we") the Lord and Father (an unusual connexion to designate God: see ch. i. 27, where we have the more usual one, found also here in the ordinary text. Both terms are to be taken of the Father: the former, on the side of His Power: the latter, on that of His Love); and therewith curse we men, which (not, *who*, which would personally designate *certain men* thus made; but *which*, generic. This distinction, which some modern philologists are striving to obliterate, is very important in the rendering of Scripture, and has been accurately observed by our English translators) have been created (and are still, as the perfect tense shews. See below) after

the likeness of God (which remains in us, marred indeed, but not, as is sometimes carelessly said, destroyed. This likeness we ought to revere, in ourselves and in others: and he who curses, despises it. Not man's original state, but man's present state is here under consideration: and on that consideration depends the force of the Apostle's argument). 10.] Out of the same mouth cometh forth blessing and cursing (by this resuming and collocation of the two opposite acts, the inconsistency is further shewn). These things, my brethren, ought not so to take place.

11.] *Illustration from nature, that such conduct is unnatural.* Doth a fountain out of the same chink (hole, from which the water flows, in a rock, or in the earth) send forth the sweet and the bitter (water, of course: but there is no need to supply any thing: the contrast is in the contrary nature of the two)?

12.] Shews further, that *natural organizations do not bring forth things opposite to or inconsistent with their usual fruits*, but each one has one result, and that always. Can, my brethren, a fig tree bring forth (see on the whole, Matt. vii. 16 ff. De Wette is wrong, when he says that thistles or the like would be here, as there, more agreeable to the similitude. For the reasoning is not here, that we must not look for good fruit from a bad tree: but that no tree can bring forth fruit inconsistent with its own nature) olives, or a vine, figs? nor

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

<sup>13</sup> *Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.* <sup>14</sup> *But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.* <sup>15</sup> *This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.* <sup>16</sup> *For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.* <sup>17</sup> *But the wisdom that is from*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

water bring forth sweet. <sup>13</sup> <sup>o</sup> Who <sup>o</sup> Gal. vi. 4. is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of his good conduct <sup>p</sup> his <sup>p</sup> ch. ii. 18. works <sup>q</sup> in meekness of wisdom. <sup>q</sup> ch. i. 21. <sup>14</sup> But if ye have <sup>r</sup> bitter envying <sup>r</sup> Rom. xiii. 13. and rivalry in your heart, <sup>s</sup> boast <sup>s</sup> Rom. ii. 17, 23. not against and lie not against the truth. <sup>15</sup> <sup>t</sup> This wisdom is not one <sup>t</sup> Phil. iii. 19. ch. i. 17. descending from above, but earthly, sensual, devilish. <sup>16</sup> For <sup>u</sup> where <sup>u</sup> 1 Cor. iii. 5. Gal. v. 20. envying and rivalry is, there is confusion and every evil thing. <sup>17</sup> But

(as if the former sentence had been a negative one) can salt [water] bring forth sweet water (i. e. if the mouth emit cursing, thereby making itself a brackish spring, it cannot to any purpose also emit the sweet stream of praise and good words: if it appear to do so, all must be hypocrisy and mere seeming).

13—18.] *Wisdom must be shewn by meekness and peaceableness, not by contentiousness.* This paragraph is closely connected with the subject of the chapter as enounced in ver. 1. Where that ambition, and rivalry to be teachers, existed, there was sure to be contentiousness and every evil thing.

13.] Who is (compare the similar question in Ps. xxxiv. 12) wise and a man of knowledge (the same adjectives are joined in the Septuagint version in Dent. i. 13, 15; iv. 6. It is not easy to mark the difference, if any is here intended) among you? Let him shew out of (the Apostle seems again to be referring to his reasoning in ch. ii. 18. The *wisdom* and *knowledge* would be dead without this exhibition, as faith without works) his good conduct (in life) his works (the good conduct is the general manifestation: the works, the particular results of that general manifestation. The sum of both makes up the *works* in the former case, ch. ii.) in meekness of wisdom (in that meekness which is the proper attribute of wisdom).

14—16.] *Consequences of the opposite course.* But if ye have (as is the fact: this is implied) bitter emulation (bitter seems to refer back to the example in vv. 11, 12) and rivalry in your heart (out of which come thoughts and words and acts, see Matt. xv. 18, 19), do not (in giving

yourselves out for wise, which [compare ver. 15] you cannot really be) boast against and lie against the truth (of which their whole lives would be thus a negation and an opposition;—which would be in their persons vaunted against and lied against).

15.] *Designation of such pretended wisdom.* This wisdom is not one descending from above (the verb is purposely thus broken up in the original, to throw out the negation, and to put the categorical word, descending, into prominence, as a class to which this *wisdom* does not belong. So that we must not miss this purpose by rendering “*descendeth not*,” as does A. V.), but earthly (as the sharpest contrast to *descending from above*: belonging to this earth, and its life of sin and strife), sensual (it is almost impossible to express satisfactorily in English the idea given by the original word here [*psychic*, from *psyché*, the soul]. Our ‘*soul*’ is so identified with man’s spiritual part in common parlance, that we have lost the distinction between *soul* and *spirit*, except when we can give a periphrastic explanation. The idea here is, belonging to the unspiritual mind of man. See the whole treated in the note on Jude 19), devilish (like, or partaking of the nature of, the devils. This word must not be figuratively taken: it betokens both the origin of this hypocritical wisdom [compare *set on fire by hell*, above, ver. 6], and its character: it is from,—not God, the giver of all true wisdom, ch. i. 5, but the devil,—and bears the character of its author).

16.] *Justification of the foregoing assertion.* For where is emulation (in a bad sense) and rivalry (see above), there

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

x<sup>1</sup> Cor. ii. 6, 7. x the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, 'gentle, easily persuaded, full of compassion and good fruits, without doubting, y and without hypocrisy. 18 z And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by them that work peace.

y Rom. xii. 9.  
1 Pet. i. 22. &  
ii. 1. 1 John  
iii. 18.  
z Prov. xi. 18.  
Hos. x. 12.  
Matt. v. 9.  
Phil. i. 11.  
Heb. xii. 11.

IV. <sup>1</sup> From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

IV. <sup>1</sup> From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war

is confusion (anarchy, restless disturbance), and every evil thing (or, deed).

17, 18.] *Character and praise of heavenly wisdom.* But (contrast) the wisdom from above is first of all pure (it is necessary to guard the mere English reader against the abuse of this text often found, when it is made to signify that the heavenly-wise must be pure, i. e. free from all contact with any thing that offends, before he can be peaceable: and thus it is used to further, instead of to discourage, an uncharitable spirit), then (i. e. 'in the second place:' its external qualities are now enumerated) peaceable, forbearing, easily persuaded, full of compassion (the great triumph of the Christian practical life is won by *compassion*: see ch. ii. 13) and good fruits (contrast to "every evil thing," above), without doubting (as might be expected, from the various meanings of the Greek term thus rendered, this word has been variously interpreted. Luther, A. V., and most Commentators, render it 'without partiality.' Two considerations contribute to substantiate the rendering given above, which is that of De Wette, Wiesinger, and Huther. 1) The word would seem, from its close junction with 'without hypocrisy,' rather to betoken an inner quality than an outward circumstance; 2) when thus used of an inner quality, ch. i. 6; ii. 4, our Apostle, in common with other New Test. writers, signifies by it 'to doubt.' So that I would understand by it *free from all ambiguity and simulation*), without feigning ("these two characteristics are also added with especial reference to the state of things among the readers: *without doubting*, compare ch. i. 6—8; ii. 4: *without feigning*, ch. i. 22, 26; ii. 1." Huther). 18.]

Before, in ver. 16, after the characterization came the *statement of the result*: and so now here. That result was de-

signed as a present one," "confusion and every evil thing:" this is a future one, but beautifully anticipated by the pregnant expression of "fruit being sown:" see below. But (so literally: passing from the subjective character to the objective result) fruit (or, *the fruit*) of righteousness (genitive of apposition: that fruit which is righteousness: see Heb. xii. 11; and compare Isa. xxxii. 17: righteousness in its wider sense; in themselves and in others: in practice and in reward: in time and in eternity) is sown (in saying this, the Apostle speaks in anticipation, as if a husbandman should this autumn be said to sow next year's bread) in peace (betokening the spirit and mode in which the sowing takes place, as opposed to *where envying and rivalry is*) by them who work (better than 'make,' which seems to confine the meaning to the reconciling persons at variance. So also in Matt. v. 9) peace.

CHAP. IV. 1—10.] *Exhortations and pleadings, as connected with what preceded, first against wars and fightings, then against the lusts and worldly desires out of which these spring.* And herein, 1—3.] *against wars and fightings, the origin of which is detailed and exposed.*

1.] *Whence are wars, and whence fightings among you* (by what follows, it would appear to be not contentions between teachers that are meant, or between sects, but concerning "mine" and "thine." Grotius refers them to the tumults which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem. But this idea, that these are strifes about mine and thine, confines them perhaps to too narrow a space; they seem rather, as Huther, to represent all those quarrels which spring up about common worldly interests from selfish considerations of pride, envy, covetousness, and the like) ? Are they not from thence (this second

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

*in your members? <sup>2</sup> Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. <sup>3</sup> Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. <sup>4</sup> Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with*

*a that war in your members? <sup>2</sup> Ye lust, and have not; ye commit murder, and ye envy, and cannot obtain: ye fight and make war. † Ye have not, because ye ask not: <sup>3</sup> <sup>b</sup> ye ask and receive not, <sup>c</sup> because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your lusts. <sup>4</sup> <sup>d</sup> Ye † adulteresses, know ye not that <sup>e</sup> the friendship of the world is enmity to God? <sup>f</sup> whosoever*

<sup>a</sup> Rom. vii. 23.  
Gal. v. 17.  
<sup>1</sup> Pet. ii. 11.

<sup>†</sup> Thus all the MSS.

<sup>b</sup> Job xxvii. 9.  
& xxxv. 12.

<sup>c</sup> Ps. xviii. 41.  
Prov. i. 28.

<sup>d</sup> Isa. i. 15.

<sup>e</sup> Jer. xl. 11.  
Micah iii. 4.

<sup>f</sup> Zech. vii. 13.

<sup>c</sup> Ps. lxxvi. 18.

<sup>1</sup> John iii. 22. & v. 14.

<sup>d</sup> Ps. lxxxiii. 27.  
<sup>†</sup> adulterers and <sup>is</sup> omitted by all Gal. i. 10.

our oldest MSS.

<sup>e</sup> 1 John ii. 15.

<sup>f</sup> John xv. 19. & xvii. 14.

question contains in fact the answer to the former, in an appeal to the consciences of the readers), from your lusts (literally, your pleasures) which militate (campaign, have their camp, and, as it were, forage about. We are meant, in the figure used, to see as the adversaries, our fellow-men, against whom, to put down whom and set ourselves up, our lusts are as it were an army of soldiers ever encamped within us and waging war) in your members?

2.] carries on the assertion in detail. Ye desire (generally: it is not said what: but evidently worldly possessions and honours are intended by the context, vv. 4 ff.), and possess not (lust of possession does not ensure possession itself, then comes a further step, out of this lust): ye murder (but how comes murder to be introduced at this early stage of the development of lust, before desire to have, which itself leads on to wars and fightings? It appears as if we were meant to understand it as alluding to such cases, e. g., as those in the Old Test. of David and Ahab, who, in their desire to possess, committed murder. And if it be said, that this is a hard saying of those who feared the Lord, be it remembered that the Apostle is speaking of wars and fightings, and though he may include under these terms the lesser forms of variance, the greater and more atrocious ones are clearly not excluded. In the state of Jewish society during the apostolic age, it is to be feared that examples of them were but too plentiful, and there is no saying how far the Christian portion of Jewish communities may have suffered themselves to become entangled in such quarrels and their murderous consequences) and envy, and are not able to obtain: ye fight and make war (these words form the final answer to the question with which the section

begins: and are therefore not to be joined with the following, as in the A. V.).

Reason why ye have not. Ye have not, because ye ask not (in prayer to God: in the following verse he explains, and as it were corrects this): 3.] ye ask and do not receive, because ye ask amiss (with evil intent, see below), that ye may spend [it] (that which ye ask for) in ('in the exercise of,' 'under the dominion of:' in does not belong to the verb,—'that ye may consume it upon,' as A. V.: 'may spend it,' but to the state in which the spenders are, in the course of satisfying) your lusts. The general sense is: if you really prayed aright, this feeling of continual craving after more worldly things would not exist: all your proper wants would be supplied: and these improper ones which beget wars and fightings among you would not exist. Ye would ask, and ask aright, and consequently would obtain.

4.] Ye adulteresses (the occurrence of the feminine only is rightly explained by Theile: "This denomination, taken from the feminine, and not from the masculine, might be suggested by the figure itself. For it puts God in the place of husband: and thus it is as natural to call individual men adulteresses, as the whole human race, or any particular nation." Some have thought that St. James is addressing Churches here. But God is the Lord and husband of every soul that is His, as much as of every church; and the indignant exclamation of the Apostle is just as applicable to every one who forsakes his or her God, as to an apostate church. This is one of those cases where the testimony of our ancient MSS. is so valuable, in restoring to us the nervous and pregnant rebuke of the original), know ye not that the friendship of the world (the world here, precisely as in ch. i. 27, men, and

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

therefore shall be minded to be a friend of the world becometh an enemy of God. <sup>5</sup> Or do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, <sup>g</sup>The Spirit that †he placed in us jealously desireth us? <sup>6</sup> But he giveth the greater grace. Wherefore he saith, <sup>h</sup>God resisteth the

<sup>g</sup> See Gen. vi. 5. & viii. 21. Numb. xi. 20. DEUT. xxiii. 19, 21. Prov. xvi. 10. † So all our oldest MSS. h Job xxii. 29. Ps. cxxxviii. 6. Prov. iii. 34. & xxix. 23. Matt. xxiii. 12. Luke i. 52. & xiv. 11 & xviii. 14. 1 Pet. v. 5.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

God? *whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.* <sup>5</sup> *Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?* <sup>6</sup> *But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth*

men's interests and ambitions and employments, in so far as they are without God) is enmity (the state of being an enemy) of God (the man who is taken out of the world by Christ, cannot again become a friend and companion of worldly men and their schemes for self, without passing into enmity with God, of whose family he was a reconciled member. God and the world stand opposed to one another: so that a man cannot join the one without deserting the other. This is further stated in what follows)? *whosoever therefore* (particular consequence on the general axiom just stated; carried however further, into all approach to, and not merely the completion of the outward state) shall be minded (sets his mind and thought and wish that way. He that *would be* a friend of the world, must make up his mind to be God's enemy) to be a friend of the world, is (thereby, by the proceeding in the direction indicated by that *mind*) constituted (as above; not merely 'is,' or 'becomes;' 'becomes,' 'then and there,' is rather the meaning) an enemy of God.

5, 6.] *Testimony from Scripture* to convince further those who might question what has just been stated. Or (the formula puts a hypothetical alternative, the assumption of which negatives itself) do you think that the Scripture saith in vain, The Spirit that He (God) placed in us (viz. when the Spirit descended on the church) jealously desireth (us for his own)? These words connect naturally with the foregoing. We are married to one, even God, who has implanted in us His Spirit: and He is a jealous God, who will not suffer us to be friends of His enemy and His friends at the same time. The only difficulty seems to be, to trace this latter saying in any part of Scripture. I will state the solution which seems to me the most probable, and then give an account of other methods of solving it. The emphasis of this clause lies on the words jealously

desireth: and, interpreting those words as above, we are naturally led to ask, is there any chapter or passage especially, where such a mind towards His people is ascribed to God? And this directs our thoughts at once to Deut. xxxii., where the love of Jehovah for Israel, and His jealousy over them is described. In that song of Moses we have this very word used of God, ver. 19—21. So that here we have the elements of the sense of that which is cited, viz. the jealous desire of the Lord over His people. And for the rest, "*the Spirit that He placed in us,*" the only solution seems to be, that the Apostle translates into the language of the Gospel the former declarations of the God of Israel, e.g. such as that Num. xxxv. 34, "*I the Lord dwell among the children of Israel,*" combining them with such prophecies as Ezek. xxxvi. 27, "*I will put my Spirit within you.*" I own that such a solution does not seem to me wholly satisfactory: still there is nothing improbable in the idea that St. James may have combined the general sense of Scripture on the point of God's jealousy over His people, and instead of the God who dwelt in Israel, may have placed the Holy Spirit who dwelleth in us. At all events it is better to understand it thus, than to force the words of the citation from their simple meaning. The statement of the other interpretations of this difficult verse would be quite unintelligible to an English reader. It will be found in my Greek Test. With regard to the sense above given, as fitting into the context, Theile well says, that it introduces us into the same figurative realm of thought in which the appellation "*adulteresses*" placed us before. The Apostle is speaking of the eager and jealous love of God towards those whom He has united as it were in the bond of marriage with Himself.

6.] But He (God, by His Holy Spirit dwelling in us, the same subject as



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. <sup>7</sup> Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup> Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. <sup>9</sup> Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. <sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. <sup>11</sup> Speak

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. <sup>7</sup> Submit yourselves therefore to God: but <sup>1</sup> resist the devil, and he shall flee from you: <sup>8</sup> <sup>k</sup> draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. <sup>1</sup> Purify your hands, ye sinners, and <sup>m</sup> make chaste your hearts, ye <sup>n</sup> double-minded. <sup>9</sup> <sup>o</sup> Be afflicted, and mourn and weep: let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into humiliation. <sup>10</sup> <sup>p</sup> Be humbled before the Lord, and he will exalt you. <sup>11</sup> <sup>q</sup> Speak

i Eph. iv. 27. & vi. 11.  
1 Pet. v. 9.  
k 2 Chron. xv 2.  
l Isa. i. 16.  
m 1 Pet. i. 22.  
1 John iii. 3.  
n ch. i. 8.  
o Matt. v. 4.  
p Job xxii. 29.  
Matt. xxiii. 12.  
Luke xiv. 11. & xviii. 34.  
q Eph. iv. 31. 1 Pet. ii. 1

in the previous sentence) giveth the more grace (the more and greater, for this longing and jealous desire): wherefore he saith (the Spirit, again: for it is the same Spirit who is implanted in us that speaks in Scripture), God (the Lord, in the Septuagint: and the same variation is found where the words are again cited in 1 Pet. v. 5) is set against the proud, but giveth grace to the lowly (see Rom. xii. 16. This is a proof that the ambitious and restless after worldly honours and riches, are God's enemies, whereas the humble and lowly are the objects of His gifts of ever-increasing grace. The inference follows in the shape of solemn exhortation). 7—10.]

Submit yourselves therefore to God (addressed mainly to the proud—the *adulteresses*” above; but also to all): but resist the devil (the ruler of this world), and he shall flee (better than the A. V. *‘will flee,’* which is merely an assurance as from man to man: this is a divine promise) from you: draw near to God, and He will draw near (here better *‘will:’* in speaking of the divine dealings, positive declarations are better softened: see John xvi. 23, A. V. Not that this is always observed: see Rev. vii. 17, A. V.). But it is only the pure in heart and hand that can approach God: therefore—Purify your hands (the hands being the external organs of action, and becoming polluted by the act, as e. g. by blood in the act of murder: see Isa. i. 15, lix. 3; 1 Tim. ii. 8. And, for both the particulars here mentioned, Ps. xxiv. 4), ye sinners: and make chaste your hearts (in allusion to the figure of *“adultery”* above), ye double-minded (ye whose affections are divided between God and the

world. The Apostle is addressing not two classes of persons, but one and the same: the *sinners are double-minded*).

9.] This cannot be done without true and earnest repentance, leading them through deep sorrow. Be wretched (in your minds, from a sense of your sinfulness. That such feeling will have its outward demonstrations is evident: but this word itself does not allude to them), and mourn and weep (here again, the exhortation does not regard outward things, as a mourning habit, or the like. These may follow on that which is here commanded, but are not the thing itself): let your laughter be turned into mourning (now he speaks rather of outward manifestations), and your joy into humiliation (literally, casting down of the eyes: hence shame or humiliation, which produces such downcast looks. These latter are more said of the inner states of mind).

10.] Conclusion of the exhortation: the true way to exaltation, through humility. Be humbled before the Lord (Matt. xxiii. 12, and 1 Pet. v. 6: but *“under the hand of God”* there is not an equivalent to in the sight of, or, before the Lord here. The latter gives more the realization in the soul of the presence of God, as drawing near to Him in humility: that, the subjection to Him in recognition of His providence and His judgments. The Lord, not Christ, but the Father: see on ch. i. 7), and He shall exalt you (both here and hereafter: by His grace and counsel here to the hidden glory of His waiting children, and by His fruition and presence hereafter to the ineffable glory of His manifested children; in due time, as 1 Pet. v. 6. Compare Luke i. 52; Job v. 11; Ezek. xxi. 26).

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

not one against another, brethren: he that speaketh against a brother, <sup>r</sup> or judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law and judgeth the law: but if thou judgest the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. <sup>12</sup> One is the lawgiver and judge, <sup>s</sup> he who is able to save and destroy: but thou, <sup>t</sup> who art thou that judgest <sup>†</sup> thy neighbour? <sup>13</sup> <sup>u</sup> Go to now, ye that say, 'To day,

<sup>r</sup> Matt. vii. 1.  
Luke vi. 37.  
Rom. ii. 1.  
1 Cor. iv. 5.

<sup>s</sup> Matt. x. 28.

<sup>t</sup> Rom. xiv. 4,  
13.

<sup>†</sup> *So all our  
oldest MSS.*

<sup>u</sup> Prov. xxvii.  
1. Luke xii.  
18, &c.

11, 12.] *Exhortation against evil speaking and uncharitable judgment.* Some have thought that there is no close connexion with the preceding: and Huther urges this from the milder word *brethren* being here used, whereas before it was "*adulteresses,*" "*sinners,*" "*double-minded.*" But it may be observed, that St. James frequently begins his exhortations mildly, and moves onward into severity: in this very paragraph we have an example of it, where unquestionably the tone of the question, "Who art thou that judgest thy neighbour?" is more severe than the "*brethren*" with which it began. The connexion is with the whole spirit of this part of the Epistle, as dissuading mutual quarrels, undue self exaltation, and neighbour depreciation. Chap. iii. dealt with the sins of the tongue: and now, after speaking against pride and strife, the Apostle naturally returns to them, as springing out of a proud uncharitable spirit. **Do not speak against one another** (it is evident, what sort of speaking against one another he means, by the junction of judging with it below: it is that kind which follows upon unfavourable judgment:—depreciation of character and motive), **brethren** (prepares the way for the frequent mention of *a brother* below): **he that speaketh against a brother, or judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law** (of Christian life: the old moral law glorified and amplified by Christ: the "*royal law,*" ch. ii. 8; "*law of Christ,*" i. 25), and **judgeth the law** (viz. by setting himself up over that law, as pronouncing upon its observance or non-observance by another): **but if (as thou dost) thou judgest the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge** (seeing that he who judges, judges not only the man before him, but the law

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. 12 There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another? 13 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to*

also: for he pronounces not only on the fact, but on that fact being, or not being, a breach of the law. So that thus to bring men's actions under the cognizance of the law, is the office of a judge).

12.] **One (God) is the lawgiver and judge** (unites these two offices in His own person: the latter of them depending on the former), **He who is able to save and destroy** (He who is able, because He alone has the power to carry out His judgment when pronounced. On the word *save*, see on ch. i. 21, ii. 14, as relating to ultimate salvation: and on *save and destroy*, Matt. x. 28, to which this is the key-text, fixing the reference there to God, and not to God's Enemy): **but thou, who art thou** (thou feeble man, who hast no such power, and who art not the lawgiver) **that judgest thy neighbour?**

13—17.] *Against ungodly and presumptuous confidence in our worldly plans for the future.* This again falls into the previous context, where we are warned against hearts divided between God and the world. But, as has been rightly remarked as early as Bede, and by many since, St. James, though carrying on the same subject, is no longer, from this place to ch. v. 6, addressing members of Christ's church, but those without: the ungodly and the rich in this world. This however must be taken with just this reservation,—that he addresses Christians in so far as they allow themselves to be identified with those others. This first paragraph, for example, might well serve as a warning for Christians who are in the habit of leaving God out of their thoughts and plans. That it is still *Jews* who are addressed, appears from ver. 15, and ch. v. 4. **Go to now** (Bengel calls this an exclamation to excite attention. This seems to be

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: <sup>14</sup> whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. <sup>15</sup> For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. <sup>16</sup> But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. <sup>17</sup> Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

or to morrow, we will go into this city, and will spend there one year, and will traffic and get gain <sup>14</sup> (whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? <sup>x</sup> For † ye are a vapour, which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away); <sup>15</sup> instead of your saying, <sup>y</sup> If the Lord will, we shall both live, and shall do this or that. <sup>16</sup> But now ye boast in your vainglory: <sup>z</sup> all such boasting is evil. <sup>17</sup> So that <sup>a</sup> to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

<sup>x</sup> Job vii. 7.  
Ps. ciii. 3.  
ch. i. 10.  
1 Pet. i. 24.  
1 John ii. 17.  
† So (probably)  
all our oldest  
MSS.  
y Acts xviii. 21.  
1 Cor. iv. 10.  
& xvi. 7.  
Heb. vi. 3.  
z 1 Cor. v. 6.  
a Luke xii. 47  
John ix. 41.  
& xv. 22.  
Rom. i. 20,  
21, 32, & ii.  
17, 18, 23.

the true view of it: 'come on,' let us reason together: as in Isa. i. 18. The now serves to mark the time, as noted by the point to which the argument of the Epistle has arrived), **ye that say To-day, or to-morrow** (or supposes an alternative, "to-day, it may be, or to-morrow:" if, with some ancient MSS., we read and, the two days are assigned for the journey, without any alternative), **we will go into this** (most Commentators render, 'this or that,' equivalent to 'such a' as A. V.: but this is not the usage of the word in the original. **this city** expresses in general terms the city then present to the mind of the speaker) **city, and will spend there one year** (A. V., "continue there a year," is not accurate. It is, "spend a year there," which savours of presumption much more strongly and vividly. They speak, as Bengel says, as if intending afterwards to settle about the following years), and **will traffic** (this word brings up the worldly nature of the plan) and **get gain**: <sup>14.</sup>] **whereas ye know not the (event)** (or, *matter*, or *content*: the more general and indefinite, the better. The original has only, **that of the morrow**) **of the morrow: for** (substantiates the ignorance just alleged) **of what sort** (depreciative, as in 1 Pet. ii. 20) **is your life? for** (refers to the depreciative force in **of what sort**: 'I may well pour contempt on it, for . . .') **ye are** (ye yourselves: so that any thing of yours, even your life, must partake of the same unstability and transitoriness. So in ch. i. 10 the **rich** is said to pass away as the flower of the grass.

It is not your *life*, which is not a thing seen, but *ye*, that *appear for a little while*) a vapour, which appeareth for a little time, afterwards, as it appeared, so (i. e., 'vanishing as it came') **vanishing**:

<sup>15.</sup>] (ver. 14 was parenthetical, and demonstrated the folly of their conduct. Now the sense proceeds) **instead of your saying, If the Lord** (God, as usual in this Epistle: see on ver. 10) **will** (properly, shall have willed; i. e. have so determined it in His counsel), **we shall both live, and shall do this or that.**

<sup>16.</sup>] **But** (contrast to the spirit of resignation to the divine will just recommended) **now** (as things now are, see 1 Cor. v. 11; xiv. 6) **ye boast in** (not, as in ch. i. 9, 'make your boast in: ' the *in* indicates the state, as in ch. iii. 18; and iv. 3 especially. The *vainglory* is the source, but not the material of the boasting) **your vaingloriousnesses** (so literally. The word signifies the self-deceived and groundless confidence in the stability of life and health on which the worldly pride themselves. On this, as on its foundation, your boastful speeches are built): **all such boasting** (all boasting so made and so grounded) **is evil.** <sup>17.</sup>]

This conclusion is most naturally understood to refer to the universal notoriety of the shortness of human life, and to apply only to the subject just treated). **So that** (therefore we see by this example the truth of the general axiom . . .) **to him who knoweth to do good, and doeth it not** (not merely, *omits to do it*, as might be the case if it were some one definite

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

a Prov. xi. 28.  
Luke vi. 24.  
1 Tim. vi. 9.

V. <sup>1</sup> Go <sup>a</sup> to now, ye rich men, go weep, howling over your miseries which are coming on. <sup>2</sup> Your riches are corrupted, and <sup>b</sup> your garments are become moth-eaten: <sup>3</sup> your gold and your silver is rusted through: and the rust of them shall be for a testimony to you, and shall eat your flesh as fire. <sup>c</sup> Ye laid up treasure

V. <sup>1</sup> Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. <sup>2</sup> Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. <sup>3</sup> Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped

b Job xiii. 28.  
Matt. vi. 20.  
ch. ii. 2.

c Rom. ii. 5.

deed that was spoken of. It is not sins of omission that men are here convicted of, as so often mistakenly supposed: but the doing *evil*, as in the case of the speech above supposed, where *good* is easy and obvious), it is sin to him (i. e. reckoned to him as sin).

CHAP. V. 1—6.] *Denunciation of woe on the rich in this world.* These verses need not necessarily be addressed (as Huther) to the same persons as ch. iv. 13 ff. Indeed the *go to now* repeated seems to indicate a fresh beginning. Commentators have differed as to whether this denunciation has for its object, or not, exhortation to repentance. I believe the right answer to be, much as De Wette, that in the outward form indeed the words contain no such exhortation: but that we are bound to believe all such triumphant denunciation to have but one ultimate view, that of grace and mercy to those addressed. That such does not here appear, is owing chiefly to the close proximity of judgment, which the writer has before him. Calvin then is in the main right,—when he says, “They are wrong who imagine that James is here exhorting rich men to repentance: it seems to me rather to be a simple denunciation of the judgment of God, with which he wished to alarm them *without hope of pardon*,”—except in those four last rather characteristic words. 1.] *Go to now* (see above, ch. iv. 13), *ye rich, go weep* (the *tense* in the original gives the command a concentrated force, as that which ought to be done at once and without delay), *howling* (it is a word in the Old Test. confined to the prophets, and used, as here, with reference to the near approach of God’s judgments. See Isa. xiii. 6) *over your miseries which are coming on* (no supply of the word “*you*” is required after the verb. These miseries are not to be thought of as the natural and determined end of all worldly riches,

but are the judgments connected with the coming of the Lord: see ver. 8. It may be that this prospect was as yet intimately bound up with the approaching destruction of the Jewish city and polity: for it must be remembered that they are Jews who are here addressed). 2.] *The effect of the coming judgment is depicted as already present*, and its material as already stored up against them. What is meant by the figure used, we learn in ver. 4. *Your riches are corrupted* (see Job xxxiii. 21; xl. 7. The expression is figurative, and to be understood of *all* riches;—‘your possessions’), and *your garments* (the general term *riches* is now split into its component parts, clothing and treasure) *are become moth-eaten* (ref.: see also Isa. li. 8; Acts xii. 23. The reference to Matt. vi. 19, 20 is obvious): 3.] *your gold and your silver is rusted through* (the language is popular, seeing that gold does not contract rust. In the Epistle of Jeremiah, xii. 24, the same terms are used of golden and silver images of idols. Rust, happening generally to metals, is predicated of gold and silver without care for exact precision. So that there is no need to seek for some interpretation which may make the expression true of gold, as that [Bretschneider] copper vessels plated with gold are intended. The stern and vivid depiction of prophetic denunciation does not take such trifles into account), and *the rust of them shall be for a testimony to you* (not, as A. V., “*against you*,” i. e., the rust which you have allowed to accumulate on them by want of use, shall testify against you in judgment,—but, as Wiesinger and Huther rightly, seeing that the rust is the effect of judgment begun, not of want of use,—the rust of them is a token what shall happen to yourselves: in the consuming of your wealth, you see depicted your own), and *shall eat your flesh as fire* (i. e. as fire

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

treasures together for the last days. <sup>4</sup> Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. <sup>5</sup> Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. <sup>6</sup> Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

in the last days. <sup>4</sup> Behold, <sup>d</sup> the hire of the labourers who mowed your fields, which is held back, crieth out from you; and <sup>e</sup> the cries of them that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. <sup>5</sup> <sup>f</sup> Ye lived in pleasure on the earth, ye were wanton: ye nourished your hearts in the day of slaughter. <sup>6</sup> <sup>g</sup> Ye condemned, ye murdered the just man: he doth not resist you.

<sup>d</sup> Lev. xix. 13.  
Job xxiv. 10.  
11. Jer.  
xxii. 13.  
Mal. iii. 5.

<sup>e</sup> Deut. xxiv.  
15.

<sup>f</sup> Job xxi. 13.  
Amos vi. 1,  
4. Luke xvi.  
19, 25.  
1 Tim. v. 6.

<sup>g</sup> ch. ii. 6.  
Acts ii. 23.  
& iii. 15. &  
vii. 52.

devoids the flesh). Ye laid up treasure in (not "for," or "against") the last days (i. e. in these, the last days before the coming of the Lord, ye, instead of repenting and saving your souls, laid up treasure to no profit; employed yourselves in the vain accumulation of this world's wealth. The past tense, as so often when the course of life and action is spoken of, is used as if from the standing-point of the day of judgment, looking back over this life).

4—6.] *Specification of the sins, the incipient judgments for which hitherto have been hinted at under the figures of rust and moth.* And 4.] *the unjust frauds of the rich*, in non-payment of just debts. Behold (belongs to the fervid graphic style), the hire of the workmen who mowed your fields, which has been held back (for the sense, see Lev. xix. 13; Jer. xxii. 13, and especially Mal. iii. 5. In Ecclus. xxxiv. 22, we have, "He that defraudeth the labourer of his hire is a bloodshedder"), crieth out (for vengeance on you. See Gen. iv. 10) from you (i. e. from your possession, where you have deposited it: from your coffers, where it lies): and the cries of them who reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of hosts (not only does the abstracted hire cry out from its place, but the defrauded victims themselves join, and the cry is heard of God. This is the only place in the New Test. where the Lord of Sabaoth (hosts) is used by any writer: Rom. ix. 29 is a citation. The Jewish character of the whole will sufficiently account for it. Bede gives another reason, which also doubtless was in the Apostle's mind: "He calls God the Lord of armies, to strike terror into those who imagine that the poor have no defender").

5.] *Second class of sins: luxury and self-indulgence.* Ye luxuriated on the earth (the last words of ver. 4 placed the thought in heaven, where their judgment is laid up) and wanted, ye nourished (satiated, fattened) your hearts (compare Acts xiv. 17. Although the body is really that which is filled, the heart is that in which the satisfaction of repletion is felt) in the day of slaughter (i. e. as Theile, "Like cattle, who on the very day of slaughter feed and fill themselves, happy and careless." Compare Jer. xii. 3. This seems the simplest and most obvious interpretation. Many Commentators understand the day of slaughter to mean a day of banqueting, when oxen and fat-lings are slain).

6.] *Third class of sins: condemning the innocent.* Ye condemned, ye murdered the just man (these words are probably spoken generally, the singular being collective. "The just man," not merely "the innocent man;" it is his justice itself which provokes the enmity and cruelty of the rich. It has been usual to refer these words to the condemnation and execution of Christ. But there is surely nothing in the context to indicate this, further than that such a particular case may be included in the general charge, as its most notorious example. I cannot see, with Huther, how the present tense, "doth not resist," makes against this; for any how we must suppose a change of sense before the present can be introduced: and then it may as well be a description of Christ's patient endurance, or of His present long-suffering, as of the present meekness of the [generic] just man. But I prefer the latter, and with it the other reference throughout): he (the just man)



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

7 Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it till it shall have received <sup>h</sup> the early and latter † [rain]: <sup>8</sup> be ye also patient: establish your hearts, <sup>i</sup> because the coming of the Lord is nigh. <sup>9</sup> <sup>k</sup> Murmur not, brethren, one against another, that ye be not judged: behold, the judge <sup>l</sup> standeth before the door. <sup>10</sup> <sup>m</sup> Take,

<sup>h</sup> Deut. xi. 14.  
Jer. v. 24.  
Hos. vi. 3.  
Joel ii. 23.  
Zech. x. 1.  
† rain is not expressed in one of our oldest MSS. (the Vatican): the other (the Sinaitic) supplies 'rain' instead. This shows that originally no word was expressed.

<sup>i</sup> Phil. iv. 5. Heb. x. 25, 37. 1 Pet. iv. 7. k ch. iv. 14.

1 Matt. xxiv. 33. 1 Cor. iv. 5. m Matt. v. 12.

doth not resist you (the behaviour of the just under your persecutions is ever that of meekness and submission. This last clause serves as a note of transition to what follows. So Herder remarks, as cited by Wiesinger: "And thus we have as it were standing before us the slain and unresisting righteous man, when lo the curtain falls: Be patient, brethren, wait!" See, on the whole sense, Amos ii. 6, 7; v. 12; and the description in Wisd. ii. 6—20).

7—11.] *Exhortation to suffering Christians to endure unto the coming of the Lord.* On the connexion, see above. 7.] Be patient therefore ("therefore" is a general reference to the prophetic strain of the previous passage: judgment on your oppressors being so near, and your own part, as the Lord's *just ones*, being that of unresistingness), brethren (contrast to the *rich men*, last addressed), until the coming of the Lord (i. e. here, beyond all reasonable question, of Christ. The Lord, it is true, usually in this Epistle is to be taken in the Old Test. sense, as denoting the Father: but we have in ch. i. 1; ii. 1, examples of St. James using it of our Saviour, and it is therefore better to keep so well-known a phrase to its ordinary meaning).

*Encouragement by the example of the husbandman.* Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it (with reference to it: as it were sitting over it and watching it) till it (better than 'he,' as Luther and A. V.) shall have received the early and latter [rain] (see *reff.*). It appears that the early rain fell in Oct., Nov., and Dec., extending, with occasional snow, into Jan. See *reff.* Dent., Jer.:

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. <sup>8</sup> Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. <sup>9</sup> Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

and after fine spring weather in Feb., the latter rain in March to the end of April, Jer. iii. 3, Heb. and A. V.): 8.] **be ye also patient** (as well as, after the example of, the husbandman): **establish** (confirm, strengthen, both which are required for patience) **your hearts, because the coming of the Lord is nigh.**

9.] *Exhortation to mutual forbearance.*

"He has been encouraging them to suffer open and grave injuries from the wicked with fortitude: he now exhorts the same persons to be prompt in making up, or concealing, those lesser offences which often arise among Christians themselves. For it happens that those who bear often with equanimity the greatest contumelies and injuries from enemies and wicked men, yet cannot easily bear much less offences when given by their brethren." Horneius. **Murmur not, brethren, against one another, that ye be not judged** (seeing that murmuring against one another involves the violation of our Lord's "judge not" [Matt. vii. 1], he finishes with the following clause there, "that ye be not judged:" the passive verb here, as there, being to be taken in a condemnatory sense, or at all events as assuming the condemnatory issue): **behold, the Judge standeth before the door** (the Judge, viz. the Lord. These last words are added with a view to both portions of the sentence preceding, not to the latter one only. The near approach of the Judge is a motive for suspending our own judgment, as well as for deterring us from incurring that speedy judgment on ourselves which we shall incur if we do not suspend it).

10, 11.] *Encouragement to patience in*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

<sup>10</sup> Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. <sup>11</sup> Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy. <sup>12</sup> But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by the earth, neither by any other

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

† brethren, as an example of affliction and of patience the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord. <sup>11</sup> Behold, <sup>n</sup> we count them happy that have endured: ye [have] heard of <sup>o</sup> the endurance of Job: † behold also <sup>p</sup> the end of the Lord, for <sup>q</sup> the Lord is very pitiful and merciful. <sup>12</sup> But above all things, my brethren, <sup>r</sup> swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and

† my is omitted in two of our oldest MSS.

<sup>n</sup> Matt. v. 10, 11. & x. 22.

<sup>o</sup> Job i. 21, 22. & ii. 10.

† See note.

<sup>p</sup> Job xlii. 10. &c.

<sup>q</sup> Numb. xiv. 18. 1's. ciii. 8.

<sup>r</sup> Matt. v. 34, &c.

affliction by Old Test. examples. Take, my brethren, as an example of affliction (not 'of enduring' or 'suffering affliction,' as A. V.) and of patience the prophets (so Matt. v. 12), who spoke in the name (or, by the name) of the Lord (God). 11.] Another example, in which a further point is gained. Behold, we count happy them that have endured (see Matt. v. 10): ye [have] heard of the endurance of Job; behold also (A. V. "and have seen." The testimony of the ancient MSS. is divided; but the imperative is the more probable reading) the end of the Lord ('the termination which the Lord [in Old Test. sense] gave?' do not limit your attention to Job's sufferings, but look on to the end and see the mercy shewn him by God); for (better than 'that,' as A. V.: the sense being, "Job's patience is known to you all: do not rest there, but look on to the end which God gave him: and it is well worth your while so to do, for you will find that He is, &c.") And this has apparently occasioned the repetition by the Apostle of the words the Lord) the Lord is very pitiful and merciful (this remembrance of God's pity and mercy would encourage them also to hope that whatever their sufferings, the "end of the Lord" might prove similar in their own case).

12—20.] Various exhortations and dehortations, connected with the foregoing chiefly by the situation, sufferings, and duties of the readers. 12.] This dehortation from swearing is connected with what went before by the obvious peril that they, whose temptations were to impatience under suffering, might be betrayed by that impatience into hasty swearing and imprecations. That this suffering state of theirs

is still in view, is evident from "Is any afflicted?" which follows: that *it alone* is not in view is equally evident, from the "Is any merry?" which also follows. So that we may safely say that the Apostle passes from their particular temptations under suffering to their general temptations in life. But (contrast of the spirit which would prompt that which he is about to forbid, to that recommended in the last verses) above all things (meaning, 'So far is the practice alien from Christian meekness, that whatever you feel or say, let it not for a moment be given way to'), my brethren, swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath (Hutlier's note here is valuable and just: "It is to be noticed, that swearing *by the name of God* is not mentioned: for we must not imagine that this is included in the last member of the clause, the Apostle intending evidently by the words, '*or by any other oath*,' to point only at similar formulæ, of which several are mentioned in Matt. v. 34, 35. Had he intended to forbid swearing by the name of God, he would most certainly have mentioned it expressly: for not only is it in the law, in contradistinction to other oaths, commanded,—see Deut. vi. 13; x. 20; Ps. lxiii. 11,—but in the prophets is announced as a token of the future turning of men to God: ref. Isa. i. 16; Jer. xii. 16; xxiii. 7, 8. The omission of notice of *this oath* shews that James in this warning has in view only the abuse, common among the Jews generally and among his readers, of introducing in the common every-day affairs of life, instead of the common yea and nay, such asseverations as those here mentioned: so that we are not justified in

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

your nay, nay: that ye fall not under judgment. <sup>13</sup> Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? <sup>s</sup> let him sing praise. <sup>14</sup> Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the congregation, and let them pray over him, <sup>t</sup> anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, <sup>15</sup> and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the

<sup>s</sup> Eph. v. 19.  
Col. iii. 16.

<sup>t</sup> Mark vi. 13.  
& xvi. 18.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.* <sup>13</sup> *Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.* <sup>14</sup> *Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:* <sup>15</sup> *and the prayer of faith*

deducing from his words any prohibition of swearing in general, as has been attempted by many expositors of our Epistle. The use of oaths *by heaven, &c.*, arises on the one hand from forgetting that every oath, in its deeper significance, is a swearing *by God*, and on the other from a depreciation of simple truth in words: either way therefore from a lightness and frivolity which is in direct contrast to the earnest seriousness of a Christian spirit." See my note on Matt. v. 34: but (contrast to the habit of swearing) **let your yea be yea, and [your] nay, nay** (it is hardly possible here to render "But let yours be [your habit of conversation be] yea yea and nay nay," on account of the *position* of the words in the original. So that, in form at least, our precept here differs slightly from that in St. Matt. The fact represented by both would be the same: confidence in men's simple assertions, and consequently absence of all need for asseveration): **that ye fall not under judgment** (i. e. condemnation: not as the meaning of the word used, but as the necessary contextual result. The words in fact nearly amount to "*that ye be not judged*" above. Notice, that there is here no exhortation to truthful speaking, as so many Commentators have assumed: that is not in question at all). <sup>13.</sup>] The connexion seems to be, Let not this light and frivolous spirit at any time appear among you: if suffering, or if rejoicing, express your feelings not by random and unjustifiable exclamations, but in a Christian and sober manner, as here prescribed. **Is any among you in trouble? let him pray. Is any in joy** (light of heart)? **let him sing praise** (literally, play on an instrument: but used in Rom. xv. 9, and 1 Cor. xiv. 15, and elsewhere, of singing praise generally). <sup>14.</sup>] **Is any sick among you** (here one case of *affliction* is specified, and for it specific directions

are given)? **let him summon to him** (send for) **the elders of the congregation** (to which he belongs: but not, *some one among those elders*, as many Roman-Catholic interpreters. The Council of Trent anathematizes those who say that these elders are not priests ordained by a bishop, but elders in age in the congregation, and thus deny that the priest is the sole administrator of extreme unction. It is true the elders are not simply "the elders in age in every congregation," but those who were officially *elders*, or *bishops*, which in the apostolic times were identical: see notes on Acts xx. 17, 28: so that "*priests ordained by a bishop*" above, would, as applied to the text, be an anachronism), **and let them pray over him** (either 1. literally as coming and standing over his bed: or 2. figuratively, with reference to him, as if their intent in praying, went out towards him), **anointing** (or, *when they have anointed*), **him with oil in the name of the Lord** (the act thus qualified was plainly not a mere human medium of cure, but had a sacramental character: compare the same words, used of *baptism*, Matt. xxviii. 19; Acts ii. 38; x. 48; xix. 5; 1 Cor. i. 13, 15. **The Lord** here is probably Christ, from analogy: His name being universally used as the vehicle of all miraculous power exercised by His followers), <sup>15.</sup>] **and the prayer of faith** (the prayer which faith offers) **shall save** (clearly here, considering that the forgiveness of sins is separately stated afterwards, this term can *only* be used of *corporeal healing*, not of the salvation of the soul. This has not always been recognized. The R.-Cath. interpreters, who pervert the whole passage to the defence of the practice of extreme unction, take it of the salvation of the soul: Cornelius-a-Lapide saying, "*The prayer of faith*, i. e. the sacrament and the sacra-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. <sup>16</sup> Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

Lord shall raise him up: <sup>u</sup> even if <sup>u</sup> he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him. <sup>16</sup> Confess therefore one to another your transgressions, and pray for one another that ye may be healed. <sup>x</sup> The supplication <sup>x</sup> of a righteous man availeth much in

<sup>1</sup> Sam. xii. 18. <sup>1</sup> Kings xiii. 6. <sup>2</sup> Kings iv. 33. & xix. 15, 20, & xx. 2, 4, &c. <sup>u</sup> Isa. xxxviii. 24. <sup>u</sup> Matt. ix. 2. <sup>x</sup> Gen. xx. 17. <sup>x</sup> Numb. xi. 2. <sup>x</sup> Deut. ix. 18, 19, 20. <sup>x</sup> Josh. x. 12. <sup>x</sup> &c. <sup>x</sup> Ps. x. 17. & xxxiv. 15. & cxlv. 18. <sup>x</sup> Prov. xv. 39. & xxviii. 9. <sup>x</sup> John ix. 31. <sup>x</sup> 1 John iii. 22.

mental form of extreme unction (!), shall save the sick, i. e., shall confer on him grace by which his soul may be saved." Some Commentators take both meanings. The Council of Trent prevaricates between the two) **the sick man, and the Lord** (most probably Christ, again: He who is Lord in the Christian church) **shall raise him up** (from his bed of sickness: thus the Greek word is used in Mark i. 31; Matt. viii. 15; ix. 5—7, &c. Here again our R.-Cath. friends are in sad perplexity, seeing that these words entirely deprive the passage of all relevancy to extreme unction): **even if he have committed** (he be *in a state of having committed*, i. e. abiding under the consequence of, some commission of sin; for so the *perfect tense* implies; and hereby the sin in question is presumed to have been the working cause of his present sickness) **sins, it shall be forgiven him** (supply as a subject, *the having committed them*, from the foregoing).

Among all the daring perversions of Scripture by which the Church of Rome has defended her superstitions, there is none more patent than that of the present passage. Not without reason has the Council of Trent defended its misinterpretation with the anathema above cited: for indeed it needed that, and every other recommendation, to support it, and give it any kind of acceptance. The Apostle is treating of a matter totally distinct from the occasion, and the object, of extreme unction. He is enforcing the efficacy of the prayer of faith in afflictions, ver. 13. Of such efficacy, he adduces one special instance. In sickness, let the sick man inform the elders of the Church. Let them, representing the congregation of the faithful, pray over the sick man, accompanying that prayer with the symbolic and sacramental act of anointing with oil in the name of the Lord. Then, the prayer of faith (see Cornelius-a-Lapide above for the audacious interpretation) shall

bring (heal) the sick man, and the Lord shall bring him up out of his sickness; and even if it were occasioned by some sin, that sin shall be forgiven him. Such is the simple and undeniable sense of the Apostle, arguing for the efficacy of prayer: and such, as above seen, the perversion of that sense by the Church of Rome. Here, as in the rest of these cases, it is our comfort to know that there is a God of truth, whose judgment shall begin at His Church. Observe, the promises here made of recovery and forgiveness are unconditional, as in Mark xvi. 18, &c.

16.] *A general injunction* arising out of a circumstance necessarily to be inferred in the preceding example. There, the sin would of necessity have been confessed to the elders, before the prayer of faith could deal with it. And seeing the blessed consequences in that case,—“generally,” says the Apostle, “in all similar cases, and one to another universally, pursue the same salutary practice of confessing your sins.” **Confess therefore to one another** (not only to the presbyters in the case supposed, but to one another generally) **your transgressions** (i. e. not merely offences against your brethren; but also sins against God: compare Matt. vi. 14, 15), **and pray for one another that ye may be healed** (in case of sickness, as above. The context here forbids any wider meaning: and so rightly De Wette, Wiesinger, and Huther. So even Cornelius-a-Lapide). It might appear astonishing, were it not notorious, that on this passage among others is built the Romish doctrine of the necessity of confessing sins to a priest. As a specimen of *the way in which* it is deduced, I subjoin Cornelius-a-Lapide’s explanation “‘*One another?*’ i. e. confess, man to man, like to like, brother to brother, namely to the priest, who though in office he be superior, yet by nature is equal, like in infirmity, the same in obligation of confessing.” Cajetan, on the contrary, denies that “sacramental confession” is here spoken of: here, as in so many other

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

its working. <sup>17</sup> Elijah was a man  
<sup>y</sup> of like passions with us, and <sup>z</sup> he  
<sup>1</sup> prayed with prayer that it might  
<sup>a</sup> not rain, and it rained not on the  
<sup>b</sup> earth for three years and six months:  
<sup>18</sup> and again <sup>b</sup> he prayed, and the  
<sup>c</sup> heavens gave rain, and the earth  
<sup>19</sup> brought forth her fruit. Brethren,  
<sup>c</sup> if any among you be seduced from  
<sup>20</sup> the truth, and one convert him;  
<sup>20</sup> know, that he who converteth a  
<sup>20</sup> sinner from the error of his way

<sup>y</sup> Acts xiv. 15.  
<sup>z</sup> 1 Kings xvii.  
<sup>1</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Luke iv. 25.

<sup>b</sup> 1 Kings xviii.  
<sup>42, 45.</sup>

<sup>c</sup> Matt. xviii.  
<sup>15.</sup>

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*much.* <sup>17</sup> *Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.* <sup>18</sup> *And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.* <sup>19</sup> *Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; <sup>20</sup> let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way*

cases, the much-vaunted unity of Roman interpreters embracing the most opposite opinions. The supplication of a righteous man (i. e. of one who shews his faith by his works, see ch. ii. 24) **availeth much in its working** (i. e. worketh very effectually. Much doubt has arisen about the meaning and reference of this last term. It is usually taken as in A. V.,—"the effectual fervent prayer,"—as an epithet setting forth its fervency. This interpretation however has not only, as Wiesinger confesses, New Test. usage against it, but can hardly be justified from the context, it being necessarily implied that the prayer of the righteous man is not a dead and formal one. Besides which, the force of the general sentence, "*the prayer of a righteous man availeth much,*" suffers much from the appending of a condition under which alone the sentence could be true).

<sup>17, 18.</sup> *Example of this effectual prayer, in the case of Elijah.* <sup>17.</sup>

Elijah was a man of like passions with us (this precedes, to obviate the objection that the greatness of Elijah, so far out of our reach, neutralizes the example for us weak and ordinary men. There is no contrast to the just man intended, but rather Elijah is an example of a just man), and he prayed with prayer (made it a special matter of prayer: not, *prayed earnestly*, as A. V., and others) that it might not rain (this fact is not even hinted at in the Old Test. history in 1 Kings xvii. ff.; nor the following one, that he prayed for rain at the end of the drought: though this latter may perhaps be implied in 1 Kings xviii. 42 ff.), and it rained not on the earth for three years and six months (so also Luke iv. 25: and in a Rabbinical work this, "In the thir-

teenth year of Ahab, a famine prevailed in Samaria for three years and a half." There is no real discrepancy here, as has been often assumed, with the account in 1 Kings: for as Benson has rightly observed, the words "*in the third year*" of 1 Kings xviii. 1 by no necessity refer to the duration of the famine, but most naturally date back to the removal of Elijah to Zarephath, xvii. 8 ff.; compare the same "many days" in ver. 15, where indeed a variation is "for a full year"): and again he prayed (see above), and the heavens gave rain and the earth brought forth her fruit (which she is accustomed to bear).

<sup>19, 20.</sup> *The importance and blessing of reclaiming an erring brother.* This is very nearly connected with the foregoing; the duty of mutual advice and correction, with that of mutual confession and prayer.

<sup>19.</sup> Brethren, if any among you be seduced (literally passive; and there is no reason why the passive signification should not be kept, especially when we remember our Lord's warning, "*Take heed that no man deceive, seduce you*") from the truth (not merely truth practical, of moral conduct, but that truth which is the subject of the word whereby our regeneration took place, ch. i. 18; the doctrine of Christ, spiritual and practical), and one convert him (turn him back to the truth); know (or, *let him know*, viz. the converted man—for his comfort, and for the encouragement of others to do the like by this proclamation of the fact), that he who converteth (not, '*has converted.*' our English present, when connected with a future, exactly gives the meaning) a sinner from the error of his way (thus is the person converted more generally expressed than before; not only



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>d</sup> shall save a soul from death, and  
<sup>e</sup> shall cover a multitude of sins.

<sup>d</sup> Ro. vi. xi. 11.  
 1 Cor. ix. 27.  
 1 Tim. iv. 10.  
<sup>e</sup> Prov. x. 12.  
 1 Pet. iv. 8.

*him that has been seduced, but any sinner) shall save a soul from death* (in eternity: the future shews that the *salvation* spoken of is not contemporary with the *conversion*, but its ultimate result), *and shall cover a multitude of sins* (viz. by introducing the convert into that state of Christian faith, wherein all sins past, present, and future, are forgiven and done away. See 1 Pet. iv. 8, and for the expression, Ps. xxxi. 1; Neh. iv. 5. The word *sins*, following *sinners*, necessarily binds the reference to the converted, not the converters. It is

not "*his sins*" [the ancient Syriac version so renders it], because the Apostle wishes to put in its most striking *abstract* light the good deed thus done. The objection that thus we should have a tautology,—the saving of the soul of the converted man, including the covering of his sins, is entirely obviated by this latter consideration. The idea that they are the sins of the converter is thus as abhorrent from the context, as it is generally repugnant to apostolic teaching. Compare, on the whole, 1 Pet. iv. 8).

# THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

**I.** <sup>1</sup> PETER, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the <sup>a</sup> elect strangers of the <sup>b</sup> dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, <sup>2</sup> <sup>c</sup> according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, <sup>d</sup> in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and <sup>e</sup> sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: <sup>f</sup> Grace

a Eph. i. 4.  
ch. ii. 9.  
b John vii. 35.  
Acts ii. 5, 9,  
10. James i. 1.  
c Rom. viii. 20.  
& xi. 2.  
d 2 Thess. ii. 13.  
e Heb. x. 22. &  
xii. 24.  
f Rom. i. 7.  
2 Pet. i. 2.  
Jude 2.

*I.* <sup>1</sup> PETER, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, <sup>2</sup> elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:

CH. I. 1, 2.] ADDRESS AND GREETING: corresponding generally with those of St. Paul's Epistles, designating however himself more briefly, and his readers more at length. Peter (the Greek form of the name Cephas, a stone, given him by our Lord, see John i. 43: in 2 Pet. i. 1 it is 'Symeon Peter'), an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect strangers (see Heb. xi. 13. elect, chosen of God to His adopted family in Christ) of the dispersion (i. e. belonging to the Jewish dispersion. This leading character of the readers of 1 Peter has been acknowledged generally: see testimonies in Introduction. At the same time, as there argued, there is no reason to exclude Gentile Christians from among them, as forming part of the Israel of God. Indeed, such readers are presupposed in the Epistle itself: compare ver. 14, ch. ii. 10, iv. 3) of Pontus (see Acts ii. 9, note), Galatia (see Intro. to Gal. § ii.), Cappadocia (Acts, as above), Asia (not quite as in Acts ii. 9, xvi. 6, where Phrygia is distinguished from it: here it must be included), and Bithynia (Acts xvi. 7, note: and on the whole geographical extent embraced by the terms, and inferences to be gathered from their order of sequence, see Introduction), according to foreknowledge (this signifies not merely

knowledge of their faith beforehand, as some interpret it, but counsel or fore-ordaining. "God causes election, and does not discover it only." See on ver. 20, where the signification 'fore-decreed' is necessary to the context) of God the Father (thus indicated, as leading on to the great mystery of the Holy Trinity in the work of our salvation) in (not 'through,' as A. V.: 'through' would betoken the origin, and enduring pattern after which,—'unto,' the conditional and abiding element in which, and in signifies the result for which) sanctification of the Spirit (gen. subjective, or rather efficient, the Spirit being the worker of the sanctification), unto (result as regards us—the fruit which we are to bring forth, and the state into which we are to be brought) obedience (absolutely, Christian obedience, the obedience of faith, as in ver 14) and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ (i. e. admission into and standing in that covenant, whose atoning medium is Christ's blood,— and mode of application, the sprinkling of that blood on the heart by faith. The allusion is to Exod. xxiv. 8, where the covenant was inaugurated by sprinkling the blood on the people. This was the only occasion on which the blood was thus sprinkled on persons: for on the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. <sup>g</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>h</sup> unto an inheritance incorrup-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

unto you, and peace, be multiplied. <sup>g</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which <sup>h</sup> according to his abundant mercy <sup>i</sup> begat us again unto a living hope <sup>k</sup> through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>l</sup> unto an inheritance incorruptible, <sup>1</sup> and unde-

great day of atonement, only the sacred vessels were thus sprinkled. So also in Heb. ix. 13. But we need not confine the virtue of the sprinkling to *admission* into the covenant. Doubtless its *purifying power*, especially as connected with *obedience*, is also in the mind of the Apostle. The Death of Christ is not only, as *looking back on the past*, a propitiation for sin, thereby removing the obstacle which stood in the way of God's gracious purpose towards man,—but also, *looking forward to the future*, a capacitating of us for the participation in God's salvation: just as Israel, sin having been atoned for by the sacrifice itself, was admitted into the actual state of reconciliation by the sprinkling on them of the sacrificial blood. "By this description of the readers, an anticipation is given of the whole train of thought in the Epistle: the aim of which is to impress the blessed certainty of salvation, and with that, the obligations incurred by receiving God's gift," Harless); **grace and peace be multiplied unto you** (so, but more fully, in reff. 2 Pet.; Jude I. "Peace is distinguished from grace, as a fruit, or effect, from its cause," Gerhard. "May your peace be multiplied" is quoted as a rabbinical salutation).

3—12.] The Apostle *begins*, much after the manner of St. Paul in the opening of his Epistles, *with giving thanks to God for the greatness of the blessings of salvation*; thus paving the way for the exhortations which are to follow. And herein, he directs his readers to look, first, *forward into the future* [vv. 3—9]; then *backward into the past* [vv. 10—12].

3—5.] *Thanksgiving for the living hope into which the Christian has been begotten.*

3.] Blessed be (this particular word, which is not the same as that so rendered in Matt. xxi. 9 and parallels; xxiii. 39; xxv. 36; Luke i. 28, &c., is used in the New Test. of God only: and so almost always in the Old Test.) **the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ** (so verbatim Eph. i. 3, where

see note), **who according to his much mercy** (compare "*being rich in mercy*," Eph. ii. 4) **begat us again** (as in ver. 23 and elsewhere in the New Test., where the idea, though not the word occurs,—spoken of the new birth from the state of nature to the state of grace, the work of God the Spirit [ver. 2], by means of the word [ver. 23], in virtue of Christ's propitiatory sacrifice and of union with Him [vv. 2, 18: ch. ii. 24, iii. 18]) **unto** (either unto as aim and end, being equivalent to "that we might have," or *local*, unto, into; "so that we have." The latter is here preferable, seeing that hope is not the aim, but the condition, of the Christian life) **a living hope** (*living*, as connected with *begetting again*; it is a life of hope, a life in which hope is the energizing principle. This is better than to understand it as contrasting our hope with that of the hypocrite, which shall perish: as Leighton, in some of his most beautiful language. **Hope** is not to be understood of the *object of hope*, but of hope properly so called, subjectively. This hope of the Christian "has life in itself, gives life, and looks for life as its object," De Wette) **through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead** (to what does this through refer? Ecumenius says, "Whence hath it life? From Jesus Christ, who arose from the dead." Similarly Luther, Bengel, &c. But, while we retain distinctly the connexion of our *living hope* with the *life* of Him on whom it depends, it is much more natural to join this instrumental clause with the verb **begat**, as bringing in with it the whole clause, us to a **living hope**, by which it is defined. The resurrection of Christ, bringing in life and the gift of the life-giving Spirit, is that which potentiates the new birth into a living hope), **4.] unto** (this unto, as the former one, depends on **begat us again**, and is co-ordinate to the other. It introduces the objective end to which our hope is directed. "During our pilgrimage, we have a living hope: when it is finished,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

filed, and that fadeth not away,  
<sup>m</sup> reserved in heaven for you, <sup>5 n</sup> who  
 are kept in the power of God through  
 faith unto salvation ready to be re-

m Col. i. 5.  
 n Tim. iv. 8.  
 o John x. 28,  
 29. & xvii. 11,  
 12, 15. Jude  
 1.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

tible, and undefiled, and  
 that fadeth not away, re-  
 served in heaven for you,  
<sup>5</sup> who are kept by the  
 power of God through faith  
 unto salvation ready to be

that hope becomes the inheritance of the promise." Steinmeyer) an inheritance ("by inheritance [cf. ch. iii. 7, 9] is imported the whole fulness of blessings not seen, of which the Christian as a child of God [ver. 3] has expectation, see Gal. iv. 7. This inheritance is more closely defined, as *salvation* [vv. 5, 9], as *grace, grace of life* [ver. 13, ch. iii. 7], as *glory* [ch. v. 1], as *an unfading crown of glory* [ch. v. 4], or *the eternal glory of God* [ch. v. 10]. The simplest expression for that, which the Apostle calls *inheritance*, is on the one side the *grace of life* with its *glory*, on the other the *salvation of souls*. This inheritance is the full possession of that, which was promised to Abraham and all believers [Gen. xii. 3, see Gal. iii. 6 ff.], an inheritance, as much higher than that which fell to the children of Israel in the possession of Canaan, as the sonship of the regenerate, who have already received the *promise of the Spirit through faith* as a pledge of their inheritance, is higher than the sonship of Israel: compare Gal. iii. 18, 29; 1 Cor. vi. 9; Eph. v. 5; Heb. ix. 15." Wiesinger) *incorruptible* (not liable to decay. "We are here perishing among perishing things: the things are passing which we enjoy, and we are passing who enjoy them. . . . When death comes, that removes a man out of all his possessions to give place to another: therefore are these inheritances decaying and dying in relation to us, because we decay and die: and when a man dies, his inheritances, and honours, and all things here, are at an end in respect of him: yea we may say the world ends to him." Leighton), *undefiled* (Leighton quotes from Jerome, "The rich are either unrighteous, or the heirs of the unrighteous." "All possessions here are defiled and stained with many defects and failings: still somewhat wanting, some damp on them, or crack in them: fair houses, but sad cares flying about the gilded and ceiled roofs: stately and soft beds and a full table, but a sickly body and queasy stomach. . . . All possessions are stained with sin, either in acquiring or using them, and therefore they are called mammon of unrighteousness, Luke xvi. 9"), and *unfading* (in its beauty; which

in all earthly things is passing and soon withered: see ver. 24. So that our inheritance is glorious in these three respects: it is in *substance*, incorruptible: in *purity*, undefiled: in *beauty*, unfading. Bengel has remarked that St. Peter loves accumulated synonyms: vv. 7, 8, 19: ch. v. 10), *reserved* (laid up, Col. i. 5) *in the heavens* ("that we may be sure it is *safe*," Calvin: also reflecting back on the epithets above, because all that is *there* is incorruptible and undefiled and unfading. The Greek interpreters make these words an argument against the millenarians: so Eumenius, "If the inheritance is in the heavens, the millenarian restitution is fabulous") *for* (with a view to) *you* (turning again to his readers from the general statement of ver. 3), *5.] who are being guarded* ("what avails it that salvation is laid up for us in heaven, if we are tossed about in the world as in a turbulent sea? What avails it that our salvation is kept in a tranquil harbour, if we are drifting among a thousand shipwrecks? The Apostle thus anticipates objections of this kind." Calvin. "The inheritance is reserved: the heirs are guarded: neither shall it fail them, nor they it." Bengel. "The word *kept* here is a military term. The saints when in danger, may know that as many as their perils, so many are their guards provided by God: thousands of thousands keep watch over them." Aretius) *in* (in, of the power in which, and by virtue of which, the *guard* is effectual: not, as some interpret, *in*, as in a fortress) *the power of God by* (the power of God was the efficient cause: now we come to the effective means) *faith* ("the causes of our preservation are two; 1. Supreme, the power of God; 2. Subordinate, faith. . . . Our faith lays hold upon this power, and this power strengthens faith, and so we are preserved." Leighton) *unto* (the end and limit of the *keeping*: compare the very similar expression in Gal. iii. 23, *we were kept in ward, shut up unto the faith about to be revealed*) *salvation* (*salvation*, though in itself a merely negative idea, involves in itself, and came to mean in the New Test., the positive setting in bliss of

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

revealed in the last time.  
<sup>6</sup> Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: <sup>7</sup> that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

vealed in the last time. <sup>6</sup> In which time ye greatly rejoice, though now <sup>p</sup> for a season, if need be, <sup>q</sup> ye have been afflicted in manifold temptations: <sup>7</sup> that <sup>r</sup> the proof of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perisheth, yet <sup>s</sup> is tried with fire, <sup>t</sup> may be found unto praise and glory

1 Cor. iii. 13.

t Rom. ii. 7, 10. 1 Cor. iv. 5. Thess. i. 7-12.

o Matt. v. 12.  
 Rom. xii. 12.  
 2 Cor. vi. 10.  
 ch. iv. 13.  
 p 2 Cor. iv. 17.  
 ch. v. 10.  
 b James i. 2.  
 r James i. 5.  
 12. ch. iv. 12.  
 s Job xxiii. 10.  
 Ps. lxxvi. 10.  
 Prov. xvii. 3.  
 Isa. xlviii. 10.  
 Zech. xiii. 9.  
 Thess. i. 7-12.

the people of God: see ver. 9; James i. 21, &c.) ready to be (stronger than *about to be*, Gal. iii. 23; Rom. viii. 18, ch. v. 1) revealed (see the two last cited places. The stress is, as Wiesinger well remarks, not the nearness of the *revelation*, but the fact of the salvation being *ready* to be revealed: not yet to be brought in and accomplished, but already complete, and only waiting God's time to be manifested) in the last time (not, as Bengel, last, as compared to the times of the Old Test., but absolutely, as in the expression, "*the last day*." It is otherwise in Jude 18, which see).

6-9.] *Joy of the Christian at the realization of this end of his faith.*

6.] It has been much disputed whether this verse (as also ver. 8, see there) is to be taken of *present* joy, or of *future*. In the latter case the present verb in both places must be a categorical present, used of a future. And this sense seems to be sanctioned by ver. 8, in which he could hardly predicate of his readers, that they at the present time rejoiced *with joy unspeakable and already glorified*. To avoid this, those who suppose the whole to allude to the time present, and the realization of future bliss by faith, imagine the present verb, "*ye rejoice*," to have a slight hortatory force, reminding them of their duty in the matter. This however again will hardly suit the very strong qualifying terms above quoted from ver. 8. On the whole, after consideration, I prefer the former interpretation, and the as-if-future sense of the verb "*rejoice*" in both places.

In which (i. e. in the last time: the *in* is temporal, bearing the same sense in the resumption, as it did at the end of ver. 5, from which it is resumed. Such is our Apostle's manner, to resume, in proceeding further, the thing or person just mentioned, in the same sense as before: compare vv. 5, 8, 10) *ye rejoice* (the verb is a

strong word, implying the external expression and exuberant triumph of joy: *ye exult*), for a little time (as in ch. v. 10) at present (this would, on the hypothesis of *ye rejoice* being a proper present, be superfluous) if it must be so (if it be God's will that it should be so: if is hypothetical, not affirmative. As Œcumenius says, "for all the saints are not in affliction") having been afflicted (this past participle, more than any thing, favours the as-if-future acceptance of the verb, "*ye rejoice*:" looking back from the time of which exultation, the grief is regarded as passed away and gone. It carries with it, as indeed it is rendered in A. V., a slightly adverbative sense,—“though ye were troubled,” “troubled as ye were,” or the like) in (not *through*, but the element and material of the affliction) manifold temptations (temptations, as in James i. 2, 12, trials, arising from whatever cause; here, mainly from persecution; see ch. iv. 12 ff., on the "*fiery infliction which comes for your trial*." manifold: see James i. 2):

7.] that (end and aim of these temptations) the proof (see on James) of your faith (equivalent to the fact of your faith being proved, and so, by an easy transition, the result of that proof, the purified and proved faith itself), more precious than gold which perisheth (more precious is in apposition with proof above. No supply before '*gold*,' such as '*of*,' as in A. V., or '*that of*,' is legitimate. It is not '*the proof*' which is precious, though the literal construction at first sight seems to be this, but the faith itself: see above), yet is (usually, habitually) proved by fire (the yet in this clause brings out this, that gold though perishable yet needs fire to try it—the inference lying in the background, how much more does your faith, which is being proved for eternity, not for mere temporary use, need a fiery trial?), may be found (finally and once for all, as the



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ: <sup>8</sup> u whom having not seen, ye love; <sup>x</sup> in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and [already] glorified: <sup>9</sup> receiving <sup>y</sup> the end of your faith, even the salvation of souls. <sup>10</sup> z Concerning which salvation prophets enquired and searched diligently, even they who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: <sup>8</sup> whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: <sup>9</sup> receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. <sup>10</sup> Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

u 1 John iv. 20.  
x John xx. 20.  
2 Cor. v. 7.  
Heb. xi. 1, 27.  
y Rom. vi. 22.  
z Gen. xlix. 10.  
Dan. ii. 44.  
Hag. ii. 7.  
Zech. vi. 12.  
Matt. xiii. 17.  
Luke x. 24.  
2 Pet. i. 19,  
20, 21.

result of the judicial trial at that day) unto (having as its result) praise and glory and honour (*whose?* Here the matter treated of is the praise of the elect themselves. Some have pressed the meanings of the separate words: the praise being from the Judge, His "Well done, good servant?" glory, admission into His glory, ch. v. 1, 10: the honour, the dignity and personal honour thence accruing, ch. iii. 7. But perhaps, as in Rom. ii. 7, we should rather regard them here as cumulative) in (so literally: i. e. 'at the day of: the element, in time, in which it shall be manifested) the revelation of Jesus Christ (i. e. His return, who is now withdrawn from our sight, but shall then appear again: and with His revelation shall come also the revelation of the sons of God, Rom. viii. 19; 1 John iii. 2):

8.] whom (it is in the manner of our Apostle to take up anew and with a fresh line of thought, a person or thing just mentioned: see above on ver. 6) having not seen ye love (now, at this present time): in whom though now ye see Him not, yet believing (with this word the present condition of believers ends, and with the next the then state again begins), ye [then] rejoice (present categoric, as before: in whom must be taken with believing, not with ye rejoice. The A. V. is ambiguous, it being undetermined to which of the two, "rejoicing" or "believe," in whom belongs) with joy unspeakable (ineffable, which cannot be spoken out, Rom. viii. 26) and [already] glorified (this word is the strongest testimony for the as-if-future sense which we have adopted and maintained for ye rejoice, both times. It fixes the reference of the verb to that time when hope shall have passed into enjoyment, and joy shall be

crowned with glory. The meaning on the other interpretation is obliged to be weakened down to "joy bearing in itself glory," i. e. the high consciousness of glory. The A. V. "full of glory," is quite beside the meaning. It is no quality of the joy which is asserted, but a fact which has happened to it), receiving (the word here, as in other places where it occurs (see 2 Cor. v. 10; Eph. vi. 8; Col. iii. 25; ch. v. 4; 2 Pet. ii. 13), quite forbids the sense of "present realizing:" it betokens the ultimate reception of glory or condemnation from the Lord. Here it is 'receiving [present], as you then, in a blessed eternity, will be receiving') the end of your faith (that, to which your faith ultimately looked forward: see Rom. vi. 21, 22), salvation of (your) souls (the great inclusive description of future blessedness: the soul being the central personality of the man).

10-12.] The weightiness of this salvation, as having been the object of earnest enquiry of prophets, by whom it was announced, and even of angels. 10.] Concerning which salvation (its time especially, as explained below, but its manner and issue also) sought earnestly and examined earnestly (so literally) prophets (not the prophets; the terms, prophets and angels, are both times generic, to exalt the greatness of the salvation. What follows limits the assertion, and defines the prophets intended. So Bengel: "The omission of the article here gives sublimity to the discourse, for it draws off the reader from the limited consideration of individuals to regard the genus to which they belonged: so in ver. 12, angels"), they who prophesied concerning the grace that was [destined] for you (in matter of fact, in God's purposes it was you, for whom the salvation was destined, though you as in-

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

<sup>11</sup> *searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.*  
<sup>12</sup> *Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto them-*

AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>11</sup> searching to what, or what manner of season <sup>a</sup> the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point, when it testified beforehand <sup>b</sup> the sufferings regarding Christ, and the glories that should follow them.  
<sup>12</sup> <sup>c</sup> Unto whom it was revealed,

<sup>a</sup> ch. iii. 10.  
<sup>2</sup> Pet. i. 21.  
<sup>b</sup> Ps. xxvii. 6.  
 Isa. liii. 3.  
 &c. Dan. ix. 26.  
 Luke xxiv. 26, 28, 44, 46. John xii. 41. Acts xxvi. 22, 23.  
<sup>c</sup> Dan. ix. 24. & xii. 9, 13.

dividuals were not in *their* view) : **searching** (the participle takes up again the two verbs, with a view to mark more definitely the object of their search, now about to be described) **at** (towards, with reference to) **what or what sort of** (what, as identifying, **what sort of**, as describing. "The former means, the very date itself: the latter, the kind of period, to be known by various events." Bengel) **season was declaring** (signifying, revealing) **the Spirit of Christ which was in them** (the Spirit of Christ, i. e. Christ's Spirit: the Spirit which Christ has and gives, being He who reveals all things relating to Christ and the purposes of the Father: see Matt. xi. 27; John xvi. 14, 15, which passages, though in their normal sense they apply to New Test. revelations, yet in their declarative and abstract truth regard the Spirit's office in all ages. See also Acts xvi. 7) **testifying beforehand the sufferings regarding** (spoken of with reference to; or, as before, 'destined for') **Christ** (it is disputed, whether this be meant of Christ individually, or of Christ mystically, including His Church. Our answer may be thus given. The expression is not indeed strictly parallel with that in Col. i. 24: see note there: but still the two are so far analogous that they may throw light one on the other. In both, as in ch. ii. 21, iii. 18, iv. 1, 13, v. 1, and in many other places where Christ's sufferings are spoken of, **Christ** is used without *Jesus*, not thereby precluding the personal designation of our Lord, but still carrying into prominence the official and mediatorial: and on this latter account, if the context seem to require it, including also the wider mystical sense in which Christ's sufferings are those of the whole aggregate of His spiritual body. The question for us then is, Does the context here require this latter extended meaning? And to this we must answer decidedly in the negative. The "things which have been now reported unto you by them that preached the gospel unto you," are the contents of the gospel history, the sufferings and triumphs of

Christ. And it was of these as appointed for Him as means of bringing in the grace which was appointed for you, that the prophets testified beforehand, and the glories after these [sufferings] (on these *glories*, see ch. iii. 18, 22, ver. 1. "The glory of the Resurrection: the glory of the Ascension: the glory of the last judgment and heavenly kingdom." Bengel. If it be asked what prophets are meant, we may reply, the prophets generally. Of one of them, who did prophesy of the sufferings of Christ, and the glories after them, viz. Daniel, we have it related, that he "understood by books the number of the years" destined for the desolations of Jerusalem. And our Lord declared that many prophets and kings desired to see the things which his disciples saw, and saw them not): **to whom** (taking up again *the prophets* . .) **it was revealed** (how are these words to be taken? Does it was revealed (1) correspond to "*searching, &c.*," so as to signify that the revelation was the result of their search, or the answer to it? The difficulty in such a rendering would be, that in one instance only would this be true, viz. that of Daniel; and even in that, not strictly correspondent: whereas it is here predicated of the prophets generally. Most certainly it cannot be in any sense said of them, that the exact time of the fulfilment of their prophecies was revealed to them. Or does it (2) signify that just so much was revealed to them, as that their prophecies were not to be fulfilled in their own time, but in ours? This again would be objectionable, seeing *a*) that there would be nothing corresponding to it in prophetic history, with the sole exception of Daniel, as before: *b*) that it would rather indicate a stop and discouragement of their search, than its legitimate result. Add to this, that the cases in which St. Peter himself, in the Acts, cites the prophecies, shew how he intended this term "*it was revealed*" to be taken. E. g. he quotes Joel, Acts ii. 17, speaking of the things prophesied by him as to take place "*in the last days*:" he says of David, ver. 31, "*Seeing before, he*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

d Heb. xi. 13, 30, 40. that <sup>d</sup> not unto themselves, but unto you they did minister the things, which have now been reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with <sup>e</sup> the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven;

e Acts ii. 4. <sup>f</sup> which things angels desire to look into. <sup>13</sup> Wherefore <sup>g</sup> gird up the loins of your mind, <sup>h</sup> being sober: hope perfectly for the grace that is being brought unto you <sup>i</sup> in the revelation

f Exod. xxv. 20. Dan. viii. 13. & xii. 5, 6. Eph. iii. 10. g Luke xii. 35. Eph. vi. 14. h Luke xxi. 34. Rom. xiii. 13. i Thess. v. 6. 8. ch. iv. 7. & v. 8. i Luke xvii. 30. 1 Cor. i. 7. 2 Thess. i. 7.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*selves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look to.* <sup>13</sup> *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus*

*spoke concerning the Resurrection:*" and in iii. 24, he says, "*Moreover all the prophets from Samuel and those after, as many as spoke, proclaimed also these days.*" From these examples it would appear, that "*it was revealed*" here is not said of any result or consequence of their search, but of the general revelation made to them: that it is co-ordinate with, not subordinate to searching, that (the content and purport of the revelation) **not to themselves but to you they were ministering** (i. e. by announcing, foretelling) the things (in their previous announcement and foreshadowing) **which now have been declared** (literally, "*were declared:*" now embracing the New Test. period: but we in English cannot join '*were*' with '*now*') **unto you by means of those who preached the gospel to you by (instrumental) the Holy Spirit sent** (historic tense, referring distinctly to the day of Pentecost) **from heaven** (herein consists the great difference between prophet and evangelist: the former was the organ of the Spirit of Christ which was in him, the latter preached by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. Still, both are one in design, and in the contents of their testimony. And both are here mentioned, to set before the readers their exceeding happiness, in being the favoured objects of the ministration of salvation by prophets and apostles alike), **which things** (viz. the things announced to you: not, as many, the future glories promised to us: see below) **angels** (generic, as "*prophets*" above: see there) **desire to look into** (literally, to stoop down and peer into. It embraces further still the excellence of the salvation revealed to us, that angels, for whom it is not designed as for us [Heb. ii. 16], long to pry into its mysteries. To the princi-

palities and powers in heavenly places is made known, by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God, Eph. iii. 10. Hofmann remarks,—“Angels have only the contrast between good and evil, without the power of conversion from sin to righteousness. Being then witnesses of such conversion to God, they long to penetrate the knowledge of the means by which it is brought about. . . . They themselves are placed outside the scheme of salvation: therefore it is said that they desire to look into the facts of the apostolic preaching”).

13—CHAP. II. 10.] *General exhortations founded on the blessedness of the Christian state.* 13.] **FIRST EXHORTATION**—to WATCHFULNESS and ENDURANCE OF HOPE. **Wherefore** (i. e. because these things are so precious and wonderful, not only to men, but also to angels) **gird up** (the tense in the original conveys the sense of completeness and once-for-all nature of the action) **the loins of your mind** (the exhortation seems to be taken from our Lord's command, Luke xii. 35, where, as here, the girding up is a preparation for the coming of the Lord. On the figure, see Eph. vi. 14 ff.), **being sober** (Calvin explains it well: “He recommends not only temperance in meat and drink, but, more than this, spiritual sobriety—the putting a rein on all our senses, that they become not intoxicated with the allurements of this world”), **hope perfectly** (i. e. “without doubt or dejection, with full devotion of soul:” or, even better, “so, that nothing be wanting.” The A. V., “*hope to the end,*” does not reach the full meaning) **for** (in the direction of) **the grace** (i. e. the great gift of grace, the crowning example of grace) **which is being brought** (A. V., “*is to be brought;*” not amiss, but not

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*Christ; <sup>14</sup> as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: <sup>15</sup> but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; <sup>16</sup> because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy. <sup>17</sup> And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

of Jesus Christ; <sup>14</sup> as children of obedience, <sup>k</sup> not conforming yourselves to the lusts which were formerly <sup>1</sup> in your ignorance; <sup>15</sup> <sup>m</sup> but rather after the pattern of that Holy One which called you, be ye yourselves also holy in all behaviour, <sup>16</sup> because it is written, †Ye shall <sup>n</sup> be holy, because I am holy. <sup>17</sup> And if ye call upon as your Father Him <sup>o</sup> who without respect of persons judgeth

<sup>k</sup> Rom. xii. 2.  
ch. iv. 2.

<sup>1</sup> Acts xvii. 30.  
<sup>1</sup> Thess. iv. 5.  
<sup>m</sup> Luke i. 74.  
75. 2 Cor.  
vii. 1.  
<sup>1</sup> Thess. iv.  
3, 4, 7. Heb.  
xii. 14.  
<sup>2</sup> Pet. iii. 11.

† So all our  
oldest MSS.  
<sup>n</sup> Lev. xi. 44. &  
xix. 2. & xx.  
7.  
<sup>o</sup> Deut. x. 17.  
Acts x. 34.  
Rom. ii. 11.

giving, what the present participate in the original expresses, the near impending of the event spoken of: 'which is even now bearing down on you') unto you in the revelation of Jesus Christ (the meaning of St. Peter's own words, identical with these, as applied to the revelation of the Lord at His second advent, ver. 7, seems to fix the meaning of the above words as here given, and to preclude the rendering of those who take the whole as referring to the present revelation of grace made by the Gospel, in which Jesus Christ is revealed).

14—21.] SECOND EXHORTATION—TO OBEDIENCE, AND HOLINESS, AND REVERENCE. This exhortation is intimately connected with the former; but not therefore to be regarded as one and the same. Each of these is evolved regularly out of the last [see again ver. 22], but each is an advance onward through the cycle of Christian graces and dispositions. 14.]

As children of obedience (compare "children of wrath," Eph. ii. 3; "children of light," ib. v. 8; and esp. "the sons of disobedience," ib. v. 6; "children of the curse," 2 Pet. ii. 14. This mode of expression must be referred to the more vivid way of regarding things prevalent among the Orientals, which treats intimate connexion, derivation, and dependence, even in spiritual matters, as the relation of a child or a son. 'Children of disobedience' are accordingly those who belong to 'disobedience' as a child to its mother, to whom disobedience is become a nature, a ruling disposition. Hence the student may learn to rise above all such silly and shallow interpretations as that "children of obedience" is a Hebraism for "obedient children;"—so A. V. The depths of the sacred tongue were given us to descend into, not to bridge over), not conforming yourselves (the

A. V., well, "not fashioning yourselves according to;" but it would have been better to keep the same English for the word as is given in Rom. xii. 2, the only other place where it occurs) to your lusts (which were) formerly in your ignorance (i.e. ignorance of things divine, even to the extent of heathenish alienation from God, which latter is most probably here pointed at. See Rom. i. 18 ff. This ignorance marks not only the period, but also the ground and element of these lusts prevailing in fashioning the life); nay rather (the word is stronger than merely 'but') after the pattern of (still carrying on the idea of conformity) that Holy One (the A. V. has given a mistaken and ungrammatical rendering of this clause) who called you, be ye yourselves also (the tense in the original sets forth the completeness with which this holiness is to be put on) holy in all (manner of, every instance of) behaviour (conversation, in the old sense of turning and walking about in life), 16.] because it is written (because gives the reason not only for the designation of God as the Holy One, but for the whole exhortation which precedes—for the duty of assimilation to Him in His Holiness), Ye shall be holy, because I am holy (see Matt. v. 48; Eph. v. 1; 1 John iii. 3).

17.] Further exhortation, in consideration of our close relation of children to God our Judge, to reverence and godly fear. And if (this if, as in Col. iii. 1, introduces an hypothesis with an understood background of fact: *Ii* [as is the case] . . .) ye call upon as father (not, as A. V., 'the Father') Him who judgeth impartially (see Acts x. 34; James ii. 1: there is not even an apparent inconsistency with the declaration that the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judg-



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

p 2 Cor. vii. 1. according to every man's work, <sup>p</sup> pass  
 Phil. ii. 12. the time of your <sup>q</sup> sojourning in fear :  
 Heb. xii. 28. <sup>q</sup> 2 Cor. v. 6. <sup>18</sup> knowing that not with corruptible  
 Heb. xi. 13. things, silver or gold, <sup>r</sup> were ye  
 ch. ii. 11. redeemed from your vain behaviour  
 r 1 Cor. vi. 20. <sup>s</sup> received by tradition from your  
 & vii. 23. fathers; <sup>19</sup> but <sup>t</sup> with precious blood  
 s Ezek. xx. 18. <sup>u</sup> as of a lamb without blemish and  
 ch. iv. 3. without spot, even the blood of  
 t Acts xx. 28. Christ, <sup>20</sup> <sup>x</sup> who verily hath been  
 Eph. i. 7. <sup>u</sup> as of a lamb without blemish and  
 Heb. ix. 12, without spot, even the blood of  
 14. Rev. v. 9. Christ, <sup>20</sup> <sup>x</sup> who verily hath been  
 u Exod. xii. 5. <sup>x</sup> Rom. iii. 25.  
 Isa. liii. 7. & xvi. 25, 26. Eph. iii. 9, 11. Col. i. 26. 2 Tim. i. 9, 10. Tit. i. 2, 3. Rev. xiii. 8.

*man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: <sup>18</sup> forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: <sup>20</sup> who verily was*

ment unto the Son, John v. 22: for this last fact of itself implies that the Father is the Judge, the fountain of judgment: as Didymus says here, "When the Son judgeth, it is the Father who judgeth") according to the work of each man (on the work Bengel strikingly remarks, "Of every one man there shall be but one work, good, or bad." See James i. 4; Gal. vi. 4. every man's, be he Jew or Gentile, high or low, rich or poor: thus by setting God's just judgment above all alike, His Majesty, as inculcating godly fear, is enhanced), behave (see on *behaviour* above) during the time of your sojourning (see note, Heb. xi. 9. The Christian, who calls God his Father, is in exile, tarrying in a strange country, while here on earth) in fear (how, it is asked, is this, seeing that "there is no fear in love: for perfect love casteth out fear: because feath hath torment" [1 John iv. 18]? Ecumenius answers, that the fear here recommended is not the *corrective* fear, leading to repentance, but the *perfected* fear, which accompanies the Christian through his whole course. And Leighton beautifully says, "This fear is not cowardice: it doth not debase, but elevates the mind: for it drowns all lower fears, and begets true fortitude and courage to encounter all dangers for the sake of a good conscience and the obeying of God. The righteous is as bold as a lion, Prov. xxviii. 1. He dares do any thing, but offend God: and to dare to do that, is the greatest folly, and weakness, and baseness, in the world. From this fear have sprung all the generous resolutions, and patient sufferings of the saints and martyrs of God: because they durst not sin against Him, therefore they durst be imprisoned, and impoverished, and tortured,

and die, for Him. Thus the prophet sets carnal and godly fear as opposite, and the one expelling the other, Isa. viii. 12, 13. And our Saviour, Luke xii. 4, 'Fear not them which kill the body, but fear Him, &c.' Fear not, but fear: and therefore fear, that you may not fear"): **18.] knowing** (being aware: this argument enhances the duty of godly fear by the consideration of the inestimable price at which they were redeemed. This consideration is urged through vv. 18—21) **that not** (emphatic) **with corruptible things, silver or gold, were ye redeemed** (bought out of, by the payment of a ransom, presently to be specified: see 1 Cor. vi. 20; vii. 23; Gal. iii. 13) **out of your vain behaviour** (way of life, which, when past, left no fruit behind it) **delivered to you from your fathers** ("One Father alone is to be imitated," says Bengel; "we find the same contrast in Matt. xxiii. 9.") This again makes it probable that the persons here more especially addressed are Gentile Christians. The Apostle himself, a Jew, would hardly speak of the vain ungodly lives of Jews as delivered to them from their fathers, without more explanation), **but with precious blood, as of a lamb blameless and spotless** (see Exod. xii. 5; Levit. xxii. 20), **[even the blood] of Christ** (the other construction, adopted by the A. V., and many Commentators,—"*but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb, &c.*" is legitimate; but I prefer the above, as bringing forward the precious blood in contrast to the corruptible things, and then explaining the word precious by a climax, finding its highest point in even of Christ. The question, with what particular lamb Christ is here compared, will be found discussed in the main on John i. 29. Our reply here



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, <sup>21</sup> who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. <sup>22</sup> Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifested <sup>y</sup> at the end of the times for you <sup>21</sup> who are through him <sup>†</sup> believers in God, <sup>z</sup> that raised him up from the dead, and <sup>a</sup> gave him glory; so that your faith and hope are in God. <sup>22</sup> Seeing ye <sup>b</sup> have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the

<sup>y</sup> Gal. iv. 4.  
Eph. i. 10.  
Heb. i. 2. &  
ix. 70.

<sup>†</sup> So all our  
oldest MSS.

<sup>z</sup> Acts ii. 24.

<sup>a</sup> Matt. xxviii.  
18. Acts ii.  
33. & iii. 13.  
Eph. i. 20.  
Phil. ii. 9.  
Heb. ii. 9.  
ch. iii. 22.  
<sup>b</sup> Acts xv. 9.

however will be somewhat modified by the consideration, that the figure of buying out of the *vain way of life* seems to contain an allusion to the bringing up out of Egypt, and the word *foreordained*, which follows, to the taking up of the paschal lamb beforehand, Exod. xii. 3, 6. And thus I believe the reference here to be to the paschal lamb. "As Israel's redemption from Egypt required the blood of the paschal lamb, so the redemption of those brought out of heathendom required the blood of Christ, the predestination of whom from eternity is compared with the taking up of the lamb on the tenth day of the month." Hofmann.)

20.] The preciousness and completeness of this redemption is further enhanced by *God's foreordination* of it, and His *bringing it to glorious completion* in His due time. **Who (viz. Christ) hath been foreordained indeed** (see on ver. 2) **before the foundation of the world** (the same thought is foremost in the Apostle's speech in Acts ii. 23; iii. 18), **but manifested** (brought out of the *hiding-place* of God's purposes into the *open display* of Incarnation and historical world-fact. The same word occurs in ch. v. 4 of the yet future manifestation of Christ at His second coming) **at the end of the times** (compare Heb. i. 1, and note there. This *manifestation* of Christ marks *this* as the *end of the times*, and this last time shall only endure so long, as this *manifestation* requires) **for your sakes** (an additional and weighty intensification of their obligation) **who are through Him** (not only through His manifestation; but through Him personally, made to you all that He is made as the medium of your faith in God: the resurrection and glory being included) **believers in God** (a similar specification is found at ver. 4) **who raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory** ("that we are redeemed from our vain conversation, is

owing to the blood of Christ; but that we have faith and hope in God, is brought about by God having raised Christ from the dead, and given Him glory." Hofmann), so that your faith and hope are (not, as A. V., and others, "that your faith and hope *might be*;" but simply announcing a matter of fact. Your faith rests on Christ's resurrection—it was God who raised Him: your hope, on Christ's glorification: it is God who has given Him that glory. Closely accordant with this is St. Peter's first public speech in the Acts, ii. 22 ff., where all that has happened to Christ is referred to God as the doer of it) on (resting on and in) God.

22—25.] THIRD EXHORTATION, to LOVE OF ONE ANOTHER, from the consideration of their new birth by the word of God.

22.] Having purified (i. e. "seeing that ye have purified:" the *participle* of the original carries with it an inferential force as to the exhortation, and besides, assumes that as a fact, to which it covertly exhorts. It is *moral* purification that is spoken of) **your souls** (the souls, as the centres of personality, though here described as purified by the persons themselves, yet are not so, except by a process in which the whole person is employed,—the habit of obedience) **in** (the course of: the region, in which the purification takes place) **your obedience of the truth** ("the truth" is that of the Gospel of Christ in its largest sense; not merely as Calvin, "the rule which the Lord prescribes to us in the Gospel:" [and obedience of the truth is nearly equivalent to "*obedience of [the] faith*," Rom. i. 5 and elsewhere. Compare St. Peter's own saying, Acts xv. 9, "*purifying their hearts by the [or, their] faith*"), **unto** ("with a view to," *in the direction of*;) it might be with or without intention: the legitimate tendency of that purification, which ought to have been going on in your souls, was toward)

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

c Rom. xii. 9.  
 10. 1 Thess.  
 iv. 9. 1 Tim.  
 i. 5. Heb.  
 xiii. 1. ch. ii.  
 17. & iii. 8.  
 & iv. 8.  
 2 Pet. i. 7.  
 1 John iii. 18.  
 & iv. 7. 21.  
 † pure is  
 omitted by  
 our two oldest  
 MSS. See  
 1 Tim. ii. 5.  
 2 Tim. i. 22.  
 d John i. 13.  
 & iii. 5.  
 e James i. 18.  
 1 John iii. 9.  
 † for ever is  
 omitted in  
 all our oldest  
 MSS.  
 f Psa. ciii. 15.  
 Isa. xl. 6. &  
 li. 12.  
 James i. 10.  
 g Ps. cii. 12, 20.  
 Isa. xl. 8.  
 Luke xvi. 17.  
 h John i. 1, 14.  
 1 John i. 1, 3.  
 a Eph. iv. 22.  
 25, 31. Col.  
 iii. 8. Heb.  
 xii. 1. James i. 21. & v. 9. ch. iv. 2.

Spirit unto unfeigned <sup>c</sup> love of the  
 brethren, love one another from the  
 † heart earnestly: <sup>23</sup> <sup>d</sup> being born  
 again, not of corruptible seed, but of  
 incorruptible, <sup>e</sup> by the word of God,  
 which liveth and abideth †. <sup>24</sup> For  
 † all flesh is as grass, and all the  
 glory of man as the flower of grass.  
 The grass withered, and the flower  
 thereof fell away: <sup>25</sup> but <sup>g</sup> the word  
 of the Lord abideth for ever. <sup>h</sup> And  
 this is the word which by the gospel  
 was preached unto you.

II. <sup>1</sup> Wherefore having <sup>a</sup> laid

unto unfeigned love of the  
 brethren, see that ye love  
 one another with a pure  
 heart fervently: <sup>23</sup> being  
 born again, not of cor-  
 ruptible seed, but of in-  
 corruptible, by the word  
 of God, which liveth and  
 abideth for ever. <sup>24</sup> For  
 all flesh is as grass, and  
 all the glory of man as the  
 flower of grass. The grass  
 withereth, and the flower  
 thereof falleth away: <sup>25</sup> but  
 the word of the Lord en-  
 dureth for ever. And this  
 is the word which by the  
 gospel is preached unto you.

II. <sup>1</sup> Wherefore laying

unfeigned brotherly love (love of Christians  
 towards one another), love one another  
 from the heart earnestly (the heart is  
 the seat of the affections: let the love  
 come straight and pure from thence, not  
 short of it, from any secondary purpose as  
 its origin. Intently would exactly give the  
 sense of the adverb: with the energies on  
 the stretch):

23.] *Ground of the exhortation*, carried  
 up further than the act of *purifying* above,  
 to the state of the new life of which that  
 was an act; even to the beginning of that  
 new life in their regeneration by the divine  
 word. And the begetting cause of this  
 new birth being God's living and imper-  
 ishable word, from that fact come in  
 new considerations, enforcing that pure love  
 which belongs not to a transitory and  
 shifting, but to an eternal and abiding  
 state. **Being born again, not of** (out of,  
 as origin) **corruptible seed, but incor-**  
**ruptible, by means of** (not "out of," this  
 time. The word of God is not the be-  
 getting principle itself, but only that by  
 which the principle works: as it were the  
 grain which is the vehicle of the mys-  
 terious germinating power. We are not  
 regenerated *out of*, but *through*, or *by*  
*means of*, the word. But on the other  
 hand, the word itself is no mere perishing  
 vehicle; no mere sacramental symbol, lost  
 in the usiug; but it lives by and with  
 the divine principle of life which it conveys  
 and expands, and abides for ever. The  
*power of origination* rests in God Him-  
 self, the Father, who begat us of his own

will: the *means* of instrumentality move  
 on and abide (for ever) the word of God,  
 living and abiding (that the two partic-  
 iples belong to *the word*, not to *God*,  
 is decisively shewn by the sequel, where  
 the abiding nature, not of God, but of  
 the word of God, is set forth). 24.]

**Because** (Scripture proof that the word  
 of God lives and abides, while all human  
 instruments of birth, being flesh, pass  
 away) **all flesh is as** (*as* is not found in  
 the Old Test. text) **grass, and all glory of**  
**it** (whatever blooms up from the flesh, as  
 the flower from the grass) **as flower of**  
**grass. The grass was dried up** (the past  
 tense; the fact being related as in a tale;  
 so in James i. 11), **and the flower** [thereof]  
**fell away: but the word of the Lord** (in  
 the Septuagint version, as in the Hebrew,  
*of our God*: changed here probably on  
 account of the application which follows)  
**remaineth for ever. And** (literally, but:  
 it applies what has gone before: the con-  
 trast being between the general truth and  
 the particular identification) **this** (word  
 here spoken of) **is the word which was**  
**preached to you** (literally, which was  
 evangelized unto you; i.e. which was  
 preached to you in the declaration of the  
 Gospel. The logical inference to be  
 drawn is,—“and consequently the word  
 preached to you is imperishable and eter-  
 nal, and demands of you that you earnestly  
 and intently follow up that new life which  
 by it has been implanted in you.” Hence  
 the connexion of ch. ii. 1—3).

CHAP. II. 1—10.] *Exhortations to nou-*

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, <sup>2</sup> as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: <sup>3</sup> if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. <sup>4</sup> To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God,

aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, <sup>2 b</sup> as newborn babes, desire the spiritual guileless <sup>c</sup> milk, that ye may grow thereby: <sup>3</sup> if so be ye have <sup>d</sup> tasted that the Lord is good: <sup>4</sup> to whom coming, a living stone, rejected <sup>e</sup> indeed of men, but chosen of God, and had in honour,

b Matt. xviii. 3.  
Mark x. 15.  
Rom. vi. 4.  
1 Cor. xiv. 20.  
ch. i. 25.  
c 1 Cor. iii. 2.  
Heb. v. 12, 13.  
d Ps. xxxiv. 8.  
Heb. vi. 5.

e Ps. cxviii. 22.  
Matt. xxi. 42.  
Acts iv. 11.

rich and perfect this new life, under the image (a) of newborn babes (1—3), (b) of God's spiritual temple and priesthood (4—10). Having laid aside (once for all) therefore (on the connexion, see above) all (manner of) malice (premeditated desire of doing evil) and all guile (see ver. 22, ch. iii. 10, and John i. 48; and below) and hypocrisies (guile is the abiding disposition, hypocrisies are the acts of personation and deception which are some of its manifestations), and envies (again embraced under guile, but not perhaps so closely connected with it. The guileless disposition knows not envy), and all slanderings (2 Cor. xii. 20. Augustine says, "Malice is tormented with another's harm: envy is tormented with another's good: guile doubles the heart; flattery, the tongue: slander wounds the good fame"), 2.] as newborn babes (so the Rabbis called their converts and scholars), long after the spiritual (I thus render, for want of a better and more distinctive word. The original term is the same as that rendered *rational* (A. V. "*reasonable*") in Rom. xii. 1: and its intent is, to distinguish the *milk* spoken of from mere *fleshy milk*, and to shew that it is spoken figuratively and spiritually: that milk of the soul, not of the body,—milk that is imbibed by the mental faculties. Our English is too poor in psychological distinctions, to be able to express it by any appropriate adjective: "*reasonable*" is decidedly wrong, as A. V. in Rom.; and '*of the word*,' as A. V., here, after Beza, is just as bad) guileless (not, '*unadulterated*,' in contrast to less pure human teachings; but, in contrast to "*guile*" above, 'that is without guile,' has no by-ends, no one purpose but to nourish and benefit the soul) milk (not here in contrast, as in 1 Cor. iii. 2; Heb. v. 12, 13, to strong meat: but simply in reference

to its nourishing qualities), that on it ye may grow (properly passive: be nourished up) unto salvation (the growth is the measure of the fulness of that—not only rescue from destruction, but—positive blessedness, which is implied in *salvation*: see on the word above, ch. i. 5): 3.] if, that is (if so be expresses the same, viz. that the necessary condition of the above exhortation is assumed as having place in the readers), ye (have) tasted (the infant once put to the breast desires it again: the Apostle appeals to this their first taste as an incentive to subsequent ones) that (the formula is from the well-known and beautiful Ps. xxxiv.) the Lord (as Calvin observes, not simply *God* is here meant, but *God* as *He* is revealed to us in the person of Christ) is good (perhaps the simplest meaning, as applied to meats and drinks, is here intended. The Vulgate renders it *sweet*). 4, 5.] Exhortation to come to Christ the chosen stone, and be built up into a spiritual temple unto God. To whom (i. e. the Lord) approaching (*present*, representing the daily habit of the Christian life, not something to be done once for all. The word refers to the approach made by faith, when the Christian closely realizes the presence and seeks the communion of his Lord), a (or, *the*. Observe that this Apostle lays hold on the metaphor belonging to the very name which Christ gave to him, and teaches us all to become living stones after His example) stone (the allusion is to Ps. cxviii. 22; Isa. xxviii. 16. Observe that no "*as*" must be supplied, as is done in A. V.: Christ is the stone: we do not come to Him *as* we come to a stone) living (this points not only to the figure being realized in a higher department of being than its natural one, but also to the fact of the Lord being alive from the dead), by men indeed rejected, but in the sight

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

i Eph. ii. 21, 22. <sup>5</sup> be <sup>f</sup> ye also, as living stones, built up <sup>g</sup> a spiritual house, † for <sup>h</sup> an holy priesthood, to offer up <sup>i</sup> spiritual sacrifices <sup>k</sup> acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup> Because † it is contained in † Scripture, <sup>1</sup> Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, had in honour: and he that believeth on him shall not be ashamed. <sup>7</sup> Unto you therefore which believe is the honour: but unto them which be disobedient,

g Heb. iii. 6.

† So all our oldest MSS.

h Isa. lxi. 0.

&amp; lxxi. 21.

ver. 9.

i Hos. xiv. 2.

Mal. i. 11.

Rom. xii. 1.

Heb. xiii. 15,

16.

k Phil. iv. 18.

ch. iv. 11.

† So, omitting

also, all our

MSS.

† the is

omitted in

our oldest

MSS.

i Isa. xxviii. 16.

Rom. ix. 33.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION RESTON.

and precious, <sup>5</sup> ye also, as <sup>the</sup> lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup> Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. <sup>7</sup> Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the

of God (with God, God being judge) chosen (selected, chosen out), had in honour (see below, on ver. 6), be ye also as living (see above) stones built up (on the dispute whether the verb is indicative or imperative, see my Greek Test.) a spiritual house (equivalent to "temple," 1 Cor. iii. 16; Eph. ii. 21: as before, the stones are called *living*, and the house *spiritual*, not merely to signify that they are not dead stones, and the house not a material one, but on account of the life which Christians derive from Christ, the living Stone, and of the service which they render in virtue of being a body dwelt in by the Holy Spirit) for an holy priesthood (abstract, office of priesthood, including in itself the individual priests. Being God's spiritual temple, they form an holy priesthood to Him, approaching and serving before Him in virtue of that Living and Holy One, whose mystic Body they are, and in whom the Father is well pleased. And they need no other by whom to approach God: being all priests, they require not, nor admit of, any distinct body of men among themselves specially called priests, nearer to God than themselves. Nowhere is this more clearly declared by inference, than here) to offer up (no habitual offering, as in rite or festival, is meant, but the one, once-for-all devotion of the body, as in Rom. xii. 1, to God as His) spiritual sacrifices (compare especially Heb. xiii. 15, 16. Spiritual, because as the temple, as the priests, as the God, so the offering. It is this, rather than any distinction from the Old Test. sacrifices, that is pointed at) acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (these last words may be joined, either 1)

with "acceptable," or 2) with "to offer up." This latter has for it the analogy of Heb. xiii. 15, "By Him therefore let us offer, &c.," and is much to be preferred. The introduction of the words "through Jesus Christ" as a mere appendage of "acceptable" would not satisfy the weighty character of the words, nay, would seem to put them in the wrong place, seeing that not merely the acceptability, but the very existence, and possibility of offering of those sacrifices depends on the mediation of the great High Priest).

6.] *The exhortation of the previous verses is substantiated in its form and its assertions by Old Test. prophecy. Because* (i. e. the aforesaid is so, on the ground of Scripture) *it is contained in Scripture, Behold, I place in Zion a chief corner stone, chosen, had in honour: and he that believeth on Him* (or, 'it': this addition is not in the passage cited) *shall not be ashamed.*

7, 8.] *Appropriation of the honour implied in the last clause to believers: and per contra. to unbelievers, of another and opposite effect of the exaltation of this corner-stone. Unto you then* (inference from the last words, "he that believeth on Him shall not be ashamed") *is the honour* (belonging to the Stone itself, with which you are united in the building: the honour implied in the "shall not be ashamed," said of those who believe on Him. It is altogether beside the purpose to understand 'Christ,' or 'the Stone,' as the subject, and render as A. V., "He is precious," making "the honour" predicate instead of subject) *who believe: but to the disobedient* (not, the *unbelieving*: see Heb. iii. 18, note. Unbelief



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, <sup>8</sup> and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. <sup>9</sup> But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>m</sup> the stone which the builders re-  
jected, the same is made the head  
of the corner, <sup>8</sup> <sup>n</sup> and a stone of  
stumbling, and a rock of offence,  
<sup>o</sup> even to them which stumble, being  
disobedient to the word: <sup>p</sup> where-  
unto also they were appointed.  
<sup>9</sup> But ye are <sup>q</sup> a chosen generation,  
<sup>r</sup> a royal priesthood, <sup>s</sup> an holy na-  
tion, <sup>t</sup> a peculiar people; that ye  
should shew forth the virtues of  
him who hath called you out of  
<sup>u</sup> darkness to his marvellous light:

Tit. ii. 14.

u Acts xxvi. 18. Eph. v. 8. Col. i. 13. 1 Thess. v. 4, 5.

<sup>m</sup> Ps. cxviii.  
22. Matt.  
xxi. 42.  
Acts iv. 11.  
<sup>n</sup> Isa. viii. 14.  
Luke ii. 31.  
Rom. ix. 33.  
<sup>o</sup> 1 Cor. i. 23.  
<sup>p</sup> Evod. ix. 19.  
Rom. ix. 22.  
1 Thess. v. 9.  
Jude 4.  
<sup>q</sup> Deut. x. 15.  
ch. i. 2.  
<sup>r</sup> Exod. xix. 5.  
6. Rev. i. 6.  
& v. 10.  
John xvii. 19.  
1 Cor. iii. 17.  
2 Tim. i. 9.  
<sup>t</sup> Deut. iv. 20.  
& vii. 6. &  
xiv. 2. &  
xxvi. 13, 19.  
Acts xx. 28.  
Eph. i. 14.  
1 Thess. v. 4, 5.

is the root of disobedience: but it is the manner of Scripture, to follow it out into disobedience, its invariable effect, when spoken of in contrast to *faith*. What follows is in the form of another quotation, or rather combination of quotations: the first from Ps. cxviii. 22), the stone which the builders rejected, this has become for a (has been made into a) head corner stone (this is true with regard to believers also: but to them it is grace and glory, to these it is terror and destruction), and a stone of stumbling and rock of offence (second quotation from Isa. viii. 14. This stumbling is not mere mental offence, which e. g. they take at the preaching of the Cross; but the "stumbling upon the dark mountains" of Jer. xiii. 16: see Prov. iv. 19; Dan. xi. 19:—the eternal disgrace and ruin which forms the contrast to "honour" above. See, on the "rock of offence," Matt. xvi. 23: where we find that the very expression carries a reminiscence of Peter's own days of unbelief when he was an offence,—he, the stone, *petros*,—to his Lord, who stumble, being disobedient to the word (thus, and not as A. V., is the construction), for which (thing, fact, viz., their whole moral course of delinquency and the stumbling at the end of it) they were also (besides that they reach it, there is another consideration) appointed (set where they are, or were; viz. by Him who set above [it is the same word in the original] the stone of stumbling).

9, 10.] Contrast, in a glorious description of the office, privilege, and function, of the enlightened and adopted people of

God. But ye (emphatic) are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood (the expression is from the Septuagint version of Ex. xix. 6. Compare Rev. i. 6, and v. 10. In the New Test. church, these two elements, the kingship and the priesthood, are united in every individual believer, as in our great Head, Jesus Christ, who alone unites them in the Old Test. church; the two coexisting, but never except in the case of Melchisedek His foretype, united in the same Person), an holy nation (also from Exod. xix. 6, God's declaration at Sinai respecting Israel), a people for acquisition (so literally: i. e. peculiarly God's own, as interpreted by what follows in the place of Isaiah referred to, as well as here. There it stands, in the Septuagint version, "my people whom I acquired for myself to shew forth my virtues." In the place of Exodus which was before quoted, ch. xix. 5, we read in the Septuagint version, "ye shall be to me a peculiar (acquired) people from all the nations." In Acts xx. 28, "the Church of God which He purchased by His own blood," the word rendered 'purchased' is 'acquired,' as here. See also Deut. vii. 6); that ye may tell out the virtues (i. e. gracious dealings, excellent and glorious attributes: see Isa. above. This use of the word "virtues" is common in Philo) of Him (God: the Father) who called you out of darkness (of ignorance, error, sin, misery) to (not exactly 'into:' the preposition gives more the aim of the call, than its local result: to, i. e. to attain unto and be partakers of: to walk in and by) His wonderful light (this expression here can hardly mean the light of our



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

x Hos. i. 9,  
10. & ii. 23.  
Rom. ix. 25.

y 1 Chron.  
xxix. 15.  
Ps. xxxix. 12.  
& cxix. 19.  
Heb. xi. 13.  
ch. i. 17.  
z Rom. xlii. 14.  
Gal. v. 16.  
a James iv. 1.  
b Rom. xii. 17.  
2 Cor. viii. 21.  
Phil. ii. 15.  
Tit. ii. 8. ch. iii. 16.

<sup>10</sup> x which in time past were no people, but are now the people of God: which were unpitied, but now have obtained compassion. <sup>11</sup> Dearly beloved, I beseech you, <sup>y</sup> as sojourners and strangers, to <sup>z</sup> abstain from fleshly lusts, <sup>a</sup> which war against the soul; <sup>12</sup> <sup>b</sup> having your conversation comely among the Gentiles:

Christian life only; but must import that light of God's own Presence and Being, after which our walking in light is to be fashioned: the light to which St. John alludes, when he says, *if we walk in the light, as He is in the light*. "It is wonderful," says De Wette, "just as to one coming out of long darkness the light of day would be wonderful." The figure of the corner-stone has not quite passed away from the Apostle's mind: in the end of the prophecy concerning which he speaks, we read, Ps. cxviii. 23 [Matt. xxi. 42], "*This is the Lord's doing, and it was wonderful in our eyes*": who (contrast between their former and present states) were once no people (the Apostle is again citing, or rather clothing that which he has to write in, Old Test. words: see Hos. ii. 23), but [are] now the people of God (these words apply most properly to Gentile Christians, although spoken in the prophecy of Jews. St. Paul thus uses them, Rom. ix. 25; and it is not impossible that that passage may have been in St. Peter's mind), who were unpitied (of God: the clauses here and above are not merely negatives, but contraries: not "who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy," as A. V., indicating a mere change of time in order of progress, but who were unpitied, objects of aversion and wrath), but now have obtained compassion (the past tense has a fine and delicate force which cannot be given in a version: who were men who [have received no pity], but now men who [received pity], viz. when God called you by Christ).

11—CHAP. IV. 6.] *Exhortations to walk christianly and worthily towards and among those without who speak and act in a hostile manner*. Hitherto we have seen them exhorted to walk worthily of their calling as distinguished from their own former walk: now the Apostle exhorts them to glorify God before an ungodly and persecuting world.

11, 12.] Ver. 11,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

<sup>10</sup> which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. <sup>11</sup> Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; <sup>12</sup> having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that,

negative, exhorts to *abstinence from fleshly lusts*: ver. 12, positive, to *cause the unconverted Gentiles around, by their fair Christian walk, to glorify God*. Beloved (as this word is only found once again in this Epistle, ch. iv. 12, we may apply to it Wiesinger's remark, "The seldomer our Apostle uses this endearing term, the weightier it is where it does occur as the opening of a hortatory discourse"), I exhort you as sojourners (see Eph. ii. 19 and note) and strangers (see on ch. i. 1. This primary and literal meaning of the word is probably the uppermost one here, seeing that the Apostle is speaking of behaviour among the Gentiles. Still, from the more general reference of this first exhortation, the other and wider reference, that the sons of God wherever they maybe on earth, are strangers to the world, must not be left out of sight. These words, "*as sojourners and strangers*," belong, not to "*I beseech you*," as in the A. V., but to *abstain*. They form the ground why the readers should abstain, not why the Writer should exhort) to abstain from the carnal lusts (see Eph. ii. 3; 2 Pet. ii. 18; Tit. ii. 12. Here, it is, from the context, the walking and acting in the indulgence of these lusts which the Apostle is forbidding. See them enumerated in Gal. v. 19—21), the which (this expression gathers up into a class the *lusts*, and asserts it of all of them, that they war against the soul: thus rendering a reason) war (see James iv. 1; Rom. vii. 23) against the soul (the man's personal immortal part, as opposed to his body, his *members* in which the *lusts* war, is held in suspension between influences from above and influences from beneath: drawn up and saved, or drawn down and ruined. And among its adversaries are these fleshly lusts, warring against it to its ruin); <sup>12.</sup> positive *result of this abstinence*, and its important fruit: —having your behaviour among the Gen-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. <sup>13</sup> Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; <sup>14</sup> or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. <sup>15</sup> For so is the will of God, that

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

that, in the matter in which they speak against you as evildoers, <sup>c</sup> they may by your good works, <sup>e</sup> which they behold, glorify God <sup>d</sup> in the day of visitation. <sup>13</sup> <sup>e</sup> Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; <sup>14</sup> or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him <sup>f</sup> for vengeance on evildoers, and <sup>g</sup> praise of them that do well. <sup>15</sup> For so is the will of

<sup>c</sup> Matt. v. 16.

<sup>d</sup> Luke xix. 44.

<sup>e</sup> Matt. xxiii. 21.  
<sup>f</sup> Rom. xiii. 1.  
<sup>g</sup> Tit. iii. 1.

<sup>f</sup> Rom. xiii. 4.

<sup>g</sup> Rom. xiii. 3.

tiles comely (as over against the *vain behaviour* of the Gentiles, ch. i. 18. Compare ch. iii. 16), that (aim of the preceding) in the matter in which (not 'whereas,' as A. V. The sense is, "that that conduct, which was to them an occasion of speaking against you as evil-doers, may by your good works become to them an occasion of glorifying God." And "that, in which," will be in fact your whole Christian life) they speak against you as evil-doers (often the Christians would be compelled to diverge from heathen customs and even to break human laws, and thus would incur the imputation of malefactors), they may, on the ground of your good works, being spectators of them (contrast to the ignorance assumed below, ver. 15), glorify God in [the] day of visitation (i. e. the day when God visits, — Luke i. 68, 78; Acts xv. 14, — mankind with His offers of mercy and grace: our Lord says of Jerusalem, Luke xix. 44, "Thou knewest not the day of thy visitation." The word has been variously understood: the Fathers generally, and some moderns, explain it as above: others think that the day of *inquisition before earthly magistrates* is meant. Bede and others understand it of the day of judgment. But the former sense is far preferable on account of usage, and for its fitness in the context).

13—17.] *Exhortation to subjection to secular rule.*

13.] Be subjected (so literally: be in a condition of having been subjected) to every human institution (such, and not "every human creature," as some hold. The latter would stultify what follows: for it is not to the king as a man, but to the king as a human institution, that we are to be subject. It is no

objection to this command, that all powers are ordained of God: for that consideration does not come into notice in these words, but in those which follow, "for the Lord's sake." Here, it is the *lower side* of such institutions, the fact of their being ordained and upheld by men, that is brought into sight) for the Lord's sake (i. e. Christ's: "the Lord" with St. Peter, except in Old Test. citations, is always our Lord. And here there is additional reason, for that He, the Head of all principality and power, is yet in us his members subject to them, until the day when all shall be put under His feet): whether to king (general, — but, from the nature of the case as regarded those to whom the Epistle is addressed, here the Roman Emperor) as supereminent (not ruled by any other human power), or to governors (of the provinces, sent by Cæsar) as to men sent (in the habit of being sent, — sent from time to time) through him (the king, not the Lord, as some, and Calvin very positively. But there can be little doubt that he is wrong. For first the analogy of the clauses shews that the grounds of obedience in each case, all being alike for the Lord's sake, belong to the actually existing rights of power in that case. The king is supreme, in his own right: governors rule by delegation from the king. Then the right understanding of "for the Lord's sake," as applying to all, forbids this view. For thus we should obey the king as eminent, no mention of the Lord being made, whereas rulers are to be obeyed as sent by the Lord) for (to bring about) vengeance on evil-doers, and praise of well-doers. 15.] For (ground of the submission enjoined: correlative with, but not going so far as, the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

h Tit. ii. 8.  
ver. 12.God that <sup>h</sup> with well doing ye put  
to silence the ignorance of those*with well doing ye may  
put to silence the ignorance  
of foolish men: <sup>16</sup> as free,*

i Gal. v. 1, 13.

foolish men: <sup>16</sup> <sup>i</sup> as free, and not as  
using your liberty for a cloke of*and not using your liberty  
for a cloke of malicious-*

k 1 Cor. vii. 22.

your maliciousness, but as <sup>k</sup> the ser-  
vants of God. <sup>17</sup> <sup>l</sup> Honour all men.*ness, but as the servants of  
God. <sup>17</sup> Honour all men.*

l Rom. xii. 10.

<sup>m</sup> Love the brotherhood. <sup>n</sup> Fear God.*Lovethe brotherhood. Fear*

Phil. ii. 3.

m Heb. xiii. 1.

n Prov. xxiv.

21. Matt.

xxii. 21.  
Rom. xiii. 7.<sup>o</sup> Honour the king. <sup>18</sup> <sup>o</sup> Servants,*God. Honour the king.  
<sup>18</sup> Servants, be subject to*

o Eph. vi. 5. Col. iii. 22. 1 Tim. vi. 1. Tit. ii. 9. Luke vi. 32. ver. 20.

purpose announced in ver. 12) so (after this manner, in this direction and wise: viz. as follows) is ('se trouve') the will (thing willed, concrete result of the will) of God, that doing good (so literally, the participle carrying the reason with it: by doing good) ye put to silence the ignorance (not simply ignorance of this or that fact, but a state of lack of knowledge or understanding, habitual ignorance. This state is here introduced as speaking, "having [as Wiesinger] ever its mouth open rather than its eyes," ready to cry out upon any mere appearance of things as misunderstood by it) of the foolish men (above designated; those viz. *who speak against you as evil-doers* are not, "of foolish men" in general, as A. V.). <sup>16</sup>] The connexion is somewhat doubtful. Chrysostom and others join as free with "submit yourselves," above, ver. 13:—Bede, Luther, Calvin, and others, with the last clause, "that with well doing, &c." ver. 15: Steiger, Huther, with the following, ver. 17. This latter seems quite untenable, as carrying no application on from ver. 16 to ver. 17. No one would think of pleading his freedom as an excuse for not honouring all, or for not loving the brethren, or for not fearing God: or indeed for not, in some sense, *honouring the King*. But in a matter of subjection, such *freedom* might be and often is made a cloke for disobedience. Connecting then *as free* with what has preceded, which of the other connexions are we to take? That with "submit yourselves" seems too distant: it may certainly be said that ver. 17 brings in again the general duty in its most simple form: but even thus we can hardly account for the parenthetical ver. 15, so unparenthetical in its aspect and construction. Whereas if we join "*as free*" to ver. 15, we obtain, as Wiesinger well argues, an explanation which that verse seems to need,—for it is almost a truism that we are to

accomplish the *putting to silence* by *well doing*, unless some explanation be given of the particular circumstances under which this is to take place.—I regard then ver. 16 as an explanation of ver. 15. *As free* (children of God, His family and people, His kingly priesthood: not merely free from the law, or free from sin, or free from earthly subjection, but generally and abstractedly free—Christ's freed-men) and not as *having your freedom* [for] a veil of your evil intent (of the evil intent which using your freedom as a veil would necessarily presuppose), but as *God's* (emphatic) servants (and therefore bound to submit yourselves to that which God ordains).

<sup>17</sup>] A pithy general statement (see below) of the whole department of Christian duty of which the Apostle is now speaking: then a note of transition, by the three following commands, to the next paragraph, where he severs the general into the special duties. Give honour to all men (i. e. by the force of the original, to each man according as the case, which requires it, arises: "in every case render promptly every man's due," Rom. xiii. 7. So that the distinction between this and "*honour*" again expressed below is a clear one: see there. And by this force of the word used, this first precept assumes a place of general and wide-reaching reference, which then is severed by the three following commands into three great branches, before the relations of ordinary life are introduced ver. 18, with participial forms). Love (as your habit of mind and act) the brotherhood (the aggregate of the brethren), fear God, honour (both these latter as continuing habits, frames of mind and courses of action) the king.

<sup>18</sup>—<sup>25</sup>] *Exhortation to servants to be obedient to their masters.* <sup>18</sup>] *Ye*

servants (domestic servants: a milder designation than the common New Test. one of *slave*. Possibly, it may be here used to

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the forward. <sup>19</sup> For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. <sup>20</sup> For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. <sup>21</sup> For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ

[† by] being subject to your masters † *Not expressed in the original: see note.*  
 with all fear; not only to the good and considerate, but also to the perverse.  
<sup>19</sup> For this is <sup>p</sup>thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure tribulations, suffering wrongfully. <sup>20</sup> For <sup>q</sup> what glory is it, if, when ye do wrong, and are buffeted for it, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye shall take it patiently, [it is glory,] † for this is thankworthy † *So two of our oldest MSS. Matt. xvi. 24. Acts xiv. 22. 1 Thess. iii. 8. 2 Tim. iii. 12.*  
 with God. <sup>21</sup> For <sup>r</sup> hereunto were

include the freedmen who still remained in their master's house), in subjection (the participle carries on, immediately, the "Honour all men" above; but also belongs, at a greater distance, to the whole of the last paragraph, as a general designation of the habitual conduct, in and by which they were to shew forth an honest conversation among the Gentiles) in all fear (this provides, by its wide generality, for the case by and by to be specially commented on. Fear, not merely the reverence of an inferior, but the awe of one in subjection) to your masters; not only to the good (kind) and considerate (see note, Phil. iv. 5: those who make reasonable allowances, and exact no more), but also to the perverse (crooked, in deviating from right and justice, see Phil. ii. 15).

19, 20.] Reason for being subject to the perverse: that it is well pleasing to God when we suffer for well-doing. For this is thankworthy (as in Luke vi. 32, where the very same word is used, "If ye love them which love you, what thank have ye?" i. e. what recognition at God's hand in the day when He will come, and His reward with Him? It is said of something, to do or suffer which is out of, beyond, the ordinary course of what might have been expected. The A.V. has hit the meaning very well), if on account of consciousness of God (realization in a man's inner being, of God's presence and relation to himself: so we have "conscience of sins," Heb. x. 2) any one endures (as a superimposed burden, but here induced perhaps by the idea of subjection which is dominant throughout) tribulations (things which bring grief), suffering wrongfully

(here emphatic, as carrying the transition to the next step of the argument).

20.] For (proof of the foregoing by assuming [interrogatively] the refutation of the contrary) what kind of glory [is it] (the word glory is perfectly general, and must not, as Bengel, be supplied with "in God's sight." What credit is due...? Matt. v. 47), if doing wrong and being buffeted (the participles are in close logical connexion, and both of them describe enduring habit, not the occurrence merely of one such case. "When ye be buffeted for your faults," A.V., is somewhat too wide: "When ye do wrong and are buffeted for it," expresses the Greek more closely. Buffeted is here perhaps in the literal sense: receive blows, as was the wont with slaves), ye shall endure it (not, as De Wette, with only "the reluctant dull endurance of a criminal who cannot avoid his punishment:" this mars the hypothesis, which requires that the same kind of endurance should belong to both its sides, the only difference being in suffering justly and unjustly. So that "endure" must carry the sense of patient endurance: as A.V., "ye shall take it patiently")? but if well-doing and suffering [for it] (these last words are amply justified by the logical connexion of the participles, see above) ye shall endure it [it is glory] (with the reading adopted, it becomes necessary to supply, mentally at least, some such words): for this is thankworthy (see above; it is the same word as there, and never ought to have been altered by the A.V. to acceptable, which is quite another thing) with (in the estimation of God. 21.] For (proof that undeserved



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

s ch. iii. 18.

† So all our ancient MSS.

Some of later date have suffered for us, leaving you: but none read as the A.V.

t John xiii. 15.

Phil. ii. 5.

1 John ii. 6.

u Isa. liii.

9. Luke

xxiii. 41.

John viii. 46.

2 Cor. v. 21.

Heb. iv. 15.

x Isa. liii. 7.

Matt. xxvii.

39. John

viii. 48, 49.

Heb. xii. 3.

y Luke xxiii.

40.

† Not expressed

in the original; see

note.

z Isa. liii. 4—6.

11. Matt. viii. 17.

Heb. ix. 28.

a Rom. vi. 2, 11. &amp; vii. 6.

b Isa. liii. 5.

ye called: because <sup>s</sup> Christ also suffered for † you, † leaving † you a pattern, that ye should follow his steps: <sup>22</sup> u who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: <sup>23</sup> x who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but <sup>y</sup> committed [† them] to him that judgeth righteously: <sup>24</sup> z who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, <sup>a</sup> that we, having died to our sins, should live unto righteousness: <sup>b</sup> by whose stripe

also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: <sup>22</sup> who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: <sup>23</sup> who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: <sup>24</sup> who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye

z Isa. liii. 4—6. 11. Matt. viii. 17. Heb. ix. 28.

a Rom. vi. 2, 11. &amp; vii. 6.

b Isa. liii. 5.

suffering is *thankworthy with God*, by the instance of Christ's sufferings, which were our example) to this (state, viz. the endurance of wrongful sufferings) ye were called: because (ground of the assertion) Christ also (the also applies to the words "suffered for you," the words for you carrying with them the "well-doing," as explained below, ver. 24) suffered for you, leaving behind for you a copy (a pattern to write or paint by: technically, these patterns were formulæ given by writing-masters to their pupils, containing all the letters of the alphabet) that ye should follow upon (follow close upon, denoting close application to: the word is commonly used of following behind another) His footsteps.

22.] *Further expansion of this example of Christ*, making it plain that He endured patiently in suffering for well-doing:—who never did (never in a single instance) sin (the words are almost a citation from Isa. liii. 9, in one form of the Septuagint version) nor yet (climax: not only did He never sin in act, but not even . . .) was guile ever found in His mouth: 23.] who when reviled, reviled not again (a proof of his patience. Isa. liii. 7 is before the Apostle), when suffering threatened not (used not to threaten: denoting constant habit. The order is again that of climax: from reproach to suffering, from not reproaching to not threatening): but ('yea, rather') delivered [them] (see below) up (what? Most Commentators supply "himself" [so A. V.], or "his cause," both of which seem out of place, and hardly justified by the usage of the verb

in the original. Rather would I supply an object out of the *being reviled and suffering*, foregoing, either, with Huther and Wiesinger, "His reproaches and sufferings," or, which seems to me better, "those who inflicted them:" perhaps not without reference to "Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do") to Him that judgeth (whose office it is to judge) righteously (i. e. the Father: designated in ch. i. 17 as "He that judgeth without respect of persons." Calvin says well, "Those who indulge their exaction of vengeance, do not leave to God the office of Judge, but in a manner want to make Him their executioner");

24.] who Himself (now the *well-doing* reaches its height. He was not only negatively innocent, ver. 22, but suffered in the pursuance of the noblest purpose of love, and that love towards us: by which fact His example is further brought home and endeared to us) bore our sins (but in the pregnant sense of "bore to sacrifice," "carried and offered up:" see notes on James ii. 21, and Levit. xiv. 20; Heb. vii. 27. It is a word belonging to *sacrifice*, and not to be dissociated from it. In Isa. liii. 12, [Heb. ix. 28,] we have the sense of bearing on Himself more prominent: and by that passage our rendering here must be regulated: always remembering that the other sense lies behind) in His [own] body on the tree (i. e. "took them to the tree and offered them up on it as an altar"); that (purpose of that great and crowning suffering of the Lord) having died (not, as some Commentators, "having passed away," being removed to a distance, but literally, "having died") to our sins,



AUTHORIZED VERSION.

were healed. <sup>25</sup> For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

III. <sup>1</sup> Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; <sup>2</sup> while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. <sup>3</sup> Whose adorning let it

AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

ye were healed. <sup>25</sup> For <sup>c</sup> ye were † going astray as sheep; but are now returned <sup>d</sup> unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

III. <sup>1</sup> In like manner, <sup>a</sup> ye wives, [† by] being in subjection to your own husbands; so that even if any obey not the word, <sup>b</sup> they also shall, † without speech, <sup>c</sup> be won by the behaviour of their wives; <sup>2</sup> <sup>d</sup> when they have beheld your chaste behaviour coupled with fear. <sup>3</sup> <sup>e</sup> Whose adorning

c Isa. liii. 6.  
Ezek. xxxiv.  
† So all our oldest MSS.  
Ezek. xxxiv. 23. & xxxvii. 24. John x. 11, 14, 16.  
Heb. xiii. 20. ch. v. 4.  
a 1 Cor. xiv. 34.  
Eph. v. 22.  
Col. iii. 18.  
Titus ii. 5.  
† Not expressed in the original: see note.  
b 1 Cor. vii. 16.  
† So all our ancient MSS.  
c Matt. xviii. 15. 1 Cor. ix. 19—22.  
d ch. ii. 12.  
e 1 Tim. ii. 9.  
Titus ii. 3, &c.

we should live unto righteousness (the same contrast is found, but with another image, of being freed from, and become servants to, in Rom. vi. 18. In ver. 11 there, where the same figure of death and life is used, it is *dead unto sin, but living unto God*), by whose stripe (the word signifies the weal left by a stripe. From Isa. liii. 5) ye were healed. <sup>25</sup>] For (justification of the last assertion by another allusion to Isa. liii.) ye were straying like sheep: but ye have returned (not, "have been converted") now unto the Shepherd (compare ch. v. 4, and the prophecies in Isa. xl. 11; Ezek. xxxiv. 23, xxxvii. 24, also John x. 11,) and Bishop (the word *Episcopus* properly signifies overseer, or visitor: and there may be a reference to Ezek. xxxiv. 11, "Behold, I will seek out my sheep and visit them" [so the Septuagint, using the very word from which *Episcopus* is derived]. But the most likely account of the expression is, that the Apostle transfers the well-known name of the elders of the churches, *Episcopi*, to the great Head of the Church, of whom they were all the servants and representatives. On the name and office, see notes, Acts xx. 17, 28; Phil. i. 1) of your souls (so in ch. i. 9, 22, and in ver. 11).

CH. III. 1—7.] Exhortations in regard to the married state: and (1—6) to wives: (7) to husbands.

1.] In like manner (i. e. after the same general principle, enounced in ch. ii. 13, as the *servants in their relation*), wives (as *servants*, ch. ii. 18, *husbands*, ver. 7, is vocative. This is decisively shewn by your below, as in ver. 7. The word signifies only *women*: but by the context it is shewn to mean *wives*), [by being] in sub-

jection to (the participle, as in ch. ii. 18 : carrying on the general command, Honour all men. Wives are to pay this honour, by being, &c.) **your own husbands** (**your own** gives point to the obligation, but is without any distinctive emphasis: see the parallel place, Eph. v. 22, and note), **that** (if we render strictly the future which follows, we must make this **that** in English, into **so that**) **even if** (**even if** assumes as possible, the apparently exceptional ease which may seem to justify the wives' disobedience) **any (husbands) are disobedient to the word** (in a state of unbelieving disobedience; most probably, though this is not directly nor necessarily assumed, heathens), **they shall be won** (converted to faith and obedience: made a gain for Christian love, and for Christ Himself. So Leighton: "A soul converted is gained to itself, gained to the pastor, or friend, or wife, or husband who sought it, and gained to Jesus Christ: added to His treasury, who thought not His own precious blood too dear to lay out for this gain") **without word** (without speech: without you, the wives, preaching to them, or exhorting them, but simply by your Christian behaviour. The rendering of the A. V., "*without the word*," is precluded, on account of the general improbability of such a saying, seeing that faith is grounded on hearing, and hearing on the word of God. Besides which, the wives' conversation, being a shewing forth of obedience to the word, could not be said to produce its effect *without the word*) **by means of the behaviour of their wives; when they have beheld your chaste behaviour** (chaste, in the largest sense, not with its proper reference only: modest and pure) **coupled with fear** (so the A. V., admirably: con-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of garments :

<sup>f</sup> but let it be <sup>f</sup> the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible ornament of the meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

<sup>5</sup> For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who hoped in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands : <sup>6</sup> as Sarah obeyed Abraham, <sup>g</sup> calling him lord : of whom ye have become children, if ye do well, and are not afraid of any sudden fear. <sup>7</sup> Ye husbands, <sup>h</sup> in like

<sup>f</sup> Ps. xlv. 13.  
Rom. ii. 29.  
& vii. 22.  
2 Cor. iv. 10.

<sup>g</sup> Gen. xviii.  
12.

<sup>h</sup> 1 Cor. vii. 3.  
Eph. v. 25.  
Col. iii. 19.

deducted, led, maintained, in a spirit of reverence to your husbands, see Eph. v. 33).

3.] **Of whom** (the wives ; you, who are addressed) **let [the adornment] be not the outward adornment of braiding of hair** (see 1 Tim. ii. 9), **and putting round** (the head, as diadems, or the arm, as bracelets, or the leg, as anklets, or the finger, as rings, or generally, hanging the body round with) **of golden ornaments, or of putting on of dresses** ("the sex which began first our engagement to the necessity of clothing, having still a peculiar propensity to be curious in that, to improve the necessity to an advantage") :

4.] **but** (rather let their adornment be) **the hidden man of the heart** (here it is not, as in Rom. ii. 29, merely the inner man as distinguished from the outer man, which unbelievers have as well as believers : and that for this reason, that the *hidden man* is not here that which is *to be adorned*, but is itself the adornment : and consequently is of necessity the regenerate life itself in its freshness and beauty. And this is designated as being **of the heart**,—consisting in the heart, changed, and lovely with Christian affections and graces), **in** (standing in, as its condition and element) **the incorruptible [ornament] of the meek and quiet spirit** ("*meek*, as raising no disturbance itself : *quiet*, as bearing mildly disturbance from others. To the former quality ver. 5 refers ; to the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel ;* <sup>4</sup> *but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.* <sup>5</sup> *For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands :* <sup>6</sup> *even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord : whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.* <sup>7</sup> *Likewise, ye hus-*

latter, ver. 6." Bengel), which (viz. the meek and quiet spirit) is in the sight of God (who looks not at the appearance, but at the heart) of great price (the word is that used for costly ointment and raiment).

5.] **For** (enforcing of the same by example) **in this manner** (i. e. with the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit) **formerly the holy women** (*holy*, as in Luke i. 70 ; Acts iii. 21 ; Eph. iii. 5 ; women of blessed note in the sacred history as servants of God) **also** (as well as you, if you obey), **who hoped in God** (i. e. whose hope was directed towards, and rested in, God), **adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands** (this clause describes the state in which the adornment was put on, to which it belonged : being thus in subjection, they were adorned with the meek and quiet spirit which belongs to it) :

6.] as (e. g.) **Sarah obeyed** (the tense in the original indicates not so much the habit, as her whole course of obedience considered as a completed whole) **Abraham, calling him lord** (Gen. xviii. 12) : **of whom ye have become** (i. e. by your implanting through faith into the family of faithful Abraham. It ought properly to be rendered **ye became**, referring back to the precise time when they were so made ; but cannot be so expressed in English) **children, if** (i. e., as A. V. "as long as," but better and clearer) **ye do good, and are not afraid of any sudden fear** (to what

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*bonds, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.* <sup>8</sup> Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: <sup>9</sup> not rendering evil for evil, or railing for rail-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

manner, dwelling according to knowledge with the woman <sup>1</sup> as with the weaker vessel, giving them honour as being also heirs with † you of the grace of life: <sup>k</sup> that your prayers be not hindered. <sup>8</sup> Finally, <sup>1</sup> all being of one mind, sympathizing, <sup>m</sup> loving the brethren, <sup>n</sup> compassionate, humble-minded: <sup>9</sup> ° not rendering [to others] evil for evil, or reproach for

<sup>1</sup> Cor. xii. 23.  
1 Thess. iv. 4.

† *So our oldest MS. There is considerable variation in the others.*  
<sup>k</sup> See Job xlii. 8. Matt. v. 23, 24. & xviii. 10.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xii. 16. & xv. 5.  
Phil. iii. 16.  
<sup>m</sup> Rom. xii. 10.  
Heb. xii. 1. ch. ii. 17.  
<sup>n</sup> Eph. iv. 32. Col. iii. 12.  
<sup>o</sup> Prov. xvii. 13.  
1 Thess. v. 15.

& xx. 22. Matt. v. 30. Rom. xii. 14, 17. 1 Cor. iv. 12.

do these words allude? They appear to be a citation from Prov. iii. 25, where it is said to him that obeys the counsels of wisdom, "*Be not afraid of sudden fear, nor of the desolation of the wicked when it cometh.*" If this be so, the *fear* spoken of is not subjective, "with any amazement," as A. V., but some external cause of terror. And such a meaning would suit very well with the context, in which as in ver. 14, the Apostle is often encouraging his readers to bear affliction and persecution cheerfully. So that we may interpret it with Estius, "which while ye do, there is no cause to fear any evil: as, that of displeasing your husbands by your chaste and holy lives: or, lest they should treat you servilely if you shew yourselves ready to obey: for we know the sex is liable to vain fears. And even if you have unkind husbands, try to appease them rather by silence and patience, than by many words." With regard to the much-disputed question whether by the preceding injunction all ornament of dress is forbidden, or only the making such ornament *the adorning*, it may safely be left to the Christian wisdom of believing women, to be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is, in this as in other similar matters. Within the limits of propriety and decorum, the common usage is the rule. There is sin in singularity, both as ministering to pride in ourselves, and as giving offence to others and discommending our holy religion. As Leighton well says, "There may be in some an affected pride in the meanness of apparel; and in others, under either neat or rich attire, a very humble unaffected mind. . ." Seneca says: "Great is he who enjoys his earthenware as if it were plate, and not less great is the man to whom all his plate is no

more than earthenware").

7.] *Duty of husbands to their wives.*

**Ye husbands, in like manner** (in like manner, i. e., there is a certain *honour* due to the wife, as to the husband and the master before. This again must be connected with the general precept in ii. 17), **dwelling according to knowledge** (in an intelligent and reasonable manner, well aware of the *weakness* spoken of below) **with the feminine as with the weaker vessel** (some, as the A. V., join these words with *giving honour*. But this mars the parallelism and the sense. For the Apostle prescribes two things: 1) consideration for the wife, as of the weaker sex: 2) honour for the wife, as a fellow-heir of the grace of life), **giving** (apportioning) **honour as to those who are also** (besides being your wives) **fellow-inheritors** (with you) **of the grace of life** (i. e. God's gracious gift of life eternal: ch. i. 4, 13 suffice to clear the meaning, the former explaining *inheritance*, the latter, *grace*): **in order that your prayers be not hindered**. The hindrance meant seems to be, that which would be occasioned by the man not giving his wife proper honour as a fellow-heir of the grace of life; in which case the peculiar promise of advantage in social united prayer would be lost: see Matt. xviii. 19. According to this view, the united prayers of man and wife are meant. And so most of the Commentators.

8, 9.] *General summary exhortations to mutual forbearance and love.*

Finally, all [being] (the construction is still carried on from ch. ii. 17) **of one mind, sympathizing** (the meaning is not, as in A. V., confined to cases of sorrow: the "*re-joining with them that do rejoice*" is also included), **loving the brethren, compassionate** (towards the afflicted), **humble-minded** (the word forms a note of transi-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

reproach: but contrariwise blessing them; because ye were thereunto called, <sup>p</sup> that ye should inherit a blessing. <sup>10</sup> For <sup>q</sup> he that desireth to love life, and to see good days, <sup>r</sup> let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: <sup>11</sup> let him <sup>s</sup> turn away from evil, and do good; <sup>t</sup> let him seek peace, and pursue it. <sup>12</sup> For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, <sup>u</sup> and his ears are [† open] unto their supplication: but the face of the Lord is † against them that do evil. <sup>13</sup> <sup>x</sup> And who is he

p Matt. xxv. 34.

q PsA. xxxiv. 12, &c.

r James i. 26. ch. ii. 1, 22. Rev. xiv. 5.

s Ps. xxxvii. 27. Isa. i. 10. 17. 3 John 11. t Rom. xii. 18. & xiv. 19. Heb. xii. 14.

u John ix. 31. James v. 16.

† Not expressed in the original.

† Literally, upon, as before.

x Prov. xvi. 7. Rom. viii. 28.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

ing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. <sup>10</sup> For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: <sup>11</sup> let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. <sup>12</sup> For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. <sup>13</sup> And who is he that will harm you, if ye be fol-

tion to the next verse: humility being essential both to true gentleness of love and to true patience under injuries): **not giving back** (in deeds) **evil for evil** [to others,] or reproach for reproach (in words): **nay rather on the contrary, blessing** (others). The word *blessing*, in A. V., is liable to be, and generally is, mistaken for the substantive "a blessing;" whereas it is the participle, as in our text): **because to this end** (viz. that which follows) **ye were called** (by God), **that ye might inherit blessing** (it is not in order to inherit a blessing that we must bless; but because our portion is, blessing: and the reasoning is much as in Eph. iv. 32, "forgiving one another, as God also in Christ forgave you").

10—12.] For (the above exhortations are impressed by a citation from Ps. xxxiv. 13—17. That the citation cannot apply directly to the last written words, is plain, by their necessarily referring to the future life, whereas the blessings promised in the Psalm as necessarily refer to the present. So that we must connect the citation mainly with the participle, "blessing them;" and if we take in the intermediate clause, it must be only secondarily, as connecting, generally, blessing with blessing) **he who desireth to love life** (the difficulties of the citation can hardly be brought before the English reader. I have discussed them in my Greek Test.), **and to see** (reff.) **good days, let him refrain** (in the Psalm proceeds in the second person, "Refrain thy" . . .) **his tongue** (first come the sins of the tongue, then those of the con-

duct) **from evil, and lips that they never speak** (referring to single occasions, or better perhaps, to the whole life considered as one fact) **deceit** (i. e. speak one thing and mean another): **moreover** (brings up a new particular, belonging to a different sphere of conduct) **let him turn away from** (in act, that is) **evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and pursue it** (because it is not always to be found, and when not immediately found, may require diligent pursuit: compare Heb. xii. 14, and St. Paul's command, Rom. xii. 18. The ancient gloss is good: "let him search for peace as a thing hidden, and pursue it as a thing fugitive").

12.] The citation continued, and a reason given for the foregoing conditions of prosperity. **Because the eyes of the Lord** (Jehovah) **are** (directed in a favourable sense, for good) **upon righteous men, and His ears** (inclined) **unto their supplication: but the face of the Lord is** (directed, in an unfavourable sense,—for wrath) **upon men doing evil things.**

13—CHAP. IV. 6.] Exhortation to right behaviour towards the world in persecutions which come upon them for righteousness' sake (13—17): and that by the example of Christ (18—22), whose suffering in the flesh, and by consequence whose purity and freedom from sin they are to imitate (iv. 1—6).

13.] And (connected with what preceded: seeing that God takes such care for the righteous, and that the result of that care will be a life worthy to be loved, and good days) **who is**

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

lowers of that which is good? <sup>14</sup> But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; <sup>15</sup> but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? <sup>14y</sup> But if ye even ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and <sup>z</sup> be not afraid with their terror, neither be troubled; <sup>15</sup> but sanctify Christ in your hearts as Lord: <sup>a</sup> being ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, † but with meekness and †

<sup>y</sup> Matt. v. 10,  
11, 12. James  
i. 12. ch. ii.  
19. & iv. 14.

<sup>z</sup> Isa. viii. 12,  
13. Jer. i. 8.  
John xiv. 1,  
27.

<sup>a</sup> Pa. cxix. 46.  
Acts iv. 8.  
Col. iv. 6.  
2 Tim. ii. 25.

† So all our  
oldest MSS.

he that shall harm you, if ye be (literally, by having become: but we cannot express this in English otherwise than by expressing its result, ye be) emulous (i. e. as in A. V. followers; the Rheims version has emulators, which if it were sufficiently English, would be better) of that which is good?

14.] Nay if even ye chance to suffer on account of righteousness (Augustine says, "Not *what*, but *why*, he suffers, makes the martyr." righteousness, i. e. that right and holy living to which you devote yourselves, and which gives offence to the ungodly world. See our Lord's saying, Matt. v. 10), blessed are ye (this, that is, makes no exception to none harming you, but rather is a notable example of it). But ("he now teaches how suffering is to be borne so as to keep this blessedness unmarred," Bengel. The words are almost verbatim from Isa. viii. 12, 13) be not afraid with their terror (not, "afraid of," as A. V. terror is, as in the place quoted, "neither fear ye their fear," subjective. The command amounts to this, "be not affected in heart by the fear which they strive to inspire into you"), nor be troubled ("as the highest curse which the law threatens is a heart fearful and full of terror, Lev. xxvi. 36; Deut. xxviii. 65; so the highest good which Christ gained for us and offers us in the Gospel is a heart certified of the grace of God, and consequently tranquil in all adversities and dangers." Gerhard): nay, rather sanctify your hearts (in the Old Test. passage it is added, "and He shall [in the A. V. let Him] be your dread." "This addition is not made here, but instead, in your hearts, to bring out that the sanctifying must be perfected in the inner parts of a man, and so keep him from all false fear. As if he would say, Care only for this, that your

heart may be a temple of Christ, in which becoming honour may be given to Him as Lord; then will nothing further disturb you: you have in Him all that you can need." Wiesinger) Christ as Lord (the expression "the Lord of hosts himself" in truth is changed in a Christian sense into Christ as Lord): [being] (so literally; continuing the same adjectival sentences as before) ready always for (i. e. to give) an answer (an apologetic justification, in the primitive Christian sense. This was most commonly given before official persons and on trial, but in the present case is expressly extended to every person and occasion) to every man that asketh of you a reason (a reasonable account) concerning the hope that is in you (the word *hope* is not put for the whole of the Christian's faith, but is to be taken strictly. In persecution, it is his *hope* especially which is put to the trial), but (makes a contrast to the readiness just inculcated: ready, but not over ready: see Luther, below) with meekness (see above, on ver. 4) and fear (this fear is not the fear of God exclusively, nor that of men, but the aspect of the mind as regards both: proper respect for man, and humble reverence of God. The case supposed would generally occur when some one invested with authority asked a reason; and the complexion of the answer to be given is taken from that circumstance. On the injunction, Luther says, speaking from his own experience at Worms and elsewhere, "Then must ye not answer with proud words, and bring out the matter with a defiance and with violence as if ye would tear up trees, but with such fear and lowliness as if ye stood before God's tribunal. . . . so must thou stand in fear, and not rest on thine



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

b Heb. xiii. 18. fear : <sup>16</sup> b having a good conscience ;  
 c Titus ii. 8. ch. ii. 12. † So our oldest MSS. the others reading as the A.V. : see note.  
 † So our oldest MSS. the others reading as the A.V. : see note.  
 d Rom. v. 6. Heb. ix. 26. 28. ch. ii. 21. & iv. 1.  
 c that, in the matter in which ye † are spoken against, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. <sup>17</sup> For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. <sup>18</sup> Because Christ also suffered for sins <sup>d</sup> once; a just person for unjust persons, that he might bring us to

<sup>16</sup> having a good conscience ; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. <sup>17</sup> For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. <sup>18</sup> For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that

own strength, but on the word and promise of Christ," Matt. x. 19 f.): <sup>16.</sup>]

having a good conscience (viz. when you make your apology: "seeing that words without practice have but small weight, therefore he joins to a profession of faith a good conscience." Calvin. This is better, seeing that the same subject, that of behaviour under persecution, is afterwards carried on, ver. 17, than to regard these words as taking up the former part of ver. 15), that in the matter in which (see note on ch. ii. 12) ye are spoken against (the reading of the A. V., after many of our MSS., has come apparently from ch. ii. 12), they who traduce your good conversation (behaviour in life) in Christ (as Christians,—your whole life being in Christ, as its element: see 1 Cor. iv. 17; Col. ii. 6) may be ashamed.

<sup>17.</sup>] For (confirmation of the exhortation to a good conscience, above) it is better (we have had a similar argument in ch. ii. 19, 20, from which passage the sense of better here is made clear: there it is said of the suffering for well-doing, that it is *thankworthy*, that it is *glory*, that *unto this ye were called*) to suffer [for] (see ch. ii. 20, and the connexion as given there) doing well, if the will of God should will [it so] (Luther says beautifully, "Go thou forth in Faith and Love: cometh the Cross, then take it up; cometh it not, then seek it not"), than [for] doing ill.

<sup>18—22.</sup>] *Establishment of the above position on the fact of Christ having Himself suffered, being righteous, and through death, even in death vanquishing the power of death, entered into His glory at God's right hand.* <sup>18.</sup>] Because (not 'for:' it does not only render a reason, but lays down the reason why Christian suffering for well-doing is blessed) Christ also (as well as yourselves if ye be so called as to

suffer) suffered for sins (the thought is somewhat similar to that in ch. ii. 21, but the intent of it different: there, it was as an example to us that the sufferings of Christ were adduced: here, it is as a proof of the blessedness and advantage of suffering for well-doing, that proof being closely applied to us by the fact that that suffering was undertaken on our behalf, and that blessedness is our salvation. The words for sins I distinctly hold, with Wiesinger, to come in, as a point of comparison, between Christ and ourselves, under the also, against most Commentators. Considering St. Peter's love of using the same term in two meanings, of which we have already had several examples, e.g. vv. 9, 14, 15, I have no hesitation in applying the *suffering for sins* the one time to Christ, the other to ourselves, though His suffering for sin, and ours, are two very different things. He, the sinless One, *suffered for sins*; as a sacrifice for sin, as a sinner, made sin for us, dying the death of a criminal: we, though not sinless, yet in our well-doing, are to suffer if God's will so will it, *for sins*,—for sins which we are supposed to have committed, and as sinners. To miss this, is to miss one of the cardinal points of the comparison) once ("from this once, through the also," as has been beautifully said, "a beam of comforting light falls on the sufferings of Christians." He suffered once: His sufferings are summed up and passed away: He shall suffer, no more. And we are suffering "once:" it shall be soon so thought of and looked back upon. For this reason doubtless is the word inserted); a just person (*just* is purely predicative: not as A. V. 'the just,' which again loses the point of comparison) on behalf of unjust [persons] (this again, though the resembling tints are beginning somewhat

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: <sup>19</sup> by which also*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

God, <sup>e</sup> being put to death <sup>f</sup> in the flesh, but made <sup>g</sup> alive in the spirit: <sup>h</sup> in which he also went and <sup>h</sup> preached

<sup>e</sup> 2 Cor. xiii. 4.  
<sup>f</sup> Col. i. 21, 22.  
<sup>g</sup> Rom. i. 4.  
& viii. 11.  
<sup>h</sup> ch. i. 12.  
& iv. 6.

to fade off, is another point of comparison: He suffered, just, righteous, *for unjust ones*: He represented, He was offered for, the unjust, the unrighteous: and so we in our turn, though in a far less deep and proper meaning, when we, being *just* [ver. 12], suffer as *unjust*, though not in any propitiatory sense *for unjust*. We have similar uncertainty and play of meaning where the same subject is treated, Rom. vi. 10, 11: it is said that Christ "*died to sin*," and "*liveth to God*;" and we are exhorted thus to *count ourselves dead to sin, and living to God*: where the two expressions, though they have a common meaning of small extent, are in their widest and most important references of necessity widely divergent), that (with this expression of *purpose* we leave the comparison, as far as suffering is concerned, returning to it presently for a moment with the fact of His being *put to death*, and pass up to the *blessedness* of His innocent suffering, and to that which makes it so glorious and precious to us, as the ground of all our blessedness in suffering) **He might bring us near to God** ("that He, Himself going to the Father, might bring us who had been alienated, justified, into heaven together with Himself, ver. 22, by the same steps as He trod, of humiliation and exaltation. From this word to ch. iv. 6, St. Peter unites together the course and procession of Christ and the faithful [in which course he himself also *followed* Christ, according to His prediction John xiii. 36], inserting also the unfaithfulness and punishment of some." Bengel), **put to death** (this participial clause gives the manner of that bringing us near to God) indeed in the *flesh* (of this there can be no doubt, and in this assertion there is no difficulty. in the *flesh*, in this region, under these conditions, the death on the cross was inflicted: His flesh, which was living flesh before, became dead flesh: Christ Jesus, the entire complex Person, consisting of body, soul, and spirit, was put to death *in the flesh*), **but made alive** [again] in the spirit (here there may seem to be difficulty: but the difficulty will vanish, if we guide ourselves simply and carefully by the former clause. As regarded the flesh, the Lord was put to death; as re-

garded the spirit, He was brought to life. His flesh was the subject, recipient, vehicle, of inflicted death; His Spirit was the subject, recipient, vehicle, of restored life. But here let us beware, and proceed cautiously. What is asserted is not that the *flesh died* and the Spirit was *made alive*; but that as to the flesh the Lord died, as to the Spirit, He was made alive. He, the God-man Christ Jesus, body and soul, ceased to live in the flesh, began to live in the Spirit; ceased to live a fleshly mortal life, began to live a spiritual resurrection life. His own Spirit never died, as the next verse shews us. "This is the meaning, that Christ by His sufferings was taken from the life which is flesh and blood, as a man on earth, living, walking, and standing in flesh and blood . . . and He is now placed in another life and made alive according to the Spirit, has passed into a spiritual and supernatural life, which includes in itself the whole life which Christ now has in soul and body, so that he has no longer a fleshly but a spiritual body." Luther. And Hofmann says, "It is the same who dies and the same who is again made alive, both times the whole Man Jesus, in body and soul. He ceases to live, in that *that*, which is to His Personality the medium of action, falls under death; and He begins again to live, in that He receives back this same for a medium of His action again. The life which fell under death was a fleshly life, that is, such a life as has its determination to the present condition of man's nature, to the externality of its mundane connexion. The life which was won back is a spiritual life, that is, such a life as has its determination from the Spirit, in which consists our inner connexion with God." It is impossible, throughout this difficult and most important passage, to report all the various shades of difference of opinion which even the greater expositors have given us. I shall indicate only those which are necessary to be mentioned as meanings to be distinguished from that which I advocate, or as errors likely to fall constantly under the eye of my readers. Of this latter class is the rendering of the A. V. here, "*by the Spirit*," which is wrong both grammatically and theologically): **in which**

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

unto the spirits <sup>l</sup> in prison; <sup>20</sup> which were once disobedient, <sup>k</sup> when the longsuffering of God was waiting in the days of Noah, while <sup>1</sup> the ark was a preparing, <sup>m</sup> wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

<sup>i</sup> Isa. xlii. 7.  
& xlii. 9.  
& lxi. 1.  
<sup>k</sup> Gen. vi. 3, 5,  
13.

<sup>l</sup> Heb. xl. 7.

<sup>m</sup> Gen. vii. 7.  
& viii. 18.  
<sup>2</sup> Pet. ii. 5.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; <sup>20</sup> which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

(viz., in the spirit, according to which His Jew life was. *In which, not by which*: see below) He also went and preached (went, used of a local transference here, just as "*is gone*" [the same word], below in ver. 22: and preached, of a preaching good news, as in all other places of the New Test.) to the spirits in prison (the disembodied spirits, which were kept shut up [Jude 6; 2 Pet. ii. 4] in the place of the departed awaiting the final judgment: in School, as the Jews called it; which were once disobedient (this clause is a secondary and dependent one, descriptive of the spirits intended: that they were those of men who were formerly disobedient), when (marks distinctively the time intended by the word once) the longsuffering of God was waiting (and this marks the period of their disobedience, viz. those 120 years of Gen. vi. 3) in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which (by having entered into which) a few persons, that is, eight souls (individuals) were saved (from drowning) by water (not, "into which a few, &c. got safe through the water," which was not the fact. The water is in the Apostle's view, the *medium of saving*, inasmuch as it bore up the ark: see the next verse). So much for the interpretation of the detail of this passage; from which it will be seen that we have regarded it, in common with the majority of Commentators, as necessarily pointing to an event in our Lord's redemptive agency which happened, as regards time, in the order of the context here: and that that event was, His going (whether between His death and resurrection, or after the latter, will be presently discussed) to the place of custody of departed spirits, and there preaching to those spirits, which were formerly disobedient when God's longsuffering waited in the days of Noah. Thus far I conceive our passage stands committed: and I do not believe it possible to make it say less, or other, than this. What was the intent of that preaching, and what its effect, is not here revealed; the fact

merely is stated. The statement of the fact, however, has been felt to be accompanied by such great difficulties, that other meanings have been sought for the passage than that which the words present at first sight. Expositors have endeavoured to remove the idea that the gospel was preached to the dead in Hades, either 1) by denying the reference to our Lord's descent thither at all, or 2) by admitting that, but supposing it to have had another purpose. I give, following the classification in Huther's note, an account of the principal upholders of these views. Under 1., I place all those who deny any reference to Christ's descent into Hades, distinguishing the minor differences between them as to what *preaching* is there indicated.

I. 1. Augustine, Bede, Thomas Aquinas, Lyra, Hammond, Beza, Scaliger, Leighton, &c., and recently Hofmann, maintain that the preaching mentioned was the preaching of righteousness by Noah to his contemporaries: that Noah thus preached not of himself, but by virtue of the Spirit of Christ inspiring him; and that thus his preaching was in fact a preaching by Christ in the Spirit. But this necessitates a forced interpretation of the words in prison; Augustine understanding by them, *in the darkness of ignorance as in a prison*: Beza, &c., that they *are now* in prison for their then unbelief. It must be evident to every unprejudiced reader, how alien such an interpretation is from the plain meaning and connexion of the words and clauses. Not a word is indicated by St. Peter on the very far-off lying allusion to the fact that the Spirit of Christ preached in Noah: not a word, here, on the fact that Noah himself preached to his contemporaries. Again, the same *subject, Christ*, runs through the whole, without a hint, that we are dealing with historical matter of fact, in some of the terms, as "*suffered*," "*put to death*," "*made alive*," and with recondite figure in *others*, as "*went and preached*." Again, whether we take the *metaphorical prison* of Augustine, which I suppose will hardly find any advo-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

<sup>21</sup> *The like figure where-  
unto even baptism doth  
also now save us (not the*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>21</sup> <sup>n</sup> Which, the antitype [of that], <sup>n</sup> Eph. v. 20.  
doth now save † you also, even bap- † <sup>So our three  
oldest MSS.</sup>

ates, or the *present* being in prison of Beza, &c., it cannot surely be doubted that we are equally putting force on the Apostle's words, and that the **spirits in prison** must be taken as describing the local condition of the *spirits at the time when the preaching took place*. Moreover, *went*, as compared with ver. 22 (which Hofmann gets most lamely over, by saying that it presents no greater difficulty than the statement that Christ accompanied the Israelites through the wilderness in 1 Cor. x. 4: to which we may answer, If this were a plain statement, involving such an application of the word, we might then discuss the intelligibility of it)—the expression, **were once disobedient**, marked off as not belonging to the same time as the *preaching*, shew, as plainly as words can shew, that we are reading of some act of Christ which He *then, at the time described, went and did, with reference to spirits who were, at some other time specified, in a certain state*. And, which has not been sufficiently noticed, a crowning objection to this view is the use of the word *spirits*, connecting [wherein, i. e. *in the spirit*] our Lord's state with the state of those to whom He preached: a word only used of men when departed out of this life.

I. 2. Several Commentators, principally Socinian, but also Grotius and others, understand by **the spirits in prison** either the Gentiles, or the Jews (under the yoke of the law) and Gentiles (under the yoke of the devil) together, and by the word *preached*, the preaching of the Spirit of Christ by the Apostles. These expositors take the mention of the disobedient in Noah's time to be merely by way of sample of the disobedient in all time, or, at least, in the time when the Apostle was writing. As Huther well says, "How this interpretation heaps on caprice upon caprice, need not be shewn." I will add, that its supporters do not appear to attempt to justify it philologically, as indeed it is plain they cannot. Every word of every clause protests against it.

II. We now come to those who understand the passage of our Lord's descent into Hades, but, offended by the idea of the possibility of salvation being opened to spirits of the disobedient kept awaiting judgment, diverge from one another and

from the straightforward explanation.

II. 1. Many understand **the spirits in prison** of souls awaiting condemnation, but explain *preached* of announcing, not salvation, but condemnation. But, besides that this verb, as remarked above, has, as applied to Christ and His Apostles, but the one meaning of preaching the good tidings of Salvation,—besides the utter superfluity of such a "preaching" to spirits already reserved to damnation,—what a context would such a meaning give, in the midst of a passage intended to convey consolation and encouragement by the blessed consequences of Christ's sufferings!

II. 2. Some of the Fathers, as Irenæus, Tertullian, Hippolytus,—the Schoolmen, Zwingle, Calvin, &c., explain *preached* rightly, of announcing salvation, but regard **the spirits in prison** as the spirits of the *just*, especially of the Old Test. saints. The most extraordinary instance of this class of interpreters is Calvin, who destroys his own explanation, by confessing that the Greek will not bear it.

II. 3. Estius, Bellarmine, Luther, Peter Martyr, Bengel, &c., assume that the words refer, not to all the unbelievers of Noah's time, but only to those who repented at the last moment when the flood was upon them.

II. 4. Athanasius, Ambrose, Erasmus, Calvin, hold both kinds of preaching, the evangelic to the spirits of the just, the damnatory to those of the disobedient.

One or two singular interpretations do not fall under any of the above classes: e. g. Marcion maintained that the preaching of Christ was to those whom the Old Test. calls ungodly, but who were in reality better than the Old Test. saints; Clement of Alexandria, that they were the *just among the philosophers*, who were nevertheless imprisoned under idolatry.

It remains that we should enquire, whether this preaching to the imprisoned spirits by our Lord, took place between His death and His resurrection, or after the latter. The answer will very much depend on the sense which we give to the words in **which**. The argument which Wicsinger so much insists on, that the clauses must come in chronological sequence, will not determine for us; because in **which He also** might very well be a

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

o Titus iii. 5. tism : not putting away of ° the filth  
p Rom. x. 10. of the flesh, p but the enquiry of a

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

putting away of the filth  
of the flesh, but the answer  
of a good conscience to-

taking up again of in the Spirit, recapitulating some former act also done in the Spirit: "put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit,—that Spirit in which also, ere He was made alive with the full resurrection life, He &c." And this I incline to think the sense of the passage: in which referring not to the complex resurrection life, but properly and strictly to the spirit, in which the Lord never ceased to be, even when His complex life of body and soul was dissolved. When again Wiesinger says that went and preached cannot be understood of the time intermediate, because in no case can we think of our Lord's state in death in dualistic wise, so that while His body was held by the bands of death, His Spirit should be carrying on the Messianic work,—I answer, why not? Surely the reply to the penitent thief implies a *going*, and in that going a joy and triumph sufficient to be the subject of a consoling promise at that terrible moment. And might not the reasoning be turned, with as much propriety? Might not we say that it is impossible to conceive of our Lord during that time as *other than* employed in the spirit in which He continued, not to exist merely, but to live? That, granted that His dying words imply a special delivering of his Spirit into the hands of his Father, and by consequence, a resting of his Spirit in those Hands in the death-state,—yet must we not conceive of His Spirit as going thither, where "the righteous souls are in the hand of God?" And if so, who shall place a limit to His power or will to communicate with any departed spirits of whatever character? So that, while I would not say that the conditions of the passage are not satisfied by the supposition that the event happened after the Resurrection, I believe there can be no reason for saying that they are not, on the other hypothesis. And I own, that the in which also inclines me to this other. It seems most naturally to be taken as a resumptive explanation of in the Spirit, with a view to something (ver. 21) which is to follow; and the in, capable indeed of being otherwise explained, yet seems to favour this idea,—that the Lord was strictly speaking in the Spirit, when that happened which is related.

From all then which has been said, it

will be gathered, that with the great majority of Commentators, ancient and modern, I understand these words to say, that our Lord, in His disembodied state, did go to the place of detention of departed spirits, and did there announce His work of redemption, preach salvation in fact, to the disembodied spirits of those who refused to obey the voice of God when the judgment of the flood was hanging over them. Why these rather than others are mentioned,—whether merely as a sample of the like gracious work on others, or for some special reason unimaginable by us, we cannot say. It is ours to deal with the plain words of Scripture, and to accept its revelations as far as vouchsafed to us. And they are vouchsafed to us to the utmost limit of legitimate inference from revealed facts. That inference every intelligent reader will draw from the fact here announced; it is not purgatory, it is not universal restitution; but it is one which throws blessed light on one of the darkest enigmas of the divine justice: the cases where the final doom seems infinitely out of proportion to the lapse which has incurred it. And as we cannot say to what other cases this *preaching* may have applied, so it would be presumption in us to limit its occurrence or its efficacy. The reason of mentioning here these sinners, above other sinners, appears to be, their connexion with the type of baptism which follows. If so, who shall say, that the blessed act was confined to them?

21, 22.] The persons and the things compared must be carefully borne in mind. The *few* in Noah's day were saved by water; we also are saved by water. The *antitype* to that water on which the ark floated, saving its inmates, is the water of baptism; but as ours is a spiritual, not a material rescue, so the *antitype* is not the washing of our flesh by that water,—the form in which it is applied to us, as the bearing up their ark was the form in which their water was applied to them,—but a far nobler thing, the clearness and purity of our inner consciousness towards God: and this saving power of the water of baptism in our case is by virtue of the resurrection and exaltation of Christ, into whose death and resurrection we are baptized. Thus by our very profession we are united to Him in sufferings as in glory.



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

ward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: <sup>22</sup> who is gone into heaven,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

good conscience after God, <sup>a</sup> by the <sup>q. ch. i. s.</sup> resurrection of Jesus Christ: <sup>22</sup> who

He through His innocent sufferings has glorified suffering and death, even in death working mercy, and now exalted as our Head above all principality and power. The course of thought is unusual, is startling, is mysterious; but it is not unaccountable, it is not arbitrary. From the mention of the spiritual nature of our Lord's resurrection life, arises the mention of His blessed employ even in that state of the pure spirit to which His sufferings brought Him: from that mention comes the connexion of a great type of that day of Noah with our share, by baptismal union with Christ, in His salvation and triumphs; by which thoughts the final point is reached, His utmost exaltation through suffering, our union with and following of Him. Having said thus much on the whole connexion, we can now go into the details.

21.] Which (viz. *water*: not *baptism*, which does not come in till the end of the clause: nor, the whole fact announced in ver. 20. The construction is somewhat involved by the close connexion of the thing signifying and the thing signified. The *water* to which *which* refers is not the water of Noah's flood, but water, generally, the common term between the type and antitype), the *antitype* [of that] (i. e. simply the *corresponding particular* in both cases: the word does not contain in itself any solution of the question which of the two, the *type* or that which is *antitype* to it, is the original: the same word, *antitype*, is used in Heb. ix. 24, where, from the context, the *type* is the primitive, the *antitype* the representative: here, from the context, it is *vice versâ*: this need not however be expressed, but left to be understood), is *now saving* (the rescue not being as yet fully accomplished. We are as yet *being saved* by water) *you also* (as well as them. Then this assertion having been made, follows the parenthetical explanation, that the method of saving in the *antitype* is not material, as in the type), *even baptism* (not, *the water of baptism*: the parenthesis following is a kind of protest against such a rendering:—but, water, in the form of baptism, become to us baptism. *Water* is the common term: water saves in both cases. It saved them, becoming to them a means of floating their ark and bearing them harmless: it saves us, becoming to us baptism: and that bap-

tism not material, but spiritual): *not putting away of the filth of the flesh* (i. e. "not fleshly putting away of filth." It is possible that the Apostle may have special reference to the unavailing nature of the Jewish washings, as Justin Martyr says, "What was the profit of that baptism which cleanses the flesh and body only? Be baptized in soul"), *but enquiry of a good conscience after God* (i. e. the seeking after God in a good and pure conscience, which is the aim and end of the Christian baptismal life. This is the sense of the Greek expression here, in the only other place where it occurs in Scripture, viz. 2 Kings xi. 7. On this view, the *enquiry of a good conscience* means,—the enquiry which a good conscience makes. Very various have been the interpretations. Some understand the *questions used in baptism*; others, the *request of a good conscience*; others, again, *prayer to God for a good conscience*. The objection to all these is, that they do not justify the expression as applied to the saving force of baptism; as indeed neither entirely does the meaning which I have given above: but where *all* explanations were unsatisfactory, I thought it best to adopt one which strictly keeps to the Scripture usage of the words, being at the same time full as good as any of the others in its contextual application. The rendering of the A. V., the *answer of a good conscience*, is entirely unjustifiable, in fact is a pure invention, the word bearing no such meaning),—*by means of the resurrection of Jesus Christ* (with what are these words to be joined? Grotius, with others, connects them with the immediately preceding. So also Hofmann, saying, "By means of the resurrection of Christ, as the removal of sin once for all for all mankind, it is, that in baptism the prayer for a good conscience is directed to God." But as Wiesinger objects, it is surely allotting too insignificant a part to these words, to make them merely assign the method in which the prayer is heard. Most Commentators have joined them with *saves*, regarding the intervening sentence as parenthetical. Thus taken, the words refer back to "*being made alive in the Spirit*" in ver. 18, conducting on the course of thought with regard to Christ, and to ourselves: His resurrection, and entrance into His

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>r</sup> Ps. cx. 1. is gone into heaven, and <sup>r</sup> is on the  
Rom. viii. 34.  
 Eph. i. 20.  
 Col. iii. 1.  
 Heb. i. 3. right hand of God; <sup>s</sup> angels and  
s Rom. viii. 38.  
 1 Cor. xv. 24.  
 Eph. i. 21. authorities and powers being made  
 subject unto him.

a ch. iii. 18.

† for us is  
 omitted by  
 two of our  
 oldest MSS.:  
 the Sinaitic  
 MS. reads  
 for you.

b Rom. vi. 2, 7.  
 Gal. v. 24.

c Rom. xiv. 7.  
 ch. ii. 1.

d Gal. ii. 30.  
 ch. i. 14.

e John i. 13.

Rom. vi. 11.

2 Cor. v. 15.

James i. 18.

f Ezek. xlii. 6. & xlv. 9. Acts xvii. 30.

IV. <sup>1</sup> Forasmuch then <sup>a</sup> as Christ  
 hath suffered † in the flesh, arm  
 yourselves likewise with the same  
 mind: <sup>b</sup> because he that hath suf-  
 fered in the flesh hath ceased from  
 sin; <sup>2</sup> <sup>c</sup> that ye no longer <sup>d</sup> should  
 live the rest of your time in the  
 flesh by the lusts of men, <sup>e</sup> but by  
 the will of God. <sup>3</sup> <sup>f</sup> For the time

kingdom, giving us, by Him, a living part  
 in Him, and entrance also into His king-  
 dom by means of His appointed sacrament  
 of Holy Baptism, spiritually received):

22.] who is on the right hand of  
 God (Ps. cx. 1), having gone (compare  
 went, above, ver. 19) to heaven (i. e. into  
 the place of angels and supramundane  
 powers, but distinguished from them by  
 being himself at God's right hand), angels  
 and authorities and powers (the whole  
 heavenly hierarchy, as in Col. ii. 10—15)  
 being subjected to Him. And thus is  
 announced the glorious completion of the  
 result of Christ's voluntary and innocent  
 sufferings: glorious for Himself, and glori-  
 ous for us, who are by baptism united to  
 Him. And now the practical inference for  
 us follows.

CHAP. IV. 1—6.] *Exhortation, after  
 the forecited example of Christ's suffer-  
 ings, to entire separation from the ungodly  
 Gentile world.* This passage closes the set  
 of exhortations which began at ch. ii. 11,  
 with reference to behaviour towards the  
 heathen world around: and with ch. iv. 7,  
 begins a new and concluding set, no longer  
 regarding the world without. Christ then  
 having suffered in the flesh (see on this  
 above, ch. iii. 18). This conclusion takes  
 up again the words "*Because Christ also  
 suffered*" there, which led to the enlarging  
 on the result of those His sufferings as re-  
 garded both Himself and us), do ye also  
 arm yourselves with (put on as armour)  
 the same mind (intent, resolution; viz., to  
 suffer in the flesh, as He did. See this  
 explanation justified in my Greek Test.);  
 because (assigns a reason for the expression  
 just used, arm yourselves: "and ye will

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

and is on the right hand  
 of God; angels and au-  
 thorities and powers being  
 made subject unto him.

IV. <sup>1</sup> Forasmuch then as  
 Christ hath suffered for us  
 in the flesh, arm yourselves  
 likewise with the same  
 mind: for he that hath  
 suffered in the flesh hath  
 ceased from sin; <sup>2</sup> that  
 he no longer should live  
 the rest of his time in the  
 flesh to the lusts of men,  
 but to the will of God.

<sup>3</sup> For the time past of our

need this arming, because, the course of  
 suffering according to the flesh which ye  
 have to undergo ending in an entire free-  
 dom from sin, your warfare with sin must  
 be begun and carried on from this time  
 forward") he that hath suffered according  
 to the flesh is made to cease from sin (he  
 is, by the very fact of having thus suffered,  
 brought to an end with sin—has no more  
 to do with it: and by an inference, the  
 suffering in the flesh, and the being made  
 to cease from sin, are commensurate in  
 their progress. On the sense, see Rom. vi.  
 7. Here too there is throughout a presup-  
 position of our being united to the suffer-  
 ings of Christ, not merely as regards our-  
 selves, suffering in the flesh, but suffering  
 by virtue of union with Him who suffered,  
 and so divorced from all sin. That this sen-  
 tence itself is general, and not to be under-  
 stood in itself of Christ, is plain: equally  
 plain that He is the person hinted at in the  
 background, and with reference to whom  
 the general truth is adduced. The general  
 assertion itself, here and in Rom. vi. 7,  
 rests on the fact that the flesh is the ele-  
 ment of sin, and he that hath mortified it  
 by suffering has in the same proportion got  
 rid of sin); with a view (depends on "arm  
 yourselves," the intermediate general sen-  
 tence being parenthetical) no longer by the  
 lusts of men (as your rule: what is called  
 the normal dative: not as Wies., al., i. e.  
 "live unto righteousness," ch. ii. 24: cf.  
 Rom. vi. 10—13: this live is a very differ-  
 ent matter from live in those places. men  
 put forward for contemptuous emphasis, as  
 opposed to God, which gains more majesty  
 by not being thus put forward. What the  
 lusts are is shewn in ver. 3), but by the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: <sup>4</sup> wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: <sup>5</sup> who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. <sup>6</sup> For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. <sup>7</sup> But the end*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

past of our life may suffice us <sup>g</sup> to have wrought out the will of the Gentiles, walking as ye have done in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: <sup>4</sup> wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same slough of riot, <sup>h</sup> speaking evil of you: <sup>5</sup> who shall give account to him that is ready <sup>i</sup> to judge the quick and the dead. <sup>6</sup> For for this cause <sup>k</sup> was the gospel preached to dead men also, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

<sup>g</sup> Eph. ii. 2.  
& iv. 17.  
<sup>i</sup> Thess. iv. 5.  
Titus iv. 3.  
ch. i. 14.

<sup>h</sup> Acts xiii. 45.  
& xviii. 6.  
ch. iii. 16.

<sup>i</sup> Acts x. 42.  
& xvii. 31.  
Rom. xiv. 10.  
12. 1 Cor. xv.  
51. 52. 2 Tim.  
iv. 1. James  
v. 9.  
<sup>k</sup> ch. iii. 19.

will of God (according to that which God wills, as your rule) to live the rest of your time in the flesh (compare ch. i. 17). For (follows: "I say, the rest of the time, for the past time surely, &c.") sufficient is the past time to have wrought out (the word used, and its tense, imply that the course is closed and done, and looked back on as a standing and accomplished fact) the will of the Gentiles (that which the Gentiles would have you do. The Gentiles, used not of any national distinction, but of heathens as distinguished from Christians, shews that the majority of the readers of the Epistle had been Gentiles, among these *gentiles*, themselves), walking as ye have done in lasciviousnesses (plural, out-breaks of *lasciviousness*), lusts (here perhaps not general, as in ver. 2, but particular lusts of uncleanness), wine-bibbings, revellings, drinking-bouts, and nefarious idolatries (I may remark as against the view that this Epistle was written to Jews, that this passage cannot be explained on that supposition. The Jews certainly never went so far into Gentile abominations as to justify its assertions): at which (wherein, viz. at your having done with such practices, implied above. The aim of this verse is, that they might not be moved by the perverse judgments concerning them of these men. They must give offence to their former companions: for this there is no help) they are astonished (think it strange, as A. V.), that you run not with them (the idea is that of a multitude

rushing on together) to (the direction and purpose of the confluence) the same slough (a sink, or slough, or puddle. On the whole the local meaning is to be preferred, on account of the figure in the previous verb) of profligacy, speaking evil of you (the early apologists testify abundantly to the fact, that the Christians were accused of all manner of crimes, and of haughtiness and hatred of their species): who (your blasphemers. The consideration is propounded for the comfort and stay of Christians unjustly slandered) shall render account to Him that is ready to judge (once for all, decisively) living and dead. For (assigns a reason for the judging *the dead* just mentioned) to this end to dead men also (as well as to *living*, which is the ordinary case: and carrying with it a climax,—“even to the dead”) was the gospel preached (when, and by Whom, see below), that they might indeed be judged according to men as regards the flesh, but might live on according to God as regards the spirit. In examining into the meaning of this difficult verse, one thing may be laid down at the outset, as certain on any sure principles of exposition; and thereby a whole class of interpretations removed out of our way. Seeing that for binds vv. 5 and 6 logically together, and that to dead men also distinctly takes up the to dead men before in this logical connexion, all interpretations must be false, which do not give to the words *the dead* in ver. 6 the same

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

1 Matt xxiv. 13, 14. Rom. xiii. 12. Phil. iv. 5. Heb. x. 25. James v. 8. 2 Pet. iii. 9. 11. 1 John ii. 18. m Matt. xxvi. 41. Luke xxi. 84. Col. iv. 2. ch. i. 13. & v. 8. n Col. iii. 14. Heb. xiii. 1. o Prov. x. 12. 1 Cor. xiii. 7. James v. 20.

7 But <sup>1</sup> the end of all things is at hand: <sup>m</sup> be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer, <sup>8</sup> <sup>n</sup> above all things having your love towards one another fervent: because <sup>o</sup> love † covereth a multitude of sins.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer. <sup>8</sup> And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

† So most of our ancient MSS.

meaning as the dead in ver. 5: i. e. that of *dead men*, literally and simply so called: men who have died and are in their graves. This at once rids us of all the Commentators who interpret this second *dead* of the *dead in trespasses and sins*, as well as those who to gain this meaning here, distort *dead* in ver. 5 from its constant reference in that connexion to mean the *spiritually dead*, or the *Gentiles*. A second principle which we may lay down is this: that *dead* in ver. 6 must be kept as wide in its reference as *dead* in ver. 5: i. e. that it must not be interpreted as applying merely to the blasphemers of the Christians who should have died before the judgment, or merely to such blasphemed Christians themselves, as shall have then died, or merely to the spirits in prison of ch. iii. 19, but must be treated as a general assertion in the literal meaning of the word. It is quite impossible to put before the English reader the discussion on the different interpretations which have been given, as it mainly turns on considerations of the construction of the sentence in the original, but I may just say this much, that *dead* cannot mean "*now dead*," nor can the *gospel was preached* point to the time when the *gospel* was preached to them, before they died: nor again, can the Apostle's view be to comfort his readers in persecution and slander, by the thought that bodily death would not exempt their adversaries from the divine judgment. The view here adopted is, the persons pointed at are those spirits in prison to whom our Lord went and preached, ch. iii. 19. Our Lord is ready to judge the dead; and with reason; for even they have not been without opportunity of receiving his *gospel*: as the example which was adduced in ch. iii. 19 shews. For this end the *gospel* was preached even to the dead,—that they might—not indeed escape the universal judgment on human sin, which is physical death,—but, *that they might be judged* [be in the state of the completed sentence on sin, which is death after the flesh] according to [as] *man as regards the flesh*, but [notwith-

standing] *might live* [of a state to continue] according to God [a life with God, and divine] as regards the spirit. And this interpretation I adopt, believing it to be the only one which satisfies the conditions of the sentence: which justifies the *for* as accounting for the judging the *dead*: the *also*, as taking up, and bringing into prominence and climax the *dead*: the term *dead*, as used in precisely the same sense as in the last verse, and contemporary with the verb which governs it: the statement, that the *gospel was preached*, as grounded on a previously-announced fact, ch. iii. 19: the aim and end introduced by the *that*, which on this, and on no other rendering, receives meaning and perspicuity. And so, in the main, with minor deviations, the more accurate of the modern Commentators.

7—V. 11.] *General exhortations with reference to behaviour within the Christian body, in contemplation of the approaching end.* This portion of the Epistle falls into three sections: 7—11, *Christian and social duties*, in consideration of the end being at hand: 12—19, *Christian bearing of suffering*, in the same consideration: v. 1—11, *ecclesiastical and general mutual ministrations*: passing off into fervent *general exhortations and aspirations.* 7.] But (the connexion is close with what had gone before: the *being ready* of ver. 5 is in the Apostle's mind: and he passes, with it before him, from considerations external to the church, to those affecting its internal condition) the end of all things is at hand (on this being the constant expectation of the apostolic age, see Acts i. 7, note: 1 Thess. iv. 15, note): be therefore of temperate mind (see note on 1 Tim. ii. 9), and be sober unto (with a view to) prayers, 8.] above all things (not placing love above prayer, but because all social life and duty must presuppose love as its necessary bond and condition) having your love towards one another intense (see ch. i. 22. He presupposes their love, and enjoins that it be fervent or intense): because love covereth a multitude of sins (from ref. Prov. x. 12,



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

<sup>9</sup> Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

<sup>10</sup> As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. <sup>11</sup> If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>9</sup> P Using hospitality one to another without murmuring. <sup>10</sup> R Each man even as he received a gift of grace, ministering it one to another, <sup>8</sup> as good stewards of <sup>t</sup> the manifold grace of God. <sup>11</sup> U If any speaketh, [† speaking] as oracles of God; <sup>x</sup> if any ministereth, [† ministering] as of the ability which God bestoweth:

p Rom. xii. 13. Heb. xiii. 2.  
q 2 Cor. ix. 7. Phil. ii. 14. Philem. 14.  
r Rom. xii. 6. 1 Cor. iv. 7.  
s Matt. xxiv. 45. & xxv. 14. 21. Luke xii. 42. 1 Cor. iv. 1. 2. Titus i. 7.  
t 1 Cor. xii. 4. Eph. iv. 11. u Jer. xxiii. 22.  
† Not expressed in the original.  
x Rom. xii. 6, 7. 8. 1 Cor. iii. 10.

except that there it is "all sins." As to the meaning, the words here are used in a different reference from that in St. James, where see note. Here it is the hiding of offences [both from one another and in God's sight: see below] by mutual forbearance and forgiveness, which is meant. This has been recently denied by De Wette and Huther, the former understanding the sins rather as those of the Christian body, which mutual love keeps back from being committed, and the latter not excluding the other meaning. They would understand the words, that love causes God to overlook a multitude of sins. This they do partly on account of the word *sins*, which they maintain cannot well be applied to the mutual offences of common life [see however Matt. xviii. 15], and partly on account of "because," which seems to indicate some stimulus by which Christian love is recommended. And doubtless there is something in this latter consideration, especially when we remember that the nearness of the divine judgment is a pressing motive throughout these exhortations. I do not see why we should not take the saying in its widest reference, understanding it primarily perhaps of forgiveness, but then also of that prevention of sin by kindness of word and deed, and also that intercession for sin in prayer, which are the constant fruits of fervent love. It is a truth from which we need not shrink, that every sin which love hides from man's sight, is hidden in God's sight also. There is but one efficient cause of the hiding of sin: but mutual love applies that cause: draws the universal cover over the particular sin. This meaning, as long as it is not perverted into the thought that love towards others covers a man's own sin by his merits, need not and should not be excluded): —hospitable towards one another (see

Rom. xii. 13) without murmuring (see Phil. ii. 14, and note. The opposite to *murmuring* in hospitality is simple openheartedness, Rom. xii. 8: the consequence of it, "hidden evil speaking, hateful reproaching with past favours," as Gerhard says here). <sup>10</sup>] And this is to be so, not merely in the interchange of this world's good offices, but also in the communication of the gifts of the Spirit, which are the common endowment of the whole body, individual Christians being only the stewards of them. Each man even as (in whatever quality and quantity: but the subsequent injunctions seem more to regard the quality than the quantity. It is otherwise in Eph. iv. 7; Rom. xii. 3. The *as* has no reference to the manner of reception) he received a gift of grace (see Rom. xii. 6 ff.; 1 Cor. xii. 4, 28; meaning, any one of the gifts known by that name), to each other ministering it (to the need of others; his store out of which he ministers being that gift thus bestowed upon him), as (being: or, as becometh: see ch. i. 14) good stewards (there is most likely a reference to our Lord's parable of the talents) of the various (or manifold: see this illustrated, 1 Cor. xii. 4; Matt. xxv. 15; Luke xix. 13) grace of God. <sup>11</sup>] And this both in speaking and acting. If any one speaketh (as a prophet or teacher, see 1 Cor. xii. 8, 10, where the several branches of this gift are laid out), speaking (as in the former construction) as oracles (not "the oracles;" the meaning is not, speaking in accord with Scripture, but, speaking what he does speak, as God's sayings, not his own: as a steward) of God: if any one ministereth (in Rom. xii. 8; 1 Cor. xii. 28, we have the several parts of this *ministry* laid out), [ministering] as (see above) out of (as his store and power of ministration)



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

<sup>y</sup> Eph. v. 20.  
ch. ii. 5.  
<sup>z</sup> 1 Tim. vi. 16.  
ch. v. 11.  
Rev. i. 6.

that in all things <sup>y</sup> God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, <sup>z</sup> to whom be the glory and the might for ever and ever. Amen.

*giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.* <sup>12</sup> *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: <sup>13</sup> but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. <sup>14</sup> If ye be re-*

Cor. iii. 13.  
.i. 7.

<sup>12</sup> Beloved, think it not strange concerning <sup>a</sup> the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing taking place unto you: <sup>13</sup> <sup>b</sup> but in as far as <sup>c</sup> ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice; <sup>d</sup> that, at the revelation of his glory, ye may be glad also with exultation. <sup>14</sup> <sup>e</sup> If ye

<sup>b</sup> Acts v. 41.  
James i. 2.  
<sup>c</sup> Rom. viii. 17.  
2 Cor. i. 7.  
& iv. 10.  
Phil. iii. 10.  
Col. i. 24.  
2 Tim. ii. 12.  
ch. v. 1. 10.  
Rev. i. 9.  
<sup>d</sup> ch. i. 5, 6.  
<sup>e</sup> Matt. v. 11.  
2 Cor. xii. 10.  
James i. 12.  
ch. ii. 19, 20. & iii. 14.

the power (thus to minister) which God bestoweth: that (aim and end of all this as of every act both of the Christian community and of the Christian man) in all things (the fact that all things are referred to God, and done as of and to Him, is His being glorified in the Christian church) God may be glorified through Jesus Christ ("as all benefits descend to us from God through Christ, so also all ought to be referred to the glory of God through Christ." Gerhard), to whom (viz. to God, as the main subject of the foregoing, and also because the words the glory refer back to may be glorified. The case is very similar to Heb. xiii. 21, where see note. See similar doxologies, ch. v. 11; Rom. xi. 36; Eph. iii. 21) is the glory and the might (exactly so in Rev. i. 6; see also ib. v. 13) to the ages of the ages (i. e., for ever and ever, see note, 1 Tim. i. 17). Amen (is not a note of conclusion, but of strong emotion of heart).

12—19.] *Exhortations* (see summary above) in reference to the trial of affliction which they were to undergo: and that, in view of the end of things. The section falls into three parts: 1) vv. 12, 13—these sufferings as participation in Christ's sufferings are to be rejoiced in, as in prospect of participation of His glory also: 2) 14—16—if really sufferings for Christ, the glory of Christ already rests on you: take care then that they be verily sufferings for Him: 3) 17, 18, these sufferings are a part of the coming judgment which begins at the house of God. Then ver. 19 concludes. This passage is no repetition of ch. iii. 13—iv.

6, which treated of their sufferings with reference to their inflictors: whereas this proceeds wholly on reference to a Christian's own inner hopes, and considerations within the church itself.

12, 13.] *Beloved* (so ch. ii. 11; here it begins an affectionate address, in which comfort and joy is about to be introduced), be not astonished at (see on ver. 4: think it not a thing alien from you, in which you are not at home. St. Peter himself was astonished, thought it strange at our Lord's sufferings, when he said, "This shall not be to Thee") the passing through the fire (literally, burning: in its later use, smelting, trying of metal by fire) which is taking place in your case for a trial to you, as if (explanatory of the "be not astonished," above) some strange thing were happening unto you (i. e., were falling by chance on you (opposed to what went before, "taking place for your trial;" i. e., done with a purpose, by One who knows how to serve that purpose): but in as far as (not "in that," "inasmuch as," A. V.) ye are partakers with the sufferings of Christ (i. e. have a share, in your own persons, of those sufferings which He personally bare: compare 2 Cor. iv. 10; Phil. iii. 10; Heb. xiii. 13, &c. It is not the sufferings of Christ mystical in His body the church [compare Col. i. 24] which are meant: in these the readers might bear their part, but could hardly be said to have part), rejoice; that (simply of the scope of that joy, as the preparation for what follows) ye may also at (in, i. e. "in the day or time of:" not to be taken with the verb "rejoice," as

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

proached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. <sup>15</sup> But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busy-body in other men's matters. <sup>16</sup> Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. <sup>17</sup> For the time

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you <sup>f</sup> †: <sup>15</sup> but <sup>g</sup> let none of you suffer as a murderer, <sup>h</sup> or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a prier into other men's matters. <sup>16</sup> Yet if any suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; <sup>i</sup> but let him glorify God in this name. <sup>17</sup> Because

<sup>f</sup> ch. ii. 12. & iii. 16.  
<sup>†</sup> on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified in all our oldest MSS. and versions.  
<sup>g</sup> ch. ii. 20.  
<sup>h</sup> 1 Thess. iv. 11. 1 Tim. v. 13.  
<sup>i</sup> Acts v. 41.

indicating that at which or because of which the joy takes place) the revelation of His glory rejoice (the "rejoice" before was spoken of the habit of life; now of the single event of that day) exulting (with exultation; because that former joy here is mixed with grief and sadness.)

14—16.] See the summary above, at ver. 12. If ye are reproached in (i. e., in the matter of, for) the name of Christ (see Matt. v. 11, from which the words are adopted, as also ch. iii. 14. The word there added, "speaking falsely," comes below, vv. 15, 16. Bengel says, "People thought it a reproach to call any one a Christian, ver. 16." But probably the reference is more general, and Calvin is right: "He makes mention of reproaches because they bring with them more bitterness than loss of goods, or even torments and pains of the body; there being nothing which so much breaks noble minds." And in the name of Christ also must have a wider sense: on account of your confession of Christ in word and deed: compare Mark ix. 41), blessed are ye (ch. iii. 14: blessed, and that even now), because the Spirit of glory and that of God (the Apostle does not mean, by repeating the article, two different spirits, but identifies the same Spirit under two different denominations: the Spirit of glory, which is also the Spirit of God) resteth upon you (from Isa. xi. 2: on you, as on Him: compare also Numb. xi. 25, 26; 4 Kings ii. 15. It is possible that the clause which follows in the received text, may have fallen out by similarity of endings; but in judging of this as a likelihood, we must remember that not only the three great MSS. omit it, but so many of the

ancient versions, as to make it very improbable that it has been thus overlooked: and its very appearance, to explain the words "of glory," is against it).

15, 16.] Negative and positive, resumptions and enlargements of the words, "in the name of Christ." In the name of Christ, I say: 15.] for let no one of you suffer (reproach or persecution: suffer in any way) as (being) a murderer or malefactor (as opposed to a well-doer, ch. iii. 17), or as (the repetition of "as" separates the following word from the foregoing, as belonging to a separate class) a prier into other men's matters.

16.] But if (he suffer) as (being) a Christian (the word appears here, as in Acts xxvi. 28, to be used as carrying contempt, from the mouth of an adversary), let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name (viz. that of Christian: at, or in, the fact that he is counted worthy to suffer by such a name. This seems better than to take name as meaning "behalf," A. V., regard, matter, as most Commentators).

17—19.] See summary at ver. 12. The thought which lies at the root, is this: all men must come under the judgment of God. His own family He brings first under it, chastising them in this life: let then those who suffer for His sake glorify Him for it, as apprehending their part in His family, and as mindful of the terrible lot of those whom His judgment shall find impenitent and unchastised. It is this latter thought, the escape from the weight of God's hand [ch. v. 6], and not the thought of the terrible vengeance which God will take on their persecutors, which is adduced as the second ground

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

k Isa. x. 12.  
Jer. xxv. 29.  
& xlix. 12.  
Ezek. ix. 6.  
Mal. iii. 5.  
l Luke xxiii.  
31.  
† Not expressed  
in the ori-  
ginal.  
m Luke x. 19,  
14.  
n Prov. xi. 31.  
Luke xxiii.  
31.

o Ps. xxxi. 5.  
Luke xxiii.  
46. 2 Tim. i.  
12.  
† So all our  
oldest MSS.

the time is come <sup>k</sup> that judgment must begin at the house of God: and <sup>l</sup> if [† it] first [† begin] at us, <sup>m</sup> what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? <sup>18</sup> <sup>n</sup> And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear? <sup>19</sup> Wherefore let also them that suffer according to the will of God <sup>o</sup> commit the keeping of their souls in well doing † unto a faithful Creator.

is come *that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?* <sup>18</sup> *And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?* <sup>19</sup> *Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.*

of comfort to the persecuted Christians.

17.] Because (grounds the *let him glorify*, and the whole behaviour implied in it) it is the season (now: "the time is come," as A. V.) of the judgment beginning (at and proceeding onward from) the house of God (explained in the next clause to mean the church, the temple of living stones, the "*spiritual house*" of ch. ii. 5. The reference is to prophecies like Jer. xxv. 15 ff., especially ver. 29; xlix. 12: Ezek. ix. 6: Amos iii. 2. Wiesinger reminds us that it is hardly possible that the destruction of Jerusalem was *past*, when these words were written: if that had been so, it would hardly have been said, "*time for judgment to begin*"): but if first (it begin) at us (*who are the house of God*, see Heb. iii. 6. The argument, from the lesser to the greater, see expanded above. Compare our Lord's question, Luke xxiii. 31, "*If they do these things in the case of the green tree, what must be done in the case of the dry?*"), what [will be] the end of them that disobey the gospel of God (the blessed tidings of the very God who is to judge them)? 18.] And (the question of the last verse is again repeated under a well-known form, taken from the Old Test., which however casts solemn light on both members of the interrogation: explaining what is meant by judgment on God's people, and also by the end of the disobedient. The citation is almost verbatim from the Septuagint version, departing from the Hebrew text, which is as the A. V., "Behold the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner") if the righteous is (*is being*: or rather perhaps the present spoken of that which *is to be*

with difficulty saved (on account of the sharpness of the trial, and his own weakness. See Rev. v. 4, 5. The word *scarcely* does not induce any *doubt* as to the issue, only *wonder*: if we be *righteous* by faith in Christ, our salvation, however difficult and apparently impossible, is as certain as Christ's own triumph), the ungodly (the man who in his innermost heart cares not for God and turns not to Him) and sinner (he that is devoted to sin. The absence of a second article, and the singular verb, both shew, that the same person is meant by both), where shall he appear (so in Ps. i. 5: where shall he stand and find an abiding place in the judgment?)?

19.] Wherefore (*general conclusion* from vv. 17, 18. If the sufferings of Christians as Christians are a sign of God's favour towards them, in subjecting them to his judgments, with a view to their not perishing with the ungodly world, then have they every reason to trust Him in those sufferings, and to take comfort: continuing in that same well-doing which is their very element and condition) let also them who suffer (*also*, as well as all other persons) according to (in pursuit of, along the course of) the will of God (see on ch. iii. 17: here especially in reference to our ver. 17, seeing that it is God's will that judgment should begin at His house), commit (deliver [subjectively] into the hands of, and confidently leave) their souls (their personal safety and ultimate *salvation*, ver. 18) in (as clad in, accompanied with, subsisting and employed in) well-doing (as contrasted with the opposite characters in ver. 15. Huther says well: "This addition shews that the confident surrender to God is to be joined, not with careless indolence, but

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

V. <sup>1</sup> *The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: <sup>2</sup> feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

V. <sup>1</sup> The elders † therefore which † *So all our oldest MSS.*  
are among you I exhort, who am also <sup>a</sup> an elder, and <sup>b</sup> a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also <sup>c</sup> a partaker of the glory which is about to be revealed: <sup>2</sup> <sup>d</sup> feed the flock of God which is among you [† overseeing it], <sup>e</sup> not by constraint, but willingly †; † not for filthy lucre, but of  
*add according to God. f 1 Tim. iii. 8, 8. Titus i. 7.*

a Philem. 9.  
b Luke xxiv.  
48. Acts i. 8.  
22. & v. 32.  
& x. 39.  
c Rom. viii. 17.  
18. Rev. i. 9.  
d John xxi. 15.  
16, 17. Acts  
xx. 28.  
† Not expressed  
in the original.  
e 1 Cor. ix. 17.  
† Two of our  
oldest MSS.  
f 1 Tim. iii. 8, 8. Titus i. 7.

with active practice of good") unto a faithful Creator (in God being our Creator, without whom not a hair falls to the ground, we have an assurance that we are not overlooked by Him: in His being a faithful Creator, whose covenant truth is pledged to us, it is implied that we are within that covenant, suffering according to His will and as His children. This title of God must not be understood of the second creation in the new birth).

CHAP. V. 1—11.] *Last and hortatory portion of the Epistle*; in which the word well-doing, ending (in the original) the former portion, is taken up and spread over various classes among the readers: thus vv. 1—4, he exhorts the *leaders of the church*; ver. 5, the *younger members* [see note there]; vv. 6—9, *all in common*. Then, vv. 10, 11, follows his general *parting wish and ascription of praise to God*.

1.] *Elders therefore among you I exhort* (the designation *elders* or *presbyters* here is evidently an official one [ver. 2], but at the same time reference to age is included: see ver. 5. The *therefore* takes up the above exhortation ch. iv. 19), *who am a fellow-elder* (with you: Bengel remarks, that "mutual exhortation among equals and colleagues is of great force"), and *witness of the sufferings of Christ* (not in the sense of Acts i. 8, 22, ii. 32, x. 39, &c.,—a witness to testify to by words,—nor as Heb. xii. 1; Acts xxii. 20; Rev. ii. 13, xvii. 6, a witness, in bearing about in his own person,—nor both of these together;—but in the sense of an *eye-witness*, on the ground of which his apostolic testimony rested: I who say to you, "*Christ suffered in the flesh*," say this of sufferings which my own eyes saw. Thus this clause links on the following exhortation to the preceding portion of the Epistle concerning Christian suffering, and also tends to justify the *therefore*), *who am also a partaker of*

the glory which is about to be revealed (I prefer to take this as an allusion to our Lord's own words John xiii. 36, "*Thou shalt follow me afterwards*," rather than regard it as alluding to the Transfiguration, as some, or to the certainty that those who suffer with Him will be glorified with Him. As bearing that promise, he came to them with great weight of authority as an exhorter—having seen the sufferings of which he speaks, and being himself an heir of that glory to which he points onwards),—*tend* (or *keep*). It is the same word as in John xxi. 16 [not 15 and 17]: see note there) *the flock* (the verb includes in one word the various offices of a shepherd; the leading, feeding, heeding) *of God* (see Acts xx. 28. The similitude is among the commonest in Scripture: see Jer. iii. 15, xxiii. 1—4; Ezek. xxxiv. 2 ff.; John x. 11 ff.) *which is among you* (he orders them to feed the flock of God, not generally, nor oecumenically, but locally, as far as concerned that part of it found among them) [, *overseeing* (it) (this word, "*episcopountes*," has perhaps been removed for ecclesiastical reasons, for fear *presbyters* should be supposed to be, as they really were, *episcopoi*, bishops)] *not constrainedly* ("so, as men do who would be of some other profession if they could afford it, and are consequently idle and cold-hearted in their work"), *but willingly* (out of love to the great Shepherd, and to the flock. The addition, "*according to God*," is curious, and not easily accounted for. It certainly does not, as Luther says, clear up the thought, but rather obscures it. The expression is seldom found; and never in the sense here required); *nor yet* (brings in a climax each time) *with a view to base gain* (see Isa. lvi. 11; Jer. vi. 13, viii. 10; Ezek. xxxiv. 2, 3, &c.; and Titus i. 7), *but earnestly* (prompted by a desire not of gain, but of

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

a ready mind; <sup>3</sup> neither as <sup>g</sup> being lords over <sup>h</sup> your portions, but becoming examples to the flock. <sup>4</sup> And when <sup>k</sup> the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive <sup>l</sup> the amarantine crown of his <sup>m</sup> glory. <sup>5</sup> In like manner, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elders. Yea, <sup>n</sup> all gird on <sup>†</sup> humility one to another:

good to the flock;—ready and enthusiastic, as [the illustration is Bede's] the children of Israel, and even the workmen, gave their services eagerly and gratuitously to build the tabernacle of old; nor yet as **lording it over** (using the rights of a *lord* for the diminution of the ruled and the exaltation of self. Christian rulers of the church are *set over the church* [1 Thess. v. 12; Rom. xii. 8], *leaders* [Luke xxii. 26], but not *lords over it* [Luke xxii. 25, 26]. One is their *lord*, and they are His *ministering servants* the portions [entrusted to you] (so is the original word (*clerus*) understood by very many Commentators, and rightly, as is decided by the mention of the *flock* below. See this meaning defended in my Greek Test.), but becoming patterns of the flock (the tyrannizing could only apply to the portion over which their authority extended, but the good example would be seen and followed by the whole church: hence "*your portions*" in the prohibition, but "*the flock*" in the exhortation). And [then] **when the chief Shepherd** (see ch. ii. 25; Heb. xiii. 20: and compare Ezek. xxxiv. 15, 16, 23; Matt. xxv. 32) is manifested (used by St. Peter in a double reference, to Christ's first coming, and His second also: see ch. i. 20: so also by St. Paul, Col. iii. 4; 1 Tim. iii. 16: by St. John, 1 John ii. 28, iii. 2, 5, 8. Here clearly of the second coming. It would not be plain, from this passage alone, whether St. Peter regarded the coming of the Lord as likely to occur in the life of these his readers, or not; but as interpreted by the analogy of his other expressions on the same subject, it would appear that he did), **ye shall receive the amarantine** (the adjective formed from *amarantus*, the everlasting, or unfading, flower. It does not here mean *unfading*, but must be rendered strictly, *composed of that flower*: the word in ch. i. 4 is a

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

a ready mind; <sup>3</sup> neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. <sup>4</sup> And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. <sup>5</sup> Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves under the elder. Yea, all of you be subject

different form) **crown** (reff.) of His glory (or, of glory: but I prefer the other. That we shall share his glory, is a point constantly insisted on by St. Peter: see ver. 1, ch. iv. 13, i. 7: and above all, ver. 10 below. This idea reaches its highest in St. John, with whom the inner unity of the divine life with the life of Christ is all in all. Compare especially 1 John iii. 2 f.).

5—7.] *Exhortation to the younger, and to all, to humility and trust in God.*  
5.] In like manner (i.e. '*mutatis mutandis*,' in your turn: see ch. iii. 7: with the same recognition of your position and duties), **ye younger, be subject to the elders** (in what sense are we to take "*younger*" and "*elders*" here? One part of our answer will be very clear: that "*elders*" must be in the same sense as above, viz., in its official historical sense of presbyters in the church. This being so, we have now some clue to the meaning of "*ye younger*:" viz. that it cannot mean younger in age merely, though this, as regarded *men*, would generally be so, but that as the name *elder* had an official sense, of superintendents of the church, so *younger* likewise, of those who were the ruled, the disciples of the *elders*. Thus taken, it will mean here, the rest of the church, as opposed to the *elders*). **Yea** (the A. V. happily thus gives the sense, i.e., Why should I go on giving these specific injunctions, when one will cover them all?), **all gird on humility one to another** (an allusion to our Lord's action of girding Himself with a napkin in the servile ministration of washing the disciples' feet: of which He himself said, that He had given them an example to do as He did. The impression made on St. Peter by this proof of his Master's love is thus beautifully shewn. The verb rendered **gird on** is variously interpreted. Its derivation is



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. <sup>6</sup> Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: <sup>7</sup> casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. <sup>8</sup> Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: <sup>9</sup> whom resist sted-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

because <sup>o</sup> God resisteth the proud, <sup>o</sup> James iv. 6. and <sup>p</sup> giveth grace to the humble. <sup>p</sup> Isa. lvii. 15. & lxvi. 2. <sup>6</sup> <sup>q</sup> Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: <sup>7</sup> <sup>r</sup> casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you. <sup>8</sup> <sup>s</sup> Be sober, be vigilant; <sup>t</sup> your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: <sup>9</sup> <sup>u</sup> whom resist sted-

<sup>r</sup> Ps. xxxvii. 5. & lv. 22. <sup>s</sup> Matt. vi. 25. <sup>t</sup> Luke xli. 11. <sup>u</sup> Phil. iv. 6. <sup>v</sup> Heb. xiii. 5. <sup>w</sup> Luke xxi. 34, 36. <sup>x</sup> 1 Thess. v. 6. ch. iv. 7. <sup>y</sup> because is omitted by two out of three of our oldest MSS. <sup>z</sup> Job i. 7. & ii. 2. <sup>aa</sup> Luke xxii. 31. <sup>ab</sup> Rev. xii. 12. <sup>ac</sup> Eph. vi. 11, 13. <sup>ad</sup> James iv. 7.

from the string or band attached to a garment to tie it with): because (reason why you should gird on humility) God (the citation agrees verbatim with James iv. 6) opposeth Himself to the proud (this was a common saying even among the heathen moralists), but giveth grace to the humble (here in a subjective sense, the lowly-minded, those who by their humility are low). 6.] Humble yourselves therefore (the same spirit as before continues through this and the following verses: the care or anxiety here, and the sufferings, ver. 9, keeping in mind their persecutions and anxieties, as also does "the strong hand," see below) under the strong hand of God (on the expression, see Exod. iii. 19. The strong hand of God is laid on the afflicted and suffering, and it is for them to acknowledge it in lowliness of mind), that He may exalt you (the Apostle refers to the often repeated saying of our Lord, Matt. xxiii. 13, Luke xiv. 11, xviii. 14. The same is also found in the Old Test. Ps. xviii. 27; Prov. xxix. 23) in [the] time [appointed] (this humility implies patience, waiting God's time. The time need not necessarily be understood as Bengel of the end: it is more general: see "in his times," 1 Tim. vi. 15): 7.] casting (once for all, by an act which includes the life) all your anxiety ('the whole of;' not, every anxiety as it arises: for none will arise if this transference has been effectually made. This again is an Old Test. citation, Ps. lv. 22. The expression shews that the anxiety was not a possible, but a present one; that the exhortation is addressed to men under sufferings. As to the word anxiety, we may remark, that it is the

same root as that used in Matt. vi. 22, and signifies care by which the spirit is divided, part for God, part for unbelief; which is in fact an exalting self against Him) upon Him, because (seeing that: the justifying reason) He careth (this is not the same, nor a like word to that rendered anxiety above: and however much the run of the words to which we are accustomed is marred by the change, the two should in rendering be kept carefully distinct) for (about) you.

8, 9.] Other necessary exhortations under their afflictions; and now with reference to the great spiritual adversary, as before to God and their own hearts. ("Lest," says an old gloss, "we should abuse, in the direction of our security, that consolation, that God careth for us, the Apostle forewarns us of the snares of Satan.")

8.] Be sober (see chap. iv. 7, and Luke xxi. 34, 36. This sobriety of mind, as opposed to intoxication with anxieties of this life, is necessary to the firm resistance: only he who is sober stands firm), be watchful (can it be that Peter thought of his Lord's "Were ye thus unable to watch with me one hour" on the fatal night when he denied Him?): your adversary (the omission of any casual particle makes the appeal livelier and more forcible, leaving the obvious connexion to be filled up by the reader) the devil as a roaring lion ("the devil is compared to a lion hungry and roaring for impatience of his hunger, because he insatiably seeks our destruction, and no prey satisfies him." Gerhard) walketh about (compare Job i. 7, ii. 2), seeking whom to devour (namely, by assimilating to himself through commission

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

fast in the faith, <sup>x</sup> knowing that the very same sufferings are being accomplished in your brotherhood that is in the world. <sup>10</sup> But the God of all grace, <sup>y</sup> who called † you unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered <sup>z</sup> a little while, † shall himself <sup>a</sup> make you perfect, <sup>b</sup> stablish, strengthen, settle you. <sup>11</sup> <sup>c</sup> To him be the † might for ever and ever. Amen. <sup>12</sup> <sup>d</sup> By Silvanus the faithful brother, as I reckon, I have <sup>e</sup> written unto you in

*fast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.* <sup>10</sup> *But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.* <sup>11</sup> *To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.* <sup>12</sup> *By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly,*

of mortal sin): 9.] whom resist (see James iv. 7) firm in the faith, knowing (*being aware*): it is an encouragement against their giving way under Satan's attacks, to remember that they do not stand alone against him; that others are not only sharers of their sufferings, but comrades in prayer and warfare against Satan) that the very same sufferings are being accomplished (their full measure attained, according to the will of God, and by the appointment of God) in (with reference to, in the case of) your brotherhood in the world (not said to direct attention to another brotherhood not in the world; but as identifying their state with yours: who, like yourselves, are in the world, and thence have, like yourselves, to expect such trials).

10, 11.] *Final assurance of God's help and ultimate perfecting of them after and by means of these sufferings.* 10.] But (however you may be able to apprehend the consolation which I have last propounded to you, one thing is sure: or as Bengel, "Do ye only watch, and resist the enemy: God will do the rest") the God of all grace (who is the Source of all spiritual help for every occasion), who called you (which was the first proof of His grace towards you) unto (with a view to; said for consolation. He who has begun grace with a view to glory, will not cut off grace till it be perfected in glory. See 1 Thess. ii. 12; 2 Thess. ii. 14) His eternal glory in Christ Jesus (this, "*in Christ Jesus*" belongs to "*called*," which has since been defined by the words following it. Christ Jesus is the element in which that calling took place), when ye have suffered a little

while, shall Himself (solemn and emphatic: "the Apostle shews that from the same Fountain of Grace comes both the first call to heavenly glory and the ultimate consummation of this benefit," Gerhard) perfect [you] ("that no defect remains in you," Bengel), shall confirm (establish you firmly, so "that nothing overthrow you," Bengel), shall strengthen, shall ground [you] (fix you as on a foundation, "that you may conquer all adverse force. A speech worthy of Peter, the Rock; he is confirming his brethren." See Luke xxii. 32, *Thou, when thou hast turned again, strengthen* (the same word as here) *thy brethren*: 2 Tim. ii. 19). To Him (again emphatic: "that they might not claim any praise and glory to themselves," Gerhard) be (i. e. be ascribed: or, as ch. iv. 11, *is*, i. e. is due) the might (which has been shewn in this perfecting, confirming, strengthening, grounding you, and in all that those words imply as their ultimate result,—of victory and glory) to the ages of the ages. Amen.

12—14 ] CONCLUSION. 12.] By Silvanus the faithful brother (there seems to be no reason for distinguishing this Silvanus from the companion of St. Paul and Timothy, mentioned in 1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1; 2 Cor. i. 19, and known by the name of Silas in the Acts. See further in the Introduction), as I reckon (indicates the Apostle's judgment concerning Silvanus, given, not in any disparagement of him, nor indicating that he was not known to St. Peter, but as fortifying him, in his mission to the churches addressed, with the Apostle's recommendation, over and above the acquaintance which the readers

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand. <sup>13</sup> The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son. <sup>14</sup> Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

few words, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God; wherein † stand ye. <sup>13</sup> She that is elected together with you in Babylon saluteth you; and so doth † Mark my son. <sup>14</sup> Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. † Peace be to you all that are in Christ †.

† Acts xx. 24.  
1 Cor. xv. 1.  
2 Pet. i. 12.  
† So all our  
oldest MSS.

‡ Acts xii. 12,  
25.

§ Rom. xvi. 16.  
1 Cor. xvi. 20.  
2 Cor. xiii. 12.  
1 Thess. v.  
9b.

‡ Eph. vi. 23.  
† So two of our  
three oldest  
MSS.

now already have had with him), I have written unto you (these words "unto you" are taken by some, as the A. V., as dependent on "faithful," which is harsh, and leaves the verb "I have written" without any object of address) in (literally, by means of, — as my vehicle of conveying my meaning) few words (this may perhaps refer to some more copious instructions which Silvanus was to give them by word of mouth: or may serve to fix their attention more pointedly on that which had been thus concisely said), exhorting (such in the main is the character of the Epistle) and giving my testimony that this (of which I have written to you; see below) is the true grace (as testified by the preaching of the Apostles to be covenanted and granted to them by God. This identification of the preached and written message with the true mind of God towards man, is not uncommon with our Apostle: e. g., ch. i. 12, 25 [ii. 10, 25]). The reason of this was not any difference, as some would have us believe, between the teachings of St. Peter and St. Paul, but the difficulty presented to the readers in the fact of the fiery trial of sufferings which they were passing through) of God, in which stand ye (the construction in the original is what is called *pregnant*; into which being admitted, stand in it. This is a short and earnest exhortation, containing in it the pith of what has been said by way of exhortation in the whole Epistle).

13.] She that is elected together with you in Babylon saluteth you (*who*, or *what* is this? The great majority of Commentators understand it to mean a *sister congregation*, elect like yourselves, ch. i. 1. And this perhaps may be a legitimate interpretation. Still it seems hardly probable, that there should be joined together in the same sending of salutation, an *abstraction*, spoken of thus enigmatically, and a *man*, *Mark my son*, by name. No men-

tion has occurred in the Epistle of the word *church*, to which reference might be made: if such reference be sought for, *the dispersion*, in ch. i. 1, is the only word suitable, and that could hardly be used of the congregation in any particular place. Finally, it seems to be required by the rules of analogy, that in an Epistle addressed to *elect strangers* or *sojourners*, individually, not aggregately, "*she that is elected together with them*," must be an individual person also. These considerations induce me to accede to the opinion of those, who recognize here the *believing sister* whom St. Peter led about, being his wife, 1 Cor. ix. 5: and to find, in the somewhat unusual periphrastic way of speaking of her, a confirmation of this view. Still, I own, the words "*in Babylon*" a little stagger me in this view. But it seems less forced than the other. On the question, *what Babylon* is intended, whether Rome, or the Chaldean capital, or some village in Egypt, see Introduction, § iv.), and *Mark my son* (perhaps, and so most have thought, the well-known Evangelist: perhaps the *actual son* of St. Peter, bearing this name. The fact of Peter taking refuge in the house of Mary the mother of John Mark (Acts xii. 2), casts hardly any weight on the side of the former interpretation: but it derives some probability from the circumstance that St. Mark is reported by Eusebius to have been the *follower* and *disciple* and *interpreter* of Peter, on the authority of Papias and Clement of Alexandria: and that Irenæus reports the same. The word "*son*" is understood either spiritually or literally, according as one or other of the above views is taken).

14.] Salute one another in (as the medium of salutation) a kiss of love (see on Rom. xvi. 16, where, as every where except here, "*an holy kiss*" is the expression). Peace be to you all that are in Christ (the con-

cluding blessing of St. Paul is usually *grace*, not *peace*: see [Rom. xvi. 24] 1 Cor. xvi. 23; 2 Cor. xiii. 13; Gal. vi. 18; Eph. vi. 24 [where however "*peace be to the brethren,*" &c. precedes]; Phil. iv. 23; Col. iv. 18; 1 Thess. v. 28; 2 Thess. iii. 18; 1 Tim. vi. 21; 2 Tim. iv. 22; Titus iii. 15; Philem. 25 [Heb. xiii. 25]. Gerhard says well that the formula came into use from the salutation of Christ after the Resurrection. The blessing differs

also from those in St. Paul, in the limitation implied by **you all that are in Christ**, whereas St. Paul has ever "*with you all.*" Here it is, "Peace to you, I mean, all that are, and in as far as they are, in Christ;" in union and communion with Him. "*That are in Christ*" is quite in St. Paul's manner: compare Rom. viii. 8; xvi. 7; 2 Cor. v. 17. See also our ch. iii. 16; v. 10).

# THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

**AUTHORIZED VERSION.**

*I.*<sup>1</sup> **SIMON PETER**, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: <sup>2</sup> Grace and

**AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.**

**I.** <sup>1</sup> **SYMEON PETER**, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained <sup>a</sup> like precious faith with us in the righteousness of our God and [our] Saviour Jesus Christ: <sup>2</sup> <sup>b</sup> Grace and peace be multiplied

<sup>a</sup> Acts xv. 14.  
Rom. i. 12.  
<sup>2</sup> Cor. iv. 13.  
Eph. iv. 5.  
Titus i. 4.

<sup>b</sup> Dan. iv. 1. &  
vi. 25.  
1 Pet. i. 2. Jude 2.

CHAP. I. 1, 2.] ADDRESS AND GREETING. 1.] **Symeon** (the form as belonging to our Apostle, is found, besides here, only in Acts xv. 14. Its occurrence is at all events a testimony in favour of the independence of the second Epistle. It has not, in order to make the name uniform, been adapted to the first: which, considering that it refers to the first, is a note, however slight, on the side of its genuineness) **Peter a servant (Rom. i. 1) and apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained (not got for themselves) like precious faith (faith,—i. e. substance of truth believed: faith objective, not subjective,—of equal value: not, which confers equal right to God's kingdom, equal honour and glory. The A. V. has hit the meaning very happily by like precious. See 1 Pet. ii. 7) with us (apparently, in the first place, the Apostles: but more probably, in a wider sense, the Jewish Christians, with whom the Gentiles had been admitted into the same covenant, and the inheritance of the like precious promises) in the righteousness of our God and [our] Saviour Jesus Christ (first, concerning the words, in the righteousness. Some Commentators take righteousness for an attribute of God, and "in" as instrumental, by the righteousness, goodness, truth, of God: others under-**

stand it as the righteousness which God gives us, and Christ won for us, explaining "in" as with or by: but this is objectionable, seeing that righteousness comes by faith, not faith by righteousness. The best explanation seems to me that "righteousness" here betokens the righteous dealing of God, corresponding to His attribute of righteousness, as opposed to respect of persons, and that the words are to be taken in close connexion with the foregoing, "in" being used of the conditional element, in which the obtaining like precious faith is grounded: so that the sense is, in His righteousness, which makes no difference between the one party and the other, God has given to you the like precious faith, as to us. The objection made to this, that thus the Epistle must be regarded as written to Gentile Christians, is not valid, or proves too much: for at all events there must be two parties in view in the words "like precious . . . with us," whatever these parties be. Next, in the words, of our God and [our] Saviour Jesus Christ, I would interpret, as in Titus ii. 13 [where see note] our God of the Father, and [our] Saviour Jesus Christ of the Son. Here, there is the additional consideration in favour of this view, that the Two are distinguished most plainly in the next verse): 2.] Grace to



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

unto you in the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.

<sup>3</sup> Seeing that his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, <sup>c</sup> through the knowledge of <sup>d</sup> him that called us † by his own glory and virtue, <sup>4</sup> <sup>e</sup> through which he hath given unto us his exceeding great and precious promises: that by means of these may ye become † partakers of the divine nature, <sup>g</sup> having escaped from the corruption that is in the world † through lust. <sup>5</sup> And

<sup>c</sup> John xvii. 3.  
<sup>d</sup> 1 Thess. ii. 12. & iv. 7.  
2 Thess. ii. 14. 2 Tim. i. 9. 1 Pet. ii. 9. & iii. 9.  
† So three out of our four oldest MSS.  
<sup>e</sup> 2 Cor. vii. 1.

<sup>f</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 18.  
Eph. iv. 24.  
Heb. xii. 10.  
1 John iii. 2.  
<sup>g</sup> ch. ii. 18, 20.

† Literally, in.

you and peace be multiplied (so in 1 Pet. i. 2: but further specified here by what follows) in (as the vehicle, or conditional element of the multiplication) **the knowledge** (properly, full, or ripe knowledge: but this can hardly be given in English without too strong a phrase) of God, and of Jesus our Lord (every unusual expression, like *Jesus our Lord*, occurring only Rom. iv. 24, should be noticed as a morsel of evidence to the independence of the Epistle).

3—11.] *Exhortation to advance in the graces of the spiritual life*: introduced (vv. 3, 4) by a consideration of the rich bestowal from God of all things belonging to that life by the knowledge of Him, and the aim of His promises, viz. that we should partake in the divine nature. 3.] Seeing that (the connexion with the greeting which precedes must not be broken: it is characteristic of this Epistle, to dilate further when the sense seems to have come to a close) **His divine** (the word rendered *divine* is peculiar, in the New Test., to this Epistle) **power hath given us all things which are [requisite] for life and godliness** (this word *godliness* is a mark of the later apostolic period) **through** (by means of, as the medium of attainment: "the knowledge of God is the beginning of life, John xvii. 3." Calvin) **the knowledge** (the same word as above) of **Him that called us** (i. e. of God, who is ever the Caller in the New Test.: see e. g. 1 Pet. ii. 9) by (of the instrument) **His own glory and virtue** (*virtues* are predicated of God in 1 Pet. ii. 9. Both substantives belong to God, not to us: we

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,* <sup>3</sup> *according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: <sup>4</sup> whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. <sup>5</sup> And beside this,*

must not render, as in A. V., "called us to glory and virtue," of which meaning there is not a trace in either of the readings. Bengel seems to give the meaning well, "To glory must be referred those attributes of God which are *natural*, to virtue those which are called *moral*: both are, in their inmost nature, one." See Gal. i. 15), 4.] **through which** (His attributes and energies) **He hath given to us** (not as A. V., "are given," passive) the [or, His] **greatest and precious promises** (not, *things promised*), **that by means of these promises**: i. e. their fulfilment) **ye may become partakers of the divine nature** (i. e. of that holiness, and truth, and love, and, in a word, perfection, which dwells in God, and in you by God dwelling in you), **having escaped** (a note of matter of fact, bringing out in this case the negative side of the Christian Life, as the former clause did the positive:—"when ye have escaped") **from the corruption** (destruction of soul and body) **which is in the world in** (consisting in, as its element and ground) **lust** (Calvin says well: "This corruption he shews to be not in the elements which surround us, but in our own heart, because there reign the vicious and wicked affections, whose source and root he denotes by the word *lust*. This corruption then is so placed by him *in the world*, as to shew us that *the world is in ourselves*").

5—7.] *Direct exhortation*, consequent on vv. 3, 4, *to progress in the spiritual life.* 5.] **And on this very account** (the reason here being that stated in

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue: and to virtue knowledge; <sup>6</sup> and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; <sup>7</sup> and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. <sup>8</sup> For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

for this reason, <sup>h</sup> giving on your <sup>h</sup> ch. iii. 18. part all diligence, provide, in [the exercise of] your faith, virtue; and in your virtue, <sup>1</sup> knowledge; <sup>6</sup> and <sup>11</sup> Pet. iii. 7. in your knowledge, self-restraint; and in your self-restraint, patience; and in your patience, godliness; <sup>7</sup> and in your godliness, brotherly kindness; and <sup>k</sup> in your brotherly kindness, love. <sup>8</sup> For these things, being in you, and multiplying, render you not idle <sup>1</sup> nor yet unfruitful towards the perfect knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>k</sup> Gal. vi. 10. <sup>1</sup> Thess. iii. 12. & v. 15. <sup>1</sup> John iv. 21. <sup>1</sup> John xv. 2. <sup>Titus</sup> iii. 14.

ver. 3, "seeing that, &c.," above: so that this forms a sort of termination to that sentence. The A. V. 'beside this' is entirely at fault) giving on your part (literally, introducing by the side of: i.e. besides those precious promises on God's part, bringing in on your part) all diligence, furnish (from the original meaning of the verb, to provide expenses for a chorus, it easily gets this of furnishing forth. And the construction and meaning of the following clauses is not as in the A. V., "add to" your faith, virtue, &c., but the word in is each time used of that which is assumed to be theirs, and the exhortation is, to take care that, in the exercise of that, the next step is developed), in your faith (Bengel remarks, "Faith is the gift of God: therefore we are not ordered to provide faith, but in our faith those fruits, seven of which are enumerated: faith leading the band, love closing it") virtue (best perhaps understood with Bengel as "strenuous tone and vigour of mind"); and in your virtue, knowledge (probably that practical discriminating knowledge, of which it is said Eph. v. 17, "Be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is"); <sup>6</sup>] and in your knowledge, self-restraint ("temperance" is perhaps now too much used of one sort only of self-restraint, fully to express the word. The connexion is: let such discriminating knowledge not be without its fruit, of steady holding in hand of the passions and tempers); and in your self-restraint, patient endurance (in afflictions and trials);

and in your patient endurance, godliness (i.e. it is not to be mere brute Stoical endurance, but united with God-fearing and God-trusting); <sup>7</sup>] and in your godliness, brotherly kindness (not suffering your godliness to be moroseness, nor a sullen solitary habit of life, but kind and generous and courteous); and in your brotherly kindness, love (universal kindness of thought, word, and act towards all: a catholic large-heartedness, not confining the spirit of brotherly kindness to brethren only, Matt. v. 46, 47. So that these two last correspond to the "love to one another and to all" of 1 Thess. iii. 12).

<sup>8, 9</sup>] Reasons for the foregoing exhortations: 1) positive, the advantage of these Christian graces in bringing forth fruit towards the mature knowledge of Christ: 2) negative, the disadvantage of their absence from the character.

<sup>8</sup>] For these things (the above-mentioned graces) being in you (by previous subsistence) and multiplying (not merely as A. V. "abounding") render you (not the present tense for the future, but expressing the habitual character and function of these virtues) not idle nor yet (introduces a slight climax: a man may be in some sense not unfruitful, but yet unworkful) unfruitful towards (not "in" as A. V.: these virtues are all regarded as so many steps in advancing toward the perfect knowledge of Christ, which is the great complex end of the Christian life) the perfect knowledge (here, considering the place which it holds, it is well to give the full sense of this word, which is the same as in vv. 2, 3; not as

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>m</sup> 1 John ii. 9, 11. <sup>n</sup> Eph. v. 26. Heb. ix. 14. 1 John i. 7. <sup>o</sup> 1 John iii. 19. <sup>p</sup> ch. iii. 17.

<sup>9</sup> For he that lacketh these things <sup>m</sup> is blind, short-sighted, having forgotten the <sup>n</sup> purification of his former sins. <sup>10</sup> Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence <sup>o</sup> to make your calling and election secure: for doing these things, <sup>p</sup> ye shall never fall: <sup>11</sup> for so your entrance shall be richly ministered unto you into the eternal kingdom

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*Jesus Christ.* <sup>9</sup> But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. <sup>10</sup> Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: <sup>11</sup> for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly

in ver. 6) of our Lord Jesus Christ (in Him are hid, ethically as well as doctrinally, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge: the knowledge of Him is the imitation of Him: for as it is true that hereafter the seeing Him as He is will ensure our being perfectly like Him, so it is true that here the only way in any degree increasingly to see Him as He is, is to become increasingly like Him. He only can declare Christ, who reflects Christ).

9.] For (*negative reason*: see above: and that, with reference not only to the exhortations of vv. 5, 6, 7, but by this for connected also with ver. 8: the advantage of the presence is great, for the disadvantage of the absence indicates no less than spiritual blindness and oblivion) he to whom these are not present (contrast to ver. 8) is blind (lacks discernment altogether of his own state as a member of Christ and inheritor of heaven), short-sighted (some interpret the word of not being able to see the heavenly things, which are distant, only earthly, which are close at hand. Perhaps, however, this is an interpretation more subtle than the Apostle's meaning), having incurred forgetfulness of the purification of his former sins (i.e. of the fact of his ancient, pre-Christian, sins having been purged away in his baptism. This, and not the purification of the sins of the world, and of his among them, by the cross of Christ, is evidently the sense, by the very terms of the sentence. And thus almost all the Commentators.)

10, 11.] The exhortation is resumed, and further pressed, both on the preceding grounds, and on account of its blessed ultimate results, if followed.

10.] Wherefore the rather (wherefore referring to the two considerations urged in vv. 8, 9, and the rather making them reasons for increased zeal

in complying with the exhortation), brethren (making the appeal more close and affectionate), give diligence (so the A. V. admirably) to make (properly, to make for yourselves: not to make absolutely, which lay beyond their power, but to do it, on their side, for their part. But the verb must not be explained away into a pure subjectivity, "to make sure to yourselves:" it carries the reflective force, but only in so far as the act is and must be done for and as regards a man's own self, the absolute and final determination resting with Another) your calling and election (i. e., as Grotius, "The calling which came to you by the Gospel, and the election which followed it, when you became the people of God." Both these were God's acts, ver. 3, and 1 Pet. i. 1, 2) secure (for both, in as far as we look on them from the lower side, not able to penetrate into the counsels of God, are insecure, unless established by holiness of life. In His foreknowledge and purpose, there is no insecurity, no uncertainty: but in our vision and apprehension of them as they exist in and for us, much, until they are made secure in the way here pointed out): for, doing these things (because these are works done. And the participle is conditional, carrying with it an hypothesis: as A. V., "if ye do these things"), ye shall never offend (i. e. stumble and fall): 11.] for thus (i. e. if ye do these things) shall be richly (the adverb is not, as Huther says, surprising, but most natural and obvious with the verb, which is one of furnishing and ministering; therefore of quantity. The adverb belongs to the figure latent in the verb: and must therefore be interpreted in and with the interpretation of the verb: in which case it will indicate high degrees and fulness of glory) furnished to you (the verb seems expressly chosen in order to answer to

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

dantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup> Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. <sup>13</sup> Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; <sup>14</sup> knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. <sup>15</sup> Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup> Wherefore <sup>a</sup> I will be <sup>q</sup> sure to put you always in remembrance of these things, <sup>r</sup> though ye <sup>t</sup> know them, and be established in the truth which is present [with you]. <sup>13</sup> But I think it meet, <sup>s</sup> as long as I am in this tabernacle, <sup>t</sup> to stir you up, putting you in remembrance; <sup>14</sup> <sup>u</sup> knowing that shortly I must put off my tabernacle, even as <sup>x</sup> our Lord Jesus Christ shewed unto me. <sup>15</sup> Moreover I will endeavour that ye may on every occasion be

<sup>q</sup> Rom. xv. 14.  
16. <sup>r</sup> Phil. iii.  
1. ch. iii. 1.  
1 John ii. 21.  
Jude 5.  
<sup>s</sup> So all our  
oldest MSS.  
<sup>t</sup> 1 Pet. v. 12.  
ch. iii. 17.

<sup>s</sup> 2 Cor. v. 1, 4.  
<sup>t</sup> ch. iii. 1.

<sup>u</sup> See Deut. iv.  
24, 22. & xxxi.  
14. <sup>v</sup> 3 Tim.  
iv. 6.

<sup>x</sup> John xxi. 18,  
19.

that in ver. 5: "Furnish forth your own lives with these Christian graces, so shall be furnished to you, &c.") the (or, your) entrance (the entrance which all Christians look for: not the fact of this entrance taking place, but the fact of its being richly furnished, or ministered, is that asserted) into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

12—21.] *The above exhortations confirmed by the consideration of the certainty of the power and announced coming of Christ, as shewn 1) by apostolic testimony, 2) by Old Test. prophecy.*

12—15.] *The Apostle holds it necessary to remind them of this truth, and will do so up to his approaching end.* 12.]

Wherefore (namely, because the doing these things is the only way to a rich participation in the blessings and glories of Christ's kingdom) I will be sure always to remind you concerning these things (the things just now spoken of: in the widest sense: it does not merely take up the "these things" of ver. 10, nor merely refer to the kingdom of Christ and His coming), though ye know them, and are confirmed (firmly established) in the truth which is present with you (the words "the present truth," A. V., give a wrong idea to the English reader: seeming to mean, the truth at present under notice. The meaning is, 'which is [known and professed] among you').

13.] But (notwithstanding this previously conceded fact, that you know and stand firm in the truth) I think it right (why, follows,

ver. 14), as long as I am in this tabernacle (see for the sense 2 Cor. v. 1 ff.; and below), to stir you up, in (not, 'by:' in, as the medium in which I strive towards the stirring up, and in using which it has place. In an English version, the preposition is best omitted) reminding (the same phrase occurs in ch. iii. 1);

14.] knowing (as I do: reason for thinking it meet) that rapid is (see below. is, of that which is to be: the normal present) the putting off (the two figures, of a tabernacle or tent, and a garment, are intermingled, as in 2 Cor. v. 1 ff.) of my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ declared unto me (the allusion is to John xxi. 18 ff., where a swift and sharp death is announced to St. Peter by our risen Lord. And the sentence does not mean to say, as commonly understood, that he must soon put off his tabernacle, but that the putting off, whenever it did come, would be sudden and quick. Missing this point, some have imagined that some other special revelation to St. Peter is implied: and such revelations are related in tradition. But even if the adjective be understood to mean 'soon,' 'not far off,' no such inference need be drawn. For it might well be that advancing old age might lead the Apostle to the conclusion that the end prophesied to him could not be far off.

15.] Moreover I will endeavour that ye may on every occasion have it in your power after my decease (it is at least

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

able after my decease to have these things in remembrance. <sup>16</sup> For not in pursuance of <sup>y</sup> cunningly devised fables did we make known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but <sup>z</sup> having been eyewitnesses of his majesty. <sup>17</sup> For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there was sent such a voice to him from the

<sup>y</sup> 1 Cor. i. 17.  
& ii. 1, 4.  
<sup>z</sup> 2 Cor. ii. 17.  
& iv. 2.

<sup>z</sup> Matt. xvii. 1,  
2. Mark ix.  
2. John i.  
14. 1 John i.  
1. & iv. 14.

remarkable that, with the recollection of the scene on the mount of transfiguration floating in his mind, the Apostle should use so close together the words which were there also associated, viz. **tabernacle** and **decease** [*exodus*]: see Luke ix. 28 ff. The coincidence should not be forgotten in treating of the question of the genuineness of the Epistle) to exercise the memory of these things.

16—18.] *Corroboration of the certainty of the facts announced by apostolic eyewitness.* 16.] For (reason for the zeal which he had just predicated of himself) not in pursuance of cunningly-devised fables (such cunningly-devised fables would be the mythologies of the heathen, the cabalistic stories of the Jews; and these may be alluded to, and perhaps also the fables of the Gnostics, which could, it is true, only be in their infancy, but still might be pointed at by St. Peter, as by St. Paul in 1 Tim. i. 4, iv. 7; 2 Tim. iv. 4; Tit. i. 14) did we make known unto you (the writer of this Epistle, says De Wette, wishes to appear to stand in closer relation to his readers, than the writer of 1 Peter: see 1 Pet. i. 12. But why so? May not the same Apostle in one place mean the actual preachers who delivered the Gospel to them; in the other, the Apostles, who were its first witnesses? For observe, that first Epistle is addressed to certain definite churches; this, to all Christians generally. Or, again, why should it be regarded as absolutely impossible that the publication of some one or more of the existing Gospels may have taken place, and may be alluded to in these words?) the power (viz. that conferred on Him by the Father at His glorification, of which the following scene testified, and the actuality of which He himself asserted, when He said, Matt. xxviii. 18, *All power is given unto me*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*these things always in remembrance.* <sup>16</sup> For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. <sup>17</sup> For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the ex-

*in heaven and earth:* in the strength of which He will come to judge the world) and coming (i. e., as ever, second and glorious coming: not, as Erasmus and many others, His first coming) of our Lord Jesus Christ, but [in virtue of] having been admitted (the participle, as so often, renders the reason,—the enabling cause of the act) eye-witnesses (the word used is a technical term, used of those who were admitted to the highest degree of initiation in the Eleusinian mysteries: and, considering the occasion to which allusion is made, there seems no reason for letting go altogether this reference here: “admitted as initiated spectators.” Still, in English, we have no other way of expressing this than as above. Any attempt to introduce the allusion would overcharge the language. The word “admitted” gives a faint hint of it) of His majesty (viz. on the occasion to be mentioned. The words must not be generalized, to reach to all occasions of such witnessing: but it is obvious that neither must the Transfiguration be regarded as standing altogether alone in such an assertion. It is indeed here that incident which marked, to the Apostle’s mind, most certainly the reality of Christ’s future glory: but it was not the only occasion when he had seen the exhibition of divine power by Him as a foretaste of his power at his return to judgment: compare John v. 25—28, with John xi. 40—44).

17.] For (justification of the above assertion that we were admitted witnesses of His majesty) having received (the construction is an interrupted one: so in the original) from God the Father honour and glory (honour, in the voice which spoke to him: glory, in the light which shone from Him), when a voice was borne to Him (the occurrence of a similar expression in 1 Pet. i. 13 is to be noticed) of such a



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

cellent glory. *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* <sup>18</sup> *And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.* <sup>19</sup> *We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

excellent glory, <sup>a</sup> *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* <sup>18</sup> *And this voice we heard sent from heaven, when we were with him in <sup>b</sup> the holy mount.* <sup>19</sup> *And we have more secure the prophetic word; whereunto ye do well that ye take*

<sup>a</sup> Matt. iii. 17.  
& xvii. 5.  
Mark i. 11.  
& ix. 7.  
Luke iii. 22.  
& ix. 35.

<sup>b</sup> See Exod. iii. 5.  
Josh. v. 15.  
Matt. xvii. 6.

kind (viz. as is stated in what follows: "purporting as follows") by (uttered by) the sublime glory (the words seem to be a way of designating God Himself. Others understand them of the bright cloud which overshadowed the company: others of the heaven: but the preposition *by*, in its only admissible meaning [see above], will not suit either interpretation), **This is my beloved Son, in whom** (literally, **on whom**) **I am well pleased** (the words are as in Matt. xvii. 5, where however we have "in whom" for "on whom," and "hear him" is added. In Mark and Luke the words "in whom I am well pleased" are wanting: and in the critical text of St. Luke it is, "my chosen Son." It is worth notice, that the words are in an independent form here. **on whom** is what is called a pregnant construction,—“on whom my pleasure has lighted and abides”).

18.] Substantiation of the personal testimony above adduced by reference to the fact. **And this voice we** (Apostles: Peter, James, and John) **heard borne from heaven** (not, as A. V. ungrammatically, "this voice which came from heaven:" we heard it borne, witnessed its coming, from heaven), **being with Him in the holy mount** (De Wette is partly right, when he says that this epithet "holy" shews a later view of the fact than that given us in the evangelistic narrative. The epithet would naturally arise when the Gospel history was known, as marking a place where a manifestation of this divine presence and glory had taken place. The place whereon Moses stood is said, in Exodus iii. 5, to be *holy ground*. So that really all we can infer from it is, that the history was assumed to be already well known: which is one entirely consistent with the probable date of the Epistle: see Introd. It is hardly necessary to refute Grotius's idea, that Mount Sion is meant, and that the voice referred to is that related in John xii. 28).

19—21.] *The same*—i. e. the certainty of the coming of Christ, before spoken of,—*is further confirmed by reference to Old*

Test. *prophecy.*

19.] **And we have more sure** (i. e. hold more surely) **the prophetic word** (a double explanation is possible: 1) that the comparative alludes to what has gone before as its *reason*, as if it had been said, *Wherefore*, or *Now*, or *Henceforth* we have, &c. : i. e. 'on account of this voice from heaven which we heard, we have firmer hold of, or esteem [possess] more sure, the prophetic word, as now having in our own ears begun its fulfilment.' The great objection to such a view is, the omission of any such connecting particles as those above supplied. It is true the Apostle may have omitted them: but even supposing that, it is further against the view, that if such be the force of the comparative, the thought is not at all followed up in the ensuing verses. We come then to the other possible force of the comparative: 2) that it is used as comparing the prophetic word with something which has been mentioned before, as being firmer, more secure than that other. And if so, what is that other? The most obvious answer is, the voice from heaven: and this is at first sight confirmed by the consideration that one *word* would thus be compared with another. But then comes in the great difficulty. How could the Apostle designate the written word of God, inspired into and transmitted through men, as something firmer, more secure, than the uttered voice of God Himself? And our reply must be, that only in one sense can this be so, viz. as being of wider and larger reference, embracing not only a single testimony to Christ as that divine voice did, but "*the sufferings which were destined for Christ, and the glories that were to follow*:" as presenting a broader basis for the Christian's trust, and not only one fact, however important. This is a modification of Huther's view, which takes the comparison to be, that the testimony of the Transfiguration presented only the glory of Christ in the days of His flesh, whereas the prophetic word substantiates His future glory also. But this is

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>c</sup> Ps. cxix. 105. <sup>d</sup> John v. 35. heed, as unto <sup>e</sup> a candle shining in a dark place, until the day shall dawn, and <sup>d</sup> the morning star shall arise in your hearts: <sup>20</sup> knowing this first, that <sup>e</sup> no prophecy of the scripture cometh of private interpretation. <sup>21</sup> For <sup>f</sup> prophecy was

<sup>d</sup> Rev. ii. 28. & xxii. 16. See 2 Cor. iv. 4, 6.

<sup>e</sup> Rom. xii. 6.

<sup>12</sup> Tim. iii. 16. <sup>1</sup> Pet. i. 11.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: <sup>20</sup> knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. <sup>21</sup> For the

insufficient, or rather is not strictly correct: for the Apostle clearly does regard the voice at the Transfiguration as a pledge of Christ's future glory; to which ye do well in paying attention, as to a candle (the figure is taken from the lighting of a candle at night, and the imagery is as in Rom. xiii. 12) shining in a dark place, until day shall dawn (i. e. shall have dawned: the dawn coming in upon and putting an end to the state indicated above), and the morning star shall rise in your hearts (the dawn of the day is accompanied by the rising of the morning star.

It is not quite clear, *what time* is here pointed out by the "*until &c.*" Various meanings have been assigned. Some think that Old Test. times preceded the rising of the day star of the New Test. dispensation. But it is entirely against this view, that the present, *whereunto ye do well that ye take heed*, makes it necessary, as indeed does the whole context, that the time spoken of, which the "*until &c.*" is to put an end to, should be *present*. De Wette modifies this last view by saying, that this Old Test. darkness of the pre-Christian time still endures for those who have not yet embraced the Christian faith. But this would make the readers, who are said, ver. 12, to be *established in the truth which is present*, to be still unconverted to Christianity. Bede, Calvin, &c., understand it of the glorious day which is to come when the Lord shall be manifested. Others, as Grotius, De Wette, Huther, &c., think that some state *in the readers themselves* is pointed at, which is to supervene upon their present less perfect state: Grotius interpreting it of their attainment of the gift of prophecy: De Wette, of their arriving at full conviction of the certainty of the coming of Christ: Huther, much the same, adding, "The writer distinguishes between two degrees of the Christian life: in the first, faith rests upon outward evidences, in the second, on inward revelations of the Spirit: in the first, each detail is believed separately as such: in the second, each is

recognized as a necessary part of the whole. And hence the being in the former is naturally called a walking *in a dark place*, in the light of a *candle*, while the being in the latter is a walking in the light of the morning." And this latter I believe to be nearly the true account. That which refers the words to the time of the Lord's coming is objectionable, because thus 1) the time of the Christian's walk here, in which he is said to be light in the Lord, would, not comparatively, but absolutely, be described as a walking in darkness by the slender light of Old Test. prophecy: 2) the morning star arising *in men's hearts* is not a description which can apply to the Lord's coming. So that, whatever apparent analogy there may be with the comparison used in Rom. xiii. 11 ff., the matters treated of seem to be different. At the same time it may well be, that the Apostle should have mingled both ideas together as he wrote the words; seeing that even in our hearts the fullness of the spiritual day will not have arisen, until that time when we see face to face, and know even as God knew us):

20.] *Caution as to interpretation of Old Testament prophecy*: to be borne in mind, while taking heed to it. **This first knowing** (viz. what follows, introduced by "that:" *first*, as most important in applying yourselves to prophetic interpretation), **that no prophecy of Scripture** (Scripture most probably here imports the Old Test. only, from the whole cast of the passage) **comes of private interpretation** (how are these words to be understood? Two references seem to be possible: 1) *to us*, who try to understand written prophecies: 2) *to the prophets themselves*, as they spoke them. Of these the former, maintained by many Commentators, seems precluded by the context; the next verse assigning as a reason for the position in this, that the prophets spoke not of themselves, but as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. So that we seem driven to the conclusion that the saying regards, not our interpretation of prophecy, but its *resolution*, or

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

II. <sup>1</sup> But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. <sup>2</sup> And

c Jude 4. d 1 Cor. vi. 20. Gal. iii. 13. Eph. i. 7. Heb. x. 20. 1 Pet. i. 18. Rev. v. 9.

AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

never sent after the will of man: <sup>g</sup> but men had utterance from God <sup>†</sup>, being moved by the Holy Spirit.

II. <sup>1</sup> But <sup>a</sup> there were false prophets also among the people, even as <sup>b</sup> there shall be false teachers likewise among you, which shall bring in heresies of destruction, even <sup>c</sup> denying the Master <sup>d</sup> that bought them, <sup>e</sup> bringing upon themselves swift destruction. <sup>2</sup> And many

<sup>g</sup> 2 Sam. xiii. 2. Luke i. 70. Acts i. 16. & iii. 18.  
<sup>†</sup> The readings of the oldest MSS. are in a state of confusion, which can hardly be explained in English.  
 That adopted in the text is found in the Vatican MS. a Deut. xlii. 1. b Matt. xxiv. 11. Acts xx. 30. 1 Cor. xi. 19. 1 Tim. iv. 1. 2 Tim. iii. 1-6. 1 John iv. 1. Jude 18. e Phil. iii. 19.

interpretation by the prophets themselves. So several Commentators: and De Wette, adding, that this is said to excuse the difficulty of the interpretation of prophecy, and to remove occasion of unbelief and scoffing [ch. iii. 3]. But as Huther well remarks, this last purpose is not only not indicated in the context, but is quite out of the question; the Apostle referring to prophecy not as difficult of interpretation, but as a candle shining in a dark place, nay, as being even more firm and secure than external proofs of the same truths. I believe Huther's view to be the true one: which arises from this consideration, that by the word interpretation we are not to understand the subsequent interpretation of a prophecy already given, but the intelligent apprehension of the meaning of the prophecy, out of which [but not private on the part of those by whom it is sent] the prophecy itself springs. So that the sense will be, that prophecy springs not out of human interpretation, i. e. is not a prognostication made by a man knowing what he means when he utters it: but &c. Thus, and thus alone, the whole context coheres).

21.] Reason of the above position. For prophecy was never (at any time) sent after the will of man: but men spoke from God (spoke as with the voice of, as emissaries from, God), being borne (borne along, carried onward, as a ship by the wind) by the Holy Spirit.

CHAP. II. 1-22.] DESCRIPTION OF ERRONEOUS TEACHERS WHO SHOULD ARISE: THEIR UNGODLY PRACTICES, AND CERTAIN DESTRUCTION. On the close parallelism with Jude 4-19, see in Introduction. The fact will necessitate continual reference to that Epistle.

1.] Transition to the new subject. But

(contrast to last verse) there were false prophets also (as well as the true prophets, just spoken of) among the people (of Israel. These words, more than any that have preceded, define the prophecies spoken of before as Old Test. prophecies, as there shall be among you likewise false teachers (teachers of falsehood), the which (of a class: not simply identifying the individuals) shall introduce (shall bring in by the side of that teaching which ye have received. There is a hint of secrecy and unobservedness, but not so strong as in A. V. "shall privily bring in." It is stronger in Jude 4) heresies (rather in the sense in which we now understand the word, new and self-chosen doctrines, alien from the truth: not sects, as the Latin vulgate has it, which may be founded, but can hardly be said to be introduced) of destruction (whose end is destruction, Phil. iii. 19. The expression is not to be resolved as A. V. [after Beza, as usual] by an adjective, "damnable heresies," as it thereby loses its meaning, merely conveying the writer's own judgment of condemnation), and denying (a remarkable word from St. Peter) the Master (compare Jude 4) who bought them (refl. No assertion of universal redemption can be plainer than this. Calvin passes it without a word. It may be noted that by the use of this particular description of Christ here, those heresies seem especially to be aimed at, which denied or explained away the virtue of the propitiatory sacrifice of our Lord, by which He has bought us to Himself), bringing upon themselves swift (not speedy, but sudden and unexpected) destruction (the same word as that used of the heresies above, and therefore to be rendered by the same word in English).

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

† So all our  
MSS. The  
reading her-  
eticious has  
no authority  
whatever.

f Rom. xvi. 18.  
2 Cor. xii. 17.  
18. 1 Tim.  
vi. 5. Tit. 1.  
11.

g 1 Cor. ii. 17.  
ch. i. 16.

h Deut. xxxii.  
35. Jude 4,  
15.

i Job iv. 18.  
Jude 6.

k John viii. 44.

l John iii. 8.

1 Luke viii. 31.

Rev. xx. 2, 3.

† So all our  
oldest MSS.

m Gen. vii. 1, 7.

23. Heb. xi.

7. 1 Pet. iii.

20.

n 1 Pet. iii. 19.

shall follow their † licentious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. <sup>3</sup> And <sup>f</sup> in covetousness shall they with feigned words <sup>g</sup> make merchandise of you: for <sup>h</sup> whom the sentence now of a long time lingereth not, and their destruction slumbereth not. <sup>4</sup> For if God spared not <sup>i</sup> angels when <sup>k</sup> they sinned, but <sup>l</sup> cast them into hell, and delivered them unto † dens of darkness, being reserved unto judgment; <sup>5</sup> and spared not the old world, but preserved <sup>m</sup> Noah the eighth person, <sup>n</sup> a preacher of righteousness, <sup>o</sup> bring-

o ch. iii. 6.

many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. <sup>3</sup> And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. <sup>4</sup> For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; <sup>5</sup> and spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing

2.] And many shall follow after their licentiousnesses (the connexion of depraved moral conduct with erroneous doctrine was in the early ages of the church almost universal; see the Pastoral Epistles *passim*, and below vv. 18, 19. In Jude, the two are expressed co-ordinately: “turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Master and our Saviour Jesus Christ”), on whose account (by reason of whom, i. e. from the licentious ways of those who follow after the false teachers: for to these, and not to the false teachers themselves, is the “whom” most likely referable. It is those who, securing to be in the way of truth, yet favour and follow false teachers, that cause most scandal to the way of truth itself) the way of truth (see Acts ix. 2; xix. 9, 23) shall be evil spoken of (“by those without, not knowing the difference between true and false Christians.” Bengel).

3.] And in (i. e. living in, girt about with, as their element, not as A. V. “through”) covetousness with feigned speeches they will make gain of you (these false teachers would care not for their sect, but for their gain): for whom (viz. the false teachers) the sentence (of God, decreeing their destruction) from long since is not idle (i. e. is working itself out, is living and in action), and their destruction slumbereth not (i. e. is awake, and ready to seize them; destruction being personified).

4–11.] Argument, enforced by three

historical proofs, that God will assuredly punish these wicked persons. 4.]

First historical proof: the punishment of the apostate angels. Compare Jude 6. For (connect with the position immediately preceding) if God spared not angels having sinned (how, is not here specified; but Jude, ver. 6, is more particular: see note there. It is not as A. V. “that sinned:” but carries a reasoning force, giving the reason of God’s not sparing them: “for their sin”), but casting them into hell (literally, into Tartarus; the heathen name for hell, as Gehenna was the Jewish) delivered [them] over (here, as often, used with an implied idea of punishment) to dens (the other reading “chains,” has perhaps come from the parallel place in Jude, and would seem to suit the sense better: see there) of darkness in custody (literally “being kept.” The readings are in great confusion, from the combined influence of the parallel place in Jude, and our ver. 9) unto (with a view to: or merely temporal, until: but this is not probable here, as the want of any mention of the Great Day, as in Jude 6, removes all definite allusion to the time of the judgment) judgment;

5.] Second historical proof: the flood. (Wanting in Jude)—and spared not the ancient world, but preserved (here first comes in the idea of the preservation of the righteous, which is worked out further in the next verse) Noah the eighth person (i. e. with seven others: according

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; <sup>6</sup> and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrhah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly: <sup>7</sup> and delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: <sup>8</sup> (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) <sup>9</sup> the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: <sup>10</sup> but chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVIS.

ing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly men; <sup>6</sup> and <sup>p</sup> burning cities of Sodom and Gomorrhah into ashes condemned them to be overthrown, <sup>q</sup> laying down an example of those that after should in after time live ungodly; <sup>7</sup> and <sup>r</sup> delivered righteous Lot, vexed with the behaviour of the lawless in their licentiousness: <sup>8</sup> for the righteous man dwelling among them, <sup>s</sup> in seeing and hearing, tormented his righteous soul from day to day with their lawless deeds; <sup>9</sup> <sup>t</sup> the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unrighteous unto the day of judgment under punishment: <sup>10</sup> but chiefly <sup>u</sup> them that go after the flesh in lust of uncleanness,

<sup>q</sup> Numb. xxvi. 10.

<sup>r</sup> Gen. xix. 16.

<sup>s</sup> Ps. cxix. 130, 153. Ezek. ix. 4.

<sup>t</sup> Ps. xxxiv. 17, 19. 1 Cor. x. 13.

<sup>u</sup> Jude 4, 7, 8, 10, 16.

to a well-known formula, constantly found in Greek,) preacher of righteousness (the fact, that Noah was thus a preacher of [moral] righteousness to the depravity of his age, is found alluded to in Josephus: "But Noah, disgusted with their proceedings, and afflicted with their evil counsels, exhorted them to repentance in heart and life"), bringing (i. e. "when He brought," or "and brought") the flood on the world of ungodly men;

6.] *Third historical proof: the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrhah, Jude 7. And burning to ashes the cities of Sodom and Gomorrhah condemned [them] to (better than "with") overthrow (catastrophe: the same word that is used in the Greek Septuagint version of the history in Genesis), laying down an example (see Jude 7) of (i. e. that which might shew forth the fate of) those that should in after time live ungodly;* 7.] and rescued (the contrast, the deliverance of the righteous, is here brought out at more length. This contrast is wanting in Jude, where only the punitive dealings of God are treated) righteous Lot (*righteous*, as repeating the *righteousness* of ver. 5: see also again, ver. 8), distressed (*oppressed, or harassed beyond bearing*) by the behaviour of the lawless (men who cared

not for rule nor for decency) in licentiousness (denoting the character of this behaviour or manner of life): 8.] *Explanation of the word distressed, or vexed. For by sight and hearing the righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul day by day with their lawless (not merely "unlawful," as A. V., but utterly broken loose from law, lawless) deeds (the form of the sentence is peculiar: that being represented as a deliberate act of Lot on himself, which was in fact the impression made on him by the lawlessness around him. The same way of speaking is common among us, when we say that a man "distresses himself" at any occurrence: we have in Isa. lviii. 5, "a day for a man to afflict his soul");*

9.] (this is the latter part of the sentence, begun in ver. 4: see there) the Lord knoweth how (the expression indicates both the apprehension of the manner of the act, and the power to perform it) to rescue godly [men] out of temptation (as in 1 Pet. i. 6, where see note,—trials, persecutions, and the like), and to reserve unrighteous [men] under punishment (not as most, and A. V., "to be punished:" but as in ver. 4, actually in a penal state, and thus awaiting their final punishment) to the day of judgment (the great final doom):



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

x Jude 8. and despise government. <sup>x</sup> Presumptuous, selfwilled, they are not afraid to rail at † dignities. <sup>11</sup> Whereas † See note.  
 y Jude 9. <sup>y</sup> angels, though they be greater in strength and might, bring not railing judgment against them before the Lord. <sup>12</sup> But these, <sup>z</sup> as irrational animals, born to be taken and destroyed, speaking evil of the things that they understand not, shall even perish in their corruption, <sup>13</sup> <sup>a</sup> receiving the reward of unrighteousness: counting as pleasure <sup>b</sup> that delicate living which is but for a

*ness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. <sup>11</sup> Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. <sup>12</sup> But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; <sup>13</sup> and shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day*

10.] but chiefly (see Jude 8) those who go after the flesh (more general here than in Jude, where "other," or "strange flesh," defines the particular sin. Here, all following after unlawful carnal lusts is meant) in lust of pollution (lust, hankering after unlawful and polluting use of the flesh), and despise lordship (so in Jude 8, where see note). Darers (the construction suddenly alters to a description of the wicked persons who were the object in the former sentence), selfwilled (see note on Titus i. 7, where the word is explained), they tremble not [when] speaking evil of (railing at) glories (so literally: but what is meant by this, is somewhat doubtful: see on Jude. We might take the word here, as there also, in its widest sense, as any dignities or glories, human or divine, were it not for the example there following).

11.] Whereas (i. e. "in cases where:" nearly the same as *whereas*) angels, being greater [than they] in strength and might (the participle "*being*" carries a slight reasoning force with it: "being," i. e. "though they be:" and the thought shews forcibly the unbecomingness of their irreverence, seeing that even angels, who are so far above them, yet do not bring railing accusations against glories), bring not against them (*viz. glories, dignities*: in the interpretation, *bad angels*, fallen from their heavenly estate, but regarded here according to their essential condition as sons of glory. Compare Milton's "excess of glory obscured," as descriptive of Satan,—an ex-

pression probably taken from the study of the original text in this place or in Jude) before the Lord ("before the Lord the Judge, actually present, they are afraid, and abstain from judgment," Bengel) a railing judgment (see Jude 9, in allusion to railing at above).

12—22.] Further description and denunciation of these persons. 12.] See Jude 10. In words this verse is very similar to that, but in meaning quite different: and this fact, so often occurring in the passage, strongly confirms the view of the common matter taken in the Introduction, *viz.*, that it is a portion of the utterance of the Spirit used independently by the two inspired writers. See the separate sense of each, in the notes on each. But (contrast to the angels, just mentioned) these, as irrational animals, born naturally for (with a view to) capture and destruction (i. e. not to take and to destroy, but to be taken and destroyed), speaking evil (as they do) in the matter of things which they know not, in their corruption (in their practising, and following out, of this corruption to which they have devoted themselves) shall even perish (shall go on till they perish; not only being found in it, living in it, advancing in it, but going on also to its final issue, *viz.* eternal perdition), 13 a.] receiving as they shall [the] reward of unrighteousness (exactly as in ver. 15, wages or retribution for unrighteousness: the only difference being that Balaam followed its temporal wages,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; <sup>14</sup> having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin: beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: <sup>15</sup> which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; <sup>16</sup> but was rebuked for his iniquity:

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

day: <sup>c</sup> spots and blemishes, sporting themselves in their deceits while <sup>e</sup> Jude 12.  
<sup>d</sup> they feast with you: <sup>14</sup> having eyes full of † adultery, and that cannot be made to cease from sin: alluring unstable souls: <sup>e</sup> having an heart exercised with covetous practices: children of the curse: <sup>15</sup> which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of † Balaam [† the son] of Bosor, <sup>f</sup> Numb. xxii. 5, 7, 21, 24, 28. Jude 11.  
 who loved the wages of unrighteousness; <sup>16</sup> but had a rebuke for his <sup>†</sup> Literally, of an adulteress. <sup>†</sup> Not expressed in the original.

they shall receive its eternal); <sup>13</sup> b, 14.] imagining a pleasure delicate living for a day (the interpretations of these last words have been various. Some take them as meaning *day by day*, which seems unallowable. Some, as A. V., take them for "*in the daytime*," as implying absence of all shame; but this would give a very lame and frigid sense, and is inconsistent with what is laid to the charge of these persons, which is not revelling or rioting, but delicate living, which those who practise carry on as much in the daytime as by night, being the habit of their lives. There can be little doubt that the true rendering is as the vulgate has it, and as we have given it, which is but for a day); spots (but "*rocks*;" see Jude 12, where see note) and blemishes (disgraces, disfigurements, causing shame), luxuriating in their deceits (i. e. as explained by Huther, in those things or materials of luxury, which they have fraudulently gotten, the abstract for the concrete. But, granting that interpretation as the words stand, there seems to be considerable doubt and difficulty about both reading and meaning, which can hardly be explained to the English reader. I may say that it arises from the confusion, here and in Jude, between *agapais*, love-feasts, and *aputais*, deceits. Here, the preponderance of MS. testimony is for the latter of these: in Jude, for the former. But it may be questioned whether *agapais*, love-feasts, was not the original reading here as well as there. And on this supposition, the meaning will be, that in their love-feasts [see on Jude] they find occasion of luxuriating and deli-

cate living, while feasting with you) while they feast with you (this at all events refers to the love-feasts, whatever be read above. See on Jude), having eyes full of an adulteress (so literally: meaning that their prurient imagination has ever the forbidden image before it, as if they saw it with their eyes), and that cannot be made to cease from sin (see 1 Pet. iv. 1), laying baits for unstable souls (unfixed, not formed nor established in faith and the feature of piety), having a heart practised in covetousness, children of curse (i. e. as in 2 Thess. ii. 8; John xvii. 12, persons devoted to the curse, accursed. But the A. V., "*cursed children*," does not give the meaning, "*children*" being used in the original simply with reference to their origin, *the curse*), <sup>15.</sup>] The last clauses, comprising our ver. 14, have no representatives in Jude. Now again the parallelism begins, see Jude 11: but the sentiment is more expanded here. Which have forsaken the right way (see Acts xiii. 10) and are gone astray, following out the way of Balaam (not merely figuratively, the way [of life], but literally, seeing that it was by a *journey* that Balaam displeased God: compare the frequent repetition of the word in Num. xxii. 23, and the words of the angel in ver. 32 there) [the son] of Bosor (*Bosor* seems to be a Galilaean form, which [Matt. xxvi. 73] St. Peter would naturally use, of *Beor*, the name of Balaam's father in Numbers), who loved the wages of unrighteousness (viz. which he vainly thought he might get by disobeying the command of God. See Bp. Butler's masterly sermon on the cha-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

own iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet. <sup>17</sup> <sup>g</sup> These are wells without water, mists driven by a whirlwind; for whom the blackness of darkness is reserved †. <sup>18</sup> For <sup>h</sup> by speaking great swelling words of vanity, they allure with lusts, by wantonness of the flesh, those that <sup>i</sup> are † scarcely escaping † from them who live in error, <sup>19</sup> promising them <sup>k</sup> liberty, while they themselves are <sup>l</sup> the slaves of corruption: for by

<sup>g</sup> Jude 12, 13.

† for ever is omitted in our two oldest MSS.  
<sup>h</sup> Jude 16.

<sup>i</sup> Acts ii. 40. ch. i. 4. ver. 20.  
† So all our oldest MSS.  
† So most of our oldest MSS. and versions.  
<sup>k</sup> Gal. v. 13.  
<sup>l</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 16.  
<sup>l</sup> John viii. 54. Rom. 16.

acter of Balaam, in his well-known volume), but had a rebuke for his own iniquity (what sort of a reproof is shewn below. If any force can be given to the insertion of *own*, it will be found in the fact that the reproof came from an animal which was part of his own substance: he himself furnished the conviction of his own iniquity, from the animal on which he rode): a dumb beast of burden (this expression is apparently used as synonymous with an *ass* in Matt. xxi. 5. If so, the universal practice of riding on the ass in Palestine must be regarded as the reason) speaking in man's voice hindered (not in matter of fact, for Balaam went on his way: but subjectively, was hindering, i. e. tried to hinder: "withstood," or as A. V. "forbad") the madness of the prophet (a discrepancy has been discovered between this and the Mosaic account, seeing that it was the angel, and not the ass, from whom the rebuke came, the ass having merely deprecated ill-treatment at Balaam's hands. But the Apostle evidently regards not so much the words of rebuke uttered, as the miraculous fact, as being the hindrance. It was enough to have prevented his going onward, when the dumb animal on which he rode was gifted with speech to shew him his madness). <sup>17</sup>, <sup>18</sup>.] *Further designation of these false teachers, and justification of it.* Compare Jude 12, 13, which is here much abridged. These are wells without water (in Jude, clouds without water. The comparison, in both Epistles, is simply to that which may be expected to yield water, and yields none), and mists driven along by a whirlwind,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet.*  
<sup>17</sup> *These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.*  
<sup>18</sup> *For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.* <sup>19</sup> *While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom*

for whom the blackness of darkness is reserved (see on Jude. It is obvious that no just charge of inappropriateness can be brought against our passage because this clause occurs in a different connexion from that in Jude. There it is said of wandering stars, here of driven clouds: of each, with equal appropriateness: darkness being predicable of clouds, as well as of stars extinguished).

<sup>18</sup>.] *Justification of the description.* For, speaking great swelling things of vanity (whose characteristic is vanity; as in the genitive "body of sin," Rom. vi. 6, and the like) they allure (above, ver. 14) in lusts ("in," or "with," describes the state of the tempters, and the element in which their laying of enticing baits is situated) by licentiousnesses (these are the instrument, the bait itself) of the flesh those who are scarcely (with very little space, or, very little time, for such escape) escaping from them who live in error (i. e., those unhappy persons who are but just escaping from the influence of those who live in error [the heathen], are then laid hold of by these deceivers, enticing them with licentiousness), promising them liberty (these are the great swelling things which they speak; holding out a state of Christian liberty, which proves to be the bondage of corruption) while they themselves are (all the while) slaves of corruption (the same words occur together in Rom. viii. 21, which it is very likely St. Peter had in view: compare ch. iii. 15. They promise that liberty of the sons of God, being themselves in the bondage of corruption). corruption here means, moral decay of sin,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. <sup>20</sup> For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse than the beginning. <sup>21</sup> For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. <sup>22</sup> But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

III. <sup>1</sup> This second epis-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

whatsoever a man is overcome, by the same he is also enslaved. <sup>20</sup> For <sup>m</sup>if, <sup>n</sup>having escaped the pollutions of the world <sup>o</sup>in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but having again become entangled therein, they are overcome, their last state is worse than the first. <sup>21</sup> For <sup>p</sup>it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered unto them. <sup>22</sup> † It is happened unto them according to the true proverb, <sup>q</sup>The dog gone back to his own vomit; and the sow that was washed to wallowing in the mire.

III. <sup>1</sup> This second epistle, be-

<sup>m</sup> Matt. xii. 45.  
<sup>n</sup> Luke xi. 26.  
<sup>o</sup> Heb. vi. 4.  
&c. & x. 26,  
27.  
<sup>p</sup> ch. i. 4.  
<sup>q</sup> ch. i. 2.

<sup>p</sup> Luke xii. 17,  
48. John ix.  
41. & xv. 22.

† But is omitted  
in our three  
oldest MSS.  
<sup>q</sup> Prov. xxvi.  
11.

ending in perdition): for by what [ever] a man is overcome, by the same he is also enslaved (compare John viii. 34: Rom. vi. 6. These passages were certainly in the Apostle's mind).

20—22.] *Further description of these deceivers, as apostates from Christ, and designation of their terrible state as such.* For if, having escaped (it might seem at first sight as if the escapers of ver. 18 were meant: but on close inspection it is plain that this is not so, but that we are continuing the description of the slaves of corruption, viz. the deceivers themselves) the pollutions of the world, in (element and condition of their escape) knowledge (genuine and accurate knowledge: shewing that he is treating of men who have not been mere professors of spiritual grace, but real possessors of it) of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (expressed at length, to set forth more solemnly that from which they fall), but having again become entangled in these, they are overcome, their last state is (literally, has become: but we cannot say this in English, for we thereby convey an idea that it was not always so, but has undergone a change) worse than the first (the saying is our Lord's own: see Matt. xii. 45 and the parallel in Luke).

21.] *Reason of these last words.* For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness (viz. the Christian life: *the way of truth*, as in ver. 2) than, having known it, to turn back from (out of, as out of a way) the holy commandment (the moral law of the gospel: here so designated, because it is of moral corruption that the Apostle is treating) delivered to them (compare Jude 3, "*the faith once [for all] delivered to the saints*").

22.] *Further description of their state by two proverbial expressions.* There hath happened to them that of the true proverb, The dog gone back (i. e. "*which has gone back*") to his own vomit (in ref. Prov. we have something very like this. It may seem however somewhat doubtful, whether the proverbs, as here cited, be meant to be taken from Scripture, or rather not both of them from the popular parlance): and, The sow after washing to (*gone back*, or returned is generally understood before to. But it seems better, with Huther, to understand the proverb as self-contained, and elliptical, as in "Sweets to the sweet:" so, "The washed sow to the mire") wallowing in the mire.

CHAP. III. The general subject: THE

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

loved, I now write unto you; in both which <sup>a</sup>I stir up your pure mind by way of remembrance: <sup>2</sup>that ye may be mindful of the words spoken before by the holy prophets, <sup>b</sup>and of the commandment of the Lord and Saviour <sup>†</sup>given by your apostles: <sup>3c</sup> knowing this first, that there shall come in the last of the days scoffers in [their] scoffing <sup>†</sup>, <sup>d</sup>walking after their own lusts, <sup>4</sup>and saying, <sup>e</sup>Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue thus from the beginning of the creation. <sup>5</sup>For

*tle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: <sup>2</sup>that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: <sup>3</sup>knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, <sup>4</sup>and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. <sup>5</sup>For this they willingly*

CERTAINTY OF CHRIST'S COMING ESTABLISHED AGAINST CERTAIN SCOFFERS WHO SHALL CALL IT INTO DOUBT. EXHORTATIONS are intermingled, and follow as a CONCLUSION.

1.] This Epistle now, beloved, a second (so literally) write I unto you: in which Epistles (the A. V. well, "in both which:" viz. this and the first) I stir up your pure mind (the original word signifies that aspect of the spiritual being of man, in which it is turned towards the outer world; his mind for business and outer interests, guiding him in action. And this may be said to be pure, when, the will and affection being turned to God, it is not obscured by fleshly and selfish regards: the opposite being "darkened in their mind," Eph. iv. 18. It seems impossible to reproduce in English these distinctions; we can only give them a general rendering, and leave all besides for explanatory notes) in reminding (see the same expression, ch. i. 13); that ye should remember the words spoken before by the holy prophets (i. e. the Old Test. prophets, as referred to above, ch. i. 19 ff.), and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour given by your apostles ("your Apostles" as we call St. Paul the Apostle of the Gentiles. It is quite impossible that the common reading can stand,—having absolutely no authority: and difficult, even if it did, to render as the A. V. "of us the Apostles"):<sup>—</sup>knowing this first (Jude introduces the same pro-

phetic fact with "how that they told you," ver. 18), that there shall come in the last of the days (see note on Heb. i. 1. It slightly differs from "at the end of the days," as extending by the plural, the expression, though perhaps not the meaning, over a wider space: see Jude 18) scoffers in [their] scoffing (scoffers making use of scoffing: see Rev. xiv. 2, "harpers harping with their harps:" 2 Sam. xx. 22, "the wise woman in her wisdom went unto all the people." On the sense, see Jude 18), walking according to their own lusts (so Jude 11 and 16, here combined), and saying, Where is the promise of his coming (implying that it is nowhere, has passed away and disappeared: His, viz. of Christ: whose name would be understood as of course)? for from the day when the fathers fell asleep, all things continue thus from the beginning of creation (we cannot after thus supply "as they were," as A. V.: thus simply referring to the present; as they are, as we now see them: and the words "from the beginning of the creation," belonging only to the verb continue. This being so, we still have two predicatory clauses belonging to the verb: "since the fathers fell asleep," and "from the beginning of the creation." The way of explaining this must be, that the time of waiting for the promise necessarily dates from the death of the fathers, and the duration of things continuing as they are now extends back beyond the death of the fathers: so

a ch. i. 13.

b Jude 17.

† So all our MSS. earlier than the fourteenth century.

c 1 Tim. iv. 1. 2 Tim. iii. 1. Jude 18.

† So all our ancient MSS. and versions.

d ch. ii. 10.

e Isa. v. 19.

Jer. xvii. 15.

Ezek. xii. 22,

27. Matt.

xxiv. 48.

Luke xii. 45.



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: <sup>7</sup> but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, re-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

this they willingly are ignorant of, that <sup>f</sup> by the word of God the heavens were from of old, and the earth <sup>g</sup> formed out of water and by means of water: <sup>h</sup> by which waters the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: <sup>7</sup> but <sup>i</sup> the heavens and the earth which are now, by <sup>†</sup> the same word are

<sup>f</sup> Gen. i. 6, 9.  
Ps. xxxiii. 4.  
Heb. xi. 3.

<sup>g</sup> Ps. xxiv. 2.  
& cxxxvi. 6.  
Col. i. 17.  
<sup>h</sup> Gen. vii. 11,  
21, 22, 23.  
ch. ii. 5.

<sup>i</sup> ver. 10.

<sup>†</sup> Or, by His word: our ancient MSS. are divided.

that the meaning will be, ever since the death of those to whom the promise was made, things have continued as we now see them [and as they have ever continued even before those fathers] from the beginning of creation. So that "all things continue from the beginning of creation," is a general proposition applicable to all time: "since the fathers fell asleep," the terminus, from which this general proposition is taken up and applied to the case in hand. And now we have cleared the way to enquiring, who are meant by the fathers. And the answer is plain: largely and generally, those to whom the promise was made: the same as are indicated Rom. ix. 5, "of whom are the fathers:" yet not exclusively these, but simultaneously with them any others who may be in the same category,—e. g. those who bear to the New Test. church the same relation as they to that of the Old Test. The assertion, as coming from the scoffers, must not be pressed to any particular date, but given that wide reference which would naturally be in the mind of one making such a general charge).

5—10.] *Refutations of this their scoffing inference.* 5—7.] *First refutation:* from the biblical history of the creation. For (i. e. they speak thus, because) this (viz. this fact which follows) escapes them (passes unnoticed by them) of their own will (i. e. they shut their eyes to this fact), that the heavens were from old (from the beginning of all things) and the earth formed (holding together, composed, subsisting; so the same Greek word in Col. i. 17, "By him all things subsist") out of water and by means of water (out of water, because the waters that were under the firmament were gathered together into one place and the dry land appeared: and thus water was the material, out of which the earth was made: by means of water, because the waters above the firmament, being divided from

the waters below the firmament, by furnishing moisture, and rain, and keeping moist the earth, are the means by which the earth subsists. This is the simplest rendering) by the word of God (not of its own will, nor by a fortuitous concurrence of atoms), by means of which [two] (viz. the waters under the firmament and the waters above the firmament: for in the flood [1] the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and [2] the windows of heaven were opened, Gen. vii. 11. See the other interpretations in my Greek Test.) the then world (i. e. the whole state of things then existing. The Apostle's argument is, as against the assertors of the world's endurance for ever, that it has once been destroyed, so that their assertion is thereby invalidated. The analogy is not exactly, but is sufficiently close: and the world, as an indefinite common term, takes in the heavens and earth, which were then instrumental in, and purified by, the destruction, if not altogether swept away by it. Nay, the analogy is closer than this: for just as Noah stepped out of the Ark on a new world, the face of the heavens clear, and the face of the earth renewed, so we look for a new heavens and earth [ver. 13], yet like these others constructed out of the materials of the old) being inundated with water, perished (see last note; not, was annihilated, but lost its then form and subsistence as a world or order of things [cosmos, the Greek for world, signifies both], and passed into a new state. Only thus does the verse come in logically as a contradiction to the saying of the scoffers, that all things remain thus from the beginning of creation): 7.] but the new heavens and earth (contrast to the then world: the postdiluvian visible world) by His (God's: if the other reading [see margin] be taken, it must not be pressed to signify any one saying, but must refer generally to the prophetic word,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

k Matt. xxv.  
41. 2 Thess.  
i. 8.

l Ps. xc. 4.

m Hab. ii. 3.  
Heb. x. 37.

n Isa. xxx. 18.  
1 Pet. iii. 20.  
ver. 15.

+ *No all our  
ancient MSS.*  
o Ezek. xviii.  
23, 32.

& xxxiii. 11.  
p Rom. ii. 4.

q Matt. xxiv.  
48. Luke  
xii. 59.

r 1 Thess. v. 2.  
Rev. iii. 3.  
& xvi. 15.

† *in the night  
is omitted in  
our three  
oldest MSS.  
It probably  
came in here  
from 1 Thess. v. 2.*

kept in store, reserved unto <sup>k</sup> fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. <sup>s</sup> But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and <sup>l</sup> a thousand years as one day. <sup>9m</sup> The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but <sup>n</sup> is longsuffering to † you-ward, <sup>o</sup> not willing that any should perish, but <sup>p</sup> that all should come to repentance. <sup>10</sup> But <sup>a</sup> the day of the Lord will come as a thief †; in which <sup>r</sup> the heavens shall pass away with a rushing noise, and the heavenly bodies shall be scorched up and

served unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. <sup>s</sup> But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. <sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. <sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with

r Ps. cii. 26. Isa. li. 6. Matt. xxiv. 35. Mark xiii. 31. Rom. viii. 12. Heb. i. 11.  
Rev. xx. 11, & xxi. 1.

which has announced that which comes to be mentioned) word are treasured up (perfect: "have been, and are still," kept in store, put by, against a certain time), being kept (present tense, denoting that it is only God's constantly watchful Providence which holds together the present state of things till His time for ending it) for fire against the day of judgment and perdition of impious men.

8-10.] *Second contradiction* to the scoffers: *we are not to judge God*, in the case of *delay, as we do men*, seeing that His thoughts are not as our thoughts. But let this one thing not escape you, beloved (this one, as especially important: escape you, in allusion to ver. 5), that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day (the saying is the completion of that in Ps. xc., setting forth also in a wonderful way, that one day may be in God's sight as productive of events as a millennium: in other words, when both clauses are considered, placing Him far above all human limits of time). The Lord (i. e. God, the Father, as so often in this and in the first Epistle) is not tardy (the verb signifies, not merely to delay, but to be late, beyond an appointed time; slack, as A. V.) concerning his promise, as some (viz. the scoffers in question, who are pointed at) account (His conduct) tardiness: but He is long-suffering to-

wards you (the readers of the Epistle; not as a separate class, but as representing all; as shewn below), not willing that any should perish, but (willing) that all should go forward to repentance.

10.] *Assertion of the conclusion against the scoffers—the certainty, suddenness, and effect of the day of the Lord.* But (notwithstanding the delay) the day of the Lord (i. e. of God; see below, ver. 12) shall (or, will) come (this verb has the emphasis, as opposed to all the doubts of the scoffers. It is more than merely "shall come," though no one word will give the exact force in English: "shall be here," "shall be upon you") as a thief (1 Thess. v. 2: from which place probably the expression is taken, as reference is made below to the Epistles of St. Paul); in which the heavens shall pass away (Matt. v. 18, xxiv. 34, 35; and Rev. xxi. 1) with a rushing noise (the word imports the rush of a bird, or of an arrow, or of any thing rapidly moving. Some understand it of the actual noise of the flames which shall consume the heavens: others, of the crash with which they shall fall), and the heavenly bodies (the word signifies, according to Bede, *the four elements*, fire, air, earth, and water: but he is obliged to modify the meaning of the verb, inasmuch as fire cannot dissolve or consume fire: according to Bengel, *the sun, moon, and stars*, de-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

ferrent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. <sup>11</sup> Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, <sup>12</sup> looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

dissolved, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. <sup>11</sup> Seeing that all these things shall be † thus dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be <sup>s</sup> in all holy behaviour and godliness, <sup>12</sup> looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall <sup>u</sup> be dissolved, and the heavenly bodies shall be scorched up and <sup>x</sup> melted with

† So two of our oldest MSS.; the other two reading as the A. V.  
s 1 Pet. i. 15.

t 1 Cor. i. 7.  
Tit. ii. 13.

u Ps. i. 3.  
Isa. xxxiv. 4.

x Micah i. 4.  
ver. 10.

fending it by this word being often used in that sense by the fathers. And, considering that this clause, on account of the **but**, followed presently by also when we come to speak of the earth, necessarily belongs to the heavens,—considering also that the mention of the heavenly bodies as affected by the great Day is constant in Scripture, compare Matt. xxiv. 29; Isa. xiii. 9, 10, xxiv. 23, xxxiv. 4, &c., I should be inclined on the whole to accept this interpretation) **being scorched up** (the word signifies, to suffer from excessive heat: to be in a burning fever) **shall be dissolved** (not literally, *melt*: in ver. 12, the word is a different one), **and the earth and the works in it** (this may mean either the works of men, buildings and the like, —or, the works of the Creator: perhaps both of these combined, “the works of nature and art,” Bengel) **shall be burned up**.

11—18.] EXHORTATIONS WITH REFERENCE TO THE APPROACH OF THE DAY OF GOD.

11—13.] In direct reference to what has just been said, *waiting and eager expectation is enjoined*.

11.] **These things being thus to be dissolved** (i. e., this heaven and earth which surround us. According to the reading in the text, there is no particle of inference: but the inference is all the more vivid.

**thus: viz.** in the manner just described. The original may mean, *being in course of dissolution*: but the other rendering is far more probable), **what manner of men** (not interrogative, but exclamatory) **ought ye to be** (when the event comes: the verb here rendered *be* seems to imply some fact supervening upon the previously existing state), in holy behaviours and pieties (so

literally; the plurals marking the holy behaviour and piety in all its different forms and examples) **looking for and hastening** (the older Commentators mostly supplied “*unto*” after **hastening**. So the A. V.; but there seems no reason for this. The meaning is most probably transitive, to “*hasten*,” “*urge on* :” which I agree with De Wette in adopting, and in understanding as he does, “They hasten it by perfecting, in repentance and holiness, the work of the Gospel, and thus diminishing the need of the ‘*long-suffering*’ ver. 9,” to which the delay of that day is owing. Luther’s objection to this is not difficult to answer. It is true, that the delay or hastening of that day is not man’s matter, but God’s: but it is not uncommon in Scripture to attribute to *us* those divine acts, or abstinences from acting, which are really and in their depth, God’s own. Thus we read, that “He could not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief,” Matt. xiii. 58, compared with Mark vi. 5, 6: thus repeatedly of man’s striving with, hindering, quenching, God’s Holy Spirit) **the advent** (elsewhere commonly used of a person, and most usually of the presence or advent of the Lord Himself) **of the day of God** (the same as “*the day of the Lord*” above), **by reason of which** (viz. which *day*; or, but not so well, which *coming*, on account of, for the sake of, which) **the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the heavenly bodies being scorched up are to be melted** (in the original, present, importing destiny: see above on ver. 11. De Wette thinks the meaning is not to be literally pressed, as if the *heavenly bodies* were a solid mass which would actually liquefy: but why

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

fervent heat. <sup>13</sup> But, according to his promise, we look for <sup>y</sup> new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. <sup>14</sup> Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, strive diligently <sup>z</sup> to be found in peace, without spot, and blameless in his sight, <sup>15</sup> and account <sup>a</sup> the longsuffering of our Lord salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the

<sup>y</sup> Isa. lxx. 17.  
& lxxi. 2.  
Rev. xxi. 1,  
27.

<sup>z</sup> 1 Cor. i. 8. &  
xv. 58.  
Phil. i. 10.  
1 Thess. iii.  
13. & v. 23.

<sup>a</sup> Rom. ii. 4.  
1 Pet. iii. 20.  
ver. 9.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

fervent heat? <sup>13</sup> Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. <sup>14</sup> Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. <sup>15</sup> And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also accord-

not? The same liquefaction has actually taken place in the crust of the earth wherever the central fires have acted on it. All our igneous rocks have been in a liquid state: why should not that day, in its purifying process, produce a similar effect on the earth again, and on her cognate planets, if they are to be included?

In this recapitulation, the Apostle mentions that part only of the destruction of that day which concerns the *heavens*: arguing from the greater to the less. The similarity to Isa. xxxiv. 4 can hardly escape notice, "*All the host of heaven shall be dissolved.*" See also Micah i. 4).

13.] *The positive result of that day as regards the church.* But (contrast to the destructive effects of the day lately dwelt on: not "*nevertheless,*" as A. V., which looks as if the two effects were in antagonism, and the earth were to be *annihilated*, of which idea there is no trace. The flood did not annihilate the earth, but changed it; and as the new earth was the consequence of the flood, so the final new heavens and earth shall be of the fire) according to His (God's) promise (viz., that written in Isa. xxxii. 16) we (no stress, as is almost unavoidable in the A. V. "*Nevertheless we, according to his promise:*" there is no personal pronoun expressed in the Greek, nor is the distinction drawn between us and any other class of persons) expect new heavens and a new earth, in which (heavens and earth, plural) righteousness dwelleth (as before: Isa., compare also Isa. lxx. 25).

14.] *Exhortation founded on this expectation.* Wherefore, beloved, expecting (as ye do) these things, be earnest (not the daily habit so much, as the one great life-effort which shall accomplish the end,

is in the Apostle's mind) to be found (at His coming. This word shews plainly enough that a personal coming of the Lord, as in ver. 4, is in the view of the Apostle throughout, as connected with the proceedings of the great Day. The form of expression reminds us forcibly of Matt. xxii. 11 ff.) spotless and blameless (compare 2 Cor. vi. 3, viii. 20; also the contrast, above, ch. ii. 13. From the connexion there with a feast, it seems very probable that in both passages the parable of the wedding garment was floating before the Apostle's mind) in His sight (so, and not, "*by Him,*" or "*of Him,*" as A. V., must we render) in peace (second predicate after the verb to be found: the *spotlessness and blamelessness* were with reference to God; this, in reference to your own state and lot: in peace among yourselves, in peace with yourselves, in peace for yourselves, with God. But perhaps an expression so familiar to the Eastern tongue as "*in peace,*" may have an onward as well as a present meaning, as in "*go in peace:*" and be taken of that eternal peace, of which all earthly peace is but a feeble foretaste): and account the long-suffering of our Lord (our Lord, thus expressed, is hardly to be dis severed from Him who is expressly thus named below, ver. 18. And if so, then, throughout this weighty passage, the Lord Jesus is invested with the full attributes of Deity. It is He who waits and is long-suffering: He, in His union and co-equality with the Father, who ruleth all things after the counsel of His own will) salvation (contrast to those who count His delay to be *slackness*, ver. 9): even as also (besides myself) our beloved brother (this term is probably used in a closer sense than as merely signifying fellow-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

ing to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; <sup>16</sup> as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

wisdom given unto him wrote unto you; <sup>16</sup> as also in all his epistles, <sup>b</sup> speaking in them of these things; in which † Epistles are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto

<sup>b</sup> Rom. viii. 10.  
1 Cor. xv. 24.  
1 Thess. iv. 15.

† So our three most ancient MSS. having the relative pronoun in the feminine: the other MSS. have it in the masculine (or neuter). See note.

Christian: our beloved fellow-Apostle) Paul according to the wisdom given to him (see 1 Cor. iii. 10. Also Gal. ii. 9; Eph. iii. 2, 7, 8; Col. i. 25) wrote to you (What? Where? to whom? By some the reply to the first has been found in the preceding clause, "that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation:" which, in sense, is almost identical with Rom. ii. 4, "the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." But surely the reference is too narrow to satisfy what follows here, speaking in them concerning these things, where the reference must be to the things, which we Christians look for, viz., to the coming of the day of the Lord. Thus then we should interpret the particular reference to be to some particular passage in which St. Paul had exhorted to readiness in expectation of that day, and the more general reference, ver. 16, of the frequent mention of that day in his other Epistles. In searching then 2) for some passage which may fulfil the above condition, it seems to me that we need not go beyond the earliest Epistle of St. Paul, viz. 1 Thessalonians. There, in ch. iv. 13—v. 11, we have a passage on this very point, and the more satisfactory, because St. Peter seems, in our ver. 10, to have had 1 Thess. v. 2 before his mind. And as to 3) the expression to you, there seems no need to press it as identifying any particular church, seeing that this our Epistle is addressed to all Christians alike: see ch. i. 1. All that follows from this to you is what may also be gathered from ver. 16, that our Epistle belongs to a date when the Pauline Epistles were no longer the property only of the churches to which they were written, but were dispersed through, and considered to belong to, the whole Christian Church. What date that is, I have discussed in the Introduction. There have been very various opinions as to the passage and Epistle meant: some think it to be the Epistle to the Hebrews, on account of ch. ix. 26 ff., x. 25, 37 (see on these in the Introd. to the Hebrews,

§ i. par. 6): others, the Epistles to the Corinthians, especially 1 Cor. i. 7—9, finding an allusion to 1 Cor. ii. 1 ff. in the words "according to the wisdom given to him:" others, the Epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, being addressed to Asia Minor churches, as they hold this to be: others, referring the words "in peace" to the difference between Paul and Peter, the Epistle to the Galatians: others, some Epistle which has not come down to us); as also in all (his, but not expressed: in all Epistles which he writes, leaving room for the possibility that the number of those Epistles was not complete, but still being added to) Epistles, speaking in them (as he does) of these things (viz. the coming of our Lord, and the end of the world), in which (Epistles, if the feminine relative be read: if the masculine [or neuter], "in which sayings of his:" not, "in which things," "in which subjects," as some have rendered by way of escape from the supposed difficulty: for the pronoun is correlative with the other scriptures, and must therefore designate some writings previously mentioned: or else the sentence is stultified) are some things difficult to understand (De Wette especially refers to 2 Thess. ii. 1 ff.: and it is not improbable that this may have been particularly in the Apostle's mind. See note on 2 Tim. ii. 18), which the ignorant (unintelligent, uninformed: this want of intelligence may arise from many causes: but the misunderstanding of difficult Scriptures is common to the unintelligent in general) and unstable (those who, wanting firm foundation and anchorage, waver and drift about with every wind of doctrine. Such persons are stirred from their Christian stability by every apparent difficulty: are rendered anxious and perplexed by hard texts: and showing more anxiety to interpret them somehow, than to wait upon God for their solution, rush upon erroneous and dangerous ways of interpretation) distort (the verb means, properly, to twist with a handscrew or windlass. Hence to



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

their own perdition. <sup>17</sup> Ye therefore, beloved, <sup>e</sup> seeing ye know beforehand, <sup>d</sup> beware lest, being led away together with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own steadfastness. <sup>18</sup> <sup>e</sup> But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. <sup>f</sup> To him be the glory both now and for ever. Amen.

<sup>c</sup> Mark xiii. 23.  
ch. i. 12.  
<sup>d</sup> Eph. iv. 14.  
ch. i. 10, 11.  
& ii. 18.

<sup>e</sup> Eph. iv. 15.  
<sup>1</sup> Pet. ii. 2.

<sup>f</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 18.  
Rev. i. 6.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*other scriptures, unto their own destruction. <sup>17</sup> Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. <sup>18</sup> But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*

torment with the *screw*: and then figuratively, to distort, pervert, strain, in meaning) as also the other Scriptures (or, the other passages of Scripture having reference to this great subject. Whichever be understood, it is plain 1) that by these words St. Paul's Epistles are reckoned among the Christian Scriptures: 2) that there were at this time besides those Epistles, other writings holding a similar place, known as "*scriptures*;" probably, at least, the three Gospels [and Acts?], and some of the earlier written catholic Epistles. That by the other Scriptures should be meant the Old Test. Scriptures, is not probable: these would have been more fully designated than by being placed in the same category with the inspired writings of recent or living men), to (as a contribution to—towards,—so as to help towards) **their own perdition.**

**17, 18.] Concluding exhortations:** conveyed first in the form of a caution (ver. 17), then in that of a positive exhortation to increase in grace and wisdom. **Ye therefore, beloved, knowing** (as ye do) **beforehand** (viz the whole announcement of which this chapter has been full: the certainty that such false teachers will arise, and the course which they will take), **take heed** (be on your guard) **lest being led away together with** (it is a remarkable coincidence, that St. Peter, well acquainted as he was with St. Paul's writings, should have written this word, which is the very one used by that Apostle [Gal. ii. 13] of Barnabas, at Antioch, when he *was led away together* with the hypocrisy of Peter and the other Jews)

**the error** (not, *the deceit*, active, deceiving others: but the aberration, wandering out of the right way, so as to follow it, and become partakers with it) **of the lawless ye fall from your own steadfastness** (contrast to the "*unstable*" above: see note there): **but** (contrast to the fall just predicated as possible) **grow** (not only do not *fall from steadfastness*, but be so firmly rooted as to throw out branches and yield increase. "The only condition of perseverance is, continual increase," Calvin) **in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ** (the genitive, of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, belongs to both **grace and knowledge**. The common rendering, "*in grace and in the knowledge of . . .*" would have been otherwise expressed in the original. Taken as above, the genitive stands in somewhat different relation to the two words **grace and knowledge**. As regards *grace*, it is a subjective genitive:—the grace of which Christ is the author and bestower; of which it is said, "*grace came by Jesus Christ*:" as regards *knowledge*, it is an objective genitive,—the knowledge of which Christ is the object).

**Concluding doxology:** "a hymn to Christ as to God," as Pliny says in his famous letter to Trajan. **To Him** [be, or is] **the glory** (*the glory*—i. e. all glory that is rendered: the sum total of glory) **both now and to the day of eternity** (so literally: the day which shall dawn at the end of time, and being eternal, itself know no end: "all eternity in one day," as E-tius says). **Amen** (compare Jude 25).

# THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL

OF

## JOHN.

### AUTHORIZED VERSION.

I. <sup>1</sup> *THAT* which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

### AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

I. <sup>1</sup> **THAT** <sup>a</sup> which was from the <sup>a</sup> beginning, which we have heard,— which we have seen with our eyes, <sup>b</sup> which we looked upon, and <sup>c</sup> our hands handled, — concerning the

<sup>a</sup> John i. 1.  
ch. ii. 13.

<sup>b</sup> John i. 14.  
<sup>2</sup> Pet. i. 10.  
ch. iv. 14.  
<sup>c</sup> Luke xxiv.  
89. John xx.  
27.

CHAP. I. 1—4.] INTRODUCTION: THE PERSONAL AUTHORITY OF THE WRITER, AND OBJECTS OF THE EPISTLE.—This Epistle does not begin with an *address*, properly so called. But there is in this sentence the latent form of an address: the “*unto you*” of ver. 3, and the wish “*that our joy may be full*,” answering (see note) to the more usual *greeting*, seen to shew that what follows is an Epistle, not a treatise.

The construction of these verses is difficult, and has been variously given. The simplest view, and that generally adopted, is, that in ver. 1 a sentence is begun, which is broken off by the parenthetical ver. 2 inserted to explain ver. 1, and carried on again in ver. 3, some words being, for the sake of perspicuity, recited again from ver. 1. The smaller clauses, &c., are co-ordinate with each other. So that the sentence and construction flow smoothly and regularly.

That which was (not, ‘*took place*’) from the beginning (not synonymous with “*in the beginning*,” though in the depth of its meaning it is virtually the same. It sets before us the prior limit, but without meaning strictly to define it as such exclusively. The interpretation, “*Since the beginning of the Gospel*,” is connected with the misunderstanding of the whole passage by the Socinian interpreters, and

cannot stand for a moment when we consider the context with ver. 2, and the use of this term by St. John when applied to Christ or to supernatural beings: see ch. ii. 13, 14, iii. 8; John viii. 44. Wherever he uses it of the preaching of the Gospel it is definitely marked as bearing that meaning: compare ch. ii. 7, 24, iii. 11. On the meaning of this clause see below), that which we have heard (the perfect tense extends the reference of the verb from the beginning, and that which the Apostle might have heard concerning Christ, e. g. from John the Baptist, down to the time when he was writing: regards his hearing as a finished and abiding possession), that which we have seen with our eyes (the same is true again. The seeing as well as the hearing is a finished and abiding possession. The clauses rise in climax: seeing is more than hearing: with our eyes emphasizes the fact of eye-witness), that which we looked upon (now, the tense is altered: because the Evangelist comes from speaking of the closed testimony which abode with him as a whole, to that of the senses actually exercised at the time when Christ was on earth. Notice the climax again: to look upon is more than to see: so Beza here: “which I saw with these eyes, and that not once, nor by the way, but which I

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

d John i. 4. Word of life; <sup>2</sup> (and <sup>d</sup> the life <sup>e</sup> was  
& xi. 25. manifested, and we have seen it,  
& xiv. 6. <sup>f</sup> and bear witness, <sup>g</sup> and declare  
e Rom. xvi. 26. <sup>h</sup>  
1 Thm. iii. 16. <sup>i</sup>  
ch. iii. 5. <sup>j</sup>  
f John xxi. 24. <sup>k</sup>  
Acts ii. 32. <sup>l</sup>  
g ch. v. 20. <sup>m</sup>

<sup>2</sup> (for the life was mani-  
fested, and we have seen it,  
and bear witness, and shew  
unto you that eternal life,

earnestly and thoroughly contemplated." See more below), and our hands handled ("a reference has been supposed to John xx. 20, 27: Luke xxiv. 39. But there is no need for it. Surely no *proof* is wanted, that John, who lay on the bosom of our Lord, and was beloved by Him, had touched his Lord with his hands." Fritzsche. These words are not for a moment to be explained away: they are literal matter of fact, and form one of the strongest proofs that what is said, is said of no other than the personal incarnate Son of God) concerning the Word of life (the construction seems to be this: concerning depends strictly upon the verb heard, loosely upon the other clauses. The explanation turns wholly upon the sense which we assign to the words the Word of life: and here there has been great diversity among commentators. This diversity may be gathered under two heads: those who make the Word the personal Word, who *is* life, and those who make it the account, or preaching, or doctrine, concerning life. Of this latter number are, for the most part, Socinus and his school, and some few other expositors. The former includes Augustine, Bede, Calvin [gives both], Beza, Luther, Bengel, &c. And as these words are the keystone of the sentence, it will be well to set out the interpretation once for all. I regard then the Word of life as the designation of our Lord Himself. He is the Word, and is the Word of life, this genitive, of life, being one of apposition, as He describes Himself, as being the Life, John xi. 25, xiv. 6,—the Bread of life, vi. 35, 48: the Light of life, viii. 12: compare also i. 4. This being so, the things mentioned, that which,—that which,—that which,—are all matters concerning, belonging to, regarding, Himself, the Lord of Life: all together predicated of Him by the concerning, which more properly belongs to the one verb heard [notice that in ver. 5, where the nature of the message is stated, this alone, of all these verbs, is repeated]. That which was from the beginning is His eternal pre-existence and inherent Life and Glory with the Father: this is what, in a sense slightly, though but slightly, differing from the

common one, may be said to have been from the beginning concerning the Word of life: that which was inherent indeed in Him, but by being announced to you, takes the form of being concerning Him; His well-known character and attribute. That which we have heard, and that which we have seen with our eyes, hold a middle place between the eternal and pre-existent and the material and human things concerning the Word of life; the hearing of the ear embracing all the teaching of the Lord respecting that which was from the beginning, and the seeing of the eye taking in both His glory, as on the Mount of Transfiguration, and the human Body which He assumed, with all its actions and sufferings: compare John xix. 35. Then, still lingering on the combined testimony to His pre-existent glory and His human presence in the flesh, he adds, that which we looked upon, which contemplation, as He Himself tells us, saw through the human into the divine, John i. 14, besides its earnest and diligent observation of His human life. Finally, he comes down to that which though the most direct and palpable proof for human testimony, is yet the lowest, as being only material and sensuous, that which our hands handled. All this concerning Him, who is the Word of life, is recapitulated again in ver. 3 under its two great heads, that which we have seen and heard, we declare unto you also. Lücke has very fairly stated, and refuted, the Socinian view which makes that which to be the teaching of Jesus from the beginning of His official life onwards, and the Word of life, as in ch. ii. 7, to mean, the word which ye heard: rightly stating the fatal and crucial obstacle to this view to consist in the words, our hands handled, which none of its advocates can in any way get over). And the Life (i. e. the Lord Himself who is the Life: compare John i. 4, "In Him was Life." This verse is parenthetical, taking up the last clause, and indeed the whole sense, of ver. 1, and showing how the testimony there predicated became possible) was manifested (from being invisible, became visible), and we have seen [it], and bear witness [of it], and declare (this verb does not,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) <sup>3</sup> that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup> And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. <sup>5</sup> This then is the message which we

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

unto you that eternal life, <sup>h</sup> which <sup>h</sup> John i. 1, 2. was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) <sup>3</sup> <sup>1</sup> that which we <sup>i</sup> Acts iv. 20. have seen and heard declare we unto you † also, that ye also may † also is found in our oldest authorities. have fellowship with us: and truly <sup>k</sup> our fellowship is with the Father, <sup>k</sup> John xvii. 21. and with His Son Jesus Christ. <sup>1</sup> Cor. i. 9. ch. ii. 24. <sup>4</sup> And these things write we †, <sup>1</sup> that † unto you is omitted in our two oldest MSS. John xv. 11. m ch. iii. 11. † our joy may be full. <sup>5</sup> And <sup>m</sup> this

& xvi. 24. 2 John 12.

† So our two oldest MSS.

either here or below, refer to the declaration in this present Epistle: it is the general declaration, in word and writing, of which the **write we** below, ver. 4, is the special portion at present employed) **to you that life which is eternal, the which** ("that very before-mentioned life, which was with the Father") **was with the Father** (see on John i. 1. The preposition implies not juxta-position only, but relation: hardly however, as some here, *love*: at the same time it sets forth plainly the distinction of Persons), **and was manifested to us** (here the parenthesis ends, and the construction of ver. 1 is resumed. But on account of the distance at which that verse now stands, the leading particulars of its sense are recapitulated): **that which we have heard and seen we declare to you also** (this also here seems to give to the Epistle the character of being addressed to some special circle of Christian readers, beyond those addressed at the conclusion of the Gospel, ch. xx. 31, or we may take it as indicating "you, who did not hear, nor see, nor handle with your hands the Word of life." But the other is more likely), **in order that ye also** (see above) **may have fellowship with us** (*with us*, the Apostles and eye-witnesses: being bound in faith and love to them, as they were to Christ): **and indeed** (the thought rises to the immeasurably more solemn and glorious character of the second fellowship as compared with the first: as if it were, "and this *fellowship with us* will not stop here: for we are but your admitters into another and a higher fellowship") **our fellowship is with the Father and with** (observe the repeated **with**, distinguishing the Personality, while the very fact of the *fellowship* with Both

unites the Two in the Godhead. It is not, fellowship with God and us, but with us, whose fellowship is with God, the Father and the Son) **His Son Jesus Christ** (the personal and the Messianic Names are united, as in John i. 17, where He is first mentioned, as here. The question has been sometimes asked, why we have not here, "*and with the Holy Ghost?*" The answer to which is not, as Lücke, because the divine Personality of the Holy Ghost was not found in the apostolic mode of thought, but because, the blessed Spirit being God dwelling in man, though we may be said to have "*the fellowship of the Holy Ghost,*" 2 Cor. xiii. 13,—we would hardly be said to have "*fellowship with the Holy Ghost*"). **And these things** (i. e. this whole Epistle: not, the foregoing, nor, the immediately following) **we write, that our** (*our*, i. e. *of us and of you*: not, *of us*, as distinguished from *you*) **joy may be full** (the joy spoken of is the whole complex of the Christian life here and hereafter: its whole sum is, JOY. As Düsterdieck beautifully says, "The peace of reconciliation, the blessed consciousness of sonship, the happy growth in holiness, the bright prospect of future completion and glory,—all these are but simple details of that which in all its length and breadth is embraced by one word, Eternal Life, the real possession of which is the immediate source of our joy. We have joy, Christ's joy, because we are blessed, because we have Life itself in Christ." It has been noticed before, that this verse fills the place of the *greeting* so common in the opening of Epistles, and gives an epistolary character to what follows).

5—II. 28.] FIRST PART OF THE EPISTLE: the message, that *if we would have fellowship with Him who is Light, we must*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

is the message which we have heard of him, and announce unto you, that  
 " God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup> If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: <sup>7</sup> but if we walk in

n John i. 9.  
 & viii 12.  
 & ix. 5, &  
 xii. 35, 36.  
 o 2 Cor. vi. 14.  
 ch. ii. 4.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup> If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: <sup>7</sup> but if we

walk in light, keeping His commandments. See the discussion on the division of the Epistle, in the Introduction.

5.] In each of these divisions, the first verse contains the ground-tone of the whole. And so here—**GOD IS LIGHT.**—**And** (serves to introduce the new subject) **the message which we have heard from Him** (viz. from Christ), **and announce to you** (Düsterdieck remarks, that St. John seems every where to observe the distinction between the two verbs, to *announce* and to *declare*), **is this: that God is light** (not, as Luther, "a light:" light is purely predicative, indicating the essence of God: just as when it is said in ch. iv. 8, "*God is love.*" There it is true the predicative is purely ethical, and thus literal, when used of God who is a Spirit, whereas here, *light* being a material, not an ethical object, some amount of figurative meaning must be conceded. But of all material objects, light is that which most easily passes into an ethical predicative without even the process, in our thought, of interpretation. It unites in itself purity and clearness and beauty and glory, as no other material object does: it is the condition of all material life and growth and joy. And the application to God of such a predicative requires no transference. He is Light, and the Fountain of Light material and light ethical. In the one world, darkness is the absence of light: in the other, darkness, untruthfulness, deceit, falsehood, is the absence of God. They who are in communion with God, and walk with God, are of the light, and walk in the light), **and there is not in Him any darkness at all** (it is according to the manner of St. John, to strengthen an affirmation by the emphatic negation of its opposite; compare ver. 8: ch. ii. 4, 10, 27, &c. Of the ethical darkness here denied, the Scholiast says, "for neither is there ignorance, nor deceit, nor sin, nor death." The Greek expositors ask the question respecting this message, "And *where* did he hear this?"—and answer it, "From Christ Himself, who said, 'I am the Light of the world.'"

Their reply is right, but their reference to those words of our Lord is wrong. It was *from Christ Himself*: viz. from the whole revelation, in doings and sufferings and sayings, of Him who was the *brightness of the glory* of the Father. With that revelation those His words admirably and exactly coincided: but they were not the source of the message, referring as they did specially to Himself, and not directly to the Father. In His whole life on earth, and in the testimony of His Spirit, *He declared Him*. So that this message is the result of the whole complex of ver. 1).

6.] *None can have fellowship with Him who walk in darkness.* **If we say** (the hypothesis is not assumed,—"*If we say, as we do:*"—but is purely hypothetical, "*say who will and when he will.*" The first person plural gives to the sayings a more general form, precluding any from escaping from the inference: at the same time that by including himself in the hypothesis, the Apostle descends to the level of his readers, thus giving to his exhortations the "*come,*" and not "*go,*" which ever wins men's hearts the most) **that we have fellowship with Him** (see on ver. 3. "*Communion with God is the very innermost essence of all true Christian life.*" Huther), **and walk in the darkness** (*walk*, as so often in the New Test. of the whole being and moving and turning in the world: as Bengel, "*by inward or outward action, whithersoever we turn ourselves; the light, the darkness, mark off the two more distinctly than could be done without the articles, as two existing separate ethical regions, the God and no-God regions of spiritual being), we lie* (our assertion is a false one) **and do not the truth** (this clause is not a mere repetition, in a negative form, of the preceding "*we lie:*" but is an independent proposition, answering to "*and walk in the darkness,*" and asserting that all such walking in darkness is a not-doing of the truth. Christ is "*the Truth;*" and all doing the Truth is of Him, and of those who are in union with Him. So that the



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. <sup>8</sup> If we

† Christ is omitted by our oldest authorities.  
& xv. 4. Prov. xx. 9. Eccles. vii. 20.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and <sup>p</sup>the blood of Jesus <sup>†</sup> his Son <sup>p</sup>cleanseth us from all sin. <sup>8</sup> <sup>q</sup>If we

q 1 Kings viii. 40. 2 Chron. vi. 36. Job ix. 2. & xv. 14.

p 1 Cor. vi. 11.  
Eph. i. 7.  
Heb. ix. 14.  
1 Pet. i. 19.  
ch. ii. 2.  
Rev. i. 5.

truth is objective, not as "*truth*" alone might be, subjective, and imports "God's truth," Eph. iv. 21. We may observe how closely the teaching here as to *light* and *truth* resembles that in Eph. iv. v. See also John iii. 21) 7.] (is not merely the contrasted hypothesis to ver. 6, but together with that contains a further unfolding of the subject): but if we walk in the light (this walking in the light is explained by what follows, as *He is in the light*, and by the end of the sentence, which gives the result of so walking,—viz. fellowship, &c. See Eph. v. 8 ff. for the ethical details) as *He* (God) is in the light (because the Christian is made *partaker of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. is in the light is parallel with "*is light*" above, ver. 5. is, as of Him who is eternal and fixed; we walk, as of us who are of time, moving onward: so Bede, "The distinction of words is to be noted; he says that God is in the light, but that we ought to walk in the light. For the righteous walk in the light, when, giving themselves to the working of good deeds, they advance towards perfection:" see note on ch. ii. 6: the light is the element in which God dwelleth: compare 1 Tim. vi. 16. Notice that this walking in the light, as He is in the light, is no mere imitation of God, but is an identity in the essential element of our daily walk with the essential element of God's eternal being: not imitation, but coincidence and identity of the very atmosphere of life), we have fellowship with one another (these words are to be taken in their plain literal sense, and refer, not to our communion with God, which is assumed in our walking in the light as He is in the light, but to our mutual communion with one another by all having the same ground-element of life, viz. the light of the Lord, Isa. ii. 5. There is evidently an allusion to ver. 3, and as there fellowship with God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ is expressed, so here it lies in the background, but need not be supplied. De Wette's remark is most true; Christian communion is then only real, when it is communion with God), and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin (in order to un-

derstand rightly this important sentence, we must fix definitely two or three points regarding its connexion and construction. First then, and connects it, as an additional result of our walking in the light, as He is in the light, with the words *we have fellowship one with another*: just as in ch. iii. 10, end, and *he that loveth not his brother*. Consequently, the proposition contained in it cannot be the ground of the former one, that "if we walk, &c., we have fellowship, &c.," but follows as a co-ordinate result with the fact, of our *having fellowship*. Secondly, *cleanseth* is the present tense, and must be kept to its present meaning. This consideration precludes all meanings which make it refer to the past effect of the Atonement on us, either absolutely, by its having happened, or as applied to us in Baptism. *Thirdly*, the sense of *cleanseth* must be accurately ascertained, and strictly kept to. In ver. 9, "*to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*" is plainly distinguished from "*to forgive us our sins*:" distinguished, as a further process: as, in a word, sanctification, distinct from justification. This meaning then, however much it may be supposed that justification is implied or presupposed, must be held fast here. *Fourthly*, the sense of the blood of Jesus must be also clearly defined. The expression is an objective one, not a subjective: is spoken of that which is the objective cause from without, of our being cleansed from all sin. And this is the material Blood of Jesus the personal Redeemer, shed on the cross as a propitiatory sacrifice for the sin of the world. So we have the same Blood said in Col. i. 20 to be the great medium of pacification between God and the world: so in Eph. i. 7, to be the means of our redemption: so in Heb. ix. 14, which approaches very nearly to our passage, to *cleanse* [here] our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. In all these places, and similar ones, whatever application to ourselves by faith or otherwise may lie in the background, it is not that which is *spoken of*, but the Blood of Christ itself, as the actual objective cause, once for all, of our reconciliation and sanctification.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, <sup>r</sup> and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> <sup>s</sup> If we confess our sins, He is

r ch. ii. 4.

<sup>a</sup> Ps. xxxii. 5.  
Prov. xxviii.  
13.

These considerations remove much of the difficulty and possible misunderstanding of the sentence. Thus understood, it will mean, that this our walking in light, itself necessarily grounded in communion with the Father and the Son, will bring about, that whatever sins we may still be betrayed into by the infirmity of our nature and the malice of the devil, from them the Blood of Jesus purifies us day by day. Observe, not, the *application* of that Blood: for we are speaking of a state of faith and holiness, in which that blood is continually applied: the *walking in the light is*, in fact, the *application*: is that which, as a subjective conditional element, makes that Blood of Christ's cross to be to us a means of purifying from all sin.—The whole doctrine of this verse is fully and admirably set forth in Düsterdieck. The sum of what he says may be thus stated. St. John, in accord with the other Apostles, sets forth the Death and Blood of Christ in two different aspects: 1) as the one sin-offering for the world, in which sense we are justified by the application of the blood of Christ by faith, His satisfaction being imputed to us. 2) as a victory over Sin itself, His blood being the purifying medium, whereby we gradually, being already justified, become pure and clean from all sin. And this application of Christ's blood is made by the Spirit which dwelleth in us. The former of these asserts the imputed righteousness of Christ put on us in justification: the latter, the inherent righteousness of Christ, wrought in us gradually in sanctification. And it is of this latter that he here is treating. Compare next verse).

8—11. 2.] *Unfolding of the idea of purification from sin by the blood of Christ in connexion with our walking in light.* This last is adduced in one of its plainest and simplest consequences, viz. the recognition of all that is yet darkness in us, in the confession of our sins. "If thou hast confessed thyself a sinner, the truth is in thee: for truth itself is light. Thy life is not yet all light, because there are yet sins in it: but nevertheless thou hast begun to be illuminated, because there is in thee confession of sins." The light that is in us convicts the darkness, and we, no longer loving or desiring to sin, have, by means of

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, he is

the propitiatory and sanctifying blood of Christ, both full forgiveness of and sure purification from all our sins. But the true test of this state of communion with and knowledge of God is, the keeping of His commandments [ii. 3—6], the walking as Christ walked: and this test is concentrated and summed up in its one crucial application, viz. to the law of love [ii. 7—11].

8.] *If we say that we have not sin* (i. e. in the course and abiding of our walking in light: if we maintain that we are pure and free from all stain of sin. St. John is writing to persons whose sins have been forgiven them [ii. 12], and therefore necessarily the present tense [**we have**] refers not to any previous state of sinful life before conversion, but to their now existing state and the sins to which they are liable in that state. And in thus referring, it takes up the conclusion of the last verse, in which the onward cleansing power of the sanctifying blood of Christ was asserted: as if it were said this state of needing cleansing from all present sin is veritably that of all of us: and our recognition and confession of it is the very first essential of walking in light), **we are deceiving ourselves** (causing ourselves to err from the straight and true way), **and the truth** (God's truth, objective) **is not in us** (has not subjective place in us. That truth respecting God's holiness and our own sinfulness, which is the very first spark of light within, has no place in us at all).

9.] *If we confess our sins* (it is evident, from the whole sense of the passage, which has regard to our walking in light and in the truth, that no mere outward lip-confession is here meant, nor on the other hand any mere being aware within ourselves of sin, but the union of the two, an external spoken confession springing from genuine inward contrition. As evident is it, that the confession here spoken of is not confined to confession to God, but embraces all our utterances on the subject, to one another as well as to Him; compare James v. 16: and see more below) **He** (God the Father; not, Christ, though this may at first sight seem probable from ver. 7 and ch. ii. 1. God is the chief subject through the whole passage: compare "*God is*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* <sup>10</sup> *If we say that we have not sinned, we make*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all un-<sup>† ver. 7. Ps. ll. 2.</sup>righteousness. <sup>10</sup> If we say that we

*light,*" ver. 5: "*with Him,*" ver. 6; "*He,*" and "*His Son,*" in ver. 7. It is ever God's truth [1 Cor. i. 9, 10, 13; 2 Cor. i. 18; 1 Thess. v. 24] and righteousness [John xvii. 25; Rom. iii. 25; Rev. xvi. 5] that are concerned in, and vindicated by, our redemption) is faithful and just (His being faithful and just does not depend on our confessing our sins: He had both these attributes before, and will ever continue to have them: but by confessing our sins, we cast ourselves on, we approach and put to the proof for ourselves, and shall find operative in our case, in the *forgiving and cleansing*, &c., those His attributes of faithfulness and justice. On the former of these adjectives, faithful, almost all Commentators agree. It is, faithful to His plighted word and promise: see the citations above.—The latter, just, has not been so unanimously interpreted. The idea of God's justice seeming strange here, where the remission of and purification from sin is in question, some Commentators have endeavoured to give the word the sense of *good, merciful*: or, which amounts to the same, *fair, favourably disposed*. But Lücke has shewn, that in none of the Old Test. passages which are cited to substantiate these meanings, have they really place; but in all, righteousness, justice, is the fundamental idea, and the context only makes it mean justice in this or in that direction. See note on Matt. i. 19. The meaning then being just, we have still to decide between several different views as to what particular phase of the divine justice is meant. Some understand that God's justice has been satisfied in Christ, and thus the application of that satisfaction to us if we confess our sins, is an act of divine justice: is due to us in Christ. But this is plainly too much to be extracted from our verse. In Rom. iii. 26, where this is asserted, the reason is given, and all is fully explained: whereas here the ellipsis would be most harsh and unprecedented, and thus to fill it up would amount to an introduction into the context of an idea which is altogether foreign to it. The correct view seems to be, that just as well as faithful here is an attribute strictly to be kept to that which is predicated of it under the circumstances, without entering

upon reasons external to the context. God is faithful, to His promise: is just, in His dealing; and both attributes operate in the forgiveness of sins to the penitent, now and hereafter; and in cleansing them from all unrighteousness. The laws of His spiritual kingdom require this: by those laws He acts in holy and infinite justice. His promises announced it, and to those promises He is faithful: but then those promises were themselves made only in accordance with His nature, who is holy, just, and true. In the background lie all the details of redemption; but they are not here in this verse: only the simple fact of God's justice is adduced) to forgive us our sins (not "so as to forgive, &c.," but "that He may forgive, &c.") His doing so is in accordance with, and therefore as with Him all facts are purposed, is in pursuance of, furthers the object of, His faithfulness and justice. "So that He is faithful and just, in order that He may, &c." With regard to the particular mentioned, the forgiveness of our sins here means the continued remission of the guilt of each committed sin, which is the special promise and just act of God under the Gospel covenant: see Heb. x. 14, 18), and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (the explanation of the sense, see above. Here unrighteousness is used, in reference to the word "*righteous,*" above, as corresponding to sins" in ver. 7. The divine righteousness is revealed in God's law: every transgression then of that law is of its nature and essence an unrighteousness, as contrary to that righteousness. The two verbs, forgive and cleanse, imply in the original, that the purpose of the faithfulness and justice of God is to do each as one great complex act—to justify and to sanctify wholly and entirely. 10.] Not a mere repetition, but a confirmation and intensification of ver. 8. This verse is related to ver. 9, as ver. 8 is to ver. 7). If we say that we have not sinned (if we deny, that is, the fact of our commission of sins in our Christian state. The perfect tense, so far from removing the time to that before conversion, brings it down to the present: had it been "*that we sinned not,*" it might have had that signification. **we**

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

II. <sup>1</sup>My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye may not sin. And if any man have

have not sinned answers in time to "we have no sin:" the one representing the state as existing, the other the sum of sinful acts which have gone to make it up, we make him (God, see above) a liar (this is the climax, gradually reached through the words "we lie," ver. 6, and "we deceive ourselves," ver. 8. And it is justified by the uniform assertion of God both in the Old and New Testament that all men are sinners, which we thus falsify as far as in us lies), and His word is not in us (His word may be interpreted generally,— "that which He saith.") "God hath said, Thou hast sinned: to deny that, is a crime. God's word truly accuses us, and by our contradiction of it, is driven from our hearts." Bengel. is not in us, as in John v. 38, has no abiding place in, within, us: is something heard by the ear, and external to us, but not finding place among the thoughts and maxims of our heart and life. God declares that to be true which we assume to be untrue. It is evident, that to understand the *Old Testament* by *His word*, is to miss the connexion, seeing that it is of the sins of *Christians* that St. John is treating, to whom *His word* has become a far higher revelation of His will, viz. that given by Christ, and brought home to the heart by His indwelling Spirit. This final revelation of God includes the Old and New Testament, and all other manifestations of His will to us: and it is this as a whole which we reject and thrust from us, if we say at any time that we have not sinned, for its united testimony proclaims the contrary).

CHAP. II. 1.] The connexion is thus given by Augustine: "Lest perchance he might seem to have given impunity to sins, by saying, 'He is faithful and just to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,' and men should say to themselves, 'Let us sin: let us fearlessly do what we will, Christ cleanseth us:—he takes from thee false security, and puts in useful fear. Thou art disposed to be falsely secure: be thou watchful and careful; for He is faithful and just, that He may remit us our sins, and that thou mayest always be displeased with thyself, and mayest be

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

him a liar, and his word is not in us.

II. <sup>1</sup>My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have

continually changed even unto perfection. What then follows? 'My little children, &c.' But then perhaps sin after all, from human imperfection, supervenes. What then? Shall this lead to desperation? Listen, 'If any man have sinned,' he says, &c." See more below. But there is more in the connexion than this. It is not corrective only of a possible mistake, but it is progressive—a further step taken in the direction of unfolding the great theme of this part of the Epistle, enounced in ch. i. 5. The first step for those walking in the light of God was, that they should confess their sins: the next and consequent one, that they should forsake them, and, agreeably to their new nature, keep His commandments. This verse introduces that further unfolding of our subject, which is continued, and especially pressed as regards the one great commandment of love, in our vv. 3—11.

1.] My little children (the diminutive expresses tender affection: perhaps also is used in reference to his age and long standing as a father in Christ. There is a beautiful legend in Eusebius, where St. John calls back to him a young man who had gone astray with the words, "*Why fliest thou from me, my child, me, thine own father?*"), these things write I unto you, that ye may sin not [at all] (implying the absence not only of the habit, but of any single acts of sin. these things I write, not, that which follows; nor, both the preceding and the following: but the preceding only, viz. the concluding verses 8—10 of the former chapter, not in their details merely, but in their whole connexion. The object of writing that passage was, to bring about in them the forsaking of sin. The very announcement there made, that if we confess our sins He in His faithfulness and righteousness will cleanse us from all sin, sufficiently substantiates what the Apostle here says, without bringing out too strongly the contemplation of a supposed misunderstanding on the part of the readers. To do this is to miss the deeper connexion in which these words stand to the great whole in its harmony, and to give instead



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: <sup>2</sup> and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world. <sup>3</sup> and hereby we

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

sinned, <sup>a</sup> we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: <sup>2</sup> and <sup>b</sup> he is a propitiation for our sins: yet not for ours only, but <sup>c</sup> also for [† the sins of] the whole world. <sup>3</sup> And hereby we

<sup>a</sup> Rom. viii. 34.  
1 Tim. ii. 5.  
Heb. vii. 25.  
& ix. 24.

<sup>b</sup> Rom. iii. 25.  
2 Cor. v. 18.  
ch. i. 7.  
& iv. 10.

<sup>c</sup> John i. 29.  
& iv. 42. & xi.  
51, 52. ch. iv.  
14.

† Not expressed in the original.

only an apparent and superficial one. The reference of this exhortation to the unconverted among them, and rendering "that ye abide not in sin," maintained by Socinus and his followers, need only be mentioned to be refuted. The past tense "have sinned," may serve to shew its utter untenableness). And if any man have sinned (have committed an act of sin: still speaking of those spots of sin which owing to the infirmity of the flesh remain even in those who are walking in the light. By this there is not any doubt expressed that all do occasionally sin, but the hypothesis is made, as ever by this formula, purely and generally. The resumption of the first person immediately, makes it evident that the hypothesis is in fact realized in us all), we have an Advocate with (towards, as pleading in His presence) the Father, Jesus Christ (the principal word requiring elucidation here is Advocate (Paraclete). There are two classes of interpretations of it, which, as already remarked [on John xiv. 16], by no means exclude one another. Of these, that one which may be summed up under the meaning "COMFORTER," has already been treated, on John, in the place quoted. With the other we have now to deal. ADVOCATE is the commoner sense of the word, and that which it certainly bears here. There is no discrepancy between this passage, where the Son is our Paraclete, and John xiv. 16, where the Holy Spirit is called by the same name: rather is there the closest accordance, seeing that there our Lord says He will pray the Father and He will send us "another Paraclete:" He himself, the Son of God, being thus asserted to hold this office in the first place, and the Holy Spirit to be His Substitute in His absence) [being] righteous ("in that He is righteous," as a contrast to "if any man sin." In a strict rendering, this force should be kept, and pointed out in explanation: in an English version, it is hardly possible to render it otherwise than our translators have done, "the righteous," though it is

not absolutely correct. "The righteousness of Christ stands on our side: for God's righteousness is, in Jesus Christ, ours." Luther): 2.] and He is a propitiation (the word implies that Christ has, as our sin-offering, reconciled God and us by nothing else but by His voluntary death as a sacrifice: has by this averted God's wrath from us. According to the constant usage of Scripture, God is in so far propitious in regard to the sins of men, as He suffers His mercy to prevail instead of his wrath. See Septuagint in 2 Chron. vi. 25, 27; Jer. xxxviii. [xxxi.] 34, xliii. [36], 3; Numb. xiv. 18 ff.) for (concerning, i. e. in behalf of) our sins: yet not for ours only, but also for the whole world (in the latter clause there is an ellipsis very common in ordinary speech in every language: "for the whole world" is equivalent to "for the sins of the whole world." "As broad as the sin extends, so broad the propitiation." Bengel. But this has been misunderstood or evaded by many interpreters. Cyril and Ecumenius explain our to refer to the Jews, of the whole world to the Gentiles. And many others, taking the former in its true sense, yet limit the latter, not being able to take in the true doctrine of universal redemption. So Bede, holding that our applied to those then living, of the whole world to those that were to come after. But this unworthy and evasive view is opposed by the whole mass of evangelical expositors.—The reason of the insertion of the particular here, is well given by Luther: "It is a patent fact that thou too art a part of the whole world: so that thine heart cannot deceive itself and think, The Lord died for Peter and Paul, but not for me").

3—11. [This communion with God consists, secondly, in keeping His commandments, and especially the commandment to love one another. No new division of the Epistle begins: ver. 3 is closely joined to ch. i. 5, 6, which introduced the first conditional passage, i. 7—ii. 2. The great test of communion with God, walking in the light, first requires that we confess



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

have the knowledge of him, if we keep his commandments. <sup>d</sup> <sup>4</sup> He that saith, I have the knowledge of him, and keepeth not his commandments, <sup>e</sup> is a liar, and the truth is not in him. <sup>f</sup> But <sup>f</sup> whoso keepeth his word, <sup>g</sup> in him verily is the love of God perfected: <sup>h</sup> hereby know we that we are in him. <sup>6</sup> <sup>i</sup> He that

*do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. <sup>4</sup> He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. <sup>5</sup> But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. <sup>6</sup> He*

our sins: next requires that we keep His commandments. And in this (so literally: this is the conditional element: in this is placed, on this depends, our knowledge. In ch. iii. 24 [see below], the in this is resumed by the words, "By His Spirit which He hath given us") we know (from time to time, from day to day) that we have the knowledge of him (have acquired and retain that knowledge: this knowledge is not, as some make it, the love of God, as neither of course is it mere theoretical knowledge: but is that inner and living acquaintance which springs out of unity of heart and affection), if (the token, that we have the knowledge of Him, is present, *if*, i. e. it being assumed that) we keep (as a habit, from time to time, these commandments being necessarily prescriptions regarding circumstances as they arise) His commandments (first as to the expression. St. John never uses the word "law" for the rule of Christian obedience: this word is reserved for the Mosaic law, John i. 17, 46, and, in all, fifteen times in the Gospel: but almost always *commandments*, — sometimes *the word of God* or *of Christ*, John viii. 52 f.; xiv. 23 f.; xvii. 6, our ver. 5. And as a verb he always uses "to keep," very seldom "to do;" and to keep preserves its peculiar meaning of *watching*, guarding as some precious thing, "observing to keep." Next, *whose* commandments? The older expositors for the most part refer "Him," "His," "in Him," verses 3—6, to Christ. Most modern Commentators understand these pronouns throughout of God, and the second "He" in ver. 6, of Christ. That this latter is the right understanding of the terms, is supposed to be shewn by the substitution (?) in ver. 5 of the words "of God" for "His," and its taking up again by "in Him" in ver. 6, followed by "even as He walked." But of

this I am by no means thoroughly persuaded: see note, ver. 6).

4.] *Assertion*, parallel with ch. i. 8, of the *futility of pretending to the knowledge of God where this test is not fulfilled*. The man saying, I have the knowledge of Him (see above), and not keeping His commandments, is a liar (answers to *we deceive ourselves*, ch. i. 8), and in this man the truth is not (see above on ch. i. 8, where the words are the same:

5.] *assertion of the other alternative*, not put as before, but, as usual, carried further and differently expressed: an *opposition with an accession*, as Grotius calls it):— but whoso keepeth His word (synonymous with *His commandments*, considered as a whole: on the mode of expression, see above), of a truth in him is the love of God perfected (why should this transition be made from knowledge to love? Love presupposes knowledge, and is a further step in the same *fellowship* with God: not indeed that the former step is passed through and done with, but that true knowledge and love increase together, and the former is the measure of the latter, just as keeping God's commandments is the test and measure of true knowledge of Him. And thus in the final and perfect ideal, the two are coincident: the perfect observation of His commandments is the perfection of love to Him. It is manifest, from what has been said, that this love of God must be our love towards God, not His love towards us). In this (in the fact of our progress towards this ideal state of perfection of obedience and therefore of love:—thus assured that the germ of the state is in us and unfolding) we know that we are in Him (this completes the logical period which began in ver. 3, by reasserting that verse, carrying however that assertion yet deeper, by substituting "we are in Him"

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. <sup>7</sup> Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. <sup>8</sup> Again, a new command-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

saith he abideth in him <sup>k</sup> ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. <sup>7</sup> † Beloved, <sup>1</sup> I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment <sup>m</sup> which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye heard †. <sup>8</sup> Again, <sup>n</sup> a new com-  
† So all our oldest authorities. 1 2 John 5.  
 † from the beginning is n John xiii. 34. & xv. 12.

for "we have the knowledge of Him." This "being in Him" is in fact the Christian life in its central depth of *fellowship* with God and with one another: the spiritual truth corresponding to the physical one enunciated by St. Paul, Acts xvii. 28, "In Him we live, and move, and have our being".

6.] The state of being in Him is carried forward a step further by the expression "abide in Him:" and the way is prepared, by what follows, for the coming exhortation vv. 7—11, to walk in love. The man saying that he abideth in Him (God, as above) ought (see reff. The obligation is grounded on the profession, being one of consistency with it: not on the *abiding*, which would imply that which follows, as matter of necessity), even as He (Christ) walked (during His life upon earth: see below), himself also thus to walk (not any one particular of Christ's walk upon earth is here pointed at, but the whole of His life of holiness and purity and love. This latter, as including all the rest, is most in the Apostle's mind. So in Eph. v. 1, 2, where St. Paul exhorts us to be followers of God, he adds, "and walk in love, even as Christ also loved us." Luther simply but appositely remarks, that it is not Christ's walking on the sea, but His ordinary walk, that we are called on here to imitate).

7—11.] *The commandment of Love.* The context see below. Beloved, I write not to you a new commandment, but an old commandment, which ye had from the beginning: the old commandment is the word which ye heard (on the right understanding of this verse, very much depends. The great question is, To what commandment does he refer? Does he point forward to the commandment of brotherly love, in ver. 9, or back to that of walking as Christ walked, in ver. 6? One or other of these views has generally

been taken decidedly and exclusively of the other. But this exclusive reference is apparently wrong, and a compromise may be found more agreeable to the ethical habits of thought of the Apostle, and to the context of the passage. This context requires, 1) that we maintain a logical connexion between ver. 6 and ver. 7, as indicated by the *duty* urged in the one, and the *commandment* alleged in the other: and 2) that we maintain the like logical connexion between ver. 8 and ver. 9, as indicated by the figure common to them both, of the darkness and the light. Now, of these, 1) is neglected by those who understand the *commandment* barely as the law of love: 2) is neglected by those who understand it barely of following Christ's example. The former make ver. 7 spring out of no contextual development: the latter treat similarly ver. 9. And the true view is to be found as thus indicated: the walk of Christ, which is our example, is essentially and completely summed up in one word, Love: and so the command, to walk as He walked, essentially and completely resolves itself into the law of brotherly love: for this last, taken in all its depth, includes not one special detail in a holy Christian life, but the whole of that life itself. Taking then this view, how are we to interpret in detail? What is new? what is old? what is from the beginning? For these clearly all hang together. If *from the beginning* is to signify 'from the beginning of Old Test. revelation,' or 'from the beginning of God's testimony in man's conscience,' we seem to be doing violence to the simple mode of address which is prevalent in our Apostle's style. The terms "*ye had*" and "*ye heard*," especially the latter, will hardly bear interpreting of the remote forefathers of the readers, as on this hypothesis they must, but require to be confined to the readers themselves. And if so, the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

mandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: <sup>o</sup> because the darkness is passing away, and <sup>p</sup> the true light now shineth. <sup>q</sup> He that saith he is in

<sup>o</sup> Rom. xiii. 12.  
<sup>o</sup> Eph. v. 8.  
<sup>o</sup> 1 Thess. v. 5, 8.  
<sup>p</sup> John i. 9.  
 & viii. 12.  
 & xii. 35.  
<sup>q</sup> 1 Cor. xiii. 2.  
<sup>q</sup> 2 Pet. i. 9. ch. iii. 14, 15.

meaning of *from the beginning* is fixed to be, from the beginning of the Christian lives, from the time when they heard the word. Then as to *new*, and *old*, the explanation will be simple enough. The command to love one another cannot be said to be new, for it forms a part of the word which ye heard, nay, is the very sum and centre of that word: but again, it may be said to be new, inasmuch as it ever assumes new freshness as the Christian life unfolds, as the old darkness is more and more cleared away and the true light shineth: in that light we see light; in the light of Him who maketh all things new. That the *commandment* as such refers to the law of love, thus indeed connected with Christ's example here, but still to the law of love and no other, is plain from the whole usage of the Apostle; compare especially 2 John 4—6, where the very same train of thought occurs as here, the *walking in truth* being equivalent to *walking in light* here, being followed up by "*even as we received commandment from the Father,*" and that *commandment* being characterized, as here,—"*not as though I wrote unto thee a new commandment, but that which we had from the beginning,*" and finally being stated to be "*that we love one another.*" Indeed the whole process of that passage from this point is most instructive as to our present one: "*And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments: this is the commandment even as ye heard from the beginning that ye may walk in it.*" where the same complex of the whole Christian walk is included in the one idea of love, and *love* identified with walking according to His commandments. Again in ch. iii. 11, the same formula is used in speaking of the law of love—"This is the commandment which ye heard from the beginning, that we love one another:" compare also ch. iv. 21, v. 3, iii. 22—24: again ch. iii. 14, iv. 16, John xiii. 35; ch. v. 1, 2, John xv. 10. To recapitulate: on the interpretation here adopted, the *commandment* is the command to walk as Christ walked, passing, as the context ad-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

ment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. <sup>q</sup> He that saith he is in

vances, into the law of love. This commandment is no new one, but an old one, seeing that they had it from the beginning, from the beginning of their faith, and it was in fact the sum of the word which they heard. 8.] Again (this takes up and contravenes what has been as yet said: as if it had been "in another view of the subject . . .") a new commandment write I unto you ("new," in that it was first promulgated with Christianity and unknown before: not, in that he now renews, and impresses it anew on them. The meaning above given agrees well both with the context and with St. John's habit of thought, as well as with matter of fact, and our Lord's own words, John xiii. 34, xv. 12. "When I stand at the point of time indicated by the term '*from the beginning,*' and look forwards on the Christian life of the readers, the *commandment* appears as one long known; the readers have known it from the beginning as an essential commandment, they have had it as long as they have been Christians: on the other hand, if I look backward on the life of the readers before that *beginning*, whether they were before that Jews or Gentiles, this same commandment of necessity appears as a new one, essentially Christian, first beginning for the readers with that beginning; for even for the Jewish Christians the command of brotherly love is a new one, seeing that it is ordained in imitation of Christ, John xiii. 34"), which (thing, viz. the fact that the commandment is a new one: see below) is true in Him and in you: because the darkness is passing away (not, as A. V., "*past:*" the verb is *present*), and the true light is now shining i. e. the commandment is a new one, and this is true both in [the case of] Him [Christ] and in [the case of] you: because [in you] the darkness is passing away, and [in Him] the true light is shining: therefore on both accounts the command is a new one: new as regards you, because you are newly come from darkness into light: new as regards Him, because He uttered it when He came into the world to lighten

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. <sup>10</sup> He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. <sup>11</sup> But

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

the light, and hateth his brother, is in the darkness even until now. <sup>10</sup> He <sup>r ch. iii. 14.</sup> that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and <sup>s</sup> there is none occasion of stumbling in him. <sup>11</sup> But

every man, and began that shining which even now continues.

9, 10.] We now come to the *enunciation of the law of brotherly love*, and in a form resembling that used in ch. i. 8, 10: and in ver. 4, 5. First is asserted the incompatibility of living in hatred and walking in the light: then the identity of walking in love and walking in the light: then lastly as a contrast to the last, the same fact with regard to hatred and the darkness, and the blinding effect on him who walks in it. The *light* is as before, the light of Christ, now partially shining, but one day to be fully revealed: the *darkness* is the darkness of this present world, now passing away. **He that saith that he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in the darkness until now** (Düsterdieck has very properly protested against the softening down of this hate into "loving too little, neglecting, not cultivating," &c. "Nothing," he says, "can be more shallow and weak as compared with the ethics of the whole Scripture. All the truth, depth, and power of Christian ethics rests on the contrast so distinctly insisted on by St. John. On the one side is God, on the other the world: here is life, there is death [ch. iii. 14]: here, love; there, hate, i. e. murder [ch. iii. 14 ff.], there is no medium. In the space between, is nothing. Life may as yet be merely elementary and fragmentary. Love may be as yet weak and poor, but still, life in God and its necessary demonstration in love is present really and truly, and the word of our Lord is true, 'He that is not against me is with me,' Luke ix. 50: and on the other side, the life according to the flesh, the attachment to the world, and the necessary action of this selfishness by means of hatred, may be much hidden, may be craftily covered and with splendid outer surface; but in the secret depth of the man, there where spring the real fountains of his moral life, is not God but the world; the man is yet in death, and can consequently love nothing but himself and must hate his brother: and then that other word of the Lord is true, 'He that is not for me is against me,' Luke xi. 23. For a man

can only be either for or against Christ, and consequently can only have either love or hate towards his brother." Bengel says well, on ver. 11, "An immediate opposition: where there is not love, there is hate: for the heart is not empty" It has been questioned, who is meant by **his brother**. It seems plain that the expression here is not the same as "*his neighbour*," seeing that St. John is writing to Christians, and treating of their *fellowship with one another*. On the other hand, if we are to restrict the meaning to Christian brotherhood, it is plain that we cannot understand strictly *his brother* in verses 9, 11, seeing that the man there spoken of is in reality not a Christian at all. So that either we must enlarge the sense of *brother*, or suppose some impropriety of language in the use of the term in these verses, so that it might mean, him who ought to be loved by him as a Christian brother, supposing himself to be really a Christian. This difficulty does not seem to have struck any of the Commentators: but it is one which certainly will not allow us to confine the term to its utmost strictness of meaning. **even until now**, i. e. *up to this moment*: notwithstanding any apparent change which may have taken place in him when he passed into the ranks of nominal Christians). 10.] **He that loveth his brother abideth in the light** (i. e. the continuance of the habit of brotherly love is a measure of and a guarantee for his continuance in that light whose great command is Love), **and there is none occasion of stumbling in him** (so A. V., excellently. For it is clear by the parallel in ver. 11, that this is what is meant, and not, as the original words will also bear, that he gives no occasion of stumbling to others. Compare John xi. 9, 10, which is in more than one respect the key-text here. For it also explains the apparently difficult term in **him**, occurring as it does there in ver. 10, "*but if any one walk in the night, he stumbleth, because the light is not in him.*" The light, and the darkness, by which we walk safely, or stumble, are within ourselves; admitted into us by the eye, whose singleness fills the whole body with light).



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

he that hateth his brother is in the darkness, and <sup>t</sup> walketh in the darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness blinded his eyes. <sup>12</sup> I write unto you, little children, because <sup>u</sup> your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. <sup>13</sup> I write unto you, fathers, because ye know him <sup>x</sup> that was from the beginning. I write unto you, young

<sup>t</sup> John xii. 35.

<sup>u</sup> Luke xxiv. 47. Acts iv. 12. & x. 43. & xiii. 38. ch. i. 7.

<sup>x</sup> ch. i. 1.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes. <sup>12</sup> I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. <sup>13</sup> I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto

11.] But (whereas) he that hateth his brother (see above) is in the darkness (has never come out of it: corresponds to "abideth in the light" above: denotes his state, whereas "walketh" indicates more his outward acts), and walketh in the darkness, and knoweth not where he goeth, because the darkness blinded (it is a matter of old standing: "blinded," and not "hath blinded," because it is no new effect of a state into which he has lately come, but the long past work of a state which is supposed to be gone by and is not) his eyes.

12—14.] *Threefold address to the readers, accompanied by a threefold reason for writing to them; all repeated by way of parallelism, with some variations and enlargements.* On the connexion and explanation of these verses, it may be observed, 1) that we have three classes of readers, denoted the first time by *little children, fathers, young men*, and the second time by *children, fathers, young men*. 2) that all three are addressed the first time in the present, "I write," the second time in the past, "I wrote," or "have written." 3) that while to the *fathers* and *young men* the same words are each time used [to the latter with an addition the second time], the *little children* and *children* are differently addressed. The first question arising is, what do these three classes import, and how are they to be distributed among the readers? It is obvious that the chief difficulty here is with *little children* and *children*, the words for which in the original are not only different in degree, but also radically. The former word is used by our Apostle once with "my," ch. ii. 1, and five times without "my:" ch. ii. 28, iii. 18, iv. 4, v. 21; but always as importing the whole of his readers: and once it is reported by him as used by our Lord, also in a general address

to all His disciples, John xiii. 33. *Children* is used by him similarly in our ver. 18, and reported by him as used by our Lord in a general address, John xxi. 5. These facts make it very probable that both the words are here used as general designations of all the readers, and not as a designation of any particular class among them. And this is made more probable, by the fact that if *little children* and *children* did point out the children among them, properly or spiritually so called, the rank of classes would be different from that which would occur to any writer, viz. neither according to ascending age nor to descending, but children, fathers, young men. We seem then to have made it highly probable that *little children* and *children* address all the readers alike. Now if we lay any stress on the third circumstance above mentioned, that *little children* and *children* are differently addressed, and not so *fathers* and *young men*, and endeavour therefrom to deduce any distinction between *little children* and *children* in the age or qualities expressed by them, I conceive that we shall establish nothing satisfactory. If a reason for this variation of address is to be discovered, it must be sought in the parallelism of the passage. With these preliminary remarks, we come to the details. I write unto you, little children (see above), because your sins have been (perfect) forgiven you for the sake of His (Christ's) name (*Jesus Christ*, the Saviour, the anointed One, bringing to mind all the work wrought out by Him for us, and all the acceptance of that work by the Father: so that it may be well said that on account of, for the sake of, that Name which the Father hath given Him, which is above every name, our sins are forgiven).

13.] I write unto you, fathers, because ye know him that was (compare ch. i. 1)



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

<sup>14</sup> I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

<sup>15</sup> Love not the world,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I † have written unto you, children, because ye know the Father. <sup>14</sup> I have written unto you, fathers, because ye know him that was from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because <sup>y</sup> ye are strong, and the word <sup>y</sup> Eph. vi. 10. of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. <sup>15</sup> <sup>z</sup> Love <sup>z</sup> Rom. xii. 2.

† So all our oldest authorities.

from the beginning i. e. in St. John's usage of speech, Christ; see ch. i. 1 and notes). I write unto you, young men, because ye have conquered the wicked one (the proper attribute of youth is, to carry on the active parts of life,—if soldiers, to be engaged in all active service: that of age, to contemplate, and arrive at sound and matured knowledge. The latter have conquered as well, but the burden and heat of their struggle is past. The wicked one is he in whom, in whose power, the whole world lieth, ch. v. 19; John xii. 31, xiv. 30, xvi. 11: the devil, who deceives from the beginning, John viii. 44; ch. iii. 8, 10, 12: whose works Christ came into the world to destroy, ch. iii. 8. He is conquered once and for all, by those who have passed from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, to communion with the Father and the Son, ch. v. 18. Whatever conflict remains for them afterwards, is with a baffled and conquered enemy: is a *keeping them* [from the wicked one], ch. v. 18, which *keeping* [see note there], owing to their whole life being led in communion with the Father and Son, is in fact a *being kept*, John xvii. 15.—He now repeats (see above) the three classes, but with some variations and additions in his reasons for writing to each, and with the past tense, *I have written*, instead of the present, *I write*. With respect to the possible reason for this change of tense, see note in my Greek Testament. Probably he refers, in both expressions, to the whole of this present Epistle). I wrote (or, have written) to you, children (by children, all the readers are meant: see above), because ye know the Father (the very word *children* reminds of father: and the relation is close between

this and that which is said before, that their sins are forgiven for Christ's name's sake. They are received thus by adoption into God's family, and He is become *their* reconciled Father, as He is the Father of Him through whom they have received their adoption: and one of the first evidences of dawning intelligence in a child is the recognition of its father. But this knowledge of the Father does not precede, nay, it presupposes, communion with the Son: for none knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him, Matt. xi. 27).

14.] I wrote (or, have written) to you, fathers, because ye know Him that was from the beginning (verbatim as before: to shew perhaps in strong light the great truth of John xvii. 3, that the whole sum of Christian ripeness and experience is, this knowledge of "*Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou didst send.*" Bengel gives another reason,—that no more is added, because the fathers, to whom the clause is addressed, needed not more to be said). I wrote to you, young men, because ye are strong (strong in fight: so in Heb. xi. 34; Luke xi. 21), and the word of God abideth in you (i. e. the whole announcement of the good news of the gospel in Christ has found entrance into your hearts and an abiding place there, and there dwells and works), and ye have conquered the wicked one (see above).

15—17.] *Dehortation from the love of the world.* The preceding designation of the different classes has been, as so frequently in St. John, their ideal designation, in the perfection of their several states of Christian life: and now, as so often, he brings that ideal state to bear on real temptations and duties. The love of

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

not the world, neither the things  
that are in the world. <sup>a</sup> If any

*neither the things that are  
in the world. If any man  
love the world, the love of*

a Matt. vi. 24.  
Gal. i. 10.  
James iv. 4.

the Father, the abiding in Him by His word abiding in them, the victory over him in whom "*the whole world lieth,*"—these particulars have been enounced: and though there may be a more apparent reason why the young should have this dehortation addressed to them, and more apparent allusion to the words "*ye have conquered the wicked one*" in the bringing out of the "*world,*" yet there can be no doubt that it is to *all* that this address is made. All are in the world, and as long as they are, are in danger of being betrayed by the senses to cleave to the things present and seen, to the forgetfulness of those which are absent and unseen. This general reference is shewn by the "*If any man*" which follows.

15.] Love not the world (what is the world, in the diction of St. John? And what does he import by loving the world? When we read John iii. 16, "*God so loved the world,*" &c. are we to understand the same thing by the words as here? and if not, are *both* [viz. *the world and love*] taken in a different sense, or if one only, *which*? It would seem that the *world* in both cases is the same, the *love* is different. In John iii. 16 it is the love of divine compassion and creative and redeeming mercy: here, it is the love of selfish desire, cherishing avarice or pride. But then recurs our question, What is *the world*? And it is no easy one to answer. If 1) we reply so as to make it *personal*, we are met at once by the difficulty of "*the things in the world:*" from which we cannot escape by saying that these are as below, "*the lust, &c.*" for none can be said to *love* the lust, but the *lust* is the *love*. Hence some have been led to take these three, *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the vain-glory of life*, as put for the things desired, and the material of the *vain-glory*. But this manifestly will not hold, owing to the opposition in ver. 17 between "*the world and the lust thereof*" on the one hand, and "*he that doeth the will of God*" on the other, which evidently requires that its first member should be personal as well as its second. And this last will be a weighty reason also against 2) taking *the world* as merely *material*, the present order of things, in so far as it is alien from God. We are thus brought to a point, for our understanding of the term, intermediate between personal and material.

But then our question is, which of the two is to take the first place? Is *the world* the world of matter, including the men who dwell in it, or is it the world of man, including matter as subordinate to man? If the former, we seem in danger of falling into a dualism, in which God and the world of matter should be set over against one another as independent existences: for thus the evil one, the *ruler of the world*, and his spiritual agents would themselves be included in the *world*, and adjuncts to the world of matter: a mode of thought which nowhere appears in the apostolic writings. We are thus narrowed to our other alternative, that of understanding *the world* as of human persons, including the inferior ranks of created being, and the mass of inanimate matter which they inhabit. Let us see whether this view will meet the necessities of our text and of similar passages. Thus understood, the *world* was constituted at first in Adam, well-pleasing to God and obedient to Him: it was man's world, and in man it is summed up: and in man it fell from God's light into the darkness of selfish pursuits and *worldly lusts*, in and by which man, who should be rising through his cosmic corporeal nature to God, has become materialized in spirit and dragged down so as to be worldly and sensual, and like him who has led him astray, and who now, having thus subjected man's nature by temptation, has become the *ruler of the world*. And thus the *world* is "*man and man's world,*" in his and its fall from God. It was this world which God loved, in its enmity to Him, with the holy love of Redemption: it is this world which we are not to love, in its alienation from Him, with the selfish love of participation. And this *world* is spoken of sometimes as personal, sometimes as material, according to the context in which it occurs. To give but a few decisive examples: of the purely personal sense, John xv. 18, "*If the world hateth you, &c.,*" followed by "*If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you also,*" where the singular is broken up into the individual persons: of the purely material, John xi. 9, "*If any one walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he beholdeih the light of this world.*" And in passages like the present, these two senses alternate with and interpenetrate one another: e. g.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*the Father is not in him.*  
 16 *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh,<sup>b</sup> and the lust of the eyes, and <sup>b Eccles. v. 11.</sup> the vain-glory of life, is not of the

in the term "*the things in the world*," the *world* is apparently material and local: in the opposition which follows, between the love of the world and the love of the Father, the personal meaning begins to be evident: in what follows, "*all that is in the world*," which at first sight seems material, is explained by "*the lust of the flesh, &c.*" which are the subjective desires of the "*things in the world*," not the things themselves: then, finally, in ver. 17, where "*the world and the lust thereof*," is opposed to "*he that doeth the will of God*," it is plain that we have passed, by the transition in the last verse, from the material to the personal sense altogether. This account may serve to explain that which has given so much trouble to Commentators here, the question whether *lust* is not put for the thing itself which is desired: the fact being that, the *world* including the material world in the men, the *lusts*, which are in the men, are in the *world*, as well as the things of which they are the desires, and which are in their turn included in them), nor yet (not merely meaning "*nor*;" but carrying with it an exclusive and disjunctive force, implying that what follows is not identical with what went before. That was spoken of the world itself, the totality: "have no love for this present world as such." But an escape from this prohibition might be sought by men who would deny in the abstract the charge of worldly-mindedness, but devoted themselves to some one object of those followed by worldly men: so that it is necessary to add, after "Love not the world,"—"no, nor any thing in it") the things in the world (explained above: here, the objects after which the ungodly world's *lust* reaches out, and on which its *vain-glory* is founded). If any man (see on the same expression above, ver. 1) love the world, the love of the Father (i. e. love to the Father, as opposed to his love to the world) is not in him.

16.] Gives a reason for the assertion in ver. 15: viz. the entire separation from one another of the world and God. In order to understand clearly the following, it is necessary to define strictly the things

mentioned, and to lay down explicitly the apposition between "*all that is in the world*," and the three particulars which follow as included in that category. This can only be rightly done by bearing in mind what was said before,—that, as the world is summed up in man, both those objective material things which are properly *the things in the world*, and those inward subjectivities which are in man and grounded on his worldly state, are regarded as being in the world, and these pass into, and are almost interchanged with, one another. Now here, the three things spoken of as examples of *the things in the world* are all purely subjective,—"*lust*,"—"lust,"—"vain-glory." But they are subjectivities having their ground in the objectivities of the ungodly world: the first *lust* springs out of (see below) the *flesh*, the human nature unrenewed by God: the second resides in that sense which takes note of outward things and so is inflamed by them: and the "*life*," is that belonging to *vain-glory*, the manner of life of worldly men among one another, whereby pride as to display and pomp is cherished. Now each one of these three is included in, and includes in itself, love to the world: and he that loves the world falls into, walks after, becomes part of, these lusts, and this *vain-glory*, which is not of the Father but of the world. Loving the things of the world, he becomes *conformed* to the world, and following the lusts and pride which are in the world, he himself becomes one of the things in the world. Because every thing that is in the world (namely, or for instance), the lust of the flesh (of the flesh is not an objective gen., so that the words should mean, "lust after the flesh," i. e. impure desire: this they include, but far more. The genitive is subjective, the flesh being that wherein the lust dwells, as in Gal. v. 16, Eph. ii. 3, 2 Pet. ii. 18, Rom. i. 24: see also Rom. vi. 12; 1 Pet. iv. 2), and the lust of the eyes (subjective genitive, as before: the lust which the eye begets by seeing), and the *vain-glory* of life (the *vain-glorious* is one who lays claim to credit or glory which is not his

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

Father, but is of the world. 17 And

c 1 Cor. vii. 31.  
James i. 10.  
& iv. 14.  
1 Pet. i. 24.

the world is passing away, and  
the lust thereof: but he that doeth  
the will of God abideth for ever.

d John xxi. 5.  
e Heb. i. 2.

18 d Children, e it is the last time:

of the Father, but is of the  
world. 17 And the world  
passeth away, and the lust  
thereof: but he that doeth  
the will of God abideth  
for ever. 18 Little chil-

own: see notes on Rom. i. 30 [where the rendering is, "boasters"] and James iv. 16. life, i. e. men's way or course of life. This life comprehends in it the means of living, and fashion of living,—table, furniture, equipage, income, rank; and the vain-glory arising out of these is that vain-glorious pride, which is so common in the rich and fashionable), is not of (springs not from, has not as its source: see below) the Father (this name is again used for God, in reference to *little children* and *children* above), but is of the world (has its origin from the world. It is necessary, in opposition to all such interpretations as that of Socinus, "i. e. is very discrepant from those things which God by Christ has ordered us to follow after," to lay down very distinctly St. John's limits of thought and speech in this matter. "Through our whole Epistle," says Düsterdieck [see especially ch. ii. 29, iii. 7 ff., iv. 2 ff., 7 ff., v. 1 ff.], "runs the view, which also is manifest in the Gospel of St. John, that only the mind which springs from God is directed to God. He who is born of God, loves God, knows God [ch. ii. 3 ff.], does God's will. God Himself, who first loved us, viz. in Christ His incarnate Son, begot in us that love which of moral necessity returns again to the Father, and of like necessity embraces our brethren also. This love is hated by the world, because it springs not from the world. It depends not on the world, any more than that perverted love which springs from the world and is directed towards the world, the lust of the flesh, &c., can be directed to the Father, or to God's children. So that St. John grasps in reality down to the very foundations of the moral life, when he reminds his readers of the essentially distinct origin of the love of the world, and the love of God. The inmost kernel of the matter is hereby laid bare, and with it a glimpse is given of the whole process of the love of the world and the love of God, even to the end; and this end is now set forth expressly with extraordinary power:" viz., in the next verse). 17.]

And the world is passing away, and

the lust of it (of it is subjective again; not objective, "the lust after it," but as in ver. 16: the lust thereof summing up in one the three which are there mentioned. is passing away, as in ver. 8: not declaring merely an attribute, that it is the quality of the world and its lust to pass away,—but a matter of fact, that it is even now in act so to pass. See on 1 Cor. vii. 31. It is no objection to this, that the abideth, which is opposed to this "is passing away," contains, not a matter of fact, but a qualitative predication. This is made necessary by the words "for ever" which that clause contains): but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever (in this latter member of the contrast, we have a clearly personal agent introduced: and therefore, as above remarked, we may expect that the former member also will have a like personal reference. But this expectation must not be pushed too far: seeing that in the world, the ungodly men, who are in all their desires and thoughts of the world, are included. They and their lusts belong to, are part of, depend on, a world which is passing away. On the other hand, eternal fixity and duration belongs only to that order of things, and to those men, who are in entire accordance with the will of God. And among these is he that doeth that will, which is [see vv. 3—6] the true proof and following out of love towards Him. As God Himself is eternal, so is all that is in communion with Him: and this are they who believe in Him and love Him, and do His will).

18—28.] WARNING AGAINST ANTI-CHRISTS AND FALSE TEACHERS (VV. 18—23): AND EXHORTATION TO ABIDE IN CHRIST (VV. 23—28). The place which this portion holds will be best seen by shortly recapitulating. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness;" that [ch. i. 5] is the ground-tone of this whole division of the Epistle. In ch. i. 5—ii. 11, the Apostle shews wherein the believer's walking in light consists. At ver. 12, his style takes at once a hortatory turn. In his addresses to the various classes of his



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*dren, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

and as ye heard that <sup>f</sup> antichrist cometh, <sup>g</sup> even now have there arisen

<sup>f</sup> 2 Thess. ii. 3.  
<sup>g</sup> c. 2 Pet. ii. 1. ch. iv. 3.  
<sup>g</sup> Matt. xxiv. 5, 24. 2 John 7.

readers, the tone of warning is slightly struck by "*ye have overcome the wicked one*;" if indeed the whole form of assertion of an ideal state in each case do not of itself carry a delicate shade of warning. Hence the transition is easy to actual warning. And this in vv. 15—17 begins by general dehortation from the love of the world as excluding the love of God, and now proceeds by caution against those in the world who would rob them of Him by whom alone walking in the light of God is made both possible and actual to us. The note of transition from the last verses is "*it is the last time*," here taking up the term "*is passing away*." The world is passing away: and those temptations and conflicts of which ye have heard as belonging to its last period, are now upon you: those adversaries who would endanger your abiding in Him and being found in Him at His coming. 18.] **Children** (as before, addressed not to any one class, but to all the readers), it is the last time (what is exactly the Apostle's meaning by these words? Clearly, *in some sense or other*, that it is the last period of the world. For we must at once repudiate such views as that of Bengel, who, strange to say, seems to understand it as "*the last part of John's own lifetime*," and that of Steinhofner, who explains it to be John's own time as the close of the apostolic age: and even more decidedly that of Ecumenius, that the last is to be interpreted the worst, as when we say, *the last degree of misery*, for all other reasons, and on account of the saying 2 Tim. iii. 1, "*In the last days there shall come grievous times*."

These then being cleared away, we come to the view of Grotius and others; that, when spoken of to Jews, *the last time* is that close upon the destruction of the Jewish polity; proceeding to interpret the *antichrists* to be the many false Christs who arose in that period, and *Antichrist himself* to be the chief of them, Barchebebas. But two sufficient replies may be given to this view. First, that thus these false Messiahs of the Jews must have gone forth from us, i. e. from the Christian Church, which they did not. Secondly, what would the approximation of the destruction of Jerusalem, viewed merely

as a Jewish event [which it must be, on the hypothesis here, as the word last would only be true as addressed to Jews], have to do with the subject of our Epistle?

And thus we have arrived at the views of those who recognize here the last age of the world, but are anxious to get rid of the idea that the Apostle, in thus speaking, regarded the coming of the Lord as near at hand, and endeavour to give some meaning to the expression which shall preclude this [to them] objectionable notion. Among these may be mentioned Calvin, and many of the elder Commentators, who understand the *latter dispensation*: the time from Christ's advent in the flesh to His coming to judgment. But, apart, from considerations of the unfitness of such an idea in the context, in which the term "*passing away*," vv. 8, 17,—and our ver. 28, shew that it is the coming of the Lord which is before the mind of the Apostle,—this objection is fatal to it: that manifestly not this whole period itself, but some time within its limits is meant, from the nature of the sign given below, *whence we know*, &c. If the whole Christian dispensation were intended by *the last time*, it would not be stated as a sign of its presence, that already there were many antichrists, but rather that already He was come who is to be the final revelation of the Father. The circumstance of there being already many antichrists, corresponds with a prophecy delivered by our Lord, not of the general character of the whole of the last dispensation, but of the particular character of the time preceding *the end*, to which prophecy and to which time the Apostle here beyond question alludes.

I believe that if we are to deal ingenuously both with words and with facts, we must understand the Apostle to be speaking, as any one in any subsequent age of the Church might have spoken, and as we may speak now, of his time as being the last time, seeing that the signs of the last time were rife in it. How long it may please God to prolong this *last time*, how long to permit the signs to continue which demonstrate each age of the church to have this character, is a question to which it was not given to him, and is not given to us, to reply. To him indeed many prophetic visions were given, and have been



AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

many antichrists; from whence we know<sup>h</sup> that it is the last time.

<sup>h</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 1.  
<sup>2</sup> Tim. iii. 1.

now there are many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

recorded for us; but what is their plain and unmistakable import, will only then be known, when it becomes necessary for the churches to see clearly the signs of His coming): and even as ye heard (in our preaching when ye received the Gospel) that antichrist cometh (the present tense of ordained fixity: "is to come.") But who, and what, is *Antichrist*? As far as the meaning of the word is concerned, it may mean, either 1) one who stands against Christ, or 2) one who stands instead of Christ. The latter meaning is strenuously maintained here by Grotius, who holds that our *Antichrist* here has nothing to do with the adversary (*antikeimenos*) of St. Paul, 2 Thess. ii. 3: that being one who professes himself an enemy to God, whereas this is one who makes himself Christ: understanding this and what follows [see above] of the false Christs prophesied of by our Lord, Matt. xxiv. 5, 24. This he defends by analogy of words similarly compounded with anti-, which furnishes many examples of this sense of substitution for another. But, seeing that the other meaning, the adversary of Christ, is also upheld by abundant precedents of the same kind,—it is clear that we cannot solve the doubt by philology alone, but must take into account other considerations. And first among these comes the fact, that St. John, who was acquainted with the form *pseudo-christ*, using as he does *pseudo-prophet*, ch. iv. 1, never uses it, but always,—ch. iv. 3, 2 John 7,—this word *Antichrist*. Is it not hence probable that he intended to signify, not a false Christ, but an antichrist? Next, we may fairly allege the ancient interpretations, as shewing how Greeks themselves understood the word. In these we do not find a vestige of the meaning "a substitute for Christ" being attached to the term, but every where they interpret *Antichrist* by an enemy to Christ.

Taking then *Antichrist* for Christ's adversary, I would refer to the disquisition and summary of opinions in the Introduction on 2 Thess. ii. 1 ff., where the reasons which have induced me to expect a personal Antichrist are given in full: as are also the indications furnished by prophecy, and by the history of the church and the world, as to his probable character and work), even now there have

arisen many antichrists (what are we to understand the Apostle as saying? Is this fact alleged as a presumption that the Antichrist is near, these many antichrists prefiguring and heralding him,—or as a proof that he is come, being in fact the aggregate of these? The question is an important one, as affecting that of a personal or collective antichrist. And the first thing to be noticed in answering it is, that these many antichrists are explained by the Apostle himself, ver. 22, f., to be deniers of the Father and the Son: i. e. of the Son: and even more explicitly, ch. iv. 3, deniers that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. Here, however, this latter point is not yet brought out: here it is as liars that we hear of them: as deniers of the truth, which Truth is Jesus Christ, the Son of God: as not having the Spirit, which is truth and no lie, ver. 27. They are said to have gone forth from the Christian church, but not to have been of us, as their spirit is not of God, ch. iv. 3. They are antichrists; their spirit is the spirit of antichrist, ch. iv. 3, of which the readers had heard that it should come, and it was in the world already. From much of this it might at first sight appear as if these antichrists in their aggregate formed the Antichrist. But a nearer inspection will convince us that this cannot be so. [The] Christ and [the] Antichrist stand over against one another, and analogy requires that if the one be personal, the other should be also. And in ch. iv. 3 we are not told that merely the spirit is of Antichrist, but [in the original] that it is of the Antichrist, the personal reference being still kept. Again, we have "cometh," the present future of prophetic fixity, in both places, here and in ch. iv. 3, set against "there have arisen" and "it is:" and the verb itself, in its prophetic sense, one regularly used of Christ, as here of antichrist. So that our only refuge in order to consistent interpretation here, is to regard these many Antichrists, clothed with the attributes and having the spirit of the Antichrist, as being his forerunners in the sense of 2 Thess. ii. 7, "for the mystery of iniquity already worketh:" meaning, as I have explained at length in the summary referred to above, that the antichristian principle was then, as it is now, and will be in every age, working,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

<sup>19</sup> They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. <sup>20</sup> But

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>19</sup> <sup>1</sup>They went out from among us, but they were not of us; for <sup>k</sup> if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but [<sup>†</sup> they went out,] <sup>1</sup> that they may be made manifest that all are not of us.

<sup>20</sup> And <sup>m</sup> ye have an anointing <sup>n</sup> from

ver. 27. <sup>m</sup> 2 Cor. i. 21. <sup>n</sup> Mark i. 24. Acts iii. 14.

realizing, and concentrating itself from time to time, in evil men and evil books and evil days, but awaiting its final development and consummation in [*the*] *Antichrists*, who shall personally appear before the coming of the Lord. In St. John's time, these *many Antichrists* were to be seen in the early heretical teachers whose false and corrupting doctrine and practice was beginning to trouble the church): from whence we know that it is the last time (these words are a formal statement of the connexion between the first and second members of the foregoing sentence, which without them it would be left for the reader to supply in his mind).

19.] These Antichrists are designated as having been formerly attached to the Christian church, but never really members of it. They had not that communion with the Father and the Son in which the communion of Christians with one another really consists, inasmuch as they deny the Father and the Son. They went out from among us, but they were not of us (did not really belong to us, as neither had they their origin among us); for if they had been of us they would have remained with us (the A. V. inserts "no doubt," as representing an erroneous rendering of the Vulgate Latin, which has here misled our translators. See in my Greek Test. The sense is, if they had really belonged to our number, had been true servants of Christ, they would have endured, and would not have become *antichrists*: their very becoming so proves the unreality of their Christian profession. This point is now brought out in what follows): but (the ellipsis [see marginal note] is variously supplied: by "they went out," as in text, from above: by "this was done," or "God doth this." All these in fact come to the same, provided that we keep the simple sense of the *purpose* implied, which must necessitate a *doer*; and that doer, God. So that it will be better, as the divine purpose must be understood in the depth of

the meaning, whatever be supplied, to take the simplest supplement, viz. "they went out," which is already the expressed verb of the sentence), in order that they may be made manifest, that all are not of us (the meaning is, that by their example it may be made manifest that all [who are among us] are not of us. The rendering of the A. V. "that they were not all of us," leaves open the inevitable conclusion that *some of them are of us*. The Apostle makes their *manifestation* the proof not that they were not of us, but that *all* are not of us, viz. all who are commonly found among us.

It is not my intention to go into the question as to the dogmatic consequences which have been deduced from this verse. The Apostle is probably speaking here not dogmatically, but ethically. If there is a necessity in the inference, they would have remained, it is a "voluntary necessity." We must take these words, ver. 19, in intimate connexion with the enunciation of this whole portion of the Epistle, ch. i. 5—7. The object of this portion is, ch. i. 3, that ye may have fellowship with us, in that we have fellowship with the Father and the Son. This aim penetrates all the exhortation, ii. 19—28. This fellowship depends on the walking in light, i. e. on knowledge of the truth as regards ourselves and God, and love to God and the brethren. He who departs from the truth, he who loves not God and the brethren, belongs not to this fellowship, and shews that he belongs not to it. If he had belonged to it, he would have held fast his walk in the light, as shewn by these indications. This is the human side, on which our passage regards the act and fact. There is also a divine side. They who attain eternal life are given by the Father to the Son, and no man can come to the Son except the Father draw him [John vi. 37, 44, 65, xvii. 6], and such are kept by God [ib. xvii. 11]; but also we read that they believe on the Son, receive the word of the Son, and keep themselves [John vi.

<sup>i</sup> Deut. xiii. 18. <sup>l</sup> Ps. xli. 9. <sup>k</sup> Acts xx. 30. <sup>m</sup> Matt. xxiv. 24. <sup>n</sup> John vi. 37. & x. 28, 29. 2 Tim. ii. 19. <sup>†</sup> Not expressed in the original. <sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 19.

<sup>m</sup> 2 Cor. i. 21. <sup>n</sup> Heb. i. 9. <sup>1</sup> Acts iii. 14.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

o John x. 4, 5. the Holy One, and o know all things.  
& xiv. 26.  
& xvi. 13. 21 I have not written unto you be-  
ver. 27.

*ye have an unction from  
the Holy One, and ye know  
all things.* 21 I have not

40 xvii. 6 f., i. 12, James i. 27]. And so again on the other side, they who remain at last excluded from eternal life, are thus excluded not only by God's decree but by their own evil choice and will. The words cited above, John vi. 65, were spoken by our Lord with direct reference to the traitor Judas: but on the other hand St. John gives notices of the ethical development of Judas, which leave no doubt that his depravity went hand in hand with God's judgment on him. Judas was covetous: his heart was inclined to mammon: hence he understood not the love of Mary when she anointed Jesus with her precious ointment: he grudged his Lord this token of love: he could not abide with Christ, because he shut his heart through greed, through love of the world, against the love of Christ: for the knowledge of the Lord, faith in Him, fellowship with Him, are all summed up in Love. Thus we see that in the rejection, as in the acceptance of eternal life, the two factors, God's will and man's will, are to be regarded in their ethical connexion only. In order to that knowledge of God, which is eternal life, man must be *taught* of God [John vi. 45]: but man must also *learn* of God. And the more St. John sets forth the essential nature of this knowledge of God and Jesus Christ as *ethical*, the more does he recognize, in putting forward God's will in the matter, man's will also. Christ is the Saviour of the whole world, ch. ii. 2, iv. 14. But in the personal appropriation of this universal salvation, not all really take it to themselves,—and many, who have taken it, fall away again, because they do not keep the grace given, do not abide in Christ, do not walk in the light. This last is by no means denied by St. John when he says, "If they had been of us, they would have remained with us." The words set forth an ideal similar to that in ch. ii. 5, iii. 9, v. 18. As in no one of those places can the Apostle possibly mean, that a true believer, one really born of God, has perfect love to God and cannot sin [for what then would ch. ii. 1 mean?],—so neither here can he mean that whoever once inwardly and truly belongs to the communion of believers cannot by any possibility fall from it).

20, 21.] The Apostle puts them in mind, in an apologetic form, of the truth which

they as Christians possessed, and the very possession of which, not the contrary, was his reason for thus writing to them. This reminiscence carries at the same time with it the force of an exhortation, as so many of the ideal statements on Christian perfection in our Epistle. What they *have* in the ideal depth of their Christian life, that they ought to have in living and working reality. **And** (the copulative conjunction here denotes only the passage to a new particular, without distinctly marking its adversative relation to the last) *ye* (expressed in the original as emphatic: see above) **have an anointing** (the word signifies properly the oil or ointment with which the anointing takes place, not the act itself of anointing. For this we have in English no word adequate to the necessity of the passage: "unguent" is the nearest approach, but is still inadequate. On the meaning, see below) **from the Holy One** (viz. from Christ, the *righteous* One of our ver. 1, the *pure* One of ch. iii. 3, the *holy* One of Acts iii. 14, and *holy One of God* of John vi. 69: see also Rev. iii. 18), where the Laodicean church is counselled to buy of Christ, "*eye-salve to anoint thine eyes that thou mayest see*"), and **know all things** (or, according to another reading of some old MSS., "*ye all know [this]*"). But this seems not so appropriate to the context. The full and perfect knowledge of Christian truth is the ideal completion of those who have this anointing. This of course must not be understood as actually predicated of these readers: but the expression explains itself as referring to all things needful for right action in the matter under consideration: all things that belong to this matter. Some understand, all things necessary to Christian life and godliness. But now the question recurs, What is this *anointing*, and what leads the Apostle to use this peculiar expression here? The reply to the latter question is probably, as Bengel, "that it is introduced by the sound and derivation of the words Christ and antichrist which he has just been using." Christ is the *anointed* one, *Christos*: the anointing itself being *chrisma*. The Apostle sets his readers, as anointed of God, over against the antichrists, the enemies of the anointed of God. Then as to the nature of the *anointing*, we can hardly fail to be right in interpreting it of the *Holy*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. <sup>22</sup> Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. <sup>23</sup> Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [but] he that ac-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

cause ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and because no lie is of the truth. <sup>22</sup> P Who is the liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is the antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. <sup>23</sup> q Whosoever denieth the Son, nei-

<sup>p</sup> ch. iv. 3.  
<sup>2</sup> John 7.

<sup>q</sup> John xv. 23.  
<sup>2</sup> John 9.  
<sup>r</sup> John xiv. 7.  
9, 10. ch. iv.  
15.  
<sup>†</sup> So all our  
earliest au-  
thorities.

*Ghost.* For "Christ received the Holy Ghost without measure (John iii. 34): on Him the Holy Ghost abode (i. 33): God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost (Acts x. 38). Christ baptizeth with the Holy Ghost (John i. 33): He sends the Holy Ghost, who takes of His and shews it to believers (John xv. 26, xvi. 14, Acts ii. 33). And seeing that the Son hath all which the Father hath, the Father is said to send forth the Spirit of His Son into the hearts of His children (Gal. iv. 6: compare Eph. iii. 16, Phil. i. 19, 2 Cor. iii. 17 ff.), and this, at the prayer, in the name, through the mediation, of the Son (John xiv. 16, xvi. 7 f.): the Father anoints believers by giving them His Spirit (2 Cor. i. 21 f.), as He has anointed the Son with the Holy Ghost. And hence the Spirit, which we have received, is the token that we are in the Father (ch. iii. 24), and in the Son (ii. 27), that we are children of God (Rom. viii. 14 ff., Gal. iv. 6). The Holy Ghost teaches the faithful the truth and keeps them in it: that truth, in the knowledge of which they have eternal life, having thereby the Father and the Son." Düsterdieck. This anointing, by virtue of which they are Christ's and the Father's, and without which a man is none of Christ's (Rom. viii. 14, 9), in respect of which they are *Christs*, or anointed ones, the *antichrists* attack in its very root, and would rob them of, thereby severing them from the Son and from the Father: from light and truth and life. And this very *anointing* is the means and weapon whereby they must be detected and resisted).

21.] I did not write to you (it may refer either to what has immediately preceded, or to the whole Epistle: here probably to the immediately preceding) because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and because no lie is of the truth (i. e. coupling the fact of your know-

ledge of the truth with the fact that no lie is of the truth, I wrote to supply the link between these two, to point out to you the lie and the liar, that you might at once act on that your knowledge of the truth, and not listen to them that deceive you).

22.] Who is the liar (the question passes from the abstract, *the lie*, to the concrete, *the liar*, the utterer of the lie. Who is he that is guilty of the lie? The Apostle proceeds to identify this utterer of the *lie* of which he has just spoken. We have a similar question in ch. v. 4, 5: where after describing the victory that overcometh the world, he rejoins, *Who is he that conquereth the world*, &c., as here. Some have neglected the article altogether; so the A. V.; others have given it merely the force of pointing out a liar remarkable above others. But there can be little doubt that it refers, as above, to the preceding *lie*), but (literally, "if not") he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ (literally, "*denieth* [to the effect] *that Jesus is not the Christ*")? This (the *liar* just described) is the antichrist (on the personal interpretation, see above, ver. 18. the antichrist is obviously here used not as predicating the one person in whom the character shall be finally and centrally realized, but as setting forth identity of character with him, and participation in the same development of the antichristian principle. Something of the kind must be understood, whichever way antichrist be taken, collective or personal), who denieth the Father and the Son (it is implied then, that the denying Jesus to be the Christ, is equivalent to denying the Father and the Son. And this the Apostle carefully asserts in the next verse).

23.] Every one that denieth the Son, neither hath he the Father (not only hath he denied the Son, but he cannot hold, possess, the Father): he that con-



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

confesseth the Son hath the Father also. <sup>24</sup> As for you, let that † abide in you, <sup>8</sup> which ye heard from the beginning. If that which ye heard from the beginning abide in you, <sup>†</sup> ye also shall abide in the Son, and in the

† therefore is omitted by all the oldest authorities.  
 \* 2 John 6.

† John xiv. 23.  
 ch. i. 8.

fesseth the Son hath the Father also. As nearly the whole of this Epistle, so especially such an assertion as this, formed a battle-field for the old rationalists. Some of the early Commentators and Fathers imagining that *Jewish* error was indicated by the denying that Jesus is the Christ, the idea has been again taken up by Semler, and others, and pressed in the anti-trinitarian interest. The Socinians and semi-Socinians all evade the Apostle's words by inadequate or far-fetched interpretations, understanding the expressions in this verse, of not obeying the teaching, not following the example, &c., of the Son, and by consequence of the Father. But the deeper and truer meaning of the Apostle's words has been recognized by all the better Commentators, with some variations from one another. While some mark perhaps too precisely the doctrinal character of the words, others make their force consist too much in an ideal and economical relation between the divine Persons. Still all are agreed, that that which is spoken of is the revelation of the Father by the Son only, and that he who rejects this in its fulness rejects all that can be known of the real essence and nature of the Father Himself. "The antichrists denied that Jesus, the definite Person whom the Apostles had seen, heard, and handled, is the Christ. In whatever sense this denial is to be taken,—the Apostle speaks merely of the fact, as known to the readers;—at all events, there is involved in it a denial of the Son of God; because it is only as the incarnate Son of God [ch. iv. 2], that Jesus is the Christ. And in the denial of the Son is involved necessarily the denial of the Father, since the Father cannot be known without the Son, and the Father cannot be perceived, believed on, loved, by any man, without the Son, or otherwise than through the Son, i. e. the Son manifested in the flesh, the Christ, which is, Jesus. So that in St. John's development of the argument there are three essentially connected

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

knowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. <sup>24</sup> Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the

points: denial of the Christ, of the Son, of the Father. The middle link of the chain, the denial of the Son of God, shews how the denial of the Father is of necessity involved in the denial of Christ. And the cogency of this proof is made yet more stringent by another equally unavoidable process of argument. The antichristian false doctrine consists mainly in a negation, in the denying of the fundamental Christian truth, that Jesus is the Christ. But in this is involved the denial of the essence of the Son as well as of the Father, and again in this denial is involved the losing, the virtual *not-having* of the Son and of the Father. In the sense of St. John, we may say, taking the first and last steps of his argument and leaving out the intervening ones: *He who denieth that Jesus is the Christ, hath not the Father.* And this necessary connexion between denying and not having, is perfectly clear, the moment we understand the ethical character, the living realism, of St. John's way of regarding the subject. As (ver. 23) we cannot separate the knowledge and confession of the Christ, the Son, the Father, from the *having*, the real possession of, the practical fellowship with, the actual remaining in, the Son and the Father, so conversely, together with the denial is necessarily given the *not-having*; together with the loss of the truth of the knowledge, the loss of the life which consists in that knowledge (John xvii. 3). In such a connexion, the *confession* of the truth is as essential on the one side, as the *denial* on the other. Each is the necessary manifestation of the belief or unbelief hidden in the heart. And this *confession* is not to be understood of the 'confession of heart, voice, and life,' as Bede calls it, but only, as ch. i. 9, of the confession of the mouth (Rom. x. 10, see John xii. 42). It is parallel with *bringing a doctrine*, 2 John 7, 10; and indicates the definite utterance of the doctrine which was made known by the apostolic preaching, ver. 24." Düsterdieck.

24, 25.] *Exhortation to perseverance*



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*Father.* <sup>25</sup> *And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.*  
<sup>26</sup> *These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.*  
<sup>27</sup> *But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

*Father.* <sup>25</sup> *And the promise that He himself promised unto us is this, even eternal life.* <sup>26</sup> *These things have I written unto you <sup>x</sup> concerning them that deceive you.* <sup>27</sup> *And as for you, the anointing which ye received from him abideth in you, and <sup>z</sup> ye need not that any one teach you: but as † his anointing <sup>a</sup> teacheth you con-*

<sup>u</sup> John xvii. 8.  
 ch. i. 2.  
 & v. 11.

<sup>x</sup> ch. iii. 7.  
<sup>2</sup> John 7.  
<sup>y</sup> ver. 20.

<sup>z</sup> Jer. xxxi. 33,  
 34. Heb. viii.  
 10, 11.

<sup>+ So our three oldest MSS.</sup>  
 a John xiv. 26. & xvi. 13. ver. 20.

*in the truth delivered to them, and statement of the promise connected with it: connected with the foregoing by the confessing, as involving a hearing: see the concluding sentence of Düsterdieck above.*

24.] *Ye* (so literally, the *ye* standing alone, serving to mark more distinctly the change of person: see below also, on ver. 27),—let that which ye heard from the beginning, abide in you (the truth respecting the Father and the Son once heard is regarded as a seed, dropt in and abiding in the man. from the beginning, necessarily bound here to the subjects of the hearing, just as it is necessarily bound in ch. i. 1, to the subject of “*was*,” means, “from the time when ye began to be instructed in the first rudiments of the Gospel”). If that which ye heard from the beginning abide (“shall have abode”) in you, ye also (on your part. If it abide in you, ye too shall abide . . .) shall abide in the Son and in the Father (here again the rationalizing Commentators have endeavoured to explain away the close personal relation and immanence in God expressed by the Apostle’s words. But here as every where else, they entirely miss the sense. He in whom abides the message of life in Christ which he has heard, not only has received the tidings of that life, but is transformed into the likeness of Him whose seed he has taken into him: is become a new creation: and the element in which and by which he lives and acts is even He in whom and by whom this new life comes, even Christ the Son of God. And thus living in the Son, he lives in the Father also: for Christ the Son of God is the manifestation and effulgence of the Father, himself abiding ever in the Father, as His people abide in Him. See the same truth declared, John vi. 56; xv. 1 ff.: xvii. 23 [Eph. iii. 17; 1 Cor. iii. 16; vi. 17]). 25.] *And*

the promise (the preceding, shall abide, naturally carried the mind onwards into the future. The result of that abiding will be the fulfilment, not only in partial present possession, but in complete future accomplishment, of Christ’s promise to us. This taking up again and explaining of something expressed [see ch. iii. 23, v. 11] or implied [see ch. i. 5, iv. 21, v. 14] before, is often found in our Apostle’s style) which He himself (Christ) promised unto us (in many passages of the Gospel: e. g., iii. 15; iv. 14; vi. 40, 47, 57; xi. 25, 26; xvii. 2, 3), is this, [even] eternal life.

26, 27.] *Conclusion of the section concerning antichrist.* 26.] *These things I wrote to you concerning them that deceive you* (these things, the whole since ver. 18. The present tense, deceive, describes the occupation, the endeavour, of the antichrists: what result it had had, is not expressed: some result seems implied by ver. 19). 27.] *And you* (the same sudden prominence given to the persons addressed as in ver. 24: again setting his believing readers in marked contrast to the deceivers just mentioned),—the anointing which ye received from Him (Christ, ver. 25: see above, ver. 20: as also on the anointing) abideth in you (“this indicative,” says Bengel, “has a subtle force of exhortation, as in 2 Tim. iii. 14”), and (i. e. and therefore) ye have no need that any one teach you (the Apostle’s assertions here are so many delicate exhortations, veiled under the declaration of their true ideal state of unction with the Holy Spirit who guides into all truth. If that unction were abiding in them in all its fulness, they would have no need for his or any other teaching. And in what is said, he does not indeed say that it is not abiding in them; but the contrary, thus reminding them what their

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

cerning all things, and is true, and is no lie, and even as He taught you, † abide in him. <sup>28</sup> And now, little children, abide in him; that, if <sup>b</sup> he should be manifested, we may have confidence, <sup>c</sup> and not shrink with shame from him at his coming. <sup>d</sup> Acts xxii. 14. <sup>29</sup> <sup>d</sup> If ye know that he is righteous,

† So all our oldest MSS.

b ch. iii. 2.

c ch. iv. 17.

d Acts xxii. 14.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. <sup>28</sup> And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. <sup>29</sup> If ye know that he is

real state is) but (contrast to the *having no need, &c.*) as his anointing teacheth you concerning all things (this *teaching concerning all things* is parallel to *leading into all the truth*, John xvi. 13. On the different ways of taking the following words, which can hardly be set before the English reader, see my Greek Test.),—and is true, and is not a lie (*what is true, and not a lie?* the anointing itself, or that which it teaches about all things? Necessarily, I believe, from the construction, the former. And this is quite correspondent to the fact that the Spirit who is this anointing, is the Spirit of Truth [John xiv. 17], and therefore leads into all truth [ib. xvi. 13]. As Düsterdieck remarks, “The *anointing* which abides in and teaches believers is essentially true, is not a lie, and hence nothing can come from it which is a lie”),—and even as He (or, *it?* so A. V. and others: but the change to the past tense seems necessarily to refer to Christ as the subject,—the *Holy One* from whom the *anointing* came, and who is ever in the Writer’s mind, a subject ever ready to be supplied) taught you, abide in Him (or, “in *it?*” or, in that which it teaches? Neither of these: for the “*abide in Him*” is immediately after repeated, and the reference of “*Him*” fixed, by what follows, to be to Christ).

28.] *Conclusion of this part of the Epistle*: forming also a transition to the next part: see below. And now (by this the preceding considerations are linked on to the exhortation regarding present practice which follows), little children (the affectionate repetition of this appellation binds this on to ver. 18, and to ver. 17), abide in Him (“a repetition of the precept with a tender appellation, to declare his paternal love toward them.” Him, i. e. Christ: as before, ver. 27: but here even more decidedly): in order that if He should be manifested (in case of His second coming taking place), we (observe

that he changes to the communicative way of speaking. This was not a matter in which Apostle and converts, teacher and hearer, were separate: but one in which all had a share: viz. the Christian hope of standing before the Lord with joy at His coming) may have confidence, and may not shrink with shame from Him (the preposition from, which is in the original, and is not to be evaded, as in A. V., expresses the flying from His presence, which the shame would suggest. “He who has not abode in the Lord, will flee from Him with shame and confusion when He appears.” Düsterd) at His coming (Bengel remarks, “He seems to have written this Epistle before the Apocalypse, in which His coming is put off longer”).

II. 29—V. 5.] THE SECOND GREAT DIVISION OF THE EPISTLE: *the doing of righteousness, the sign of new birth from God: the opposite, the sign of not being of God*. This main subject, enunciated in ver. 29, is carried onward throughout, and more especially with reference to brotherly love, which is the great and obvious example of likeness to God, and its absence the most decisive proof of alienation from Him. The various subdivisions see, as the exposition proceeds.

II. 29—III. 3.] Connected with the principle enounced ii. 29, is its obvious application to ourselves, as children of God. Hoping as we do to be entirely like Christ at His appearing, each one of us, in pursuance of this hope, is even now approximating to this perfect likeness by purifying himself even as He is pure.

29.] If ye know (appeal to their recognition of the divine character as that which he describes it) that He is righteous (of whom is this said? If of Christ, as seems most natural, after “in Him” and “from Him” preceding, we find a difficulty in the words “is born of Him” below, seeing that we are never said to be born anew of Christ, but always of God [through

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.*

III. <sup>1</sup> Behold, what manner of love the Father

AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

ye know that <sup>e</sup>every one also that <sup>e</sup>ch. III. 7, 10. doth righteousness is born of him.

III. <sup>1</sup> Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon

Christ], ch. iii. 1, 9; iv. 7; v. 1, 4, 18, &c. If on the other hand they are said of God, it seems strange that after a change of reference from the preceding "Him," another subject should be expressed in ch. iii. 1 by the words "the Father." In consequence of these difficulties, some have referred he is righteous to Christ, and of Him to God; which cannot well be. It would be possible, doubtless, to understand the whole of Christ, without change of subject from ver. 28; and to leave the words is born of Him as we find them. If it occurs nowhere else in reference to Christ, there is in it nothing abhorrent from our Christian ideas. And in St. John's sense of the intimate union between the Father and Son, he who is born of the Father might be said to be born of the Son also. But after all, the other view, which is that of most ancient expositors, must, I apprehend, be adopted. The analogy of the passage, as shewn in ch. iii. 1, 2, 9, 10, fixes the words is born of Him to birth from God: and the absence in the original of a new expressed subject in the words is righteous must be accounted for by remembering that this verse, as ch. i. 5, is the opening, and general statement, of a new section of the Epistle. And the essential unity of the Father and the Son comes in on this side also: so that the judgment alluded to ver. 28, which shall be executed by the Son, being judgment committed to Him by the Father, brings to mind the justice and righteousness in which that judgment is founded): ye know that also every one who doeth righteousness (literally, the righteousness, i. e. the righteousness which is implied in the word "righteous" above: if it were not too strong, we might almost say, "that righteousness:" the article shewing that there is no other. doeth, for all righteousness is energetic: it springs out of holiness, truth, love), is born (hath been begotten) of Him (God: see above: for the righteous begetteth righteous progeny). The inference here must be carefully kept to the Apostle's words and obvious sense. And those require that we should understand it thus: God is righteous. This is our axiom, from which we set out. And if so, then the source of

righteousness. When therefore a man doeth righteousness, we know, we apprehend, we collect, from our previous knowledge of these truths, that the source of his righteousness is God: that in consequence he has acquired by new birth from God, that righteousness which he had not by nature. We argue from his doing righteousness to his having been begotten of God. And the right apprehension of this is the more important because the whole mass of Socinian and Pelagian Commentators have reversed the members of the argument, and made it conclude that doing righteousness is the condition, on our part, of becoming a child of God. And the Roman-Catholic expositors, while they avoid this error, yet go equally wrong, in understanding "hath been begotten" not as the statement of a past and abiding fact, but as the ground of a confidence as to the future).

CHAP. III. 1-10.] *The true and distinguishing signs of the children of God and the children of the devil.* 1-3.]

The foundation and source of all righteousness in us is, the essential righteousness of God. All our doing of righteousness is a mere sign that He has begotten us anew—that we are His children. And what great things are contained in this name—how precious treasures of faith, of hope, of love! On this thought the Apostle now enters. He places the whole glory of the children of God before his readers. The being righteous as He is righteous, is the token of that new birth, and the measure of the life which began with it: the striving to perfect and mature this token, to fill up this measure, is an additional proof that a man is of God. 1.] Behold (as in John i. 29; xix. 5, does not express the Writer's own astonishment, but directs the attention of those who are addressed. But there immediately follows upon us, the communicative address, so that in fact the Apostle does in a manner include himself among those addressed in behold, what manner of (including "how great," "how free," "how precious"—in fact, all the particulars which are afterwards brought out respecting this love: see ver. 16, ch. iv. 9, 16) love is love here, joined as it is with the verb "hath bestowed,"

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>a</sup> John i. 12. us, that <sup>a</sup> we should be called children of God: † and [† so] we are: † therefore the world knoweth us not, <sup>b</sup> because it knew him not. <sup>2</sup> Beloved, <sup>c</sup> now are we children of God, and

† So all our ancient MSS.  
† Not expressed in the original.  
<sup>b</sup> John xv. 18, 19. & xvi. 3. & xvii. 25.  
<sup>c</sup> Isa. lvi. 5. Rom. viii. 15. Gal. iii. 26. & iv. 6. ch. v. 1.

literally *love itself*, or does it import some gift, bestowal, or fruit of love? There seems no necessity for diverting the word from its proper meaning. As in ch. iv. 9, the proof of the love is that which is imported, not by the love itself, but by the verb joined with it; as by "*was manifested*" there, so by "*hath bestowed*" here) **the Father** (spoken here not, as some think, of God in general, the whole three Persons in the blessed Trinity, but personally, of the Father, as distinguished from the Son, in whom we have received our adoption) **hath given** (see above) **unto us, that** (how is that here to be taken? is it to be kept to its strong sense, indicating that our being called the children of God is the *purpose* of that gift of love just spoken of, or does it, as so often in St. John, introduce the *purpose* of that love, stated in the form of an end to be gained by its manifestation? Lücke and others keep the strong telic sense. "What great love," says Lücke, "hath the Father shewn us [viz. in sending His Son, ch. iv. 10], in order to make us children of God!" But the objection to this is, that thus a proof of the divine Love is hinted at in our verse which is not expanded, but is left to be gathered from elsewhere: and the purpose introduced by that becomes the secondary and remote subject of the sentence, whereas, from the idea of **children of God** taking up the preceding idea of *birth from God*, and being again taken up in ver. 2, it is evidently the primary subject. The other meaning is taken by the ancient Greek expositors; "what manner of love . . . resulting in, proved by, our being, &c." The effect of the love, that at which it is aimed in its immediate bestowal, is, that we should be called children of God: its ultimate purpose is another thing. See vv. 11, 23, where we have the same construction) **we should be called children of God** (why has the Apostle rather used *should* be called than "*should be*?" Probably to bring forward the title, the reality of which, notwithstanding its non-recognition by the world, he is about to assert immediately). **And we ARE [so]: for this cause the world**

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. <sup>2</sup> Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth*

**doth not know** (apprehend, recognize) **us; because it did not know Him** (viz. Christ). — The insertion of the words, **and we are so**, appears to serve the purpose of bringing out the reality of the state conferred upon us with this title, in spite of any non-recognition of it by the unbelieving world. This clause is of the highest possible significance. On its assertion depends the **therefore** which follows: and we **ARE** God's children: for *this very reason*, because we bear not the name only but the essence, the world knows us not: and then, as a reason for this ignorance following on this reality of our derivation from Him,—because it knew Him not. The reality of a believer's sonship of God, and his non-recognition by the world, are thus necessarily connected together. But Whom did the world not know, and when? **Him** here, by the very requirements of the logic of the passage, must be the Father, who not being recognized, neither are His children; Augustine and others understand *Christ*. But this can only be, if we understand that the world rejected that revelation of the Father which was made by Christ His Son. And if we introduce this element, we disturb the strictness of the argument. It is the world's ignorance of God, considered as one great act of non-recognition, disobedience, rebellion, hate, which makes them incapable of recognizing, loving, sympathizing with, those who are veritably children of God: compare ch. v. 1). **2.] Beloved, now are we children of God** (the world recognizes us not: but our sonship is real: none the less real, that we ourselves know not our future condition in all its manifestation. So that the next member of the sentence is introduced not with a "*but*," but with an "*and*:" the two are not contrasted, but simply put in juxtaposition as components of our present state. We are really sons of God, even *now*: and we look [this very word "*now*" suggesting a future] for an inheritance in virtue of that sonship: it has not been yet manifested of what sort that inheritance shall be: thus much we know, &c. Such seems to be the simple connexion, without



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

2 Pet. i. 4.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>d</sup> it never yet was manifested what we shall be: [† but] we know that, † if it be manifested, <sup>e</sup> we shall be like <sup>e</sup> him; because <sup>f</sup> we shall see him as

f Job xix. 26. Ps. xvi. 11. Matt. v. 8. 1 Cor. xiii. 12. 2 Cor. v. 7.

d Rom. vii. 18.  
2 Cor. iv. 17.  
† Not expressed  
in the ori-  
ginal.  
Rom. viii. 20.  
1 Cor. xv. 40.  
Phil. iii. 21.  
Col. iii. 4.  
2 Cor. v. 7.

any adversative particles expressed or understood), and it never yet was manifested (on any occasion: such is the force of the tense in the original. And the verb, as so often in St. John, and as in the next sentence, does not mean, made manifest to knowledge or anticipation,—for that it is, as asserted below: but, shewn forth in actuality, come to its manifestation) what we shall be (understand, in virtue of this our state of sons of God: to what new development or condition this already existing fact will lead. But we must take care not to fall into Grotius's error, "in what manner we are to be the sons of God:" for as Calovius rightly remarks, "there are no degrees of sonship:" we are as truly, and in the same sense, children of God now, as we shall be then: but now [Gal. iv. 1] we are children waiting for an unknown inheritance—then we shall be children in full possession of that inheritance. And hence, from the reality and identity of that sonship, comes what follows,—our certain knowledge, even in this absence of manifestation in detail, that our future condition will consist in likeness to Him). We know (no contrast, though "but" is required to fill out our English idiom: see above: what we know of this *what we shall be*, is this. There is not even a correction of the preceding: the connexion is simply, "This future condition of ours hath never yet appeared: thus much we know of it." we know, as always, of certain, well-assured cognition) that, if it were manifested (viz. the "*what we shall be*;" this verb takes up again the former one. So most of the ancients and moderns. On the other hand, Bede, Calvin, Beza [and the A. V.: Tyndale and Cranmer had "*it*"], and others, supply "*He*," understanding Christ: appealing to St. John's well-known usage which we have in ch. ii. 28, and below in our ver. 5. But it may be replied, that in the former case the subject was plainly suggested by the preceding words "*in Him*," in the latter actually expressed: whereas here the reference of the verb is no less plainly given by the preceding verb, here again repeated. Besides which, "*He*," in ver. 5, clearly shews that the divine subject of these verses is not

Christ but the Father), we shall be (taken up again from above, and the emphatic like Him corresponding exactly to what above) like Him (God: see below), because (this connecting particle must be kept firm to its causal meaning, and all the difficulties of the sentence met thus, not by explaining it away. Nor does it express merely the mode of the transformation, as Lyra. Still less must we with Calvin and others reverse the causal connexion, and make the seeing Him as He is merely a proof that we shall be like Him. Whatever consequences it may entail, it is certain that the proposition introduced by because contains the real essential cause and ground of that which it follows) we shall see Him (God: see below) as He is (with St. John, the recognition and knowledge of God is ever no mere cognition, but the measure of the spiritual life: he who has it, possesses God, has the Father and the Son: becomes more and more like God, having His seed in him. So that the full and perfect accomplishment of this knowledge in the actual fruition of God Himself must of necessity bring with it entire likeness to God. And this is the part of the future lot of the sons of God which is certain. Because we shall see Him as He is,—which is taken for granted as a Christian axiom,—it of necessity follows that we shall be entirely like Him: ethically like Him: we shall behold, as (Ecumenius says, "the just, the just One—the pure, the pure One." The difficulty, that no man can see God, is not in reality contained here, any more than it is in our Lord's "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." The word, however understood, has for its limit, that no created eye even in the glorified body can behold the Creator: that beyond its keenest search there will be glory and perfection baffling and dazzling it: but this incapacity does not prevent the vision, as far as it can reach, being clear and unclouded: being, to the utmost extent of which our glorified nature is capable, as *He is*—a true and not a false vision of God. And if it be again objected that we seem to be thus confounding the ethical sight of God which is the measure of our likeness to God, with corporeal sight of Him in the



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

g ch. iv. 17.

he is. <sup>3</sup> And every man that hath this hope on Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure. <sup>4</sup> Whosoever

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

<sup>3</sup> And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. <sup>4</sup> Whosoever committeth

resurrection body, I answer that in the realm where our thoughts are now employed, I cannot appreciate that distinction between ethical and corporeal. We are speaking of things which eye hath not seen, nor mind conceived: what a *spiritual body* may imply, our ideas now do not enable us to conceive: but I suppose it must at all events be a body, all of whose senses are spiritually conditioned and attuned: that what *physical capacities* are to our bodies here, *spiritual capacities* will be there: and feeling this, however little I may know of the details of the great fact, it removes from me all insuperable difficulty as to the words "*we shall see Him as He is.*" "I know that in my flesh I shall see God," may not be the right expression in Job, but it is the expression of my hopes as a son of God: it is the one expression of a hope in which all other hopes culminate and centre. And every son of God knows, that for it ever to be fulfilled, he must be growing onward in likeness to Him, pure, even up into His purity: for in His light only shall we see light.

One point only must be noticed before passing onward; the fact that several of the great interpreters understand **Him** both times of *Christ*. This has partly of course been occasioned by their supplying Christ as a subject to the verb "*shall appear,*" or "*shall be manifested,*" above. Augustine has one of his most beautiful passages, explaining how at Christ's appearing, the impious shall see only *the form of a servant*, but we *the form of God*. The whole view, however, does not satisfy the requirements of the passage. It is the *children of God* who are addressed: and the topic of exhortation is, that they be righteous as God their Father is righteous).

3.] And every one that hath this hope (viz., that of being like Him hereafter) on Him (i. e. rested and grounded on God. In God, and grounded on His promises, is all our hope), purifieth himself (these words are not to be taken in any Pelagian sense, as if a man could of himself purify himself: "apart from me," says our Lord, "ye can do nothing." John xv. 5. The man who purifies himself has this hope resting upon God. This mere fact implies a will to purify himself, not out of, nor independent of, this hope, but

ever stirred up by, and accompanying it. So that the will is not his own, sprung out of his own nature, but the result of his Christian state, in which God also ministers to him the power to carry out that will in self-purification. See 2 Cor. vii. 1, which is remarkably parallel: and 1 Pet. i. 21, 22. The idea is much the same as that in ch. i. 9: it is entire purification, not merely from unchastity, but from all defilement of flesh and spirit), even as He is pure (Who is intended by **He**? Clearly below in ver. 5, Christ, from the facts of the case. But is it as clear here? Almost all the modern Commentators assume it, and the inference is upheld by a first view of ch. ii. 6, where much the same expression is used, and used of Christ. But there are some weighty considerations against the view. First, it is the *Father*, of whom it is written, "Be ye holy, for [or as] I am holy," 1 Pet. i. 15, 16, Levit. xi. 44, xix. 2: compare also Matt. v. 48. Secondly, it would be very harsh thus to introduce a new subject, in the face of this Scripture usage. Thirdly, it would be against the whole spirit of the context: in which sonship of God and likeness to God are joined together, and the hopes belonging to the state are made motives for the duty. Fourthly, if it be asserted that Christ is our Pattern, in whom we see the Father's purity shewn forth; I answer that this would be perfectly intelligible, if allusion was made, as in ch. ii. 6, to some historical manifestation in our Lord's life: but being as it is in the present tense, it refers to the essential divine attribute of purity: and if so, then to that attribute in its primary inherence in the Father. For these reasons and others which may be seen in my Greek Testament, I would interpret **He** here of the Father, in whom essentially abides this perfection of purity, and after continual increase of likeness to whom his sons, having the ultimate hope of being completely like Him, will be striving. In ver. 5, the case is otherwise: see there, and also on ver. 7).

4-10.] *The irreconcilability of sin with the work of redemption, with communion with Christ, and with being born of God.* The difficulty has been, to mark distinctly the connexion with the foregoing. In order to discover this, we

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.* <sup>5</sup> *And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.* <sup>6</sup> *Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whoso-*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

committeth sin transgresseth also the law: and <sup>h</sup> sin is the transgression of the law. <sup>5</sup> And ye know <sup>i</sup> that he was manifested <sup>k</sup> to take away our sins; and <sup>l</sup> in him is no sin. <sup>6</sup> Whosoever abideth in him

<sup>h</sup> Rom. iv. 15.  
ch. v. 17.

<sup>i</sup> ch. i. 2.  
<sup>k</sup> Isa. liii. 5, 6,  
11. 1 Tim. i. 15.  
Heb. i. 3.  
& ix. 20.  
<sup>l</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 24.  
1 2 Cor. v. 21.  
1 Pet. ii. 22.

Heb. iv. 15 & ix. 28. 1 Pet. ii. 22.

must go back to the theme of the whole section of the Epistle, in ch. ii. 29: "If God is righteous, then every one that doeth righteousness, is born of Him." Hitherto the positive side of this position has been illustrated: the inseparability of birth-from-God and likeness-to-God. Now, the Apostle comes to treat its negative side: the incompatibility of sin with birth-from-God. And this he deals with essentially and in the ideal, as always. The whole is in the closest connexion with the foregoing, and is developed step by step with the minutest precision, as will be seen in the exegesis.

4.] In this verse we have verse 3 taken up from the opposite side. There, God's essential purity formed a law, according to which the child of God having hope of ultimate complete likeness to Him, purifies himself. Here we have it declared that the sinner goes counter to [this and all other] law: indeed the two terms, sin and lawlessness, are synonymous and convertible. **Every one that committeth sin, also committeth transgression-of-law: and sin (abstract and in general) is transgression-of-law (abstract and in general).** The assertion amounts to the identification of the terms, and the *is* amounts to "is equivalent to."

This being so, *what is it exactly that our verse asserts* respecting these two things, sin, and transgression-of-law? First and obviously, no appropriation must be made, in this verse and throughout this passage, of the word *sin* to *one kind* of sin, whether it be mortal sin as distinguished from venial [so the Roman-Catholic expositors], or notorious and unrepented sins, or sins against brotherly love [as Luther, and Augustine]. The assertions are all perfectly general, and regard, in the true root and ideal, every sin whatever. Every sin whatever then is a transgression of God's law: as indeed its very name in Greek implies: *to sin* being to *miss a mark*, and the mark being that will of God which is the law and aim to him who "doeth the will of God," ch. ii. 17).

5.] *Additional argument* for the in-

compatibility of sin with the life of God's children: that He, Christ, in and by whom we have this adoption (John i. 12), and by being in whose likeness alone we can be perfectly like God, was manifested to take away all sins, being Himself sinless. **And ye know** (the Apostle assumes it as known by those who had an anointing from the Holy One and knew all things ch. ii. 20) **that He** (now clearly Christ, from the context, which [see above on ver. 3] can alone decide the reference in each case) **was manifested** (viz. by His appearing in the flesh, and all that He openly and visibly did and taught in it, or may be known, by the Spirit, to have done and taught) **in order that He may [might] take away** (in the original, "take away by one act and entirely." The meaning, "take away," and not "bear;" is necessitated here by the context. Sin is altogether alien from Christ. He became incarnate that He might blot it out: He has no stain of it on Himself. If we render the word "bear," this coherence is lost. Of course this fact is in the background, that He took them away by bearing them Himself: but it is not brought out, only the antagonism between Him and sin. See, on the word, the note on John i. 29) **sins** (all sins, not merely certain sins. The object of His manifestation is stated not only categorically, but definitively. Compare the striking parallel, Heb. ix. 26); **and in Him sin is not** (as His work, in being manifested, was, altogether to take away sin, so likewise is He himself free from all spot of sin. On the perversions and misunderstandings of this verse by the rationalists, and by Calvin, see in my Greek Test.).

6.] The connexion see above. **Every one that abideth in Him** (this expression is not to be weakened down by any rationalistic interpretation as *believing in Christ*, or *being joined in love to Christ*. This a man might be to an earthly friend: but could not be said to *abide in him*. See the sense expanded in the note on ch. ii. 24. Nothing short of personal

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

m ch. ii. 4.      sinneth not: <sup>m</sup> whosoever sinneth  
     & iv. 8.      seeth him not, neither knoweth him.  
     3 John 11.  
 n ch. ii. 26.    7 Little children, <sup>n</sup> let no one deceive  
     you: <sup>o</sup> he that doeth righteousness  
 o Ezek. xviii.    is righteous, even as he is righteous.  
     5-9. Rom.    is righteous, even as he is righteous.  
     ii. 13. ch. ii.    is righteous, even as he is righteous.  
     29.  
 p Matt. xiii.    8 P He that doeth sin is of the devil;  
     38. John  
     viii. 44.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

ever sinneth hath not  
 seen him, neither known  
 him. <sup>7</sup> Little children, let  
 no man deceive you: he  
 that doeth righteousness is  
 righteous, even as he is  
 righteous. <sup>8</sup> He that com-

inmanence in the personal Christ will satisfy the words: a living because He lives, and as receiving of His fulness) **sinneth not** (nor again is this to be tamed down, as has been done by far more and better interpreters than in the last case, by making it mean "does not persist in sin," so Luther, "does not allow sin to reign over him,"—so the Socinians and semi-Socinians. Against all such the plain words of the Apostle must be held fast, and explained by the analogy of his way of speaking throughout the Epistle of the ideal reality of the life of God and the life of sin as absolutely excluding one another. This all the best and deepest Commentators have felt: so Augustine and Bede, saying, "In so far as he abideth in Him, he sinneth not." The two are incompatible: and in so far as a man is found in the one, he is thereby separated from the other. In the child of God is the hatred of sin; in the child of the devil the love of it; and every act done in virtue of either state or as belonging to either, is done purely on one side or purely on the other. If the child of God falls into sin, it is an act against nature, deadly to life, hardly endured, and bringing bitter repentance: it is as the taking of a poison, which if it be not corrected by its antidote, will sap the very springs of life. So that there is no real contradiction to ch. i. 8-10, ii. 2, where this very falling into sin of the child of God is asserted and the remedy prescribed. The real difficulty of our verse is in that which follows); **every one that sinneth hath not seen** (so literally: see below) **Him, neither hath known Him** (here it seems to be said that the act of sinning not only *so far* excludes from the life in God and Christ, but proves that that life *has never existed* in the person so sinning. That this cannot be the meaning of the Apostle, is evident from such passages as i. 8-10, ii. 2, and indeed from the whole tenor of the Epistle, in which the words, "*now are we children of God,*" occur in combination with

"*let no one deceive you,*" and the like: whereas if the above view were correct, the very fact of *being deceived* not only would cause them to cease from being *children of God*, but would prove that they never had been such. If then this cannot be so, what meaning are we to put upon the words? First observe the tense in which the verbs stand in the original. They are perfects, almost equivalent to our English present, by which I have accordingly rendered them. And the meaning will be, that the cutting off by an act of sin of the sight and knowledge of Christ, shews, and shews in proportion as it prevails, unreality in that sight and knowledge. See the force of the tense discussed in my Greek Testament.

As regards the relation of the words themselves, **seeth** and **knoweth**; some hold that there is no perceptible difference: but that the latter word fixes and specifies the necessarily figurative meaning of the former. Lücke would understand "*seeing*" of knowledge obtained by historical information, which matures and completes itself into "*knowing*." But this seems hardly according to St. John's practice, who uses "*seeing*" either of bodily sight [John i. 18, 1 John i. 1, &c., &c.],—or of an intuitive immediate vision of divine things, such as Christ has of the Father and heavenly things [John iii. 11, 32, vi. 46, viii. 38],—or of spiritual intuition gained by knowledge of Christ and the divine life [John xiv. 7, 9; 3 John 11]: and there can be little doubt that this last is the meaning here: and thus **neither** will retain its proper exclusive and climacteric force: *seeing* is a further step than *knowing*: a realization of Christ's personality and of the existence of heavenly things which is the result of spiritual knowledge: and thus the sinner "**hath not seen Him, nor yet, nor even, known Him**").

7, 8.] *The contrast is again stated*, and introduced by a solemn warning not to be misled respecting it: and, as usually

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*mitteth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

because the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the

in St. John's repetitions, a new feature is brought in, which the following verses take up and further treat: viz. *that the devil is the source of such practices of sin.*

7.] Little children, let no one deceive you (it does not seem that any particular false teacher is here in St. John's view; but he alludes to all who would sever ethical likeness to God from the Christian life): he that doeth righteousness (the righteousness spoken of is but one, and that God's: the righteousness which is His) is righteous, even as He (here apparently, God, notwithstanding the apparent parallel of "*Jesus Christ the righteous*" in ch. ii. 2: for we are by this saying, as by that in ver. 3,—where see note,—referred back to the great Source of our spiritual birth, ch. ii. 29, and our likeness to Him insisted on) is righteous.

This verse has absolutely nothing to do with the sense which the Roman-Catholic expositors have endeavoured to extract from it, that good works make us righteous before God. This is altogether to invert the proposition of the Apostle, who is reasoning, not from the fact of doing good works to the conclusion that a man is righteous, but from the hypothesis of a man's being a child of God, born of Him and like Him, to the necessity of his purifying himself and doing righteousness. And in doing this, he ascribes the *doing righteousness* to its source, and the *doing sin* to its source: the one man is of God, the other is of the devil. As Luther well says, "Good works of piety do not make a good pious man, but a good pious man does good pious works. . . Fruits grow from the tree, not the tree from fruits."

8.] Contrast to ver. 7. He that doeth sin is of the devil (notice first "*he that doeth* [not, as the A. V. most unfortunately, "*committeth*"] *sin*," as indicative not so much of individual acts as of a state, corresponding to "*he that doeth righteousness*." And then the words, *is of the devil*, must not be rationalized away, as is done by those who deny the personal existence of the devil. It is the distinct opposite correlative of "*is of God*" [ver. 10, &c.], and implies a personal root and agency, just as much as that other does. But again, it does not imply any phy-

sical dualism on the part of the Apostle, "The devil made no one, begat no one, created no one," says Augustine here; "but he who imitates the devil, as if born of him, becomes a son of the devil, by imitation, not by birth. All sinners are born of the devil, in so far as they are sinners. Adam was made by God: but when he consented to the devil, he was born of the devil, and begat all such as he himself was." But be it observed, that we have here no such expression as "*hath been begotten of the devil*," but only, *is of the devil*. In the case of the children of God, there is a definite time, known to Him, when they passed from death unto life [ch. ii. 29; iii. 14; v. 11; John i. 12; iii. 3 ff.; v. 24, &c.]: from which their new life unto God dates: but there is no such point in the life of those who are the children of the devil; no regeneration from beneath corresponding to that from above: the natural life of men is not changed by seed of the devil as it is by seed of God. Rather may we say, that in those who are of the devil this latter change has never taken place. Since sin has come to reign in the world by man's sin, our natural birth, which is properly and essentially a birth from God, a creation by the eternal Word, has become a birth from the devil: so that it is, as Bengel expresses it, "a corruption, not a generation:" and there is no trace of a physical dualism in St. John's doctrine: nay, the idea is at once precluded by the fact that according to the Apostle [John i. 12] those who are children of God have become so from having been children of the devil: because the devil sinneth from the beginning ('sinned in the beginning, and has never ceased to sin since.' But the question meets us, what is from the beginning? Bede and others understand it of the beginning of all creation. Many Commentators, to avoid all chance of dualism, make it mean not from the time of his creation, but from that of his fall, understanding it of the beginning of *our world*. But again, others suppose the term to mark the beginning of the devil's own apostacy: so Bengel, &c. And lastly, others again take it to mean, "from the time when any began to sin." And this seems, when we compare John viii. 44, to be the true interpretation. He has ever been the depository, as it were,



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

q Gen. iii. 15.  
Luk. x. 18.  
John xvi. 11.  
Heb. ii. 14.

r ch. v. 18.

s 1 Pet. i. 23.

Son of God was manifested, <sup>q</sup> that he might destroy the works of the devil. <sup>9</sup> <sup>r</sup> Whosoever is born of God doeth not sin, because <sup>s</sup> his seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. <sup>10</sup> In

*purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. <sup>9</sup> Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin: for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. <sup>10</sup> In this*

of the thought and the life of sin: the tempter to sin: the fountain out of which sin has come, as God is the fountain out of which has come righteousness. See on this subject, my Sermons on Divine Love, Serm. v. pp. 68 ff., "the First Sinner"). To this end was the Son of God manifested (viz. in His incarnation, pregnant with all its consequences), that He might **destroy** (do away, break up, pull down: the word is used of a building, or a law, or an organized whole) the **works of the devil** (what are these? Clearly, in the first place, works whereof the devil is the *author*: not merely *devilish works*. And then, are we to include in the list not only sins, which manifestly belong to it, but also the consequences of sin—pain, sorrow, death? The *fact* would be true if we did: for Christ hath abolished death [2 Tim. i. 10]. But the context seems to require that we should at all events keep death and the results of sin in the background, as no mention is made of them here, and sinful works are clearly in the Apostle's mind. These works the whole *manifestation* of Christ went directly to nullify: more especially His Death, in which His power over Satan reached its highest point,—the bruising of His heel, in which He bruised the Enemy's head:—for it was in that, that He won for us that acceptance which is sealed by His glorification, and in virtue of which the Holy Spirit is given us, of whose work in us it is said that we "*by the Spirit mortify (put to death) the deeds of the body.*" Rom. viii. 13).

9, 10.] *The contrast taken up again*, and from the converse: he that is born of God cannot sin: he that does not righteousness, is not of God: i. e. is a child of the devil. Then we have the usual new particular, to give the transition note to that which is to follow,—including in this last category him that loveth not his brother. **Every one that is begotten of God, doeth not sin** (the meaning of this declaration has been treated of above, ver. 6. Here we meet

it in its barest and plainest form—the two states, being begotten of God, and sin, absolutely excluding one another), **because His seed abideth in him** (i. e. because that new principle of life from which his new life has unfolded, which was God's seed deposited in him, abides growing there, and precludes the development of the old sinful nature. Some of the ancients understood it of the *word* of God, as in the parable of the sower, Matt. xiii. 3 ff. This last interpretation has been impugned by all the moderns, but I cannot see that they have made good their objection: the force of which amounts to this; that the word of God is not so much the *Seed*, as the *means whereby the begetting to the new life takes place*. But whether we regard the generation of plants, or animal procreation, which latter is more in question here, what words can more accurately describe the office of the seed than these? and what is the word of God but the continually abiding and working seed of the new life, in the child of God? Nay, it seems to be that exactly of which we are in search: not the Holy Spirit, the personal agent; not the power of the new life, the thing begotten; but just that which intervenes between the two, the word, the utterance of God—dropped into the soul of man, taking it up by divine power into itself, and developing the new life continually. This is in the most precise and satisfactory sense the *seed of God*: and on this all Scripture symbolism is agreed: compare 1 Pet. i. 23, James i. 18. In fact the very passage which is the key to this, is John v. 38, "*Ye have not His word abiding in you.*" Nor should any exception have been taken to the comparison with the parable of the Sower, for though the attendant circumstances of generation are different, the analogy is the same); and **he cannot sin** (no explaining away of this declaration must be attempted, as is done by Cornelius-a-lapide, who understands it of *deadly sin*; by Augustine and Bede, who confine the *to*



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil:

sin to the violation of brotherly love. The Apostle is speaking not only of the ideal, but of the real state of those born of God: drawing the strongest possible contrast between the life of God and the life of sin, as excluding one another absolutely. And there is no contradiction between what is here said and ch. i. 8, 9; nay, rather that passage shews, by the strong desire to be cleansed from all sin, which it assumes, the same incompatibility as is here insisted on, **because he hath been begotten of God** (almost all the expositors, from the first times until now, make this **because** more or less represent *in as far as*, or *as long as*. It is true, the Apostle does not say, "**he cannot sin because he was born of God:**" this would testify to a past fact, once for all occurring, without any reference to its present permanence: but he has said *because he is* [**hath been and continues**] **born**,—because he *has abiding in him* that his birth from God. So that the above-cited explanation, though falling far short of the real meaning, has at least a feeling after the truth of the Apostle's assertion in it. The abiding force of this divine generation in a man, excludes sin: where sin enters, that force does not abide: the *having been born* is in danger of becoming a mere fact in the past, instead of a fact in the present: a lost life, instead of a living life. And so all such passages as this, instead of testifying, as Calvini would have this one do, to the doctrine of final perseverance of the regenerate, do in fact bear witness to the very opposite: viz., that, as the Church of England teaches, we need God's special grace every day to keep us in the state of salvation, from which every act and thought of sin puts us in peril of falling away.

Before leaving this important passage, I must quote Dürstler's concluding remarks. "The difference between the older and more modern expositors lies in this, that the former are more anxious to moderate the details of the Apostle's sentiment, and to tone down his assertion to the actual life of Christians, while the moderns recognize the full precision of the text as it stands, but then remind us that the ideal truth of the principle announced by St. John continually, so to speak, floats above the actual life of believers as their rule and aim, and that, in so far, the

Apostle's saying finds in such actual life only a relative fulfilment. None however of all the expositors, who in any way has recognized the ideal character of St. John's view, has overlooked the fact, that even in the actual life of all that are born of God there is something which in full verity answers to the ideal words, 'they cannot sin.' The children of God, in whom the divine seed of their eternal life abides, have, in reality, a holy privilege,—they sin not, and they cannot sin, just in proportion as the new divine life, unconditionally opposed to all sin, and manifesting itself in godlike righteousness, is present and abides in them. Expositors of all theological tendencies, in all times, point to this, that the new life of believers, veritably begotten by regeneration from God, is simply incompatible with sin;—the life which essentially alienates the spirit from all sin, fills it with an irreconcilable hate against every sin, and urges it to an unceasing conflict against all unrighteousness. Luther excellently says, that a child of God in this conflict receives indeed wounds daily, but never throws away his arms or makes peace with his deadly foe. Sin is ever active, but no longer dominant: the normal direction of life's energies in the believer is against sin, is an absence of sin, a no-will-to-sin and a no-power-to-sin. He that is born of God has become, from being a servant of sin, a servant of righteousness: according to the divine seed remaining in him, or, as St. Paul says, according to the inner man [Rom. vii. 15 ff.], he will, and he can work only that which is like God,—righteousness, though the flesh, not yet fully mortified, rebels and sins: so that even in and by the power of the new life sin must be ever confessed, forgiveness received [ch. i. 8 ff.], the temptation of the evil one avoided and overcome [v. 18], and self-purification and sanctification carried on"). 10.] *The continuation of the former argument:* with the insertion, in the latter half, of the new particular which is to form the argument of the next section. But this latter half belongs not only to that next section, but to this as well: its assertion "*whosoever doeth not righteousness, &c.*," is requisite for the carrying out fully of the assertion, "*In this, &c.*," which at the same time looks

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

t ch. ii. 29.      <sup>t</sup>whosoever doeth not righteousness  
n ch. iv. 8.      is not of God, <sup>u</sup>and he that loveth  
x ch. i. 5. & ii.      not his brother. <sup>11</sup> For <sup>x</sup>this is the  
7.                      message that ye heard from the be-  
y John xiii. 34.      ginning, <sup>y</sup> that we should love one  
& xv. 12.  
ver. 23. ch. iv. 7, 21. 2 John 5.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. <sup>11</sup> For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should*

backward and forward: backward, for the children of God have already been designated by the absence of sin, ver. 9: forward, for the children of the devil are designated below by the presence of sin in the second half of the verse. In this (fact, circumstance: *in* better than *by this*, which gives the idea that this is the *only sign*) are manifest (it has been asked, *to whom?* Some say to God's unerring eye alone. True, in the full and deep truth of the saying: but surely in degree and proportion to those whom the unction from the Holy One enables to know all things: in proportion as sin is manifested, or hatred and avoidance of sin is manifested, in a character. And the especial sign which follows, the sin of hate, is one which is plainly open to men's eyes, at least in its ordinary manifestations) the children of God and the children of the devil (see these expressions explained and vindicated from the charge of dualism, above, ver. 8. Compare John viii. 44, Acts xiii. 10. Socinus remarks well, "From the Apostle's words it may clearly enough be collected, that between the sons of God and the sons of the devil there are none intermediate"): every one that doeth not righteousness (see ch. ii. 29) is not of God (is not a child of God), and he that loveth not his brother (see below, these words pointing on to the next section).

11—24.] Of *brotherly love*, as the sum and essence of *righteousness*: as Christ's command [ver. 11]: whereas in the world there is hate [12, 13]: bound up with life, as hate with death [14, 15]: finding its great pattern in Christ [16]; to be testified not in word only but in deed [17, 18]; as the ground of confidence toward God and the granting of our prayers to Him, being obedience to His will [19—22]; which obedience consists in faith and love [23], and is testified to by the witness of His Spirit [24].

Before entering on ver. 11, the latter half of ver. 10 must be considered, as belonging properly, in its sense, to this section, though in arrangement inseparable from the last. The "*and*," which binds

on the additional particular in the last clause, serves, as in ver. 5, to co-ordinate that clause with the foregoing: not in this case as excluded from the forementioned category, but as one particular, taken out from among the general category, and put into a co-ordinate position with it. And it is thus put, as being the most eminent, and most of the nature of a summary, and criterion, of the rest, of any of those graces which are necessarily involved in *righteousness*. Augustine beautifully says, "Love alone distinguishes between the children of God and the children of the devil. All may sign themselves with the sign of the cross of Christ: all may answer Amen: all may sing Halleluia: all may be baptized, may enter churches, may build the walls of the same: but the children of God are not distinguished from the children of the devil, except by Love." And this love, thus constituted into the great test and touchstone, is necessarily the family love of brother for brother within the limits of those who are begotten of God. Universal love to man is a Christian grace—but it is not that here spoken of: it neither answers the description of the "*message*" given in ver. 11, nor corresponds to the context here in general, the drift of which is that a test of our belonging to God's family is our love towards His children, who are our brethren in that family: cf. ch. v. 1 ff. But, while there can be no doubt that this is the right understanding of the brotherly love here insisted on, we incur at once a formal difficulty in applying this meaning to the negative or exclusive side of the test. He who does not love his brother, has in strict fact *no brother to love*, for he is not a child of God at all. Hence we must understand, strictly speaking, "*his brother*" in this case as importing his hypothetical brother: him who would be, were he himself a true child of God, a brother, and, if so, necessarily beloved. That this love does not exist in him, demonstrates him not to be of God's family.

11.] Because (proof that absence of love of the brethren excludes from God's family)

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

love one another. <sup>12</sup> Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. <sup>13</sup> Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. <sup>14</sup> We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

another. <sup>12</sup> Not as <sup>z</sup> Cain was, of the wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were wicked, and his brother's righteous. <sup>13</sup> Marvel not, brethren, if <sup>a</sup> the world hateth you. <sup>14</sup> <sup>b</sup> We know that we have passed over from death into life, because we love the brethren.

<sup>z</sup> Gen. iv. 4, 8.  
<sup>11</sup> Heb. xi. 4.  
Jude 11.

<sup>a</sup> John xv. 18,  
19. & xvii.  
<sup>14</sup> 2 Tim.  
iii. 12.  
<sup>b</sup> ch. ii. 10.

the message which ye heard from the beginning (the announcement which from the beginning of the preaching of the Gospel was made to you. The term **message** is not here equivalent to *command*, though that which is cited is a commandment: but it is a *command* conveyed in words and by messengers, and thus become a *message*) is this, that we love one another.

12, 13.] See summary above: *example of the first instance of the world's hate*, by way of contrast. 12.] **Not as Cain was, of the wicked one, and slew his brother** (the construction is elliptic: but nothing need be supplied as in A. V. In the words **was of the wicked one** we have a resumption of the expression "*is of the devil*" from above, ver. 8: the word **wicked** being used probably on account of his being *of the wicked one* following. Observe, "*his works were wicked*" is the inference from that great proof which he gave of it by killing his brother: as is also the reason given in what follows: see below. So that here the assertion of his being of the wicked one is, as above, strictly ethical, and in no way physical or dualistic: "Cain was the son not of God but of the devil, *not by generation*, but by imitation and suggestion." Cornelius-a-lapide). **And for what reason slew he him? because his [own] works were wicked, and those of his brother righteous** (it has caused some difficulty, that no mention of this ethical difference is made in the narrative in Genesis. It has been supposed that the Apostle gathers it from God's differing acceptance of the offerings of the two: others have called the ethical characters of the two the *previous* occasion, whereas the immediately exciting cause was the deduction from acknowledged facts, of the murder. But properly considered, the Apostle's assertion here is only a *proximate* occasion. Cain murdered

his brother: therefore he hated him: and hate belongs to the children of the evil one,—classifies him at once among those whose works are evil, and who hate those who, like Abel, are testified to [Heb. xi. 4] that they are of the children of God who work righteousness. Whatever might be the exciting occasion of the murder, this lay at the root—the hatred which the children of the devil ever bear to the children of God).

13.] The connexion with ver. 12 is close: the world (the children of the devil) began so, and will ever go on as it began. **Marvel not, brethren, if (no doubt is expressed by this *if*. The hypothesis is set forth as actually fulfilled) the world hateth you** (this verse is in close sequence on the example just given: Cain being taken as the prototype and exemplar of such hate).

14, 15.] See summary above, on ver. 11. The connexion with the foregoing is very close. We learnt from ver. 10, that the love of the brethren is that which makes manifest the children of God and the children of the devil. And now again, having spoken of the hate of the world as a thing to be looked for, the Apostle brings up this sign as one tending to comfort the child of God, and shew him that, notwithstanding the world's hate, he has more to rejoice at than to fear from the fact: he is in life, they in death. **We** (emphatic: we whom the world hates: we, as set over against the world) **know** (see above, ver. 2: of *certain* knowledge) **that we have passed over out of death into life** (in the original it is, *out of the death into the life—the death*, which reigns over the unregenerate: *the life*, which is revealed in Christ), because (gives the ground and cause, not of the *having passed over*, but of the *knowledge* of having passed over) **we love the brethren** (here distinctly, our Christian brethren: the term being that well-known one

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

c ch. ii. 9, 11.  
 † his brother  
*is omitted*  
*in our three*  
*oldest MSS.*  
 d Matt. v. 21,  
 22. ch. iv.  
 20.  
 e Gal. v. 21.  
 f Rev. xxi. 8.  
 † John iii. 16.  
 & xv. 13.  
 Rom. v. 8.  
 Eph. v. 2, 25. ch. iv. 9, 11.

He that loveth not † abideth in death. <sup>15</sup> d Every one that hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that e no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. <sup>16</sup> f Herein

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

not his brother abideth in death. <sup>15</sup> Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. <sup>16</sup> Hereby perceive we the

by which the body of Christians was represented. For the Romanist and Socinian distortions of this verse, curiously running into one, see note in my Greek Test. It may conduce to a right estimate of the doctrines of men and churches, and put younger Scripture students on their guard, to see the concurrent habits and tendencies of interpreters apparently so opposite. When Pilate and Herod are friends, we know what work is in hand. But as a conclusion, I will quote the clear and faithful exposition of a greater and better man: "What do we know? that we have passed from death into life. Whence have we this knowledge? because we love the brethren. Let no one interrogate a man: let every one have recourse to his own heart: if he find there brotherly love, he may be sure that he has passed from death into life. He stands already on the right hand: let it not trouble him that as yet his glory is hidden; when the Lord shall come, then shall he appear in glory. For he is growing, but as yet in winter: the root grows, but the branches are as it were dried up: within is the sap which grows, within are the leaves of trees, within are fruits, but they wait for summer"); he that loveth not (there is this time no qualifying object, as "*his brother*:" the absence of love from the character is the sign spoken of), abideth in death (as before, "*in the death*:" in that realm of death, in which all men are by nature. Here again the absence of love is not the reason, why he remains in death; but the sign of his so remaining. The "*passing over*" has not passed upon him. The words have no reference to *future* death, any further than as he who is and abides in death can but end in death: we may notice that he does not say, he who loveth not shall come into death, as if he were speaking concerning eternal punishment, awaiting sinners in the future: but he says, "*he who loveth not abideth in death*." Bede). <sup>15</sup>] Every one that hateth his brother is a manslayer (in these words, (1) "*he that loveth not*," which preceded, is taken up by every one that

hateth: shewing that the two are identical: the living spirit of man being incapable of a state of indifference: that he who has banished brotherly love has in fact abandoned himself to the rule of the opposite state. In the ethical depth of the Apostle's view, love and hate, like light and darkness, life and death, necessarily succeed, as well as necessarily exclude, one another. He who has not the one of necessity has the other in each case. (2) he who hates his brother is stated to be a *manslayer*. The example given, ver. 12, shewed the true and normal result of hate: and again in the Apostle's ethical depth of view, as in our Lord's own [Matt. v. 21 ff., 27 ff.], he who falls under a state, falls under the normal results of that state carried out to its issue. If a hater be not a murderer, the reason does not lie in his hate, but in his *lack of* hate. "Whom we hate, we wish destroyed," says Calvin. Some would make a *manslayer* mean, a destroyer of *his own* soul. But this, as well as the view that it is the murder of his brother's *soul* which is intended, by provoking him to anger and discord,—errs by pressing the reference to the example of Cain above. Some again would interpret it by a reference to John viii. 44, understood as pointing to the ruin of Adam by the Tempter. But as Dusterdieck remarks, far rather should we say that this passage throws back a light on that passage, and makes it likely that the case of Cain, and not that of Adam, is *there* referred to; and ye know that every manslayer hath not (is without the possession of) eternal life abiding in him (ye know, viz. by your own knowledge of what is patent and axiomatic in itself. We must not fall into the error of referring the saying to the *future lot* of the murderer: it regards his present state, and is another way of saying that he "*abideth in death*," ver. 14. Eternal life, which abides in God's children, which is the living growth of the seed of God in them, is evidenced by love: if the very crown and issue of hate, homicide, be present, it is utterly impossi-



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. <sup>17</sup> But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

have we the knowledge of love, that He laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. <sup>17</sup> But <sup>g</sup> whoso hath <sup>g</sup> this world's sustenance, and beholdeth his brother having need, and shutteth up his heart from him,

<sup>g</sup> Deut. xv. 7.  
Luke iii. 11.

ble that this germ of life can be coexistent with it; can be firmly implanted and abiding [see John v. 38] in the man).

16—18.] *Description and enforcement of true love.* The Apostle has hitherto shewn that brotherly love is the truest test as between the children of God and the children of the devil. But, that no one may deceive himself or be deceived by others, it is now necessary to lay down, what is true and Christian love. 16.] *Example of true love in Christ, and enforcement of it on us.* In this (see above, ver. 10, and note, ch. ii. 3) we have the knowledge of ("we have arrived at and possess the apprehension of:" knowledge, as an act of the understanding proceeding on intellectual grounds. Here however it is used entirely within the sphere of the Christian life of union with Christ. None can understand true love as shewn in this its highest example, but he who is one with Christ, and has felt and does feel that love of His in its power on himself. See note on ch. ii. 3) love (i. e. what love is: the nature of love true and genuine: that perfection of love, which we are commending. So most of the Commentators. Some have held to the insertion of the words "of God" (as A. V.) after love, which has hardly any authority. But there can be but little doubt that the other is the right view. The love of God to us is not that which would, *as such*, be adduced as a pattern to us of brotherly love; it is true that in the depth of the matter, all true love is love after that pattern: but in a passage so logically bound together it is much more probable that the term common to the two, Christ and ourselves, would be, not divine love, which as such is peculiar to Him, but love itself simply, that of which He has given the great example which we are to follow), that He (Christ, as the words beyond question shew) laid down His life for us (i. e. died: not as Grotius, who in all the places where it occurs maintains that it is only to *expose life to danger*, which would entirely ener-

vate the Apostle's saying here. The term for us carries in it and behind it all that we know of the nature of the death which is spoken of: but the vicariousness and atoning power of Christ's death are not here in consideration: it is looked on here as the greatest possible proof of love, as in John xv. 13); and we (emphatic: we on our part, as followers of Christ) ought on behalf of the brethren to lay down our lives (ou lives, Socinus says well: "He says not, that we ought to lay down our 'life,' as if one were bound to die for many, but, our *lives*, because each ought to die for each." The Apostle states the duty generally: and thus stated it is clear enough. As Christ did in pursuance of His love, so ought we to do in pursuance of ours, bound as we are to Him not by the mere force of an outward example, but by the power of an inward life. But naturally and necessarily the precept finds its application only in those cases where our Heavenly Father's will sets the offering of such a sacrifice in the course and pursuance of our brotherly love, which He has ordained).

17.] But ("by the adversative connexion of ver. 17 with ver. 16 the Apostle marks the passage from the greater, which is justly demanded of us, to the lesser, the violation of which is all the more a transgression of the law just prescribed." Dusterdieck) whosoever hath the world's sustenance, and beholdeth (the Greek word gives more than "seeth," which would imply only the casual sight: it is the standing and looking on as a spectator: so that it ever involves not the eye only, but the mind also, in the sight: it is to *contemplate*, not simply to *see*. St. John is very fond of this word, and wherever it occurs, this its meaning may be more or less traced. There is then in this unmerciful man not merely the being aware of, but the deliberate contemplation of the distress of his brother) his brother having need, and shutteth up (the shutting is then and there done, as the result of the contemplation: not a mere constitutional



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

h ch. iv. 20. <sup>h</sup> how abideth the love of God in him? <sup>18</sup> Little children, <sup>i</sup> let us not love with word, neither with tongue; but in deed and in truth. <sup>19</sup> And herein † shall we know <sup>k</sup> that we are of the truth, and shall per-

compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? <sup>18</sup> My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. <sup>19</sup> And hereby we know that we are of the truth,

† Ezek. xxxiii. 31. Rom. xii. 9. Eph. iv. 15. James i. 15, 16. 1 Pet. i. 22.

† So all our oldest MSS. k John xviii. 37. ch. i. 8.

hardness of heart, but an act of exclusion from sympathy following deliberately on the beholding of his brother's distress) his bowels (i. e. his heart, the seat of compassion: as so often in the New Test., this expression carries the idea of *turning away* from him. As Düsterdieck remarks, the fact that a man shuts up his heart against his brother, includes in it the fact that that brother is excluded *from* the heart thus shut up), **how** (can it be that? as in ch. iv. 20) **doth the love of God** (i. e. from the very express filling out of the thought in ch. iv. 20, "*love to God*;" not God's love to us. See also ch. ii. 5, where we have the same expression and reference to the love of God being in a man. The context indeed here might seem, as the mention of Christ's love to us as so immediately preceded, to require the other meaning; or at least, that of "the love whereof God hath set us a pattern:" and accordingly both these have been held. But I see not how we can escape the force of the passages above cited) **abide in him** (Lücke and Düsterdieck are disposed to lay a stress on the word **abide** here, thereby opening a door for the view that the love of God may indeed be in him in some sense, but not as a firm abiding principle; that at all events at the moment when he thus shuts up his bowels of compassion, it is not *abiding* in him. But this would seem to violate the ideal strictness of the Apostle's teaching, and the true sense rather to be, "How can we think of such an one as at all possessing the love of God in any proper sense?" giving thus much emphasis to the word **abide**.)

Here again, as above in the case of the duty of laying down life for a brother, many questions of casuistry have been raised as to the nature and extent of the duty of almsgiving, on which it is impossible to enter here. The safest answers to them all will be found in the Christian conscience enlightened by the Holy Spirit, guiding the Christian heart warmed by the living presence of Christ)!

18.] *Exhortation to true brotherly*

*love*: following naturally on the example of the want of it given in the last verse. **Little children, let us not love with word, nor yet with tongue, but (let us love) in deed and truth** (there is some little difficulty in assigning these words their several places in the contrast. Notice first, that the two former, **with word** and **with tongue**, simply relate to the *instrument*, whereas the two latter are introduced by the preposition *in*, denoting the element in which. The true account of the arrangement seems to be, that the usual contrast of *word* and *deed* is more sharply defined by the explanatory terms, *tongue* and *truth*: **with the tongue** giving, by making the mere bodily member the instrument, more precisely the idea of absence of truth than even **with word**, and **in truth** more definitely the idea of its presence than even **in deed**. As connected with the exhortation in this verse, I may cite the tradition reported by Jerome in his Commentary on Gal. vi. 10: "The blessed John, the Evangelist, living on at Ephesus into extreme old age, and being with difficulty borne by the hands of his disciples to church, when he could not sustain his utterance for more words, used to say no more at each meeting than this: 'Little children, love one another.' At last his disciples and the brethren who were present, being wearied at hearing always the same words, said, 'Master, why dost thou always go on saying this?' The answer was worthy of St. John: 'Because it is the Lord's command; and if this only be done, it is enough'").

19–24.] See the summary at ver. 11. *The blessed effects of true brotherly love as a test of the Christian state.*

19, 20.] [And] in this (see above, vv. 10, 16. It here refers to what had gone before: viz. to the fulfilment of the exhortation in ver. 18, as the future shews: "*which thing if we do, . . .*") we shall know (on the *future*, see above. It is the result consequent on the fulfilment of the condition implied in **herein**) **that we are of the truth** ("i. e.," says

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

and shall assure our hearts before him. <sup>20</sup> For if our heart condemn us, God is

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

swade our hearts before him. <sup>20</sup> For <sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 4. if our heart condemn us, it is be-

Ecumenius, "in the fact of our loving not with word, but in deed and in truth: because he who says one thing and does another, not in his deed being consonant to his profession, is a liar and not true." But, true as this is, and self-evident, it does not reach the depth of the meaning of, have our source from. To be in the truth, is a different matter from to be truthful or true men. Estius approaches the meaning, understanding the truth to be the truth of God in His promises, and so are of the truth to mean "are of the number of the elect." Bede's interpretation, "of the truth, which is God," in which Calvin and others agree, is nearer still: but had the Apostle intended this, he surely would have written "of God." The Lutheran commentators have come nearer still, making the truth to be the word of truth by which we are begotten anew unto God. But why stop at that which after all is *itself* of the truth? why not mount up to the Truth itself, that pure and objective Truth which is the common substratum and essential quality of the Spirit Himself, of the Word, of those who are born of the Word by the Spirit?, and shall persuade our hearts before him (i. e. and in and by this same sign, shall still the questionings of our hearts before God, by the assurance that we are His true children. St. John uses the heart for the innermost seat of our feelings and passions: of alarm [John xiv. 1, 27], of mourning [xvi. 6], of joy [xvi. 22]. It was into the heart of Judas that the devil put the intent of betraying the Lord [xiii. 2]: and the heart here is the inward judge of the man,—whose office is, so to say, promoted by the conscience, accusing or else excusing [Rom. ii. 15]. Then, as to shall persuade, there is no need to give to the verb any unusual meaning. It does not mean "quiet" or "assure," except in so far as its ordinary import, "persuade," takes this tinge from the context.

It must be plain from what has been said, that the future, shall persuade, is not, on account of the words "before Him," to be taken as referring to the future day of judgment, as some have done. In ch. iv. 17, which is in some respects parallel with this, that day is expressly named: whereas in our passage,

an equally clear indication is given, by the parallelism of the two future verbs, "shall know" and "shall persuade," that no such reference is intended. before Him is not, at His appearing, but, in His sight, as placed before His all-seeing eye.

20.] takes up this matter of the persuading our hearts before God, and shews its true importance and rationale. This is carried on in the following verses, but is here and in ver. 21 placed as its ground. If our heart, before Him, judges us unfavourably—we may be quite sure that He, knowing more than our heart does, judges us more unfavourably still: if our heart condemn us not, again before Him, judging and seeing in the light of His countenance, then we know that we are at one with Him, and those consequences follow, which are set forth in ver. 22.

The many difficulties which occur in rendering this verse cannot be presented to the mere English reader. They will be found discussed in my Greek Test. The context appears to stand thus. The Apostle in ver. 19 has said that by the presence of genuine love we shall know that we are of the truth, and shall persuade our hearts in God's presence. He then proceeds to enlarge on this persuading our hearts in general. If our heart condemn us, what does it import? If our heart acquit us, what? The condemnation, and acquittal, are plainly and necessarily opposed, both in hypothesis and in result. If the consolatory view of ver. 20 is taken,—as softening our self-condemnation by the comforting thought of God's greatness and infinite mercy,—then the general result of vv. 20, 21 will be, whether our heart condemn us or not, we have comfort and assurance: and then what would be the import of our persuading our hearts at all? But on the other interpretation, the condemnatory sense of ver. 20—as intensifying our self-condemnation by the thought that the cause of it is God, knowing more of our sin than we do—then, taken with some modifications, all will be clear. I say, taken with some modifications: because the sense has been much obscured by the mistake of introducing the particular case treated in ver. 18 into the general statements of vv. 20, 21. It is not, If our heart condemn us for want of brotherly love: but this test is dropped, and the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

cause God is greater than our heart,  
m Job xxii. 20. and knoweth all things. <sup>21</sup> m Be-  
 loved, if our heart condemn us not,  
n Heb. x. 22. <sup>n</sup> we have confidence toward God,  
ch. ii. 28. <sup>22</sup> and <sup>o</sup> whatsoever we ask, we re-  
& iv. 17. ceive from him, because we keep  
o Ps. xxxiv. 15. his commandments, <sup>p</sup> and do those  
& cxlv. 18, 19. things that are pleasing in his sight.  
Prov. xv. 29.  
Jer. xxix. 12.  
Matt. vii. 8.  
& xxi. 22.  
Mark xi. 24.  
John xiv. 13.  
& xv. 7. &  
xvi. 23, 24. James v. 16. cb. v. 14. p John viii. 29. & ix. 31.

*greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.* <sup>21</sup> *Be-  
 loved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.* <sup>22</sup> *And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.*

general subject of the testimony of our hearts is entered upon. Thus we get the context and rendering, as follows): **because** (as if it were said, and this *persuading our hearts before Him* is for us a vital matter, seeing that condemnation and acquittal by our own hearts bring each such a weighty conclusion with it) **if our heart condemn us, it is because** (our self-condemnation is founded on the fact, that) **God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things** (i. e. the condemning testimony of our conscience is not alone, but is a token of One sitting above our conscience and greater than our conscience: because our conscience is but the faint echo of His voice who knoweth all things: if it condemn us, how much more He? and therefore this *persuading*, for which this verse renders a reason, becomes a thing of inestimable import, and one which we cannot neglect, seeing that the absence of it is an index to our standing condemned of God. And then, having given the reason why the *condemnation* should be set at rest by the *persuasion*, he goes on to give the blessed results of the *persuasion* itself in vv. 21, 22). **21.] Beloved** (there is no adversative particle, because this address throws up the contrast quite strongly enough, as introducing the very matter on which the context lays the emphasis, viz., the *persuading our hearts*), **if our heart condemn us not, we have confidence towards God** (said generally; not with direct reference to that which follows ver. 22, which indeed is one form of this confidence: see ch. v. 14, where the connexion is similar. The confidence here spoken of is of course present, not future in the day of judgment. **towards God**, i. e., with reference to God: but more than that: to God-ward, in our aspect as turned towards and looking to God. It must be remembered that the words are said in the full light of the reality of the Christian state,—where the heart is awakened and

enlightened, and the testimony of the Spirit is active: where the heart's own deceit does not come into consideration as a disturbing element), **22.] and** (such another "*and*" as that in verse 10 above, where, after the general statement, "*and*" introduced the particular instance in which the general truth was carried forward. So here: By dwelling and walking in love, we can alone gain that approval of our conscience as God's children, which brings real confidence in Him and real intercommunion in prayer, which is a result and proof of that confidence) **whatsoever we ask, we receive** (present: not put for future, as Grotius thinks. The Apostle is setting forth actual matter of fact) **from Him** (these words must be taken in all their simplicity, without capricious and arbitrary limitations. Like all the sayings of St. John, they proceed on the ideal truth of the Christian state. "The child of God," as Huther says, "asks for nothing which is against the will of its Father"), **because** (ground of the above *receiving*) **we keep His commandments, and do the things which are pleasing in His sight** (on the last expression [and parallelism] see Exod. xv. 26; also Deut. vi. 18, xii. 25, Ezra x. 11, Isa. xxxviii. 3. It is added, not as explanatory of *keeping His commandments*, but to connect with His granting our prayers, since our lives are in accord with His good pleasure. This however brings us to the theological difficulty of our verse, wherein it would seem at first sight as if the granting of our prayers by God depended, as its meritorious efficient, on our keeping of His commandments and doing that which pleases Him. And so some of the Roman-Catholic expositors here. But both here and elsewhere the solution of the difficulty is very easy, if separated from the party words of theology, and viewed in the light of Scripture itself. Out of Christ, there are no good works at all: entrance into

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

<sup>23</sup> *And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.* <sup>24</sup> *And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>23</sup> <sup>q</sup> And this is his commandment, <sup>q</sup> That we should believe the name of his Son Jesus Christ, <sup>r</sup> and love one another, <sup>s</sup> as he gave us commandment. <sup>24</sup> <sup>t</sup> And <sup>u</sup> he that keepeth his commandments <sup>u</sup> abideth in him, and he in him. And <sup>x</sup> hereby we

<sup>q</sup> John vi. 29. & xvii. 3.

<sup>r</sup> Matt. xxii. 39. John xiii. 34. & xv. 12.

<sup>s</sup> Eph. v. 2.

<sup>t</sup> Thessa. iv.

<sup>u</sup> 1 Pet. iv.

<sup>u</sup> 8. ver. 11.

<sup>u</sup> ch. iv. 21.

<sup>u</sup> s ch. ii. 8, 10.

<sup>x</sup> 1 John xiv. 23. & xv. 10.

<sup>x</sup> ch. iv. 12.

<sup>u</sup> John xvii. 21, &c.

<sup>x</sup> Rom. viii. 9. ch. iv. 13.

Christ is not won nor merited by them. In Christ, every work done of faith is good and is pleasing to God. The doing of such works is the working of the life of Christ in us: they are its sign, they its fruits: they are not of us, but of it and of Him. They are the measure of our Christian life: according to their abundance, so is our access to God, so is our reward from God: for they are the steps of our likeness to God. Whatever is attributed to them as an efficient cause, is attributed not to us, but to Him whose fruits they are. *Because* Christ is thus manifested in us, God hears our prayers, which He only hears for Christ's sake: *because* His Spirit works thus abundantly in us, He listens to our prayer, which in that measure has become the voice of His Spirit. So that no degree of efficacy attributed to the good works of the child of God need surprise us: it is God recognizing, God vindicating, God multiplying, God glorifying, His own work in us. So that when, e.g., Cornelius-a-lapide says, "It is congruous, and the congruous reward of obedience and reconciliation (friendship), that if man does the will of God, God in His turn should do the will of man," all we can reply is that such a duality, such a reciprocity, does not exist for Christians: we are *in God*, He in us: and this St. John continually insists on. We have no claim *from without*: He works in us to do of His good pleasure: and the works which He works, which we work, manifest before Him, and before all, that we are His children. The assertion, "*whatsoever we ask, we receive*," I reserve to be treated of on ch. v. 14, 15, where it is set forth more in detail).

23.] *Summing up of all these commandments in one: faith in Christ, and brotherly love according to Christ's command.* And (see "*and*" similarly used, ch. i. 5, ii. 17, iii. 3) **His commandment** ("he mentions," says Bede, "but *one* commandment, and then subjoins *two*, faith and love, as being inseparable the one from the other. For we cannot love one another

rightly without the faith of Christ, nor can we truly believe in the name of Jesus Christ without love") is **this, That we should believe the name** (this unusual expression is well explained by Calvin and Beza,—the word "*name*" has reference to the preaching of Him; so that to believe His Name is, to believe the Gospel message concerning Him, and Him as living in it, in all His fulness) **of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, even as He gave us commandment** (it seems natural, with the generality of Commentators, to understand Christ as intended by **He**, and by the commandment, John xiii. 34, xv. 12, xvi. 17).

24 a.] *General return*, with reference to what has been said in the last verses, *to the great key-note of the Epistle, abide in Him*, with which the former part of it concluded, ch. ii. 28. This keeping of His (God's) commandments is the abiding in God: this of which brotherly love is the first and most illustrious example and summary. So that the exhortation given at the beginning of this portion of the Epistle is still in the Apostle's mind, as again ch. iv. 15, 16, and v. 20; see also ch. ii. 6, iii. 6, 9. **And he that keepeth His (God's) commandments, abideth in Him (God), and He (God) in him** (some hold that **He** and **Him** are to be referred to Christ. And no doubt they would be perfectly true, and according to our Lord's own words, when thus applied: see John xiv. 15, xv. 5 ff. Still, from the context [see below], it is better to refer them to the chief subject, viz. to God. In the sense, the difference is not important. It is one of the most difficult questions in the explanation of this most difficult of Epistles, to assign such expressions as the present definitely to their precise personal object).

24 b.] And of one part of this mutual indwelling there is *a sign and token*, given us by God Himself, viz. *the Holy Spirit*. By the mention of the Spirit, the Apostle makes these words the note of transition to the subject of the next



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he gave us.

IV. <sup>1</sup> Beloved, <sup>a</sup> believe not every spirit, but <sup>b</sup> try the spirits whether they are of God: because <sup>c</sup> many false prophets are gone out into the world. <sup>2</sup> Herein know ye the Spirit

a Jer. xxix. 8.  
 Malt. xxiv. 4.  
 b 1 Cor. xiv. 29.  
 1 Thess. v. 21.  
 Rev. ii. 2.  
 c Matt. xxiv. 5.  
 24. Acts xx.  
 30. 1 Tim.  
 iv. 1. 2 Pet.  
 ii. 1. ch. ii.  
 18. 2 John  
 7.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

IV. <sup>1</sup> Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. <sup>2</sup> Hereby know

section, ch. iv. 1-6, which is parenthetical, of the discerning of true and false spirits, and after which the main subject of brotherly love is resumed again. And in this we (all the children of God; not, as the Roman-Catholic expositors, the Apostles, or the apostolic church, only) know that He abideth in us, from (or by —out of the fact) the Spirit which He gave us (not, *hath given*, as A. V. The giving here took place at a certain time, by a definite act, viz. on the day of Pentecost, when the Father bestowed the Holy Spirit on the Church. And this word gave is one sign that the whole is to be referred to the Father: seeing that our Lord says, “*I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, the Spirit of Truth,*” John xiv. 16. This indwelling Spirit of God is to the child of God the spring and source of his spiritual life, the sure token of his sonship, Rom. viii. 14, 15, Gal. iv. 6, and of his union with God in Christ).

CHAP. IV. 1-6.] *Warning against, and criteria whereby to distinguish, false teaching.* This passage takes up again, with reference to this portion of the Epistle, the similar warning given in the former portion, ch. ii. 18 ff. It is intimately connected with what has immediately preceded. By brotherly love we are to know that we are of the truth, iii. 19,—and the token that He abideth in us is to be the Spirit which He gave us. This Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, it becomes then all-important for us to be able to distinguish, and not to be led astray by any false spirits pretending to his character and office. Such false spirits there are, which are not of God, but of the world, and which make up that spirit of antichrist, of which prophecy had already spoken.

1.] Beloved (so ver. 7, and ch. iii. 2, 21, marking a transition to a subject on which the Apostle affectionately bespeaks their earnest attention), believe not every spirit (this expression, as also, “*the spirits,*” indicating plurality of spirits, are to be

explained by the fact that both the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of error speak by the spirits of men who are their organs. So we have, in reference to prophecy, 1 Cor. xiv. 32, “*The spirits of prophets are subject to prophets.*” By the nature of the testimony of the human spirits, we shall know whether they are of God or not; whether they are organs of the *spirit of truth*, or of the *spirit of error*. It will be observed that this interpretation of “*every spirit,*” and the Apostle’s way of speaking, rest on the assumption of there being One Spirit of Truth, from God, and one spirit of error, from the world; as opposed to all rationalizing interpretations, and also to all figurative understanding of the word. It is not the men themselves, but their spirits as the vehicles of God’s Spirit or the spirit of antichrist, that are in question, but try the spirits (this trying is enjoined not on the church by her prelates, as the Roman-Catholic expositors, but on all believers, as even some of them reluctantly admit: and the test is one of plain matter of fact, of which any one can be judge. The Church by her rulers is the authoritative assessor of the result of this trial in the shape of official adoption or rejection, but only as moved by her component faithful members, according to whose sense those her formularies are drawn, of which her authorities are the exponents) whether they are of God (bear the character of an origin from Him): because (ground for the necessity of this trial) many false-prophets (called “*many antichrists,*” ch. ii. 18: prophets, not as foretelling future things, but as the mouth-pieces of the *spirit* which inspires them. Compare 2 Pet. ii. 1, where the New Test. false teachers are called “*false teachers,*” and compared to the Old Test. “*false prophets*”) are gone forth (viz. from him who sent them: even as Jesus Himself is said, John viii. 42, xiii. 3, xvi. 27, 28, to have come forth from God. Or we may take it as in ch. ii. 19, went out from



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: <sup>3</sup> and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. <sup>4</sup> Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. <sup>5</sup> They are*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

of God: <sup>d</sup> Every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ come in the flesh is of God: <sup>3</sup> and <sup>e</sup> every spirit that confesseth not Jesus [† Christ come in the flesh] is not of God: and this is the [spirit] of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it cometh; and <sup>f</sup> now already is it in the world. <sup>4</sup> <sup>g</sup> Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than <sup>h</sup> he that is in the world. <sup>5</sup> <sup>i</sup> They are of the world:

<sup>d</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 3. ch. v. 1.

<sup>e</sup> ch. ii. 22. 2 John 7.

<sup>f</sup> These words are omitted in the *Alexandrine and Vatican MSS.*, but contained in the *Sinaitic MS.*, and in the *ancient Syriac version.*

<sup>g</sup> 2 Thess. ii. 7. ch. ii. 18, 32. ch. v. 4.

<sup>h</sup> John xii. 31. & xiv. 30. & xvi. 11.

<sup>i</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 12. 1 John iii. 31.

Eph. ii. 2. & vi. 12.

*us*,—from the Church: but the other is more likely) into the world (compare John xvi. 28, which tends to fix the meaning of the words “are gone forth” above).

2, 3 a.] *Test, whereby the spirits are to be tried. In this* (see above, ch. iii. 10, &c.) *ye know* (apprehend, recognize) the Spirit of God (the Holy Spirit, present, inspiring, and working in men’s spirits): Every spirit which confesseth (the action is attributed to the spirit, which really is that of the man by the spirit. The confession is necessarily, from the context here, not the genuine and ascertained agreement of lips and life, but the outward and open profession of faith: see 2 John 7—10, where *bringing this doctrine* is its equivalent) *Jesus Christ come in the flesh* (not equivalent to, as A. V., “that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.” If it were, the confession, or the preaching, would be simply of the fact enounced: whereas in each case it is the PERSON who is the object, or primary predicate: the participle carrying the attributive, or secondary predicate. This is abundantly shewn here, by the adversative clause, where it is simply “not confessing Jesus.” The confession required is, “Jesus Christ come in the flesh.” This perfect gives the present endurance of a past historical fact. The words imply the pre-existence and incarnation by their very terms: but they do not assert these doctrines, only the verity of our Lord’s human nature), is of God (has its origin and inspiration from Him by His Spirit). 3 a.] conversely: and every spirit which does not confess (literally, by the form of the clause, “refuseth to confess”) Jesus (in

the complex of all that He is and has become, involved as it is in His having come in the flesh), is not of God.

3 b.] This has been already virtually explained on ch. ii. 18. And this is the [spirit] of antichrist (so nearly all the Commentators supply the ellipsis, and rightly) [of] which ye have heard (the reference is not to ch. ii. 18, but to the course of their Christian instruction in which this had been taught them) that it cometh (the present used as so often of that which is a thing fixed and determined, without any reference to time: “that it should come” of the A. V. is in sense very good, but does not quite suit the perfect “ye have heard,” which seems grammatically in English to require “that it shall come:” “that it must come” would perhaps be better), and now it is in the world already (viz., in the person of these false prophets, who are its organs).

4.] Ye (so we had ye, ch. ii. 24, 27: his readers clearly and sharply set against the antichristian teachers) are of God, little children (thus he ever speaks to his readers, as being children of God, see ch. iii. 1 ff., 13 ff., 19, 24, &c.), and have overcome (there need not be any evading or softening of this perfect: see ch. ii. 14. It is faith outrunning sight: the victory is certain in Him who said, “I have overcome the world,” John xvi. end. The ground of this assurance follows) them (the false prophets, thus identified with antichrist), because greater is He [that is] in you than he [that is] in the world. He [that is] in you is most naturally understood of God, seeing that “ye are of God” preceded; for he who is “of God” has God

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

therefore speak they of the world,  
 and <sup>k</sup> the world heareth them. <sup>6</sup> We  
 are of God: <sup>1</sup> he that knoweth God  
 heareth us; he that is not of God  
 heareth not us. From this we know  
<sup>m</sup> the spirit of truth, and the spirit  
 of error. <sup>7</sup> <sup>n</sup> Beloved, let us love

*of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. <sup>6</sup> We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. <sup>7</sup> Beloved,*

<sup>k</sup> John xv. 19.  
 & xvii. 14.

<sup>1</sup> John viii. 47.  
 & x. 27.  
<sup>1</sup> Cor. xiv. 37.  
<sup>2</sup> Cor. x. 7.

<sup>m</sup> Isa. viii. 20.  
 John xiv. 17.

<sup>n</sup> ch. iii. 10, 11,  
 23.

dwelling in him. Though, as D<sup>ü</sup>sterdieck remarks, it matters not much whether we take it thus, or of the indwelling of God by His Spirit, or of the life of Christ in believers.

he [that is] in the world is the devil, the prince of this world. Having said this, he proceeds in the next verse to identify these false prophets with the world of which he has spoken.

5.] They are of the world (this description is not ethical merely, but betokens the origin and source of that which they are and teach, as "*ye are of God*" did on the other side. That origin and source is the world, unregenerate human nature, ruled over and possessed by the devil, the prince of this world): for this cause they speak of (not concerning, but of, as out of and from; the material of what they say being worldly. Bengel) the world, and the world heareth them (loving as it does its own, who are of it, John xv. 18, from which our verse is mainly taken: see also John viii. 47, xviii. 37).

6.] contrast. We (emphatic, as opposed to them; but who are meant? The Apostles and their companions in the ministry, or all believers? Or again, all teachers of God's truth, the Apostles included? It is hardly likely that the wider meaning has place here, seeing that 1) he has before said "*ye are of God*," and 2) he is here opposing one set of teachers to another. On the other hand, it is not likely that he should confine what is said to the Apostles only: such as are mentioned with praise in 3 John 5-8 would surely be included) are of God (see above): he that knoweth (apprehendeth: hath any faculty for the knowledge of. The Apostle sets him that knoweth God in the place of him that is of God, as belonging more immediately to the matter in hand, the hearing, and receiving more knowledge. This knowing God, the apprehension and recognition of God, is the peculiar property of God's children, not any natural faculty in which one unrenewed man differs from another)

God heareth us: he who is not of God doth not hear us (here we must remember carefully, what the context is, and what its purpose. The Apostle is giving a test to distinguish, not the children of God from those who are not children of God, but the spirit of truth from the spirit of error, as is clear from the words following. And this he does by saying that in the case of the teachers of the truth, they are heard and received by those who apprehend God, but refused by those who are not of God. It is evident then that these two terms here, "*he that knoweth God*," and "*he that is not of God*," represent two patent matters of fact,—two classes open and patent to all: one of them identical with the world above: the other consisting of those of whom it is said above, "*Ye know the Father*". . . "*ye know Him that is from the beginning*," ch. ii. 13, 14. How these two classes are what they are, it is not the purpose of this passage to set forth, nor need we here enquire: we have elsewhere tests to distinguish them, ch. iii. 9, 10, and have there gone into that other question. We have a striking parallel, in fact the key to these words, in the saying of our Lord to Pilate, John xviii. 37). From this (viz., not the whole foregoing train of circumstances; nor, those tests proposed in vv. 2, 3; but the facts set forth in vv. 5, 6: the reception of the false teachers by the world: the reception of the true teachers by those that apprehend God, and their rejection by those who are not of God. The same point is touched by our Lord in John x. 8, "*but the sheep did not hear them*") we know (in this unemphatic first person the Apostle includes his readers: we, all God's children. know, distinguish, recognize, as so often) the Spirit of truth (the Spirit that cometh of God and teacheth truth) and the spirit of error (the spirit that cometh of the devil, teaching lies and seducing men into error: see ch. i. 8, ii. 26).

7—21.] The Apostle again takes up his

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. <sup>8</sup> He that loveth not God; for God is love. <sup>9</sup> In this was mani-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

one another, because love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. <sup>8</sup> He that loveth not never <sup>o</sup> knew God; be- <sup>o</sup> cause <sup>p</sup> God is love. <sup>9</sup> <sup>q</sup> In this the

<sup>o</sup> ch. ii. 4. &  
iii. 6.  
<sup>p</sup> ver. 16.  
<sup>q</sup> John iii. 16.  
Rom. v. 8. &  
viii. 32. ch. ii. 10.

exhortations to brotherly love, but this time in nearer and deeper connexion with our birth from God, and knowledge of Him who is Himself Love, vv. 7, 8. This last fact he proves by what God has done for us in and by His Son, vv. 9—16: and establishes the necessary connexion between love to God and love to man, vv. 17—21.

The passage is in connexion with what went before, but by links at first sight not very apparent. The great theme of the whole was enounced ch. ii. 29. The consideration of that has passed into the consideration of that righteousness in its highest and purest form of love, which has been recommended, and grounded on His love to us, in ch. iii. 11—18, where the testimony of our hearts came in, and was explained—the great test of His presence in us being the gift of His Spirit, iii. ult. Then from the necessity of distinguishing and being sure of that His Spirit, have been inserted the foregoing tests and cautions respecting truth and error. And now he returns to the main subject. The *knoweth God, is* and *hath been begotten of God*, the taking up again of God's love to us in Christ at ver. 9 from ch. iii. 16, the reiteration of the testimony of the Spirit in ver. 13, all serve to shew that we are reading no collection of spiritual apophthegms, but a close and connected argument, though not in an ordinary style.

7, 8.] Beloved (as before, marks the fervency and affection of the Apostle turning to his readers with another solemn exhortation. Here the word is especially appropriate, seeing that his own heart is full of that love which he is enjoining), **let us love one another: because** (he at once rests the exhortation on the deepest ground) **love** (abstract, in the widest sense, as the following words shew) **is from God** (has its origin and source in God: He is the well-spring and centre of all love); **and every one that loveth** (there is no need to supply an object after **loveth**, as God is supplied in the Alexandrine MS., and "*his brother*" in some later versions: indeed to do so would be to narrow the general sense of the Apostle's saying: all love is

from God: every one that loveth, taking the word of course in its pure ideal sense in which the assertion follows from the former), **hath been begotten of God** (has truly received within him that new spiritual life which is of God: see note on ch. ii. 29), **and knoweth** (in his daily walk and habit, recognizes and is acquainted with God: by virtue of that his divine birth and life) **God:**

8.] (*Contrast*, but with some remarkable variations) **he that loveth not** (general, as before: no object: he that hath not love in him) **hath never known God** (hath not once known: has never had in him even the beginnings of knowledge of God. So that the past tense makes a far stronger contrast than the present, "*knoweth not*," would. That is excluded, and much more); **because** (reason why he who loveth not can never have known God) **God is love** (love is the very essence, not merely an attribute, of God. It is co-essential with Him: He is all love, love is all of Him: he who has not love, has not God. It is not the place here to enter on the theological import of this weighty and wonderful sentence. It will be found set forth in the first of my Sermons on Divine Love, Quebec Chapel Sermons, vol. iii. But it may be necessary to put in a caution against all inadequate and shallow explanations of the saying: such as that of Grotius (after Socinus), "*God is full of love:*" Benson, "*God is the most benevolent of all beings: full of love to all His creatures:*" Whitby, "*The Apostle intends not to express what God is in his essence . . . but what He is in demonstration of Himself, shewing great philanthropy to men:*" Hammond, "*God is made up of love and kindness to mankind:*" Calvin, "*This it is which is His nature, to love men: . . . he is not speaking of God's essence, but merely teaching what He is felt to be by us,*" &c. &c. In all these,—in the two last by supplying an object, "*men*," which is not in the sacred text, the whole force of the axiom as it stands in the Apostle's argument is lost. Unless he is speaking of the essen-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

love of God was manifested in regard to us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world, <sup>r</sup> that we might live through him. <sup>s</sup> <sup>10</sup> Herein is love, <sup>s</sup> not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son <sup>t</sup> as a propitiation for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, <sup>u</sup> if God so loved

r ch. v. 11.

s John xv. 16.  
Rom. v. 8,  
19. Titus  
iii. 4.

t ch. ii. 2.

u Matt. xviii.  
33. John  
xv. 12, 13. ch. iii. 16.

tial being of God, of what relevance is it, to say that he that loveth not never knew God, because "God is love?" Put for these last words, "God is loving," and we get at once a fallacy: He that loveth not never knew what love is: God is loving: but what would follow? that in as far as God is loving, he never knew Him: but he may have known Him in as far as He is just, or powerful. But take the proposition, **God is love**, of God's essential being,—as a strict definition of God, and the argumentation will be strict: He that loveth not never knew love: God is love [the terms are co-essential and co-extensive]; therefore he who loveth not never knew God).

9, 10.] *Proof of this* as far as we are concerned, in God's sending His Son to save us. In this (viz. which follows) the love of God was manifested in regard to us (these words, in regard to us, must be taken with the verb, not with the love of God. Many have thus wrongly connected it, and in consequence have been compelled to distort the in regard to into "towards;" so Luther, &c., and the A. V. Connected then with the verb, it must not be taken as equivalent to "towards," but as "in," i. e. "in the matter of," in regard of: see ver. 16 below: the manifestation not being made to us as its spectators, but in our persons and cases, as its "material." us, i. e. believers in general), that God hath sent (perfect tense. The manifestation is regarded as one act, done implicitly when God sent His Son: but the sending is regarded in its present abiding effects, which have changed all things since it took place) His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him (no words can be plainer than these, and need less explanation to any one acquainted with St. John. The endeavours of the old rationalists, Socinus, Grotius, &c., to escape from the assertion of Christ's pre-existence, by substituting

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

fested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, if

for into the world, "to the world," for only begotten, "dearly beloved," &c., may be seen in Dusterdieck. He well remarks, "Such expositors may naturally be expected to give an answer to the question, how a Christ so understood could be our life [ver. 9], our atonement [ver. 10], or our salvation [ver. 14]." The two emphatic words in the sentence are only-begotten and live. This was the proof, that SUCH a son of God was sent, that we might LIVE). <sup>10</sup>] *The same proof* particularized in its highest and noblest point, the atonement: and at the same time this brought out, that the love manifested by it was all on God's side, none on ours: was love to us when we were enemies, Rom. v. 8, and therefore all the greater. Ch. iii. 16 is very similar: except that there it is Christ's personal love to us: here the Father's, in sending His Son. In this is love ("in this case," in this matter," "herein," is, 'is found,' 'exists,' Love; in the abstract. This interpretation is necessary, on account of the disjunction which follows. If the word love meant, the love of God just spoken of, then it would be irrelevant to subjoin that this love was not our love to Him but His to us), not that we loved God (the verb refers to an indefinite time past—no act of love of ours to God at any time done furnishes this example of love, but an act of His towards us. It is not the nature of our love to God, as contrasted with His to us, of which the clause treats, but the non-existence of the one love as set against the historical manifestation of the other. Again that "He loved us, though we did not love Him," is so far in the words as it is given by the context [see above], but is not the meaning of the words themselves), but that He loved us (referring again to an act of Love, which is now specified), and (prove this love in that He) sent His Son a propitiation (see on ch. ii. 2) for (see *ibid.*) our sins (His death being therein



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.*  
 12 *No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.* 13 *Hereby*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

us, we also ought to love one another. 12 God hath <sup>x</sup> no one beheld <sup>x</sup> at any time. If we love one another, God abideth in us, and <sup>y</sup> the love of Him is perfected in us. 13 <sup>z</sup> Herein know we that we abide

<sup>x</sup> John i. 18.  
 1 Tim. vi. 16.  
 ver. 20.

<sup>y</sup> ch. ii. 5.  
 ver. 18.

<sup>z</sup> John xiv. 20.  
 ch. iii. 24.

implied, by which that propitiation was wrought, Eph. i. 7: and that, God's giving His own Son to death for us, being the greatest and crowning act of divine Love).

11.] *Application to ourselves of this example*, as a motive to brotherly love. Strictly parallel with the latter part of ch. iii. 16, where the same ethical inference is drawn with regard to the example of Christ Himself. **Beloved** (the Apostle's usual introduction of a fervent and solemn address, vv. 1, 7, al.), if (this if with an indicative, stating a fact, is very difficult to give exactly in English. It is not on the one hand any expression of uncertainty: but neither on the other is it exactly equivalent to "*since*," or "*seeing that*." We may call it a certainty put in the shape of a doubt, that the hearer's mind may grasp the certainty for itself, not take it from the speaker. "If [it be true that] . . ." is perhaps the nearest English filling up of the sense) **God so loved us** (so namely as detailed in ver. 10, which, and which alone, is pointed at), **we also ought to love one another** (the also does not belong to the **ought**, but purely to the **we**,—"we, on our side." But on what does the obligation, asserted in **we ought**, rest? Clearly, on that relation to God and one another implied by being children of God, which runs through all this section of the Epistle. If we are of God, that love which is in Him, and which He is, will be in us, will make us like Him, causing us to love those who are begotten of Him, ch. v. 1, 2. And of this love, our apprehension of His Love to us will be the motive and the measure).

12.] **God hath no one ever beheld** (what is the connexion of these words, so suddenly and startlingly introduced? It is evident that ver. 12 is connected with ver. 11, by the words "*if we love one another*," taking up again "*we ought to love one another*." But it is also evident that it is connected with ver. 13 by the words "*abideth in us*," &c. And it is further plain, that these words, **God hath no one ever beheld**, must have some close reference to *loving one*

*another*, seeing that they stand between those words in ver. 11, and the resumption of them in ver. 12.

Now on examining ver. 11, we find an unexpected substitution, "*if God so loved us, we also ought to love [not God, but] one another*." Why so? Here, ver. 20 will guide us to an answer, if rightly used. Not, because we *cannot* love God whom we have not seen: but because the exponents of God, whom we have not seen, are our brethren, whom we do see. And the Apostle, in substituting "*one another*," does not for a moment drop or set aside the higher, "*God*," but in fact leads up to it, by putting its lower and visible objects before us. And then ver. 12 comes in as an explanation, an apology as it were, for this substitution, in the following manner: *Love one another*, I say: for the love to God, which is our duty, is love towards one whom we have never seen, and cannot exist in us [as ver. 20] unless by and with its lower degrees as manifested towards our brethren whom we have seen. By our love to them are we to know, how far we have love to Him: if that be present, He dwelleth in us, and "*the love of Him is perfected in us*." And thus [see below] the way is prepared for vv. 15, 16, which take up and bring to a conclusion the reasoning: **if we love one another, God abideth in us** (for the reason already stated in ver. 8, and restated in immediate connexion with this very matter in ver. 16, that God is Love, and every one that loveth is born of God, knows God, abides in God and God in him), **and** (simply the copula) **the love of Him** (as in ch. ii. 5, where we had the same expression, *our love to Him*, not, as some explain it, *His love to us*. This is evident, not merely from ii. 5, but from the context here: see it explained above, and remember that it is our love to God which is here the subject, as evinced by our love to our brethren. This is further shewn by the recurrence of the same expression in ver. 17, "*Herein is love perfected with us*," and ver. 18, "*he that feareth is not made perfect in love*." And so the majority of Commentators) is



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup> And <sup>a</sup> we have beheld and do testify that <sup>b</sup> the Father hath sent the Son as Saviour of the world. <sup>15</sup> <sup>c</sup> Whosoever confesseth that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him, and he in God. <sup>16</sup> And we have

<sup>a</sup> John i. 14. ch. i. 1, 2.

<sup>b</sup> John iii. 17.

<sup>c</sup> Rom. x. 9. ch. v. 1, 5.

perfected (see note ch. ii. 5. Here, as there, it signifies, has reached its full maturity: the *loving one another* being the token and measure of it) in us (keep the primary and obvious sense, "*in us*," "*within us*," as in ch. ii. 5).

13.] In this we know that we are abiding in Him and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit (nearly repeated from ch. iii. 24. But why introduced here? In the former verse, the *fact* of His abiding in us was assured to us, if we love one another. Of this fact, when thus loving, we need a token. Him we cannot see: has He given us any testimony of His presence in us? He has given us such a testimony, in making us partakers of His Holy Spirit. This fact it is to which the Apostle here calls our attention, as proving not the external fact of the sending of the Son [ver. 14], but one within ourselves,—the indwelling of God in us, and our abiding in Him. It is obvious that all inferences from the expression "*given us of His Spirit*" against the personality of the Holy Ghost are quite beside the purpose: compare Acts ii. 17 with Joel iii. 1. We each have the indwelling of one and the same personal Spirit, but each according to our measure, 1 Cor. xii. 4, 11. One only had the Spirit without measure, in all His fullness: even Christ; John iii. 34. And the presence of the Holy Spirit is most aptly adduced here where love is in question, His first fruit being love, and His presence being tested by His fruits).

14, 15, 16.] The connexion seems to be this: the inward evidence of God's abiding in us and we in Him, is, the gift of His Spirit. But this is not the only evidence nor the only test which we have. This internal evidence is accompanied by, nay, is itself made possible [see ver. 19] by, our recognition of the Father's love in sending His Son as our Saviour: which last is a fact, testified by human evidence. This

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup> And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. <sup>15</sup> Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. <sup>16</sup> And we

recognition of God's love is a condition of abiding in Him and He in us: in a word, is the *abiding in love*, which is equivalent to abiding in Him. And we (this we, emphatic, brings up in sharp relief the apostolic body, whom Christ appointed His witnesses, John xv. 27, Acts i. 8. The assertion is of the same kind as that in ch. i. 1) have beheld (with our eyes: the same word, and in the same sense, as in John i. 32) and do testify that the Father hath sent (do testify, not merely to the historical fact as a thing past, but to its abiding influence as implied by the words, "*Saviour of the world*" below: that the Father sent the Son, and that the Son is the Saviour of the world) the Son (better here than "*His Son*:" the Father and the Son are here used as theological terms) as Saviour of the world (the world here, as in ch. ii. 2, John iii. 16, in its widest sense: no evasion of this sense, such as the "*elect in all nations*," is to be endured). 15.] And

recognition of this fact is a condition and proof of the life of God. Whosoever confesseth (the same remark holds good of this confessing, as before with regard to denying, ch. ii. 23: viz., that we must not bring into it more than the Apostle intends by it: it is not the "*confession of the life*" which is here spoken of, but that of the lips only. Of course it would be self-evident that this is taken by the Apostle as ruling the life; but simply as a matter of course. He speaks of the ideal realized) that Jesus is the Son of God (i. e. receives the testimony in the last verse as true), God abideth in him, and he in God. 16.] a) And we (not now the apostolic body only, but communicative; the Apostle and his readers. This is evident and necessary, because on the other view the words "*in regard to us*," which follow, interpreted as they must necessarily be of the *same persons*, would fit on awkwardly to the repeated general proposition with which the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. <sup>17</sup> Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. <sup>18</sup> There is no fear

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

known and have believed the love that God hath in regard to us. <sup>d</sup> God is love; and <sup>e</sup> he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God in him. <sup>17</sup> Herein is love made perfect with us, that <sup>f</sup> we have boldness in the day of judgment: <sup>g</sup> because even as he is, so are we in this world. <sup>18</sup> Fear existeth not in love;

<sup>d</sup> ver. 8.  
<sup>e</sup> ver. 12.  
<sup>ch.</sup> iii. 24.

<sup>f</sup> James ii. 13.  
<sup>ch.</sup> ii. 28.  
& iii. 19, 21.  
<sup>g</sup> ch. iii. 3.

verse concludes) **have known and have believed** (the two roots which lie at the ground of **confession, knowledge and faith**, are in St. John's language most intimately connected. "True faith is, according to St. John, a faith of knowledge and experience: true knowledge is a knowledge of faith." Lücke. See John vi. 69) **the love which God hath in regard to us** (literally in us, in our case, as above, ver. 9: not "towards us," as Beza [and A. V.], Luther, &c.). **b) God is Love, and he that abideth in love abideth in God and God [abideth] in him** (this is the solemn and formal restatement of that which has been the ground-tone of the whole since ver. 7. And here, as there, *love* is in its widest abstract sense. Its two principal manifestations are, love to God, and love to one another: but this saying is of Love absolute).

17, 18.] These verses, which are parallel with ch. iii. 19—21, set forth the confidence with which perfect love shall endow the believer in the great day of judgment. **Herein is love perfected with us** (for the meaning of **herein**, see below. **Love**, not, as Luther and others, *God's love to us*: this is forbidden by the whole context: our verse is introduced by "*he that abideth in love*," and continued by "*there is no fear in love*:" it is love dwelling and advancing to perfection in us. And again, not love to God merely, nor love to our brethren merely; these are concrete manifestations of it: but love itself in the abstract—the principle of love, as throughout this passage. This sense of *love* will point out that of **with us**, which belongs not to the word *love*, but to the verb, as in ver. 12. Love is considered as planted in us; its degrees of increase take place **with us**—not merely "*chez nous*," in us, but as *concerned with us*; in a sense somewhat similar to that in "*magnified His mercy with her*," Luke i. 58.

See 2 John 2, where however the idea of *dwelling with* is more brought out than here), that **we have confidence in the day of judgment** (that gives not the purpose of the *perfecting of love*, but the explanation of "*herein*:" "in this love is perfected in us, viz. that we, &c.") The confidence which we shall have in that day, and which we have even now by anticipation of that day, is the perfection of our love; grounded on the consideration [*because even as He is, &c.*] which follows: casting out fear, which cannot consist with perfect love, ver. 18); **because even as He** (Christ, see below) **is, we also are in this world** (this is the reason or ground of our confidence: that we, as we now are in the world, are like Christ: and in the background lies the thought, He will not, in that day, condemn those who are like Himself. In these words, the sense must be gained by keeping strictly to the tenses and grammatical construction: not "*as He was* in the world," as some, changing the tense. And when we have adhered to tense and grammar, wherein is the likeness spoken of to be found? Clearly, by what has been above said, not in our trials and persecutions. Nor by our being not of the world as He is not of the world: nor in that we, as sons of adoption through Him, are beloved of God, even as He is beloved: nor, in that we live in Love, as He lives in Love: but in that we are *righteous as He is righteous*, ch. ii. 29, iii. 3 ff., 10, 22: this being evinced by our abiding in Love. St. John does not say that Love is perfected in confidence in us, because we resemble Christ in Love; but he refers to the fundamental truth on which our Love itself rests, and says; because we are absolutely like Christ, because we are in Christ Himself, because He lives in us, for without this there cannot be likeness to Him; in a word, because we are, in that communion with Christ which we are assured of by our

AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

nay, perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment: and he that feareth <sup>h</sup> is not made perfect in love. <sup>19</sup> We love†, because he first loved us. <sup>20</sup> <sup>i</sup> If any say, I love

h ver. 12.

† him is omitted by the Alexandrine and Vatican

MSS.: the Sinaitic has God instead of it. This variety in the authorities which insert it, shews that the original text did not contain it. i ch. ii. 4. & iii. 17.

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. <sup>19</sup> We love him because he first loved us. <sup>20</sup> If a man say,

likeness to Him in righteousness, children of God, therefore our love brings with it also full confidence. Essentially, the reason here rendered for our confidence in the day of judgment is the same as that given ch. iii. 21 f. for another kind of confidence, viz., that we keep His commandments. This also betokens the righteousness of which Christ is the essential exemplar, and which is a necessary attribute of those who through Christ are children of God.)

18.] Confidence in (or as understood, as to) that terrible day presupposes the absence of fear: and this casting out of fear is the very work of love, which in its perfect state cannot coexist with fear.—Fear (abstract and general) existeth not in love (abstract and general also, as in ver. 17: not “God’s love to us;” nor “*brotherly love*”), nay perfect (see on ver. 17) love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment (see below): but he that feareth hath not been perfected in [his] love. The points here to be noticed are, 1) the emphatic existeth not, which is better rendered as above, than “there is no fear in love,” in order to keep fear, which is the subject in the Greek, also the subject in the English: 2) nay, or “but:”

which is not here the mere adversative after a negative clause, in which case it would refer to something in which fear is, e. g. “*fear existeth not in love, but existeth in hatred:*” but it is the stronger adversative, implying “nay far otherwise:” so far from it, that . . . 3) the argument, which is, a) that nothing having torment can consist with perfect love: b) that fear is in us by nature, and needs casting out in order to its absence. 4) the meaning of hath torment. Does torment mean merely pain, or pain as the result of punishment? This last is certainly the sense, both from the usage of the word, and from the context, in which the day of judgment is before us. Fear, by anticipating punishment, has it even now; bears about a foretaste of it and so partakes of it.

5) the last clause, “he that feareth is not made perfect in love,” is intimately

connected with what follows [see on ver. 14] as well as with what went before. The and [in the original, but: see rendering above] is adversative to the whole preceding sentence, and mainly to the idea of perfect love therein expressed. As regards the absence of fear from the love of the Christian believer, it has been well observed by Ecumenius, that there are two kinds of godly fear, one which afflicts men with a sense of their evil deeds and dread of God’s anger, and which is not abiding: and the other, of which it is said, “The fear of the Lord is clean, and endureth for ever,” Ps. xix., and which is free from this kind of terror. And Bengel says in his brief pointed manner, “The condition of men is various: without fear and love alike: with fear and without love: with fear and love: without fear and with love.”

19.] I am sorry to be obliged here to differ from the best modern Commentators, and some of the older ones, in holding firmly that we love, indicative, is right, and not “let us love,” imperative [either of which would satisfy the original word]. This I do not merely on account of the expressed and emphatic we, though that would be a strong point in the absence of a stronger, but on account of the context, which appears to me to be broken by the imperative. He that feareth is not perfect in love. Our love [abstract, not specified whether to God or our brother] is brought about by, conditioned by, depends upon, His love to us first; it is only a sense of that which can bring about our love: and if so, then from the very nature of things it is void of terror, and full of confidence, as springing out of a sense of His love to us. Nor only so: our being new begotten in love is not only the effect of a sense of His past love, but is the effect of that love itself: We (emphatic—one side of the antithesis) love (most Commentators supply “Him” or “one another,” but unnecessarily. It is of all love that he is speaking; of love in its root and ideal), because He (God: see the parallel, ver. 10) first loved us (viz. in the sending of His Son).

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? <sup>21</sup> And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.*

*V. <sup>1</sup> Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

God, and hate his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot † love God <sup>k</sup> whom he hath not seen †. <sup>21</sup> And <sup>1</sup> this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

V. <sup>1</sup> Every one that <sup>a</sup> believeth that <sup>b</sup> Jesus is the Christ hath been <sup>c</sup> begotten of God: <sup>d</sup> and every one

† So our two oldest MSS. k ver. 12. † So our two old MSS. 1 Matt. xxii. 37, 39. John xiii. 34. & xv. 12. ch. iii. 23.

a John I. 12.

b ch. ii. 22, 23. & iv. 2, 15. c John I. 13. d John xv. 23.

20.] The connexion is most close: and the error great of those who have made a new section begin here. This *love* is universal, necessarily manifested in *both* of the two great departments of its exercise. Love, living and working in the heart as a principle, will fix first upon objects at hand and seen: those objects being natural objects for it to fix on. How then can a man love God, the highest object of love, who is removed from his sight, and at the same time refuse to love his brother, bearing the mark of a child of God, before his eyes from day to day? Put in a brief form, the argument, as connected with the last verse, is this: His love has begotten *us* anew in love: in this *us* are included our brethren, objects of our daily sight: if therefore we do not love them, we do not love Him. If any say ("have said;" i. e. at any time: the saying once, rather than the habit, is the hypothesis), **I love God, and hate** (present tense, of habit) **his brother, he is a liar:** for (here again the argument needs supplying from our common sense, which tells us that sight is an incentive towards love) **he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen** (perfect tense, implying,—and continues to feel the influence of that sight. We do not say "I have seen him" of the dead, but of the living only), **cannot love God whom he hath not seen** (St. John does not say that there is no love without sight; nor that we love all we see better than any thing we do not see: his argument rests on a deeper and truer position: viz. on that assumed in the term **his brother**, which carries with it the consideration that he of whom it is said is begotten of God. Both terms, **his brother**, and **God**, are used within the limits of the Christian life, of which that is true, which is unfolded ch. v. 1, that *this brother*, as begotten of God, is a ne-

cessary object of love to one that loves Him that begat him. *Here*, a lower step of the same argument is taken; but without this great truth, lying beneath the word *brother*, it would carry no conviction with it).

21.] And besides this argument from common sense, there is another most powerful one, which the Apostle here adds: "How lovest thou Him, whose commandment thou hatest?" as Augustine says. **And this commandment we have from Him** (God: not, Christ: see below), **that he who loveth God, love also his brother** (where have we this commandment? In the great summary of the law, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, . . . and thy neighbour as thyself," so often cited by our Lord: see Matt. xvii. 37—39).

CHAP. V. 1.] And who is our brother? and why does this name carry with it such an obligation to love? These questions, in closest connexion with the last verse, the Apostle answers in this. **Every one that believeth that Jesus is the Christ hath been begotten of God** (to whom do these words apply? from what follows, in which the verb **hath been** [or, **is**] **begotten** is taken up by **him that is begotten**, to the brother whom we are to love as a necessary accompaniment of our loving God. But most Commentators assume that it is of *ourselves* that this is said: *our* birth of God depends on and is in closest union with our faith, ch. iii. 23. Then the connexion between this and the following clause must be made by filling up an ellipsis, "and if begotten of God we love God." But this is far-fetched; and, as has been above shewn implicitly, alien from the context, the object of which is to point out who those are whom we are bound to love, if we love God. Then having made this predication

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. <sup>2</sup> Herein we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and do his commandments. <sup>3 e</sup> For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And <sup>f</sup> his commandments are not grievous, <sup>4</sup> because <sup>g</sup> all that is begotten of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that hath overcome the

e John xiv. 15.  
21, 23. &  
xv. 10.  
2 John 6.

f Micah vi. 8.  
Matt. xi. 30.

g John xvi. 33.  
ch. iii. 9. &  
iv. 4.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. <sup>2</sup> By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. <sup>3</sup> For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. <sup>4</sup> For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that over-

of all the children of God, "every one that believeth, &c.," he, as so frequently, takes it up again below, ver. 4, with a more general reference, and dwells on our faith as the principle which overcomes the world: see there): and every one who loveth him that begat (these words take up again the former, "if any say, I love God," ch. iv. 20), loveth also him that is begotten of him (viz. the brother of whom the former clause spoke: not, as Augustine and others, Christ, the Son of God. As Calvin says, "Under this singular number he designates all the faithful. It is an argument drawn from the common order of nature").

2.] And indeed so inseparable are the two, that as before, iv. 20, our love to our brethren was made a sign and necessary condition of our love to God, so conversely, our love to God, ascertained by our keeping His commandments, is itself the measure of our love to the children of God. Either of the two being found to be present, the presence of the other follows. In this we know that we love the children of God (this, the children of God, takes up again, "him that is begotten of him" of the preceding verse), when (indefinite; "in every case where") we love God, and do His commandments (this adjunct is made, as the following verse shews, in order to introduce an equivalent to *loving God*, by which its presence may be judged).

3.] For (explaining the connexion of the two preceding clauses) the love of God is this (consists in this), that (explanatory: what he means by this) we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not grievous (the reason, why they are not grievous, is given in the next verse. Almost all the Commentators refer to Matt. xi. 36, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

This declaration, that His commandments are not grievous, has, as did ch. iii. 9, furnished some of the Roman-Catholic Commentators with an opportunity of characterizing very severely the Protestant position, that none can keep God's commandments. But here, as there, the reply is obvious and easy. The course of the Apostle's argument here, as introduced in the next verse by *because*, substantiates this fact, that His commandments are not grievous, by shewing that all who are born of God are standing in and upon the victory which their faith has obtained over the world. In this victorious state, and in as far as they have advanced into it, in other words in proportion as the divine life is developed and dominant in them, do they find those commandments not grievous. If this state, in its ideality, were realized in them, there would be no difficulty for them in God's commandments: it is because, and in so far as, sin is still reigning in their mortal bodies, and their wills are unsubdued to God's will, that any grievousness, any burden, remains in keeping those commandments).

4.] because (reason, why His commandments are not grievous) all that is begotten of God (the neuter is here used as gathering together in one, under the category of "begotten of God," the "we" implied in the last verses) conquereth (of habit: simply predicated of the category, "all that is born of God") the world (the kingdom of evil under its prince the devil, God's adversary. The argument then is this: The commandments of God are not grievous: for, although in keeping them there is ever a conflict, yet that conflict issues in universal victory: the whole mass of the born of God conquer the world: therefore none of us need contemplate failure, or faint



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

cometh the world, even our faith. <sup>5</sup> Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? <sup>6</sup> This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

world, even our faith. <sup>5</sup> Who is he that overcometh the world, but <sup>h</sup> he <sup>h 1 Cor. xv. 57. ch. iv. 15.</sup> that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? <sup>6</sup> This is he that came <sup>i</sup> by <sup>1 John xix. 34.</sup> water and blood, even Jesus Christ;

under his struggle as a hard one): and the victory which [hath] conquered the world is this, our faith (the identification of the victory with the faith which gained it, is a concise and emphatic way of linking the two inseparably together, so that wherever there is faith there is victory. And this is further expressed by the past tense here; by which it is signified that the victory is already won: see ch. ii. 13, iv. 4).

5.] If it be asked, How does our faith overcome the world? this verse furnishes the answer; because it brings us into union with Jesus Christ the Son of God, making us as He is, and partakers of His victory, John xvi. 33. Through this belief we are born again as sons of God; we have Him in us, One greater than he who is in the world, ch. iv. 4. And this conclusion is put in the form of a triumphant question: What other person can do it? Who that believes this, can fail to do it? Who is he that conquereth the world, except he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? By comparing ver. 1 a, we find 1) that "the Christ" there answers to "the Son of God" here; 2) that by the combination of the two verses, we get the proposition of ver. 4 a.

6—21.] THE THIRD AND LAST DIVISION OF THE EPISTLE. This portion falls naturally into two parts: vv. 6—13, and vv. 14—21: the former of which treats of the concluding part of the argument, and the latter forms the close of the Epistle.

6—13.] As in the former portions, our communion with God who is light [i. 5 ff.] was treated, and our birth in righteousness from God who is righteous [ii. 29 ff.], by faith in Jesus the Son of God,—so now we have another most important element of the Christian life set before us: the testimony to it arising from that life itself: *the witness of the spiritual life to its own reality*. This witness rests not on apostolic testimony alone, but on the Holy Spirit, which the believer has in himself [ver. 10], and which is God's testimony respecting His Son [vv. 9, 10], and our assurance that we have eternal life [ver. 13].

There is hardly a passage in the New

Test. which has given rise to more variety of interpretation: certainly none which [on account of the apparent importance of the words interpolated after ver. 7] has been the field of so much critical controversy. Complete accounts of both the exposition and the criticism will be found in the recent monographs on the Epistle: more especially in that of Dusterdieck.

6.] This (viz. the Person spoken of in the last verse; Jesus. This, which is maintained by most Commentators, is denied by Knapp and Huther, who refer this to "the Son of God;" "The Son of God is he, &c.:" making the proposition assert the identity of the Son of God with the historical Jesus, not the converse. This Huther supports on two grounds: 1) that the fact that Jesus came by water and blood needed no proof even to Heretics: 2) that on the ordinary interpretation the following words, "Jesus Christ," become altogether superfluous. But to these it is easily replied, 1) that although the fact might be confessed, that was not confessed to which the fact bore testimony, viz. that Jesus who came in the flesh was the Son of God: 2) that the appositional clause, "Jesus Christ," is by no means superfluous, being only a solemn reassertion of our Lord's Person and Office as testified by these signs.

The main objection to Huther's view is, that, as well stated by Dusterdieck, it makes the coming by water and blood, which, by the context, is evidently in the Apostle's argument, a substantiating consideration, to be merely an exceptional one: "this Son of God is Jesus the Christ, though He came by water and blood." Therefore the other interpretation must stand fast) is he that came by water and blood (came refers not to the Lord's birth in the flesh, but to His open manifestation of himself before the world. See above, on ch. iv. 2.

The preposition *by*, which passes into "in" in the next sentence, is thereby explained to bear its very usual sense of *through* or *by means of*, as said of that which accompanies, as the medium through which, or the element in which. The very same phrases, "*by blood*," and "*in blood*,"

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

not in the water only, but in the  
water and in the blood. <sup>k</sup> And the

John xiv. 17.  
& xv. 26. &  
xvi. 13.  
1 Tim. iii. 16.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*Christ: not by water only  
but by water and blood.  
And it is the Spirit that*

are used of our Lord in Heb. ix. 12, 25, which chapter is the best of all comments on this difficult expression.

by water and blood has been very variously understood. Two canons of interpretation have been laid down by Düsterdieck, and may safely be adopted: 1) "Water" and "blood" must point both to some purely historical facts in the life of our Lord on earth, and to some still present witnesses for Christ: and 2) they must not be interpreted symbolically, but understood of something so real and powerful, as that by them God's testimony is given to believers, and eternal life assured to them. These canons at once exclude all figurative interpretations, such as that of Socinus and his school, in which *water* stands for the purity and innocence of the life and doctrine of Christ, Heb. x. 22, Eph. v. 26, — and *blood* for the death of Christ as His testimony of Himself.

Düsterdieck observes that it is remarkable that the best Roman-Catholic expositor, Estius [whose commentary is unfortunately broken off at this verse], does not, as some have done, interpret *blood* of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, but puts together *water* and *blood*, as Calvin and Luther. So that, as Düsterdieck proceeds to say, the great leaders of the three schools of theology have had the tact to see that which their less skilled followers have missed seeing,—that *blood* cannot by any means be understood of the Lord's Supper, as has been done by many.

The next point which comes before us is to enquire whether at all, or how far, our passage is connected with John xix. 34? It occurs here, because many Commentators have seen in the incident there related a miraculous symbolizing of the two sacraments, and in this passage an allusion to that incident. To deny all such allusion seems against probability. The Apostle could hardly both here and in that place lay such evident stress on the water and blood together, without having in his mind some link connecting this place and that. The idea that we have here nothing more than a reference to the fact of John xix. 34, is against our 2nd canon above: but that John xix. 34 and this refer to the same fundamental truth, is I conceive hardly to be doubted.

It rests now then that we enquire into the meaning of each expression. On the first, *blood*, there cannot surely be much uncertainty. The blood of His Cross must, by all Scripture analogy, be that intended. The pouring out of this blood was the completion of the baptism which He had to be baptized with, Mark x. 28, 29, Luke xii. 50. And if this is so, to what can the term *water* be referred so simply, as to that baptism with water, which inaugurated the Lord's ministry? It might indeed be said, that the baptism which He instituted for His followers, better satisfies the test of our 2nd canon, that viz. of being an abiding testimony in the Christian Church. But to this there lies the objection, that as *blood* signifies something which happened to Christ Himself, so must *water* likewise, at least primarily, whatever permanent testimony such event may have left in the Christian Church. And thus some modern Commentators have taken it; as uniting the historical fact of the Lord's baptism with the ordinance of baptism, grounded on it, and abiding in the Christian Church. Düsterdieck refuses to accept this view, denying that our Lord's baptism was any proof or testimony of His Messiahship, and understanding *water* of the ordinance of baptism only. But surely we are not right in interpreting the words "*He that came by water,*" *He that ordained baptism:* nor in giving the two, *blood* and *water*, an entirely different reference. For his endeavour to escape from this by making the former represent not Christ's death but His blood, applied to us, cannot be accepted, as giving a "non-natural" sense to the words "*he that came by blood*" likewise.

All this being considered, it seems impossible to avoid giving both to *blood* and *water* the combined senses above indicated, and believing that such were before the Apostle's mind. They represent,—the *water*, the baptism of water which the Lord Himself underwent and instituted for His followers,—the *blood*, the baptism of blood which He Himself underwent, and instituted for His followers. And it is equally impossible to sever from these words the historical accompaniments and associations which arise on their mention.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

bear<sup>eth</sup> witness, because the Spirit is truth. <sup>7</sup> For there are three that bear

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

Spirit is that which beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth.

<sup>7</sup> For they that bear witness † are † The words in heaven, the

Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, are omitted by all Greek MSS. (till the 10th century); all the Greek Fathers; all the ancient versions; and most of the Latin Fathers. See note.

The Lord's baptism, of itself, was indeed rather a result than a proof of His Messiahship: but in it, taking St. John's account only, a testimony to His divine Sonship was given, by which the Baptist knew Him to be the Son of God: "*I have seen, and have borne witness, that this is the Son of God,*" are his words, John i. 34; and when that blood was poured from His "riven side," he that saw it again uses the same formula, "*he that hath seen it hath borne witness.*" It cannot be that the word **witness** being thus referred to two definite points of our Lord's life, should not apply to these two, connected as they are with water and blood here mentioned, and associated by St. John himself with the remarkable word **hath borne witness** (ver. 9) in the perfect tense, of an abiding witness in both cases.

But these past facts in the Lord's life are this abiding testimony to us, by virtue of the permanent application to us of their cleansing and atoning power. And thus both our canons are satisfied, which certainly is not the case in D<sup>ü</sup>sterdieck's interpretation, though they were laid down by himself), **Jesus Christ** (see above on this. In all the places where St. John uses this Name, it has a solemn meaning, and is by the emphasis thus thrown on the official designation of our Lord, nearly equivalent to "*Jesus the Christ.*" Compare John i. 17, xvii. 3: 1 John i. 3, 7, ii. 1, iii. 23, iv. 2, v. 20: 2 John 3, 7): **not in the water only, but in the water and in the blood** (in, see above on by. The sense of the two is there shewn to be closely allied, in giving rather the "element in which," by, the medium through which. The definite article before each word shews that they are well-known and solemn ideas. It is inserted not as matter of course, but as giving solemnity.

But why has the Apostle added this sentence? It has been thought that it is to give Christ the preference over Moses, who came only by water (1 Cor. x. 2), and Aaron, who came only by blood (of sacrifice), whereas Christ united both. But this is too far-fetched. Another opinion again regards the words as directed against those who despised the Cross of

Christ (1 Cor. i. 23): but a more definite explanation than this is required. And those can hardly be wrong, who find it in such words as those of the Baptist in John i. 25, "*I baptize with (in) water, but there standeth one among you whom ye know not:*" compare the emphatic repetitions below, ver. 31, "*I came baptizing with (in) water;*" and ver. 33, "*He that sent me to baptize with (in) water.*" The baptism of Jesus was not one of water only, but one of blood,—"*behold the Lamb of God*"—and something more than that which follows in the next clause); **and the Spirit is that which witnesseth, because the Spirit is the truth** (that is, as explained by the next verse, the Spirit is an additional witness, besides those already mentioned to the Messiahship of Jesus, and in that, to the eternal life which God has given us in Him. Some have thought that **because** should be "*that:*" the same Greek word signifying both these. But it is not to the fact that the Spirit is the truth, that the Spirit gives witness: but it is the fact that He is the truth, which makes Him so weighty a witness; which makes the giving of witness so especially His office.

Very various however have been the meanings here given to the **Spirit**. One view understands, the spirit of our Lord, which He when dying commended into His Father's hands. Another, explaining *water and blood* of the two Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, sees in **the Spirit**, in connexion with John xx. 22 ff., a third Sacrament of *absolution*. Others regard it as equivalent to *the spiritual man*, i.e. St. John himself. Others again regard it as equivalent to *God*—and the occasion of the testimony to be the Resurrection, when our Lord rose with Divine power. The Socinian Commentators interpret it of the divine power by which Christ wrought His miracles. But this, as well as Bede's interpretation, that the Spirit which descended on the Lord at His baptism is meant, inasmuch as it testified to His being the true Son of God, fails, in giving no *present abiding* testimony such as the context requires. Others again understand by it the ministry of the word.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

three, <sup>8</sup> the spirit, and the water,  
and the blood: and the three agree

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.* <sup>8</sup> *And there*

Most of these understand the Spirit here and in ver. 8 differently. But nothing can be plainer than that we must not alter the meaning, where the word for binds together the sentences so closely.

The above interpretations failing to give any satisfactory account of the text, we recur to the simple and obvious meaning, *the Holy Spirit*. And it seems fully to satisfy all the requirements of the passage. The Holy Spirit is He, who testifies of Christ [John xv. 26], who glorifies Him, and shews of the things which belong to Him [John xvi. 14]. It is by the possession of Him that we know that we have Christ [ch. iii. 24]. And the following clause, "because the Spirit is the Truth," exactly agrees with this. He is the absolute truth [John xiv. 17, xv. 26], leading into all the truth [John xvi. 13 f.]. And in this consists the all-importance and the infallibility of His witness). 7.] "John here renders a reason why he spoke not of the Spirit only, who has the chief authority in this matter, but also of the water and the blood, because in them also there is no small credit due to testimony, and the ternary number is in case of witnesses the most complete." Grotius. For (that this, and not "because," is the correct English reading, see my Greek Test.) **those who bear witness are three** (the three are considered as living and speaking witnesses; hence we have the masculine form in the original. By being *three*, they fulfil the requirements of the Law as to full testimony: Deut. xvii. 6, xix. 15: Matt. xviii. 16, 2 Cor. xiii. 1), **the Spirit, and the water, and the blood** (now, the Spirit is put first: and not without reason. The Spirit is, of the three, the only living and active witness, properly speaking: besides, the water and the blood are no witnesses without Him, whereas He is independent of them, testifying both in them and out of them), and **the three concur in one** (contribute to one and the same result: viz. the truth that Jesus is the Christ, and that we have life in Him. And this their one testimony is given by the purification in the water of baptism into His name, John iii. 5: by the continual cleansing from all sin which we enjoy in and by His atoning blood: by the in-

ward witness of His Spirit, which He hath given us).

The question of the genuineness of the words read in the received text at the end of ver. 7 is discussed, as far as external grounds are concerned, in the Digest in my Greek Test.; and it may there be seen, that unless pure caprice is to be followed in the criticism of the sacred text, *there is not the shadow of a reason for supposing them genuine*. Even the supposed citations of them in early Latin Fathers have now, on closer examination, disappeared.—Something remains to be said on internal grounds, on which we have full right to enter, now that the other is secured. And on these grounds it must appear, on any fair and unprejudiced consideration, that the words are 1) alien from the context: 2) in themselves incoherent, and betraying another hand than the Apostle's. For 1) the context, as above explained, is employed in setting forth the reality of the substance of the faith which overcomes the world, even of our eternal life in Jesus the Son of God. And this is shewn by a threefold testimony, subsisting in the revelation of the Lord Himself, and subsisting in us His people. And this testimony is the water of baptism, the blood of atonement, the Spirit of truth, concurrent in their witness to the one fact that He is the Son of God, and that we have eternal life in Him. Now *between two steps* of this argument,—not as a mere analogy referred to at its conclusion,—insert the words "for there are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one," and who can fail to see, unless prejudice have blinded his eyes, that the context is disturbed by the introduction of an irrelevant matter? Consequently, Bengel, one of the most strenuous upholders of the words, is obliged tamely to take refuge in the transposition of vv. 7 and 8 (which was perhaps the original form of its insertion in the vulgate), so as to bring into treatment the matter in hand, before the illustration of it is introduced. But even suppose this could be done; what kind of illustration is it? What is it to which our attention is directed? Apparently the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. <sup>9</sup> If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. <sup>10</sup> He that believeth on the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

in one. <sup>9</sup> If we receive <sup>1</sup> the witness <sup>1</sup> John viii. 17, 18. of men, the witness of God is greater: <sup>m</sup> for the witness of God is this, † that <sup>m</sup> Matt. iii. 16, 17. & xvii. 5. he hath borne witness concerning his <sup>†</sup> So all our oldest MSS. Son. <sup>10</sup> He that believeth on the Son

mere fact of the triplicity of testimony: for there is not the remotest analogy between the terms in the one case and those in the other: the very order of them, differing as it does in the two cases, shews this. Is this triplicity a fact worthy of such a comparison? And then, what is the testimony in heaven? Is it borne to men? Certainly not: for God hath no man seen, as He is there: His only-begotten Son hath declared Him to us on earth, where all testimony affecting us must be borne. Is it a testimony to angels? Possibly: but what has this to do with the matter in hand? And then, again, what but an unworthy play on words can it be called, to adduce the fact of **oneness** on the one side, the essential unity of the ever blessed Godhead, and on the other the concurrence in testifying to one fact,—as correspondent to one another? Does not this betray itself as the fancy of a patristic gloss, in the days when such analogies and comparisons were the sport of every theological writer? And 2) the very words betray themselves. “*The Father*” and “*the Word*” are never combined by St. John, but always *the Father* and *the Son*. The very apology of Bengel, “the appellative, *the Word*, is most appropriate to *testimony*,” may serve to shew how utterly weak he must have felt the cause to be.

The best conclusion to the whole subject is found in the remark of Bengel himself on another occasion of the practice reprobated, of which he himself furnishes here so striking an instance: “They exhibit a mischievous zeal in the Lord’s quarrels, who bring themselves to reason thus, ‘This text is convenient for my doctrine and argument; therefore I will constrain myself to believe it genuine, and will obstinately defend it, and all that can be scraped together on its behalf.’ But the Truth needs not false supports, resting much better on itself alone.” As the results of critical enquiry now stand, we

may safely affirm, that no reasonable man, acquainted with the facts, can again defend the genuineness of these words. If any do defend them, it is the charitable conclusion that he speaks in ignorance. The real mischief is, that the ignorant in high places allow themselves to use the strong language of authority, and thus become the chief enemies of truth. A sketch of the principal particulars of the dispute and of the books relating to it is given in Horne’s Introduction, vol. iv. pp. 355—388.

9.] An argument *from the less to the greater*, grounded on the practice of mankind, by which it is shewn that God’s testimony must be by all means believed by us. If **we** (mankind in general; all reasonable men) **receive** (as we *do*: receive with approval; *accept*) **the testimony of men** (generic; the testimony, i. e. in any given case. No special testimony need be thought of, as touching this present case: the proposition is general), **the testimony of God is greater** (supply in the argument, “and therefore much more ought we to receive that.” The testimony of God here spoken of is not any particular testimony, as the prophecies concerning Christ, or the testimony of the Baptist and other eye-witnesses to Him, or the Prophets, the Baptist, Martyrs, and Apostles: it is general, as is the testimony of men with which it is compared. The particular testimony pointed at by the general proposition is introduced in the following words): for (see above at the beginning of ver. 7. Here there is an ellipsis: “and this maxim applies in the case before us, because”) **the testimony of God is this, that He hath borne testimony concerning His Son** (i. e. the testimony of God to which the argument applies is this, the fact that He hath borne testimony to His Son).

10—12.] The perfect tense, “*hath borne witness*,” in ver. 9, shewed that the testimony spoken of is not merely an historical one, such for instance as Matt. iii.



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

of God <sup>n</sup> hath the witness in † him :  
 he that believeth not God <sup>o</sup> hath  
 made him a liar ; because he hath  
 not believed in the witness that God  
 hath borne concerning his Son.  
 11 <sup>p</sup> And this is the witness, that  
 God gave to us eternal life, and  
<sup>q</sup> this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup> <sup>r</sup> He that  
 hath the Son hath the life ; he that  
 hath not the Son of God hath not the  
 life. <sup>13</sup> <sup>s</sup> These things have I writ-

*Son of God hath the witness in himself : he that believeth not God hath made him a liar ; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.*  
<sup>11</sup> *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* <sup>12</sup> *He that hath the Son hath life ; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*  
<sup>13</sup> *These things have I*

17, which God bore witness to, but one abiding and present. And these verses explain to us what that testimony is. **He that believeth in the Son of God hath the testimony** (just spoken of; the testimony of God) in him (i. e. in himself. The two readings do not differ in sense. The object of the divine testimony being, to produce faith in Christ, the Apostle takes him in whom it has wrought this its effect, one who habitually believes in the Son of God, and says of such an one that he possesses the testimony in himself. What it is, he does not plainly say till below, ver. 11. But easily enough here we can synthetically put together and conjecture of what testimony it is that he is speaking: the Spirit by whom we are born again to eternal Life, the water of baptism by which the new birth is brought to pass in us by the power of the Holy Ghost [John iii. 5, Titus iii. 5], the Blood of Jesus by which we have reconciliation with God, and purification from our sins [ch. i. 7, ii. 2], and eternal life [John vi. 53 ff.],—these three all contribute to and make up our faith in Christ, and so compose that testimony, which the Apostle designates in ver. 11 by the shorter term which comprehends them all): **he that believeth not God** (St. John, as so frequently, proceeds to put his proposition in the strongest light by bringing out the opposite to it. The *believing* simply is wholly different from "*believing on*" above. That is the resting trust of faith: this the mere first step of giving credit to a witness. And thus it is tacitly assumed that one who does not believe in the Son of God, gives no credit to God Himself) **hath made Him a liar** (perfect tense, because the state of discredit implies a definite rejection still continuing. On the expression, see ch. i. 10), **because he**

**hath not believed in** (here, not only, hath not credited, though that was the more shameful rejection of God's word: but now the full rejection—the refusal to believe in, cast himself on God's testimony) **the testimony which God hath testified concerning His Son.**

11.] *Wherein this testimony consists. And the testimony* (just spoken of) *is this, that* (consists in this, namely, that . . .) *God gave* (not, as A. V., "*hath given.*" This is of especial importance here, where not the endurance of a state, but the fact of the gift having been once made, is brought out. The present assurance of our possessing this gift follows in the next clause, and in ver. 12) *to us* (not *decreed*, or *promised*, but gave, absolutely) **eternal life, and** (this clause does not depend on "*this is the witness, that . . .*" but ranges with that clause: "*this is the witness, &c. ; and this life is, &c.*") **this life is in His Son** (is in Him essentially [John i. 4, xi. 25, xiv. 6], bodily [Col. ii. 9], energetically [2 Tim. i. 10]). Here again, as ever in this Epistle, we have to guard against the evasive and rationalistic interpretations of the Socinians, that "the reason of our getting eternal life from God is found in Jesus Himself" [so Socinus]: that in is put for "*by,*" and is for "*happens*" [so Grotius].

12.] *Conclusion of the whole argument* from ver. 6: dependent on the last clause of ver. 11, and carrying it on a step further, even to the absolute identity as matter of possession for the believer, of the Son of God, and eternal life. **He that hath the Son, hath the life: he that hath not the Son of God, the life hath he not.** First notice the diction and arrangement, on which Bengel has well remarked, "The verse has two members: in the former of

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. <sup>14</sup> And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

ten unto you †, † that ye may know that ye have eternal life; even to you that believe on the name of the Son of God †. <sup>14</sup> And this is the confidence that we have towards him, that, <sup>u</sup> if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

† So, omitting that believe on the name of the Son of God, all our oldest MSS. † ch. i. 1, 2. † So our two oldest MSS.

<sup>u</sup> ch. iii. 22.

God's is not added, for the faithful know the Son: in the other, it is added, that unbelievers may know how great a thing they lose."

Next, the **having the Son** must not be explained away, with Grotius, by "*keeping the words which the Father committed to the Son,*" nor **having life**, with the same, by "*having a certain right to eternal life.*" The *having the Son* is the possession of Christ by faith, testified by the Spirit, the water, and the blood: and the *having the life* is the actually possessing it, not indeed in its most glorious development, but in all its reality and vitality.

Thirdly, it must be remarked that the question as to whether eternal salvation is altogether confined to those who in the fullest sense have the Son [to the exclusion, e. g., of those who have never heard of Him], does not belong here, but must be entertained on other grounds. See note on 1 Pet. iii. 19.

13.] This verse seems, as John xx. 30 f., like an anticipatory close of the Epistle: and its terms appear to correspond to those used in ch. i. 4. This view is far more probable, than that it should refer only to what has occurred since ver. 6, as ch. ii. 26 to ver. 18 ff. there: or only to vv. 11, 12. Still less likely is it that the concluding portion of the Epistle begins with this verse, as some have thought. **These things wrote I to you that ye may know that ye have eternal life, [to you] that believe in the name of the Son of God** (the two readings come, in the sense, to much the same. If that in the A. V. be followed, then the words "*that ye may believe*" must be interpreted "*that ye may continue to believe*").

14—21.] **CLOSE OF THE EPISTLE.** The link which binds this passage to ver. 13 is the word **confidence**, taken up again from the *knowledge* spoken of in that verse. This *confidence* is the very energizing of our spiritual life: and its most notable and ordinary exercise is in communion with

God in prayer, for ourselves or for our brethren, vv. 14—17. Then vv. 18—20 continue the explanation of the "sin unto death" and the "sin not unto death," by setting forth the state of believers as contrasted with that of the world, and the truth of our eternal life as consisting in this. Then with a pregnant caution, ver. 21, the Apostle closes his Epistle.

14, 15.] *The believer's confidence as shewn in prayer. And the confidence which we have towards Him* (which follows as a matter of immediate inference from the fact of our spiritual life: see ch. iii. 19—21) is this, that if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us (this confidence may be shewn in various ways, including prayer as one, ch. iii. 22. And that one, of prayer, is alone chosen to be insisted on here.

**Him and His will** must by all analogy be referred to the Father, not to the Son, by whom we have access to the Father. See especially ch. iii. 21, 22. The truth that God hears all our prayers, has been explained on ch. iii. 22. The condition here attached, that the request be according to His will, is in fact no limitation within the reality of the Christian life, i. e. in St. John's way of speaking according to the true ideal. For God's will is that to which our glorious Head himself submitted himself, and which rules the whole course of the Christian life for our good and His glory: and he who in prayer or otherwise tends against God's will is thereby, and in so far, transgressing the bounds of his life in God: see James iv. 3. By the continual feeling of submission to His will, joined with continual increase in knowledge of that will, our prayers will be both chastened, and directed aright. If we knew His will thoroughly, and submitted to it heartily, it would be impossible for us to ask any thing, for the spirit or for the body, which He should not hear and perform. And it is this ideal state, as always, which the Apostle has in

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>15</sup>and if we know that he heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of him. <sup>16</sup>If any see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and <sup>x</sup>shall give him life for them that sin not unto death.

<sup>x</sup> Job xlii. 8.  
James v. 14,  
16.

<sup>y</sup> Matt. xii. 31,  
32. Mark iii.  
29. Luke xii.  
10. Heb. vi.  
4, 6, & x. 26.  
<sup>z</sup> Jer. vii. 16.  
& xiv. 11.  
John xvii. 9.

<sup>y</sup> There is a sin unto death: concerning it <sup>z</sup>I do not say that he should make request. <sup>17</sup><sup>a</sup>All un-

a ch. iii. 4.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

<sup>15</sup>and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. <sup>16</sup>If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. <sup>17</sup>All unrighteous-

view. In this view he goes still further in the next verse).

<sup>15</sup>] And if we know that He heareth us whatsoever we ask (i. e. our every petition: the condition is omitted this time, as being supposed to be fulfilled), we know that we have the petitions (i. e. the things which form the subject of the petitions) which we have asked from Him (notice the present, we have, combined with the perfect, we have asked. The perfect reaches through all our past prayers to this moment. All these we have: not one of them is lost: He has heard, He has answered them all: we know that we have them in the truest sense, in possession).

<sup>16, 17</sup>] Join together the confidence concerning prayer just expressed, and the all-essential Christian principle of brotherly love, and we have following as matter of course, the duty, and the practice, of intercession for an erring brother. And of this, with a certain not strictly defined limitation, these verses treat. If any man see (on any occasion: "shall have seen") his brother (as throughout the Epistle, to be taken in the stricter sense: not any neighbour, but his Christian brother, one born of God as he is himself) sinning (this present participle is not merely predicative, but graphic, as describing the 'brother' actually in the act and under the bondage of the sin in question) a sin not unto death (see below), he shall ask (the future conveys not merely a permission to ask, "it shall be lawful for him to ask,"—but a command, taking for granted the thing enjoined as that which is to happen), and shall give him life (viz. the *asker* shall give: not, as many have understood it, God shall give him life, though of course this is so in reality: but the words mean, he, interceding for his brother, shall be the means of bestowing life on him.

This bestowal of life by intercessory prayer, is not to be minutely enquired into, whether it is to be accompanied with fraternal rebuke,—whether it consists in the giving to the sinner a repentant heart, but taken as put by the Apostle, in all its simplicity and breadth. *Life*, viz. the restoration of that divine life from which by any act of sin he was indeed in peril and indeed in process of falling, but his sin was not an actual fall) for them that sin not unto death (the clause takes up and emphatically repeats the hypothesis before made, viz., that the sin of the brother is not unto death. It does so in the plural, because the him before being indefinite, all such cases are now collected in a class: "shall give this life, I repeat, to those who sin not unto death"). There is a sin unto death: concerning it I do not say that he should make request (leaving for the present the great question, I will touch the minor points in this verse. First, it necessarily by the conditions of the context involves what is equivalent to a prohibition. This has been denied by many Commentators. "Ask if thou wilt, but in uncertainty of obtaining," says Cornelius-a-lapide. And it is equally denied, without the same implied meaning being given, by many others: some of these, as Neander, thinking it implied, that prayer may be made, though the obtaining of it will be difficult,—others, as De Wette, that it will be in vain, others, as Huther, that St. John simply says such a case was not within his view in making the above command. And most of even those who have recognized the prohibition, strive to soften it, saying, as e.g. Lyra, that though "we are not to pray for the condemned," yet we may pray for such a sinner, "that he may sin less, and so be less condemned in hell:" or as Bengel, "God willet not that the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

ness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death. <sup>18</sup> We know that whosoever is

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

righteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death. <sup>18</sup> We know

godly should pray in vain, Deut. iii. 26. If therefore one who has committed mortal sin is brought back to life, it is from the mere divine purpose, reserved from us." Calvin indeed holds fast the prohibition in all its strictness, but only in extreme cases: adding, "But, seeing that this happens most rarely, and God, commending the immense riches of His grace, commands us to be merciful after His example: we must not hastily pass upon any man the judgment of eternal death, but rather charity should induce us to hope well of him. But if the desperate impiety of some looks to us hardly short of a pointing it out by the finger of the Lord God, it is not for us to contend with the just judgment of God, or desire to be more merciful than He is."

Certainly this seems, reserving the question as to the nature of the sin, the right view of the words, **I say not**. By an express command in the other case, and then as express an exclusion of this case from that command, nothing short of an implied prohibition can be conveyed.

The second point here relates to the difference between **ask** and **make request**. The *Greek* word represented by the former is more of the petition of the inferior, as of the conquered, or of the guilty: that represented by the latter is more general, of the request of the equal, or of one who has a right. Our Lord never uses the former of His own requests to God, but always the latter. And this difference is of importance here. The **asking** for a sin not unto death is a humble and trusting petition in the direction of God's will, and prompted by brotherly love: the other, the **making request** for a sin unto death, would be, it is implied, an act savouring of presumption—a prescribing to God, in a matter which lies out of the bounds of our brotherly yearning [for notice, the hypothesis that a man sees a brother sin a sin unto death is not adduced in words, because such a sinner would not truly be a brother, but thereby demonstrated never to have deserved that name: see ch. ii. 19], how He shall inflict and withhold His righteous judgments.

And these latter considerations bring us close to the question as to the nature of the sin unto death. It would be impossible to enumerate or even classify the opi-

nions which have been given on the subject. Düsterdieck has devoted many pages to such a classification and discussion. I can do no more than point out the canons of interpretation, and some of the principal divergencies. But before doing so, ver. 17 must come under consideration).

17.] **All unrighteousness is sin** (in the words **all unrighteousness** we have a reminiscence of ch. i. 9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," and also, but not so directly, of ch. iii. 4, which is virtually the converse proposition to this. Here the Apostle seems to say, in explanation of what he has just written, "SIN is a large word, comprehending all unrighteousness whatever: whether of God's children, or of aliens from Him." The thoughts which have been brought into these words,—that *unrighteousness* is a mild word, meant to express that every slight trip of the good Christian falls under the category of sin, and so there may be a sin not unto death,—or, on the other hand, that it is a strong word, as Grotius says, "he calls unrighteousness not every ignorance or sudden fall into sin, but sin committed either with deliberation, or with space given for deliberation,"—or thirdly, as Beza, that "all sins are so far equal, that even the least thought of the least sin deserves eternal death a thousand times over," and "that all sins are of themselves deadly,"—are equally far from the meaning of the words, whose import is, as above, to account for there being a sin not unto death as well as a sin unto death); and there is a sin not unto death (not having death for its issue: within the limit of that *unrighteousness*, from all of which God cleanseth all those who confess their sins, ch. i. 9).

Our first canon of interpretation of the *sin unto death* and the *sin not unto death* is this: that the **death** and the **life** of the passage must correspond. The former cannot be bodily death, while the latter is eternal and spiritual life. This clears away at once all those Commentators who understand the sin unto death to be one for which bodily death is the punishment, either by human law generally, or by sickness inflicted by God; or of which there will be no end till the death of the sinner, which Bede thinks possible, and



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

b 1 Pet. i. 23.  
ch. iii. 9.

that <sup>b</sup> whosoever is begotten of  
God sinneth not; but he that hath

born of God sinneth not;  
but he that is begotten of  
God keepeth himself, and

Lyra adopts. This last is evidently absurd, for how is a man to know whether this will be so or not?

Our *second* canon will be, that this sin unto death being thus a sin leading to eternal death, being no further explained to the readers here, must be presumed as *meant to be understood by what the Evangelist has elsewhere laid down* concerning the possession of life and death. Now we have from him a definition immediately preceding this, in ver. 12. "*He that hath the Son hath life: he that hath not the Son of God, the life hath he not.*" And we may safely say that the words *unto death* here are to be understood as meaning, "involving the loss of *this life* which men have only by union with the Son of God." And this meaning they must have, not by implication only, which would be the case if any obstinate and determined sin were meant, which would be a *sign* of the fact of severance from the life which is in Christ [see ch. iii. 14, 15, where the inference is of this kind], but directly and essentially, i. e. in respect of that very sin which is pointed at by them. Now against this canon are all those interpretations, far too numerous to mention, which make *any* atrocious and obstinate sin to be that intended. It is obvious that our limits are thus confined to *abnegation of Christ*, not as inferred by its fruits otherwise shewn, but as the act of sin itself. And so, with various shades of difference as to the putting forth in detail, most of the best Commentators both ancient and modern.

Our *third* canon will help us to decide, within the above limits, what especial sin is intended. And it is, that by the very analogy of the context, it must be *not a state of sin, but an appreciable act of sin*, seeing that that which is opposed to it *in the same kind*, as being not unto death, is described by "*if any man see his brother sinning, &c.*" So that all interpretations which make it to be a *state* of apostacy, do not reach the matter of detail which is before the Apostle's mind.

In enquiring what this is, we must be guided by the analogy of what St. John says elsewhere. Our state being that of life in Jesus Christ, there are those who have gone out from us, not being of us, ch. ii. 19, who are called "*antichrists*," who not only "have not" Christ, but are Christ's

enemies, denying the Father and the Son [ii. 22], whom we are not even to receive into our houses nor to greet [2 John 10, 11]. These seem to be the persons pointed at here, and this the sin: viz. the denial that Jesus is the Christ, the incarnate Son of God. This alone of all sins bears upon it the stamp of severance from Him who is the Life itself. As the confession of Christ, with the mouth and in the heart, is salvation unto life [Rom. x. 9], so denial of Christ with the mouth and in the heart, is sin unto death. This alone of all the proposed solutions seems to satisfy all the canons above laid down. For in it, the life cast away and the death incurred strictly correspond: it strictly corresponds to what St. John has elsewhere said concerning life and death, and derives its explanation from those other passages, especially from the foregoing ver. 12: and it is an appreciable act of sin, one against which the readers have been before repeatedly cautioned [ch. ii. 18 ff., iv. 1 ff., v. 5, 11, 12]. And further, it is in exact accordance with other passages of Scripture which seem to point at a sin similarly distinguished above others: viz. Matt. xii. 31 ff., and, so far as the circumstances there dealt with allow common ground, with the more ethical passages, Heb. vi. 4 ff., x. 25 ff. In the former case, the Scribes and Pharisees were resisting the Holy Ghost [Acts vii. 51], who was manifesting God in the flesh in the Person and work of Christ. For them the Lord Himself does not pray (Luke xxiii. 34): they knew what they did: they went out from God's people and were not of them: receiving and repudiating the testimony of the Holy Ghost to the Messiahship of Jesus.

18—20.] *Three solemn maxims* of the Epistle regarding sin and the children of God and the world, and our eternal life in Christ, are repeated as a close of the teaching of the Apostle. Ver. 18 seems to be not without reference to what has just been said concerning sin. In actual life, even our brethren, even we ourselves, born of God, shall sin, not unto death, and require brotherly intercession: but in the depth and truth of the Christian life, sin is altogether absent. It is the world, not knowing God, which lies under the power of the wicked one: God's new-begotten children he cannot touch: they are in and



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

that wicked one toucheth him not. <sup>19</sup> And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. <sup>20</sup> And we know that the Son of God

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

been begotten of God, it <sup>c</sup> keepeth him †, and the wicked one toucheth him not. <sup>19</sup> We know that we are of God, and <sup>d</sup> the whole world lieth in the wicked one. <sup>20</sup> Moreover † we

<sup>c</sup> James i. 27.  
<sup>†</sup> So the Vatican MS and the Alexandrine (but in this latter the original scribe has corrected him to himself). The

Sinaitic MS. has himself.

<sup>d</sup> Gal. i. 4.

<sup>†</sup> So our oldest MSS.

they know the True One, and in Him have eternal life. These maxims are introduced with a thrice-repeated **we know**, the expression of full persuasion and free confidence. They form a triumphant repetition of and anticipation of the attainment of the purpose expressed in ver. 13, "*that ye may know that ye have eternal life.*"

18.] **We know that every one who is born of God, sinneth not** (see on ch. iii. 9, from which place our words are almost repeated. As explained there and in our summary of these verses, there is no real inconsistency with what has been just said. And that there is none, the second member of the verse shews): **but he that hath been born of God** (literally, he that was born of God. The perfect tense expresses more the enduring abidance of his heavenly birth, and fits better the *habitual* meaning of the words **sinneth not**: the mere past tense calling attention to the historical fact of his having been born of God, fits better the fact that the wicked one toucheth him not, that divine birth having severed his connexion with the prince of this world and of evil), **it keepeth him** ("*it*," viz. the divine birth, pointed at in the words **born of God**. It is this, and not the fact of his own watchfulness, which preserves him from the touch of the wicked one: as in ch. iii. 9, where the same is imported by "*his seed abideth in him.*" The rationalistic Commentators insist on the reading, "*he keepeth himself*;" as shewing, as Socinus, "that he himself does and contributes something:" and the orthodox Commentators have but a lame apology to offer. Düsterdieck compares "*purifieth himself*," ch. iii. 3. But the reference there is wholly different—viz. to a gradual and earnest striving after an ideal model; whereas here the **keeping** must be, by the very nature of the case, so far complete, that the wicked one cannot approach: and whose self-guarding can ensure this even for a day? Compare John xvii. 15, "*that thou shouldst keep them from the evil*," which is decisive), **and the wicked one (Satan) doth not touch him** (of course the words must not be understood as saying that he is not

tried with *temptation* by the evil one: but imply that, as the Prince of this world had nothing in our blessed Lord, even so on His faithful ones who live by His life, the Tempter has no point d'appui, by virtue of that their birth, by which they are as He is. "The malignant one approaches them," says Bengel, "*as a fly the candle*,—but hurts them not, nor even touches them").

19.] *Application* of that which is said ver. 18, to the Apostle and his readers: and that, in entire separation from the wicked one, the ruling spirit of this present world. **We know** (see summary above) **that we** (not emphatic. It is not the object now to bring out a contrast, but to reassert solemnly these great axioms of the Christian life) **are of God** (i. e. born of God: identifying us with those spoken of ver. 18), **and the whole world lieth in the wicked one** (this second member of the sentence does not depend on the preceding *that*, but like those of vv. 18, 20, is an independent proposition. **the wicked one**, not "*wickedness*," as A. V.: the neuter sense can hardly stand after ch. ii. 13, 14, iii. 8, 10, 14 compared: iv. 4: John xvii. 14 f., and above all after the preceding verse here. In this unusual term, **lieth in**, the idea *in the power of*, and the *local* idea, seem to be combined. *The wicked one* is as it were the inclusive abiding-place and representative of all his, as, in the expressions "*in the Lord*," "*in Christ*," "*in Christ Jesus*," "*we are in the true One*," ver. 20, the Lord is of His. And while we are *from God*, implying a birth and a proceeding forth and a change of state, the world, all the rest of mankind, *lieth in the wicked one*, remains where it was, in, and in the power of, *the wicked one*. Some Commentators have been anxious to avoid inconsistency with such passages as ch. ii. 2, iv. 14, and would therefore give the world a different meaning here. But there is no inconsistency whatever. Had not Christ become a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, were He not the Saviour of the whole world, none could ever come out of the world and believe on Him; but as it

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

know that the Son of God is come, and <sup>e</sup> hath given us an understanding, <sup>f</sup> that we know the true One; and we are in the true One, in his Son Jesus Christ. <sup>g</sup> This is the true God, <sup>h</sup> and eternal life. <sup>21</sup> Little

<sup>e</sup> Luke xxiv. 45.

<sup>f</sup> John xvii. 3.

<sup>g</sup> Isa. ix. 6. & xiv. 6. & liv. 5. John xx. 28. Acts xx. 28. Rom. ix. 5.

<sup>1</sup> Tm. iii. 16. Titus ii. 13. Heb. i. 8.

<sup>h</sup> ver. 11—13.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.*

<sup>21</sup> *Little children, keep*

is, they who do believe on Him, come out and are separated from the world: so that our proposition here remains strictly true: the *world* is the negation of faith in Him, and as such lies in the wicked one, His adversary).

20.] Yet another we know: and that in general, as summing up all, the certainty to us of the Son of God having come, and having given us the knowledge of God, and of our being in Him: and the formal inclusion, in this one fact, of knowledge of the true God here, and life everlasting hereafter. Moreover (closes off and sums up all. This not being seen, it has been altered to "and," as there appeared to be no contrast with the preceding) we know that the Son of God is come (the incarnation, and work, and abiding presence, of the Son of God, is to us a living fact. HE IS HERE—all is full of Him—"the Master is come, and calleth for thee"), and hath given (it is the Son of God who is to us the bestower of this knowledge, see ver. 13: it is He who is here at the end of the Epistle made prominent, as it is He who is to us eternal life, and he who hath Him hath the Father) to us [an] understanding (by understanding is meant the divinely empowered inner sense by which we judge of things divine. It is not the wisdom or judgment *itself*, but the faculty capable of attaining to it. Compare John i. 12, 13, xvii. 2 f., 6 f., 25 f., 2 Cor. iv. 6, Eph. i. 18), that we know (that we know must bear a sort of pregnant sense, of a purpose accomplished or at least secured) the true One (i. e. God: compare John xvii. 3, "that they may know Thee the only true God." The adjective true is not subjective, but objective, in the sense of *genuine*, in distinction from every fictitious god. And thus the way is prepared for the warning against all false gods, ver. 21); and we are (again, as in vv. 18, 19, this second member is an independent proposition, not dependent on the "that") in (see above, on "lieth in," ver. 19) the true One (viz. God, as above), in

His Son Jesus Christ (i. e. by virtue of our being in His Son Jesus Christ: this second in is not in apposition with, but explanatory of the former). This (viz. God the Father: the true One, who has been twice spoken of: see below) is the true God, and eternal life. There has been great controversy, carried on principally from doctrinal interests, respecting the reference of the word *this*: whether it is to be understood as above, or of His Son Jesus Christ, just mentioned. The Fathers who were engaged against Arian error, and most of the orthodox expositors since, regarding the passage as a precious testimony for the Godhead of the Son, have maintained this latter view, rather doctrinally than exegetically. One of the principal Socinianizing expositors, even Episcopius, takes this view, not being able to bear the caprice and tortuousness of the Socinian exegesis. The opposite doctrinal interest has led many of those who deny this application. To these have succeeded another set of expositors with whom not doctrinal but exegetical considerations have been paramount.

The grounds on which the application to Christ is rested are mainly the following: 1) that the pronoun *this* most naturally refers to the last-mentioned substantive: 2) that *eternal life*, as a predicate, more naturally belongs to the Son than to the Father: 3) that the sentence, if understood of God the Father, would be aimless, and tautological. But to these it has been well and decisively answered by Lücke and Düsterdieck, 1) that "*this*" more than once in St. John belongs not to the nearest substantive, but to the principal one in the foregoing sentence, e. g. in ch. ii. 22 and in 2 John 7: and that the subject of the whole here has been the Father, who is the true One of the last verse, and the Son is referred back to Him as "*His Son*," thereby keeping *Him*, as the primary subject, before the mind. 2) that as little can "*eternal life*" be an actual predicate of Christ as of the Father. He is indeed "*the life*," ch. i. 2, but not "*eternal life*."

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*yourselfes from idols.*  
*Amen.*

AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

children, <sup>i</sup>keep yourselves from  
idols †.

† *Amen is  
omitted by  
all our oldest  
authorities.*

Such an expression used predicatively, leads us to look for some expression of our Lord's, or for some meaning which does not appear on the surface to guide us. And such an expression leading to such a meaning we have in John xvii. 3, "*This is eternal life, that they may know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou didst send.*" He is eternal life in Himself, as being the fount and origin of it: He is it to us, seeing that to know Him is to possess it. I own I cannot see, after this saying of our Lord with the words, **Thee the only true God**, how any one can imagine that the same Apostle can have had in these words any other reference than that which is given in those. 3) this charge is altogether inaccurate. As referred to the Father, there is in it no tautology and no aimlessness. It serves to identify the "*true One*" mentioned before, in a solemn manner, and leads on to the concluding warning against false gods. As in another place the Apostle intensifies the non-possession of the Son by including in it the alienation from the Father also, so here at the close of all, the *true God*, the fount of *eternal life*, is put before us as the ultimate aim and end, to be approached *in His Son*, but Himself the one Father

both of Him and of us who live through Him.

21.] *Parting warning against idols.* Little children (he parts from them with his warmest and most affectionate word of address), **keep yourselves from idols** (or more literally, **from the idols**, viz. which are about you. The idol is properly a figure of an *imaginary* deity,—while an *image*, or *likeness*, is that of some real person or thing made into an object of worship. See Rom. i. 23, 1 Cor. x. 19, xii. 2, and especially 1 Thess. i. 9, where, as here, "*the living and true God*" is opposed to *idols*. And there seems no justification for the departing from the plain literal sense in this place. All around the Christian Church was heathenism: the born of God, and they that were lying in the wicked one, were the only two classes: those who went out of one, went into the other: God's children are thus then finally warned of the consequence of letting go the only true God, in whom they can only abide by abiding in His Son Jesus Christ, in these solemn terms,—to leave on their minds a wholesome terror of any the least deviation from the truth of God, seeing into what relapse it would plunge them).

# THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN.

AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

† Or, *Kyria* the elect, see *Introduction*.  
a 1 John iii. 18.  
ver. 3.  
3 John 1.

b John viii. 32.  
Gal. ii. 5, 14.  
& iii. 1. &  
v. 7. Col. 1.  
s. 2 Thess.  
ii. 13.

1 Tim. ii. 4.

+ So all our oldest authorities, except the *Alexandrine MS.*, which omits there shall be with us *altogether*.

<sup>1</sup> THE elder unto † the elect lady and her children, <sup>a</sup> whom I love in truth; and not I only, but also all they that know <sup>b</sup> the truth; <sup>2</sup> for the truth's sake, which abideth in us, and shall be with us for ever: <sup>3</sup> there shall be with us † <sup>c</sup> grace, mercy, and peace, from God the

<sup>1</sup> *THE* elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth; <sup>2</sup> for the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever.  
<sup>3</sup> *Grace* be with you, mercy, and peace, from

c 1 Tim. i. 2.

1—3.] ADDRESS AND GREETING. The elder (the Apostle, known by this name: see *Introd.*, “On the writer of the Epistle”) to the (not, an: see *Introd.*, “To whom the Epistle was written”) elect lady (see *Introd.*, *ibid.*) and to her children, whom (this *whom*, masculine plural in the original, probably embraces the whole, mother and children of both sexes: see 3 John 1) I love in truth (not merely, in reality: but in truth, such truth being the result, as stated below, of the truth of the Gospel abiding in him. See 1 John iii. 18, and note on iii. 19); and not I alone, but also all who know the truth (there is no need to limit this all to all dwelling in or near the abode of the Writer, or to all who were personally acquainted with those addressed: it is a general expression: the communion of love is as wide as the communion of faith); 2.] on account of the truth (objective: God's truth revealed in His Son, see 1 John ii. 4), which abideth in us, and shall be with us for ever (see John xiv. 16, 17. These words are a reminiscence of our Lord's words there,

*abideth with you, and shall be in you.* The future is not the expression of a wish, as some have supposed; but of confidence, as that also which follows, which takes its tinge and form from this): 3.] there shall be with us (by the *us* the Apostle includes *himself* in the greeting, as he had before done in the introductory clauses. shall be, again, not a wish: see above: we must of necessity connect this second shall be with the first. But the very fact of a greeting being conveyed, must somewhat modify the absolute future sense, and introduce something of the votive character. It is as Bengel, “wish with its affirmation,”—a wish expressed by a confident assertion of its fulfilment) grace, mercy, peace (Trench says well, “*Grace* has reference to the sins of men, *mercy* to their misery. God's *grace*, His free grace and gift, is extended to men as they are guilty: His *mercy* is extended to them as they are miserable.” And thus *grace* always comes first, because guilt must be done away, before misery can be assuaged. *Peace* is the whole sum and substance of the possession and enjoyment of God's grace and mercy: see

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. <sup>4</sup>I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father. <sup>5</sup>And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. <sup>6</sup>And this is love, that we walk after his command-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

Father, and from † Jesus Christ, † the Son of the Father, <sup>d</sup>in truth and love. <sup>4</sup>I rejoiced greatly, that I have found of thy children <sup>e</sup>walking in truth, according as we received commandment from the Father. <sup>5</sup>And now I beseech thee, lady, <sup>f</sup>not as writing unto thee a new commandment, but that which we had from the beginning, <sup>g</sup>that we love one another. <sup>6</sup>And <sup>h</sup>this is love, that we walk according to

† The Lord is omitted by the Alexandrine and Vatican MSS., but inserted by the Sinaitic MS.  
d ver. 1.  
e 3 John 3

f† John ii. 7, 8 & iii. 11.

g John xiii. 34 & xv. 12.  
Eph. v. 2.  
1 Pet. iv. 8.  
1 John iii. 23.  
h John xiv. 15, 21, & xv. 10.  
1 John ii. 5. & v. 3.

Luke ii. 14; Rom. v. 1; x. 15; John xiv. 27; xvi. 33), from God the Father, and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father (from the Father, as their original fountain, who of His great love hath decreed and secured them for us: from Jesus Christ the Son of the Father, this solemn title being used for the more complete setting forth of the union of Jesus with the Father in the essence of the Godhead), in truth and love (truth and love are the conditional element in which the grace, mercy, and peace are to be received and enjoyed).

4.—11.] *Truth and love:* These (see ver. 1) were the two ground-tones of the Epistle. And now the Apostle proceeds to describe his joy at finding the children of the *elect lady* walking in truth (ver. 4), and to enforce the commandment, to love one another (5, 6): and this in presence of the fact that many deceivers are in the world, who would rob us of our Christian reward, and of our share in God (7—9). These are not to be treated as brethren, nor greeted, lest we partake of their evil deeds (10, 11).

4.] I rejoiced greatly (at some definite time *perhaps*: but it may also be the epistolary form of putting the verb, implying the present only: and this is made more probable by the perfect tense, “I have found,” which follows. See however 3 John 3), that I have found (the most obvious interpretation is, that at some place where the Apostle was, he came upon these who are presently mentioned: as in Acts xviii. 2, *Paul came to Corinth: and finding a certain Jew, &c.*) of thy children (some) walking in truth (i. e. not only in honesty and uprightness, but in that truth which is derived from and is part

of the truth of God in Christ: see above on 1.—Again, there is no hint whatever given that the rest, or that others, of her children were not walking in truth. The Apostle apparently, as above, in some place where he was, lit upon these children of the “*lady*,” and sends her their good report. Respecting the rest, he makes no mention nor insinuation), according as we received commandment from the Father (viz. to walk in the truth: not, as Lücke, to love one another, making this clause a further description of the manner in which they were walking in truth). 5.]

And now (so coupling to what has gone before, 1 John ii. 28. It has also a force of breaking off, and passing to that which is the main subject, or most in the Writer’s thoughts, which here is, that this walking in truth is a walking after God’s commandments in love) I entreat thee (see on *entreating* and *asking*, 1 John v. 15, 16. Here the *entreating* carries a mild admonition with it, and assumes that the writer had a right thus to entreat), lady, not as writing to thee a new commandment, but (as writing to thee) that which we had from the beginning (see on this, 1 John ii. 7, 8), that (i. e. in order that: not merely explanatory here) we love one another (the expressiion of the commandment in the first person is a mark of gentleness and delicacy: a sign that he who wrote it kept the commandment himself).

6.] And (the onward course of thought here is highly characteristic of St. John) this is love (love is used in its widest sense, as the sum and substance of all God’s commandments: not only as love to God; nor only as love to the brethren), that (the explicative “*that*”



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

his commandments. This is the  
 1 1 John ii. 24. commandment, <sup>1</sup> even as ye heard  
 from the beginning that ye should  
 k 1 John iv. 1. walk in it. <sup>7</sup> Because <sup>k</sup> many de-  
 ceivers went forth into the world,  
 1 1 John iv. 2, they <sup>1</sup> who confess not Jesus Christ  
 3. coming in the flesh. <sup>m</sup> This is the  
 m 1 John ii. 22. & iv. 8. deceiver and the antichrist. <sup>8 n</sup> Look  
 n Mark xiii. 9. to yourselves, <sup>o</sup> that ye lose not those  
 o Gal. iii. 4. things which ye wrought, but that  
 Heb. x. 32, ye receive reward in full †. <sup>9 p</sup> Who-  
 35.  
 † So is the pre-ponderance of authority.  
 But the oldest MSS. vary: the Vatican has that ye lose not the things which we wrought.

ments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. <sup>7</sup> For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. <sup>8</sup> Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. <sup>9</sup> Whosoever  
 p 1 John ii. 23.

of St. John) we walk according to His commandments. The commandment (the one commandment in which God's other commandments are summed up) is this, even as ye heard from the beginning that ye should walk in it ("Is this, even that which ye heard from the beginning, that ye should walk in it," viz. in love. from the beginning, as above, ver. 5, and 1 John ii. 7). 7, 8.] The condition of Love is Truth, see ver. 3. And the necessity of fresh exhortation to walk in love, in that love whose condition is truth, lies in the fact that there are many deceivers gone forth, denying the Truth: of whom we are to beware, and not, by extending to them a spurious sympathy, to become partakers with them. 7.] Because many deceivers (makers to wander) went forth (here probably, on account of the past tense, "from us," as in 1 John ii. 19. In 1 John iv. 1, it is perfect, "are gone forth," where I have preferred the sense, "are gone forth from him who sent them," viz. the evil one. Huther prefers this latter sense here also) into the world, [namely] they who confess not (instead of "not confessing," the Apostle writes they who confess not, thereby not merely characterizing the deceivers as not confessing, &c., but absolutely identifying all who repudiate the confession which follows, as belonging to the class of deceivers) Jesus Christ coming in [the] flesh (coming, altogether timeless, and representing the great truth of the Incarnation itself, as distinguished from its historical manifestation [1 John v. 6], and from the abiding effect of that historical manifestation [1 John iv. 2]. He who denies the coming in the flesh, denies possibility of the Incarnation: he who

denies the *having come*, denies its actuality). This (viz. "he that fulfils the above character") is the deceiver and the antichrist (see notes on 1 John ii. 18, 22, as to the personal relation of these "many" to the one great Antichrist of prophecy. The word *this*, pointing to a class, makes each one of these, in his place, a representative and "precursor of Antichrist").

8.] The warning is suddenly introduced without any coupling particle, and becomes thereby so much the more solemn and forcible. Look to yourselves (yourselves here probably implies not as Bengel, *during my absence*, but "yourselves," as contrasted with the deceivers, that ye too become not as they), that ye lose not the things which ye wrought (the reading of this is somewhat uncertain. We had better give the explanation of all three forms. 1) "that ye lose not the things which we wrought," i.e. that ye, Christian converts, lose not that your Christian state of truth and love which we, Apostles and Teachers, wrought in you. The Apostles were God's workmen, Matt. ix. 37; 2 Tim. ii. 15: the false apostles were crafty workmen, 2 Cor. xi. 13; bad workmen, Phil. iii. 2: the true work was to cause men to believe on Christ, John vi. 29; and this work the false teachers put in peril of loss. If 2) the whole be in the first person, "that we lose not the things which we wrought," then the apostolic reward, the souls which are to be their hire, must be understood: if 3) in the second,— "that ye lose not the things which ye wrought,"—no human merit, but the reward laid up for faithfulness, and for every thing done in His name, must be understood, which is reckoned of grace, and not of debt), but receive reward in

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. <sup>10</sup> If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: <sup>11</sup> for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. <sup>12</sup> Having

soever goeth before you †, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the doctrine †, he hath both the Father and the Son. <sup>10</sup> If any cometh unto you, and bringeth not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him good speed: <sup>11</sup> for he that biddeth him good speed is partaker of his evil deeds. <sup>12</sup> Having

† So all our oldest MSS.

† of Christ is omitted by all our oldest MSS.

q Rom. xvi. 17.  
1 Cor. v. 11.  
& xvi. 22.  
Gal. i. 8, 9.  
2 Tim. iii. 5.  
Titus iii. 10.  
r 3 John 13.

full (the connexion of *work* with *reward* must not be broken. The idea is a complex one. Ye, our converts, are our *reward* in the day of the Lord: and this has suggested the use of the well-known word, even where it manifestly applies not to the teachers but to the taught, whose *reward* is the eternal life, which shall receive on that day its glorious completion: which is *having the Son and the Father*: see 1 John iii. 2.—If readings 1) or 2) be right, the use which Roman-Catholic expositors have tried to make of this verse to establish the merit of human works falls at once to the ground. Nor indeed does it fare much better if the other reading be taken).

9.] Explanation of this *loss*, that it is the non-possession of God, which is incurred by all who abide not in Christ's teaching. **Every one that goeth before [you]** (such I believe to be the meaning of the somewhat difficult word here used: every one who would set up for a teacher, *going before the sheep*, as John x. 4, and they following. The expositors who take this reading interpret it, "goeth forward too fast," "maketh false and unsound advance," regarding it, either as ironical [so Luther], or as serious [so Düsterdieck]), and not abiding in the doctrine of Christ (i. e. in Christ's doctrine,—that truth which Christ Himself taught. This is far more likely than that of *Christ* should be objective, as Bengel ["in doctrine which teaches that Jesus is the Son of God"], and others: and thus we have the personal genitive after *doctrine* wherever it occurs in the New Test.: see Matt. vii. 28: Mark iv. 1: John xviii. 19: Acts ii. 42), **hath not God** (see 1 John ii. 23, v. 12, notes): **he that abideth in the doctrine, that man hath both the Father and the**

**Son** (see as above. The order is the theological one, the Father being mentioned first, then the Son).

10, 11.] The exercise of the love of brethren is conditioned and limited by the truth: and is not to be extended to those who are enemies and impugnors of the truth. Those who harbour or encourage such, make common cause with them, and their evil deeds.

10.] **If any cometh unto you, and bringeth not (the indicative mood, "cometh," "bringeth,"** shows that the case supposed actually existed: that such persons were sure to come to them: compare, in the revised text, John xi. 12; 2 Cor. ii. 5; 1 John iv. 11. It is not the same as if with a subjunctive mood, "*if any come, and bring*:" which always carries a purely hypothetical force, corresponding to an interrogation, whereas the other corresponds to an assertion) **this doctrine** (the expression, "*bringeth not this doctrine*," points out the person as a teacher, not a mere traveller seeking hospitality. The original implies that he not only comes without this doctrine, but by so doing, brings the contrary doctrine. The absence of testimony for the truth is, in one who brings any testimony at all, equivalent to testifying for error), **receive him not into [your] house, and do not bid him good speed:** 11.] **for he that biddeth him good speed partaketh in his evil deeds** (these words must be understood with their right reference: "not of men who have never had any relation with the church, —1 Cor. v. 10,—but of men who wish to be thought brethren, and overthrow the truth," as Grotius says. These were not to be received with the *hospitality* with which all Christian brethren were to be entertained. Such reception of them would

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

many things to write unto you, I would not do so with paper and ink: but I hope to come unto you, and to speak face to face, <sup>s</sup> that your † joy may be full. <sup>13†</sup> The children of thy elect sister greet thee †.

<sup>s</sup> John xvii. 13.  
<sup>1</sup> John i. 4.

† *So the Alexandrine and Vatican MSS.: the Sinaitic has out.*

† 1 Pet. v. 13.

† *Amen is omitted by all our oldest authorities.*

in fact be only opening an inlet for their influence. But this is not the point on which the Apostle mainly dwells. It is the participation which the host in such a case would incur with them and their antichristian designs, by encouraging them. And this is further impressed by the caution against saying *good speed* to them: which is a further intensification of the exclusion from the house, and forms a climax,—do not even by wishing him good speed, which, if spoken by a Christian, would mean *God speed*,—identify yourselves with his course and fortunes. If you do, you pronounce approval of his evil deeds, and so far share his guilt, advancing their success by your wishes for it.

This command has been by some laid to the fiery and zealous spirit of St. John, and it has been said that a true Christian spirit of love teaches us otherwise. But as rightly understood, we see that this is not so. Nor are we at liberty to set aside direct ethical injunctions of the Lord's Apostles in this manner. Varieties of individual character may play on the surface of their writings: but in these solemn commands which come up from the depths, we must recognize the power of that One Spirit of Truth which moved them all as one. It would have been better for the Church now, if this command had been observed in all ages by her faithful sons).

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full. <sup>13</sup> The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.*

12, 13.] CONCLUSION. Having many things to write unto you, I would not [communicate them] by means of paper and ink (paper, says Lücke, the Egyptian papyrus, probably the so-called Augustan or Claudian,—ink, that made of soot and water thickened with gum, — pen [see 3 John 13], the writing-reed, probably split, — were the New Testament writing materials): but I hope to come to you, and to speak mouth to mouth (so “face to face,” 1 Cor. xiii. 12), that your joy may be filled full (see 1 John i. 4: viz. by hearing from the mouth of the Apostle himself those messages of life and truth which he forbore writing now: not merely, as some think, by his bodily presence only: still less, because the Apostles were unwilling to commit all their teaching to writing, but reserved many things to oral teaching only, as some Roman-Catholic Commentators, than which it is hardly possible to imagine a sillier comment: for *the First Epistle was written* with this very same view, ch..i. 4). **There greet thee the children of thine elect sister** (these words are variously interpreted according as the *kyria* is understood of a lady, or of a church. The non-mention of the *kyria herself* here seems, it must be confessed, rather to favour the latter hypothesis. See on the whole, the Introduction).

# THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

<sup>1</sup> *THE* elder unto the well beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth. <sup>2</sup> Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. <sup>3</sup> For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. <sup>4</sup> I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. <sup>5</sup> Beloved, thou do-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>1</sup> THE elder unto Caius the beloved, <sup>a</sup> whom I love in the truth. <sup>a 2 John 1.</sup>  
<sup>2</sup> Beloved, I pray that thou mayest prosper in all things, and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.  
<sup>3</sup> For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified to thy truth, even as <sup>b</sup> thou walkest in the <sup>b 2 John 4.</sup>  
<sup>4</sup> I have no greater joy than this, that I hear of <sup>c</sup> my children <sup>c 1 Cor. iv. 15. Philem. 10.</sup>  
walking in the truth. <sup>5</sup> Beloved,

1.] ADDRESS. The elder (see Introduction to the two Epistles) to Caius the beloved (on Caius, see Introduction. The epithet beloved seems to be used this first time in a general sense,—beloved by all: see below), whom I (for my own part: Caius was generally beloved, and the Apostle declares that he personally joins in the affection for him) love in [the] truth (see 2 John 1, note). 2—4.]

*Wish that Caius may prosper as his soul prospers: and ground of this latter assertion.*—Beloved (the repetition of the word is due perhaps more to the fact that the direct address begins here, than to any specific motive, such as the supposed ill health of Caius), I pray that concerning all things (not, as A. V., “above all things”) thou mayest prosper and be in health (i. e. bodily health), even as thy soul prospereth (as is shewn by what follows. There is a passage in Philo, in which the well-being of body and soul are simi-

larly compared: that of the body referring to health and strength, that of the soul to the enjoyment of virtue).

3.] For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified to thy truth (thy share of that Truth in which thou walkest, see below), even as (almost equivalent to how that, see below) thou walkest in truth (this clause is not an independent one, adding the testimony of the Apostle to that of the brethren,—“as [I know that] thou walkest, &c.,” but is explanatory of the former clause, and states the substance of the testimony of the brethren, as is shewn by what follows). 4.] Explains I rejoiced greatly above. I have no greater joy than this (literally, “than these things”), that I hear of my children walking in the truth (the expressive children here seems rather to favour the idea that the “Kyria” of the 2nd Epistle is a Church: see Introduction to 2 John).

5—8.] Praise of the hospitality shewn

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, † who besides are strangers; <sup>6</sup> which bore witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey worthily of God, thou shalt do well: <sup>7</sup> because that for the † Name's sake they went forth; <sup>d</sup> taking nothing from the Gentiles. <sup>8</sup> We therefore ought to support such, that we may become fellow-workers for the truth. <sup>9</sup> I wrote somewhat † unto the church: howbeit Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.

† So all our oldest MSS.

† So all our oldest MSS.  
d 1 Cor. ix. 12,  
15

† So all our oldest MSS.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*est faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; <sup>6</sup> which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: <sup>7</sup> because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. <sup>8</sup> We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth. <sup>9</sup> I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us*

by Caius; and reason of that praise. Beloved (beginning again of new address: see above on ver. 2), **thou doest a faithful act** (one worthy of a "faithful" man) **whatsoever thou workest towards** (so the Lord in Matt. xxvi. 10 describes His anointing by Mary thus, "*She hath done a good work towards Me*") **the brethren, and that** (and those brethren), **strangers** (*love of strangers* is an especial mark of Christian love, Rom. xii. 13, 1 Tim. iii. 2, Tit. i. 8, Heb. xiii. 2, 1 Pet. iv. 9), **6.] who** (the above-named strange brethren) **bore testimony to thy love in the presence of the church** (viz. where St. John was at the time of writing. They were Evangelists, ver. 7: and thus would naturally give the church an account of their missionary journey, during which they were so hospitably treated by Caius): **whom thou wilt do well if thou forward on their way worthily of God** (in a manner worthy of Him whose messengers they are and whose servant thou art): **for on behalf of the Name** (*of Christ*: see Acts. v. 41; ix. 16; xv. 28) **they went forth** (on their missionary journey), **taking nothing** (receiving nothing by way of benefaction or hire: even as St. Paul in Achaia, 1 Cor. ix. 18; 2 Cor. xi. 7 ff., xii. 16 ff.; 1 Thess. ii. 9 ff.: against Huther, who denies the applicability of the comparison, seeing that in St. Paul's case they were *Christian churches*: but so must these have been, before they would contribute to the sup-

port of their missionaries. The peculiar word used for **nothing** implies that it was their own deliberate purpose; refusing to take any thing) **from the Heathens. We therefore** (contrast to the heathens: therefore, because they *take nothing* from the heathens) **ought to support** (the word does not seem to signify "receive hospitably," as some have explained it) **such persons, that we may become fellow-workers [with them] for the truth.**

9, 10.] *Notice of the hostility of Diotrephes. I wrote somewhat to the church* (the word somewhat does not imply that the thing written was specially important, nor on the other hand does it depreciate; but merely designates indefinitely: compare Acts xxiii. 17; Luke vii. 40; Matt. xx. 20. The contents of the Epistle are not hinted at. The church is apparently the church of which Caius was a member: not, as Bengel, that out of which the missionaries of ver. 7 had gone forth): **howbeit Diotrephes, who loveth preeminence** (he appears to have been an ambitious man, who willed that not the Apostle but himself should rule the church) **over them** (the members of the church, implied in the word previously used), **receiveth us not** (does not recognize our authority: here in an improper sense, but in the next verse probably literal: see there. We want no explanation, such as our commands, our Epistles, or the like: in rejecting the Apostle's person, he rejected all his in-



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

not. <sup>10</sup> Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God. <sup>12</sup> Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>10</sup> Wherefore, if I come, I will bring to mind his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with wicked speeches: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, imitate not evil, but good. <sup>f</sup> He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God. <sup>12</sup> Demetrius <sup>g</sup> hath good testimony from all, and from the truth itself: yea, and we also bear testimony; <sup>h</sup> and

<sup>e</sup> Ps. xxxvii. 27. Isa. i. 16, 17. 1 Pet. iii. 11. <sup>f</sup> 1 John ii. 29. & iii. 6, 9.

<sup>g</sup> 1 Tim. iii. 7.

<sup>h</sup> John xxi. 24.

fluence). On this account, if I should come, I will bring to mind (i. e. as Bede, to the knowledge of all, by plainly stating them) his works which he doeth (what they were, is explained by the participle following), prating against us (this is the best rendering, which conveys not only that he used reproaches, but also that the reproaches were mere tattle, worth nothing, irrelevant. See 1 Tim. v. 13) with wicked speeches: and not satisfied with this (his conduct and words), neither doth he himself receive the brethren (here receive seems best taken in its literal sense, of entertaining hospitably, see 2 John 10. The brethren are probably the same as in ver. 5, the travelling missionaries), and hinders (by forbidding: see 1 Thess. ii. 16) those that would (receive them), and casts them (those that would receive the brethren: not, the travelling brethren themselves) out of the church (manifestly, by excommunication, which owing to his influence among them he had the power to inflict. There is no difficulty, nor any occasion to take the word as pointing at that which Diotrephes was attempting to do or threatening to do, and so as spoken in irony: the present tense indicates his habit, as above. He was evidently one in high power, and able to forbid, and to punish, the reception of the travelling brethren. See Introduction). <sup>11.</sup> Upon occasion of the hostility just mentioned, St. John exhorts Caius to imitate not the evil but the good,—probably as shewn in the praises of Demetrius which follow. Beloved, imitate not evil (ab-

stract), but good (abstract also). He that doeth good is from God (is born of God, and has his mission and power from Him; as so often in the first Epistle): he that doeth evil hath not seen God (see *reff.*).

<sup>12.</sup> *The praise of Demetrius.* Testimony hath been borne to Demetrius by all (namely, who know him, and have brought report concerning him), and by the truth itself (it is not very easy to explain this expression. We may understand it that the reality of facts themselves supports the testimony of all. But there are two reasons against this view: 1) that it does not correspond to the objective fact asserted in the statement, nor to the parallelizing of this testimony with that of *all and that of the Apostle*: and 2) that thus the Christian and divine sense of the truth, which St. John seems always to put forward, would be entirely sunk. Some would understand that Demetrius had done much for the truth, and his deeds were his witness: but this is hardly a witness of the truth to him. Others take refuge in the extraordinary supposition, that the Holy Spirit had revealed to the Apostle the truth respecting Demetrius. Another regards the testimony borne by the truth to be that furnished by all, whose evidence was decisive, not from their credit as men, but because they all spoke of and from the truth of Christ dwelling in them. This would reduce this new testimony to the former, and would in fact besides include the following in it likewise. The best interpretation is that of Düsterdieck. The objective Truth of God, which is the divine

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

† *So all our  
oldest MSS.*  
12 John 12.

† *So all our  
oldest MSS.*

† thou knowest that our testimony is true. <sup>13</sup> I had many things to write † unto thee, but I am not willing with ink and reed to write unto thee: <sup>14</sup> but I hope immediately to see thee, and then we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. The friends salute thee. Salute the friends by name.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*record; and ye know that our record is true. <sup>13</sup> I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee: <sup>14</sup> but I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.*

rule of the walk of all believers, gives a good testimony to him who really walks in the truth. This witness lies in the accordance of his walk with the requirement of God's Truth. It was the mirror in which the walk of Demetrius was reflected: and his form, thus seen in the mirror of God's Truth, in which the perfect form of Christ is held up to us [1 John ii. 6, iii. 3, 16], appeared in the likeness of Christ; so that the mirror itself seemed to place in a clear light his Christian virtue and uprightness, and thus to bear witness to him): **yea, we too** (besides the two testimonies foregoing) **bear testimony; and thou knowest that our testimony is true.**

13, 14.] *Close of the Epistle.*

13.] **I had many things to write to thee, howbeit I will not to write by means of ink and reed** (see on 2 John 12): 14.]

**but I hope immediately to see thee, and (then) we shall speak mouth to mouth** (see 2 John 12). **Peace be to thee** (beautifully paraphrased by Lyra, "The internal peace of the conscience, the fraternal peace of friendship, the supernal peace of glory." Remember our Lord's legacy, John xiv. 27, and His greeting after the Resurrection, John xx. 19. 26). **The friends salute thee. Salute the friends by name** (as if I had written their names here). The reason why St. John mentions **friends** [see John xi. 11, xv. 15, Acts xxvii. 3], and not **brethren** [1 Cor. xvi. 20, Phil. iv. 21, Eph. vi. 23], is probably to be found in the personal character of the Epistle, not addressed as from an Apostle to a church, but as from a friend to his friend, in which mutual friends on both sides would be the senders and receivers of salutation.

# THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF

## J U D E.

### AUTHORIZED VERSION.

<sup>1</sup> *JUDE, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: <sup>2</sup> Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied. <sup>3</sup> Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common*

### AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>1</sup> *JUDE, a servant of Jesus Christ, and <sup>a</sup> brother of James, to the <sup>b</sup> called, <sup>†</sup> beloved in God the Father, and <sup>c</sup> preserved for Jesus Christ: <sup>2</sup> Mercy unto you, and <sup>d</sup> peace, and love, be multiplied. <sup>3</sup> Beloved, in giving diligence to write unto you <sup>e</sup> of*

<sup>a</sup> Luke vi. 16.  
<sup>b</sup> Acts i. 13.  
<sup>c</sup> Rom. i. 7.  
<sup>†</sup> So all our oldest authorities.  
<sup>e</sup> John xvii. 11, 12, 15. 1 Pet. i. 5.  
<sup>d</sup> 1 Pet. i. 2.  
<sup>2</sup> Pet. i. 2;  
<sup>e</sup> Titus i. 4.

1, 2. *Address and greeting.*] Judas, a servant of Jesus Christ (servant, probably not here in the wider sense, in which all Christians are servants of Christ—but in that special sense in which those were bound to His service who were employed in the preaching and disseminating of His word. On the absence of any official designation, see Introduction), and brother of James (see Introduction), and brother (in the sense of St. Paul; effectually drawn by God the Father to the knowledge of the Gospel), beloved in (the phrase is one not elsewhere found, and difficult of interpretation. The meanings “by,” “on account of,” understanding “beloved by the writer,” are hardly admissible. The only allowable sense seems to be, “in the case of,” “as regards,” understanding of course that the love of the Father is spoken of) God the Father (St. Paul ordinarily in his greetings says “God our Father,” Rom. i. 7, 1 Cor. i. 3, 2 Cor. i. 2, Eph. i. 2, Phil. i. 2, Col. i. 2, 2 Thess. i. 1, (2?) Philem. 3. But he has God the Father absolutely in the following places; Gal. i. 1, 2, Eph. vi. 23, Phil. ii. 11, (2 Thess. i. 2?) 2 Tim. i. 2,

Titus i. 4; as also St. Peter, 1 Pet. i. 2, 2 Pet. i. 17; St. John, 2 John 3. It became more frequently used, as might be expected, in the later days of the canon), and kept for Jesus Christ (reserved, to be His at the day of His coming. If the question be asked, kept by whom? the answer must be, by God the Father: though constructionally the words are not connected. The participles are *perfect*, giving the signification “from of old and still”): Mercy to you, and peace, and love, be multiplied (all three proceeding from God: God’s mercy, God’s peace, God’s love: see ver. 21. In the somewhat similar passage, Eph. vi. 23, the love and faith are clearly, in themselves, the gift of God: mutual love, or love towards God. But the other seems better here).

3, 4.] *Purpose, and occasion, of the Epistle.* 3.] Beloved (only found, in the beginning of an Epistle, here and 3 John 2), giving all diligence (the phrase is only found here. It implies more than mere earnest desire: a man’s diligence is necessarily action as well as wish) to write to you concerning the common salvation

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

the common salvation, I found it necessary to write unto you forthwith, exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints. <sup>4 g</sup> For there crept in of old certain men, <sup>h</sup> men before written down in prophecy for this judgment, ungodly men, <sup>i</sup> turning <sup>k</sup> the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and <sup>l</sup> deny-

salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. <sup>4</sup> For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness,

f Phil. i. 27.  
 1 Tim. i. 18.  
 & vi. 12.  
 2 Tim. i. 13.  
 & iv. 7.  
 g Gal. ii. 4.  
 2 Pet. ii. 1.  
 h Rom. ix. 21.  
 22. 1 Pet. ii. 8.  
 i 2 Pet. ii. 10.  
 k Titus ii. 11.  
 Heb. xii. 15.  
 l Titus i. 16.  
 2 Pet. ii. 1.  
 1 John ii. 22.

(this may mean, concerning the fact of our common salvation, brought in by Christ; or concerning the means of attaining that salvation, i. e. the doctrines and practices by which it is to be forwarded. Perhaps the latter is here preferable. On the idea conveyed by common, see Tit. i. 4, and 2 Pet. i. 1), I found it necessary (not, as A. V. "it was needful:" the necessity was not part of the giving diligence, but supervened on it, owing to the circumstance to be mentioned in the next verse) to write to you, exhorting [you] to contend earnestly for the faith (objective here: the sum of that which Christians believe: faith which is believed, not faith by which we believe) once for all ("an urgent fact;—no other faith will ever be given." Bengel. This is obscured by the "once" of the A. V., which represents merely its having been given, not its having been the only gift of the kind) delivered to the saints (i. e. Christians: believers.—The meaning then of this verse is, that St. Jude, who was before earnestly desirous to write to the Church universal concerning the salvation which is common to us all [De Wette, after Sherlock, supposes that St. Jude was actually engaged on a larger and more general Epistle, and was compelled to break it off by the necessity mentioned. This may have been so: but we can hardly gather so much from the words], found urgent occasion at once to do so, respecting not merely nor directly that common salvation, but one point, viz. the keeping inviolate the faith once for all delivered to God's people. And the reason of this necessity which arose, now follows).

4.] For there crept in (not "are . . . crept in:" the past tense explains the arising of the occasion of his thus writing. On crept in, see 2 Pet. ii. 1, and note: also Gal. ii. 4. Secrecy, and lack of legitimate

introduction, are plainly expressed in the word. "Crept in," viz. into the Christian church) of old certain men (it has been observed that the term certain men has a tinge of contempt about it), [men] who have been of old written down in prophecy (to what time and fact are we to refer such designation of them? Clearly not to God's eternal purpose, in this place, from the term of old, which, as Huther remarks, is never used of that purpose, but points to some fact in time. And if so, then the previous writing down of these men can only point to the Old Test. prophecies. What special description of them is intended, might be difficult to say were it not for the quotation below, ver. 17, from the prophecy of Enoch. The warnings contained in the historical facts adduced below may also be meant. It may be observed that the ultra-predestinarians, Beza and Calvin, find, as we might expect, strong defence for their views in their interpretation here. Beza indeed gathers from this place, "that this eternal decree of God comprehended not only the event, but even principally, the persons themselves involved in it") to this judgment (what judgment, or rather result of judgment? that presently to be mentioned: the sentence which St. Jude has in his mind, and proceeds in the following verses to unfold. Judgment, as so often, though not the same as condemnation, yet gets the condemnatory meaning from the character of the context), impious, changing the grace of our God (i. e. the gift of grace, the state of salvation, in which our sins are forgiven us and we are admitted into the freedom of God's children. Of our God; drawing closer the bond of God's true children to Him and one another, and thus producing greater abhorrence of those who have thus abused His grace) into lasciviousness (the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>5</sup> I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. <sup>6</sup> And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

ing the only Master †, and our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>5</sup> I wish therefore to put you in remembrance, knowing as ye do all [†these] things once for all, how that <sup>m</sup> † Jesus, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, † secondly <sup>n</sup> destroyed them that believed not. <sup>6</sup> And the <sup>o</sup> angels which kept not their dignity, but left their own habitation, he <sup>p</sup> hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness <sup>q</sup> unto the judgment of the

† So all our oldest MSS.

† Not expressed in the original.

m 1 Cor. x. 9.

† The ancient authorities are divided, some reading God, some the Lord, but in various forms. The Alexandrine and Vatican MSS. read as in the text.

† So all our oldest MSS.

n Numb. xiv.

29, 37. &

xxvi. 64.

Ps. cv. 26.

q Rev. xx. 10.

Heb. iii. 17, 19.

o John viii. 44.

p 2 Pet. ii. 4.

words *might* mean, "perverting the grace of our God in the direction of, for the purposes of lasciviousness:" but the meaning of the verb used is simply to change, not to pervert: and we therefore must understand, as above, that they made the state of grace and Christian liberty into a state of [moral] licence and wantonness), and denying (see 2 Pet. ii. 1) the only Master, and our Lord Jesus Christ (in 2 Pet. ii. 1 Master is used of Christ: which circumstance might tempt us to refer it to Christ here also. But probability seems to weigh on the other side. In every other place [Luke ii. 29, Acts iv. 24, Rev. vi. 10, Jer. iv. 10 in the Septuagint translation] **Master** is used of God: 2) the addition "*only*" seems to bind this meaning to it here: 3) the denial of God by disobeying His law is the explanatory resumption of the last clause: 4) Master and Lord are hardly distinguishable, if both applied to Christ).

5—7.] *Examples of Divine vengeance.*

5.] *First example:* unbelieving Israel in the wilderness. See Heb. iii. 16—iv. 5. But (solemn contrast to the conduct just mentioned) I wish to remind you, knowing as ye do (better here than "although ye know," on account of the term "*once for all*" which follows. The A. V. is altogether wrong) once for all (i. e. having once for all received the knowledge of) all things (all that refers to that of which I am speaking: the clause carries with it a latent admonition, to apply other examples for yourselves), that Jesus (critical principles seem to require this remarkable reading. It is not entirely preceded by 1 Cor. x. 4: for there St. Paul uses not the personal human name,

but "*Christ*," in which there is no such difficulty. The only account to be given seems, that, the Person designated by the two names being the same, they became sometimes convertibly used in popular exhortation), having saved the people (on the fact, see Exod. xiv. 19, xxxiii. 20, 23, xxxii. 2, Isa. lxiii. 9, in which last place however the Septuagint version has "*Out of all their affliction not an ambassador, nor yet an angel, but he himself named them*") out of the land of Egypt, secondly (not as A. V., "*afterward*," but it indicates a second deed of the Lord, His first-mentioned having been the deliverance out of Egypt) destroyed them that believed not (viz. by forbidding their entrance into the land of promise [see Heb. iii. 18], and slaying them in the wilderness. This example is not mentioned in 2 Pet. ii., but instead of it, the judgment of the flood).

6.] *Second example:* the rebel angels. See 2 Pet. ii. 4. And (the connexion with the foregoing is very close) angels, those which kept not (angels is probably indefinite, and then what follows designates those angels who are meant) their own dignity (some interpret as A. V., "*first estate*," "original condition;" some again, "*the government which was over them*," viz. that of God. But seeing that angels are often in the New Test. called "*governments*," or "*powers*," as they also were among the Jews, and that such meaning answers best to the parallel clause which follows, there can be little doubt that the rendering *government*, or *principality*, or *dignity*, is right. The fact alluded to is probably that which is obscurely indicated in Gen. vi. 2. See Introduction), but left their own [proper] habitation (viz. hea-



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

great day. <sup>r</sup> 7 And how that <sup>s</sup> Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, giving themselves over to fornication, and going away after strange flesh, are in like manner to these set forth for an example, suffering the just punishment of eternal fire. <sup>8</sup> <sup>s</sup> In like manner nevertheless these dreamers also defile the flesh, despise dominion, and <sup>t</sup> speak evil of <sup>†</sup> dignities. <sup>9</sup> Yet <sup>u</sup> Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, <sup>x</sup> durst not bring against him a railing accusation,

<sup>7</sup> Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. <sup>8</sup> Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. <sup>9</sup> Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation,

ven), He hath kept (in sharp contrast to "which kept not") against the judgment of the great day (at the end of the world) in eternal bonds under darkness (the darkness being considered as brooding over them, and they under it. There is apparently a difference, which we cannot explain, between the description of the rebel angels here and in the parallel place, 2 Pet. ii. 4, and that in the rest of the New Test., where the devil and his angels are said to be powers of the air, and to go about tempting men. But perhaps we are wrong in absolutely identifying the evil spirits mentioned here with those spoken of in 2 Peter).

7.] *Third example:* Sodom and Gomorrah. See 2 Pet. ii. 6. **How** (not "even as," as A. V.) **Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, following fornication in like manner to these** (i. e. to the angels above mentioned. The manner was similar, because the angels committed fornication with another race than themselves, thus also *going away after strange flesh*), and **going away after** (it was a departure from the appointed course of nature, and seeking after that which was unnatural) **other flesh** (than that appointed by God for the fulfilment of natural desire. The sin of Sodom was afterwards common in the most enlightened nations of antiquity: see Rom. i. 27. But in all probability Sodom and Gomorrah must be numbered among those whose sin went further even than this: compare Lev. xviii. 22—25. See 2 Pet. ii. 10), are

set forth as an example, undergoing (to this day, present participle; alluding to the natural phenomena of the Dead Sea) the just punishment of eternal fire (the sense is, undergoing the punishment, as may even now be seen, of eternal fire: of that fire which shall never be quenched).

8 ff.] *Designation of these evil men as following the same destructive courses.* In like manner nevertheless (i. e. notwithstanding these warning examples) these men in their dreams (the term represents that state of dreaming in the sleep of sin, out of which men are so often called on to awake to righteousness and the light of Christ: so Arnaud, "cependant ceux-ci, comme des gens qui agissent sans savoir ce qu'ils font, comme s'ils révaient, pour ainsi dire . . .") defile the flesh (by unnatural lusts, as in verse 7, the flesh, generally: not, 'their flesh,' but our common flesh), and despise lordship, and speak evil of glories (of what sort? Some understand those of kings and Cesars: others include ecclesiastical rulers and Apostles. But to neither of these meanings can verses 9, 10 be fitted: and it becomes therefore necessary to understand the words of celestial lordships and dignities: probably in both cases those of the holy angels).

9.] **But Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed concerning the body of Moses, dared not** (by the context, from reverence for Satan's former glory) **bring against him a judgment of evil speaking** (i. e. as

<sup>r</sup> Gen. xix. 24.  
<sup>s</sup> Deut. xxix.  
23. <sup>2</sup> Pet. ii.  
6.

<sup>s</sup> 2 Pet. ii. 10.

<sup>t</sup> Exod. xxii.  
28.

<sup>†</sup> Literally,  
glories.  
<sup>u</sup> Dan. x. 13.  
& xii. 1.  
Rev. xii. 7.

<sup>x</sup> 2 Pet. ii. 11.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

but said, *The Lord rebuke thee.* <sup>10</sup> *But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.* <sup>11</sup> *Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

but said, <sup>y</sup> *The Lord rebuke thee.* <sup>y</sup> *Zech. iii. 2.*  
<sup>10 z</sup> *But these speak evil of whatever* <sup>z</sup> *2 Pet. ii. 12.*  
 things they know not: but whatever things they know naturally, as the irrational animals, in these they corrupt themselves. <sup>11</sup> *Woe unto them, for they went in the way* <sup>a</sup> *of Cain,* <sup>a</sup> *Gen. iv. 5.*  
 and <sup>b</sup> *ran greedily after the error of* <sup>b</sup> *1 John iii. 12.*  
<sup>7, 21.</sup> <sup>2</sup> *Pet. ii. 15.*

A. V. a railing accusation: a sentence savouring of, belonging to, *evil speaking*), but said, *The Lord rebuke thee* (the source of the tradition to which St. Jude here refers as familiar to his readers, is not known with any certainty. Origen says, "In the Ascension of Moses, of which book the Apostle Jude makes mention in his Epistle, Michael the archangel, disputing with the devil concerning the body of Moses, says . . ." No such tradition is found in any apocryphal or rabbinical book now extant. In the targum of Jonathan on Deut. xxxiv. 6, it is stated that the grave of Moses was given into the special custody of Michael. Some have given an allegorical interpretation, understanding by the *body of Moses* the law, or Jewish polity, or even people: and, thus interpreting, fix the occasion very variously: at the giving of the law: at the siege under Zerkiah, or the rebuilding under Zerubbabel. All such explanations are of course out of the question: and the literal matter of fact alone to be held fast. It is, however, remarkable, that the same words, *The Lord rebuke thee*, are spoken by the angel to the devil in Zech. iii. 1—3. This has led some, e. g. Bede, to imagine, that this was the occasion referred to, when Joshua and Satan stood as adversaries concerning the deliverance of Israel from captivity. The only straightforward conclusion is, that St. Jude took the incident from primitive tradition, which tradition, slightly modified, is also given by the prophet Zechariah. That the incident is related as matter of fact, and not as an "argumentum ad hominem," is evident by the very form of it. That, being thus related as matter of fact, it is matter of fact, is a conclusion which will or will not be made, according as we are or are not persuaded of the authenticity of our Epistle as a part of canonical Scripture: and according as we esteem that canonical

Scripture itself).

10.] *Contrast of the behaviour of these persons to that just related.* 2 Pet. ii. 12. *These on the other hand, whatever things they know not, speak evil of (the reference in whatever things they know not is to the spiritual world. Those who understand dominion and glories above of human authorities, are at a loss for an explanation here: so Arnaud, "il est assez difficile de préciser, quelles étaient ces choses qu'ignoraient cesi mpies"): but whatever things naturally, as the irrational animals, they understand (viz. the objects of sense: of which the flesh, ver. 8, has already been mentioned as one. naturally, i. e. instinctively: In 2 Pet. ii. 12, the comparison to irrational creatures is not confined to the sort of knowledge which they have, but is extended to the persons themselves and their conduct), in these (in the element and region of these) they corrupt themselves (or, are depraved).*

11.] The description is interrupted by a denunciation on them for having followed in the steps of former ungodly men. *Woe unto them* (so also St. Paul, 1 Cor. ix. 16, "*woe is unto me!*" from which it appears that Bengel is not exact, when he says "that this apostle only, and in this place only, uses the imprecation"): *for they went by the way* (the past tenses are probably anticipatory, as looking back on their course: as those in John xvii.,—"I glorified Thee on the earth, &c.") In an English version we are sometimes [though not here] compelled to render these by our perfect, "*they have gone,*" &c.) of Cain (how? I have treated some of the explanations in my Greek Test. The most probable answer is that given by Stier and Huther, that the point of comparison is that selfish regard and envy which was at the root of Cain's sin), and *rushed after* (so literally) the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

Balaam for reward, and perished  
<sup>c</sup> in the gainsaying of Korah.  
<sup>12 d</sup> These are the rocks in your <sup>e</sup> love-  
 feasts, when they feast with you  
 without fear, pasturing their own  
 selves: <sup>f</sup> clouds they are without  
 water, <sup>g</sup> carried <sup>†</sup> away by winds;  
 autumn trees without fruit, twice  
 dead, <sup>h</sup> plucked up by the roots;  
<sup>13 i</sup> raging waves of the sea, <sup>k</sup> foam-  
 ing out their own shame; wander-

*Balaam for reward, and  
 perished in the gainsaying  
 of Core.* <sup>12</sup> *These are  
 spots in your feasts of  
 charity, when they feast  
 with you, feeding them-  
 selves without fear: clouds  
 they are without water,  
 carried about of winds;  
 trees whose fruit withereth,  
 without fruit, twice dead,  
 plucked up by the roots;  
 13* *raging waves of the  
 sea, foaming out their own*

<sup>c</sup> Numb. xvi.  
 1, &c.  
<sup>d</sup> 2 Pet. ii. 13.  
<sup>e</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 21.

<sup>f</sup> Prov. xxv. 14.  
<sup>g</sup> 2 Pet. ii. 17.  
<sup>†</sup> Eph. iv. 14.  
<sup>†</sup> *No all our  
 MSS.*

<sup>h</sup> Matt. xv. 13.

<sup>i</sup> Isa. lvii. 20.  
<sup>k</sup> Phil. iii. 19.

error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying (either instrumental, "perished in gainsaying, as K," or local, "perished in," i.e. as included in, "the g. of K," i.e. when we read of K. and his company perishing in their gainsaying, we read of these too, as perishing after the same example. This latter seems preferable, on account of the parallelism with the other two clauses) of Korah (the common point being, that they like Korah despised God's ordinances. *Gainsaying*, because Korah and his company spoke against Moses).

12, 13.] *Continuation of the description of these ungodly men.* 2 Pet. ii. 13, 17.—**These are rocks [which are] in your love-feasts** (the Greek word [*spiladés*] is interpreted to mean *rocks under water*. They were the rocks on which the love-feasts [*agapæ*] stood in danger of being wrecked. It is unnecessary and unjustifiable to attempt to give the word any other meaning, as some have done on account of the "*spots*" [*spiloi*] in 2 Pet. ii. 13. But each passage must stand on its own ground), **feasting with you** (it may mean, feasting together: but the other is more probable) **fearlessly** (without any fear of the consequences for themselves; or, as some take it, for you), **pasturing their own selves** (using the *love-feasts* not for their legitimate purpose, the realization of the unity of Christians by social union, but for their own purposes, the enjoyment of their lusts, and the furtherance of their schemes. See Ezek. xxxiv. 1; the parallelism of which has however been too far pressed here by Grotius and Bengel, "*feeding themselves, not the flock*:" which thought does not seem to be in the context, but merely that they feed and pasture themselves in the *love-feasts*,

having no regard to the Shepherd [or shepherds] set over them): **clouds without water** (see on "*wells without water*" in 2 Pet. ii. 17. Water is *expected* from clouds), **carried out of course by winds** (here our text is the more concise: St. Peter having, as above, the "*wells without water*" separate from the "*clouds carried by a storm*." Prov. xxv. 14. **carried away**, borne by, or as above, borne out of their course, hither and thither), **autumn trees** (i.e. as trees are in the late autumn: **without fruit** explaining it, see below: "trees as in late autumn, without fruit or leaves." It does not mean that their fruit is withered, as Beza [and consequently A. V.]), **without fruit** (as trees at the time above mentioned; but there is nothing in this word to indicate whether fruit has been on them or not), **twice dead** (it is not easy to explain these words in reference to trees. For that we must do so, and not desert the similitude, and understand it of spiritual death twice inflicted, or of death here and in eternity, must be evident by "*plucked up by the roots*" following. The most likely reference of the word is to the double death in a tree, which is not only as it seems to the eye in common with other trees, in the apparent death of winter, but really dead: dead to appearance, and dead in reality), **rooted out** (the various descriptive clauses form a climax: not only without leaves and fruit, but dead: not only dead, but plucked up and thrown aside. "Tous ces mots sont des métaphores énergiques pour montrer le néant de ces impures, la légèreté de leur conduite, la stérilité de leur foi et l'absence de leurs bonnes mœurs." Arnaud): 13.] **wild waves of the sea, foaming up their own shames** (see Isa. lvii. 20: "The

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. <sup>14</sup> And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, <sup>15</sup> to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. <sup>16</sup> These are murmurers, complainers,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

ing stars, <sup>1</sup> to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. <sup>14</sup> Yea, and Enoch, <sup>m</sup> the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, <sup>n</sup> the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy ones, <sup>15</sup> to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they ungodly committed, and of all their <sup>o</sup> hard speeches which ungodly sinners spoke against him. <sup>16</sup> These are murmurers, complainers, walk-

<sup>1</sup> 2 Pet. ii. 17.

<sup>m</sup> Gen. v. 18.

<sup>n</sup> Deut. xxxiii. 2. Dan. vii. 10. Zech. xiv. 5. Matt. xxv. 31. 2 Thess. i. 7. Rev. i. 7.

<sup>o</sup> 1 Sam. ii. 3. Ps. xxxi. 18. & xciv. 4. Mal. iii. 18.

wicked are like the troubled sea, whose waters cast up mire and dirt," which beyond doubt has been in the Writer's mind. shames, plural, either, each his own shame, or all their own disgraces, instances of disgraceful conduct), wandering stars, for whom the blackness of darkness is reserved for ever (see 2 Pet. ii. 17, where nearly the same words occur. wandering stars,—in the Greek, planet stars,—would seem most probably to indicate comets, which [as in Oct. 1858] astonish the world for a time, and then pass away into darkness. The similitude would not find any propriety as applied to the planets, properly so called: for there can be no allusion to the astronomical fact of their being naturally opaque bodies, as Bengel imagines. Many Commentators have supposed that the similitude is to be understood of teachers, who would enlighten others, and yet are doomed to darkness themselves: so Eusebius, comparing the transformation into an angel of light, 2 Cor. xi. 14. But the context does not justify this. Rather should we say, these professing Christians, by their profession lights in the world, instead of letting that light shine on more and more into the perfect day, are drifting about in strange errors of doctrine and practice till it will be utterly extinguished in eternal darkness). <sup>14, 15.</sup> Prophecy of Enoch respecting them:—see below.—

Yea, and of these prophesied Enoch, seventh from Adam ("mentioned to commend the antiquity of the prophecy," Calvin. Possibly also the fact of seven

being the sacred number may have been in view, as Bengel: "The word is not without mystery, seeing that immunity from death and the sacred number concur." Several similar designations are quoted: e.g. Philo alleges Moses to have been the seventh generation from Abraham. A rabbinical writer on Numb. xxv. 12, says, "Phineas was the seventh progeny from Jacob our father"), saying, Behold, the Lord ("the name Jehovah [of which the Lord is the rendering] was already known in the time of Enoch," Bengel) came (the historic tense of prophecy) among (in, as surrounded by) His holy myriads (of angels: see Deut. xxxiii. 2; Zech. xiv. 5, Heb. xii. 22), to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the impious concerning all their works of impiety which they impiously did, and concerning all the hard things which impious sinners spoke against Him.—I have discussed in the Introduction the question as to the source of this citation, and its relation to the present apocryphal book of Enoch. I will only here set down the passage as it at present stands in De Sacy's version: "And He came with ten thousands of His holy ones, to hold judgment on them, and destroy the impious, and fight with all carnal men for all things which sinners and impious men have done and wrought against Him."

<sup>16.</sup> Continuation of the description, especially with reference to the concluding words of the prophecy.—These are murmurers (properly, they who within their

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

ing after their own lusts; and <sup>p</sup> their mouth speaketh great swelling words, <sup>q</sup> having men's persons in admiration for the sake of advantage. <sup>r</sup> But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; <sup>s</sup> that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, walking after their own ungodly lusts. <sup>t</sup> These be they who separate themselves, <sup>u</sup> sensual, not

<sup>p</sup> 2 Pet. ii. 18.  
<sup>q</sup> Prov. xxviii. 21. James ii. 1, 9.  
<sup>r</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 2.  
<sup>s</sup> 1 Thm. iv. 1. 2 Tim. iii. 1. & iv. 8. 2 Pet. ii. 1. & iii. 3.  
<sup>t</sup> Prov. xviii. 1. Ezek. xiv. 7. Hos. iv. 14. & ix. 10. Heb. x. 25.  
<sup>u</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 14. James iii. 15.

walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. <sup>17</sup> But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; <sup>18</sup> how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. <sup>19</sup> These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not

teeth and without words blame another who displeases them. Murmurers against what, is not said: probably against the appointments and ordinances of God) dissatisfied with their lot (Philo uses the Greek word of the Israelites complaining in the wilderness), walking according to their lusts (this is closely connected with the preceding: it is their base desires craving satisfaction which make them querulous and discontented), and their mouth speaketh great swelling things (see 2 Pet. ii. 18 note), admiring [men's] persons (holding mere outward appearances, dignities, of men in admiration) for the sake of advantage.

17, 18.] *Exhortation to remember how the Apostles forewarned them of these men.*—But ye, beloved (see again below, ver. 20), remember the words which were before spoken by the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ (this can hardly be cited as evidence on one side or the other on the question whether St. Jude himself was an Apostle. He *might* use the expression, being himself an Apostle: he is certainly more likely to have used it, not being one. According to the critical text, St. Peter uses the same expression, without the “us,” 2 Pet. iii. 2: and whichever view is taken as to the genuineness or otherwise of 2 Peter, there could be no intention by such an expression to exclude either the real or the pretended St. Peter from the number of the Apostles), that they told you (whether by writing, or by word of mouth, does not appear: so that we cannot say, with Bengel, “hence we see that they to whom Jude is writing, had heard the other Apostles also.” It is worthy of

remark that he does not say *they told us*, but *you*; hereby again not indeed making it certain that he included himself among the Apostles, but making it very uncertain, whether he intends to *exclude* himself) that at the last of the time (see notes on 2 Pet. iii. 3: Heb. i. 2: 1 Pet. i. 20: i. e., at the end of the world, in the last age of the Church) there shall be scoffers (men who sport with what is holy and good. The prophecy is contained in 2 Tim. iii. 1, 1 Tim. iv. 1, Acts xx. 29, and doubtless formed a constant subject of viva voce warning. 2 Pet. iii. 1, 2, can hardly be supposed to be referred to, for that place is, as this, a reminiscence of things before said by the Apostles, and nearly in the same words), walking according to their own lusts of impieties (so literally; indicating the direction, or perhaps the character of those desires. Compare the same words above, ver. 16).

19.] *Last characteristics of these men.* These are they that separate (or “are separating,” viz. from the Church, having no real sympathy with the spirit of the Gospel)—that draw lines of distinction, by walking after their own desires, not in the path of the Church's obedience, thus separating both themselves from you, and you from themselves), sensual (we have no English word for the quality here implied in the Greek word *psychikos*; and our biblical psychology is, by this defect, entirely at fault. The psyche is the centre of the personal being, the “I” of each individual. It is in each man bound to the spirit, man's higher part, and to the body, man's lower part; drawn upwards by the one, downwards by the other. He who



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

the Spirit. <sup>20</sup> But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, <sup>21</sup> keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. <sup>22</sup> And of some have compassion, making a difference: <sup>23</sup> and others

oldest MSS.  
b Amos iv. 11.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

having the Spirit. <sup>20</sup> But ye, beloved, <sup>x</sup> building up yourselves on your most holy faith, <sup>y</sup> praying in the Holy Ghost, <sup>21</sup> keep yourselves in the love of God, <sup>z</sup> looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. <sup>22</sup> And some indeed convict, † when they contend with you †; <sup>23</sup> but others <sup>a</sup> save †, <sup>b</sup> pull-

a Rom. xi. 14. 1 Tim. iv. 10.  
b Zech. iii. 2. 1 Cor. iii. 15.

† with fear is omitted by all our oldest MSS.

<sup>x</sup> Col. ii. 7.  
<sup>y</sup> 1 Tim. i. 4.  
<sup>z</sup> Rom. viii. 26.  
Eph. vi. 18.  
<sup>z</sup> Titus ii. 13.  
<sup>z</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 12.  
† The ancient MSS. are divided; see note.  
† So all our

gives himself up to the lower appetites, is *fleshly*: he who by communion of his spirit with God's Spirit is employed in the higher aims of his being, is *spiritual*. He who rests midway, thinking only of self and self's interests, whether animal or intellectual, is the *psychikos*, the selfish man, the man in whom the spirit is sunk and degraded into subordination to the subordinate *psyche*. In the lack of any adequate word, I have retained the "sensual" of the A. V., though the impression which it gives is a wrong one: "selfish" would be as bad, for the *psychikos* may be an amiable and generous man; "animal" would be worse: "intellectual," worse still. If the word were not so ill-looking in our language, "psychic" would be a great gain), not having the spirit (see above, not directly the Holy Spirit of God, but the higher spiritual life of man's spirit in communion with the Holy Spirit. These men have not indeed ceased to have a spirit, as a part of their own tripartite nature: but they have ceased to possess it in any worthy sense: it is degraded beneath and under the power of the *psyche*, the personal life, so as to have no real vitality of its own).

20-23.] CONCLUDING EXHORTATION TO THE READERS: and a) vv. 20, 21, as to their own spiritual life.—But ye, beloved (resumed from ver. 17), building up yourselves upon (as a foundation) your most holy faith (the faith here is the foundation; viz. the faith which is believed, the object of faith. Elsewhere in Scripture, CHRIST is this foundation, see 1 Cor. i. 11; which in fact comes to the same, for He is the Author and Finisher of our faith, the *alpha* and *omega*), praying in the Holy Spirit (as the means of thus building yourselves up. The expression is not found elsewhere, but is in strict

analogy with Scripture usage: compare "speaking in the Spirit,"—also Rom. viii. 26, Eph. vi. 18), keep yourselves (in the original, said of the one great life-long act to be accomplished by the building up and praying) in the love of God (within that region of peculiar love wherewith God regards all who are built up on the faith and sustained by prayer: of God being a subjective genitive, "God's love," not objective, the love towards God. The expression is very like "abide in my love," John xv. 9, where "I also loved you" preceding fixes the meaning to be Christ's love to them), looking for (present participle, as in Tit. ii. 13, where see note. It is to be the habit of the life, as those other present participles, building up and praying) the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ (viz. that which He will shew at His coming. Huther remarks that *mercy*, more usually predicated of the Father, is in the addresses of the Pastoral Epistles, and of 2 John, attributed to the Father and Son jointly) unto eternal life (these words may be joined with *mercy*,—that *mercy*, whose issue shall be eternal life; or with looking for,—as the issue and aim of the expectation; or with keep yourselves,—as the final terminus of that watchful guarding. Perhaps the right choice between the three will be to combine the two last: for keep yourselves is subordinate and conditional to looking for: "keep yourselves . . . in expectation of . . . unto"). The direct and studied reference to the Blessed Trinity will not escape the reader. b) vv. 22, 23.] Exhortation as to their conduct with reference to the persons previously stigmatized in the Epistle.—And some indeed convict when contending with you (or, "when separating from you." These appear to be the only two meanings of the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

† So our three oldest MSS.

e Zech. iii. 4, 5. Rev. iii. 4.

d Rom. xvi. 25. Eph. iii. 20.

† See note.

e Col. i. 22.

f Rom. xvi. 27. 1 Tim. i. 17. & ii. 3.

† So all our oldest MSS.

† So all our oldest MSS.

ing them out of the fire; and of others have compassion with fear †, hating even <sup>c</sup> the garment spotted by the flesh. <sup>24</sup> <sup>d</sup> But unto him that is able to keep you † from falling, and <sup>e</sup> to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, <sup>25</sup> <sup>f</sup> to the only wise God our Saviour through Jesus Christ our Lord †, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time †, and now, and to all ages. Amen.

save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. <sup>24</sup> Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, <sup>25</sup> to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

original word which suit the context.—This is the first class: that of those who oppose themselves, who must be convicted and down-argued. According to the commonly received text, the rendering will be, as A. V., “*of some have compassion, making a difference,*” viz., between them and the others); but others save (attempt to save; this, and not the absolute command, is implied in the original word), snatching them from the fire (the same passage in the prophets, Zech. iii. 1–3, which has already been before St. Jude’s mind in ver. 9, again furnishes him with the material of this figure. There we read, “*Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?*” compare also Amos iv. 11. The fire is most probably not future eternal fire: but the present hell into which their corrupt doctrines and practices have cast them, not however without reference to its ending in fire eternal. This is the second class; including, perhaps, any over whom your influence extends, as younger members of the Church, &c., whom you can thus rescue by snatching them out of the fire of temptation and peril), and others compassionate in fear (on what account, is shewn by what follows: “*lest you yourselves should suffer pollution.*” This is the third class: consisting of those whom not falling in the way of so as personally to convict, nor having influence over so as to rescue, the believers could only compassionate [and on occasion given, lovingly help] as led away hopelessly to their ruin: but in shewing such compassion, they were to maintain a wholesome fear of their deadly error, for fear they themselves

should become defiled by it.—The following clause is explanatory of “*in fear*”), hating (not, “*seeing that ye hate,*” nor “*though ye hate:*” the present participle simply falls under and expands the former clause, thus forming part of the command) even the (or, “*their*”) garment which has received defilement from the flesh (hating not merely fleshly pollution itself, but even the traces and outskirts of it; even that, be it what it may, which has its mark and stain upon it. On the sense, see Rev. iii. 4).

24, 25.] CONCLUDING DOXOLOGY, conceived in terms referring to their state of danger and necessity of divine upholding. But (this word, as in Rom. xvi. 25, closes off all other considerations and sums up all in this one. It is not at all given by the “*now*” of the A. V., which conveys a strictly temporal idea to the hearer) to Him that is able (exactly thus, Rom. xvi. 25) to keep you without falling, and to set [you] before-the-presence-of His glory (which will be revealed when the Son of man shall come, in His glory, and of His Father, and of the holy angels, Luke ix. 26, in the “*manifestation of the glory of the great God and of our Saviour Jesus Christ,*” Tit. ii. 13) blameless (see 1 Thess. iii. 13) in (element, in which they will be found) great-rejoicing (the word signifies the exuberance of triumphant joy: the corresponding verb occurs in 1 Pet. i. 6). to the only God our Saviour through Jesus Christ our Lord (on the union of God with Saviour, see Introduction to the Pastoral Epistles, § 1. 34. Observe the qualification here), be glory, majesty,

might and power, before all time (before the whole age, i. e., of the world. Thus we have eternity past), and now (thus, time present), and to all the ages (thus, eternity future).—Amen (the ordinary

conclusion of a doxology: compare Rom. i. 15, 1 Pet. iv. 11 [and 2 Pet. iii. 18, where, as here, it stands at the end of the Epistle]).

# THE REVELATION

OF

JOHN.

AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

I. <sup>1</sup> THE Revelation of Jesus Christ, <sup>a</sup> which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants what

<sup>a</sup> John iii. 32. & vii. 26. & xii. 49.

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

I. <sup>1</sup> *THE Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things*

CHAP. I. 1—3.] SUPERScription: in which the contents and Writer of the book are declared, and the importance of its subject indicated by a blessing on those who shall read and hear it.

The Revelation (revelation) imports the manifestation of holy mysteries by the enlightening of the leading faculties of the soul, either by divinely imparted dreams, or in a waking vision by divine illumination. Here, the word need not be taken in any but this its general sense, as in 2 Cor. xii. 1, where it is plural; the particular purpose of this revelation follows) of Jesus Christ (how is this genitive to be understood? Is our Lord the subject or the object? Clearly here the former: for it is not Christ who is here revealed, except in a remote sense: but Christ who reveals, as is plain in what follows), which God (the Father) gave to Him (Stern asks, "How are we to understand this? Is not Christ very God, of one essence with the Father from eternity? Did He not, by virtue of the omniscience of His divine nature, know as exactly as the Father, what should be the process of the world's history, what the fate of the Church? What purpose was served by a revelation from God to Jesus?" He proceeds to say that the words cannot refer merely to the revelation as made to *us*, but are clearly against such an interpretation: and gives, at some length and very well, that which in one form or other all will accept as the true explanation, in ac-

cordance with John vii. 16, xiv. 10, xvii. 7, 8. The man Christ Jesus, even in His glorified state, receives from the Father, by his hypostatic union with Him, that revelation which by His Spirit He imparts to His Church. For, Acts i. 7, the times and seasons are kept by the Father in His own power: and of the day and the hour knoweth no man, not the angels in heaven, nor even the Son, but the Father only, Mark xiii. 32. I may observe, that the coincidence in statement of this deep point of doctrine between the Gospel of St. John and the Apocalypse, is at least remarkable), to shew (is this infinitive of the purpose dependent on the verb gave, or on the substantive revelation? Is it the purpose of God in giving, or the purpose of the revelation in revealing, that is asserted? At all events, Heinrichs is wrong, who takes together, "*which God gave* [empowered] *Him to shew.*" But of the others, the construction with gave is the more probable, as being the more usual: "that He might shew," &c. And the verb shew must not here be confined to its stricter meaning of shewing in vision: for then we must confine the reference of "*his servants*" to the Apocalyptic Seer alone: but must be taken in its wider sense of exhibiting as knowledge, informing of. So in Matt. xvi. 21) to His (Christ's, most probably, as below in this verse, and ch. ii. 20: for thus the He is kept to the same subject throughout) servants (here meaning all Christians,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: <sup>2</sup> who bare record of the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

things <sup>b</sup> must shortly come to pass; and <sup>c</sup> he signified it sending by his angel unto his servant John: <sup>2</sup> <sup>d</sup> who

<sup>b</sup> ch. iv. 1.  
ver. 3.

<sup>c</sup> ch. xxii. 16.

<sup>d</sup> 1 Cor. i. 6.  
ch. vi. 9. &  
xii. 17.  
ver. 9.

not prophets only. That John himself is one of these *servants* below, does not affect this general meaning) **what things must** (by the necessity of the divine decree: see Matt. xvii. 10, xxiv. 6, xxvi. 54 al.) **come to pass shortly** (i.e. *before long*). The context, the repetition below, "*for the time is at hand,*" and the parallel ch. xxii. 6, followed, ver. 7, by "*Lo, I come quickly,*" fix this meaning here, as distinguished from the other of '*swiftly,*' which is also precluded by the form of construction in the original. This expression must not be urged to signify that the events of apocalyptic prophecy were to be close at hand: for we have a key to its meaning in Luke xviii. 8, where our Lord says, "*Shall not God avenge His elect, which cry unto Him day and night, even if He is long-suffering with them? I say unto you that He will avenge them shortly:*" where long delay is evidently implied. Hengstenberg repudiates this, and says it is self-evident that these words can only be adduced here "by a wrong method of interpretation." But surely the two cases are exactly parallel: and his strong language here, as elsewhere, proves nothing. His own interpretation of the words, natural as he seems to think it, is forced and unwarrantable. He (in common with many others) takes them to mean that the events spoken of would very soon *begin* to take place. The axe, he says, lay at the root of the Roman Empire when John wrote this, as it did at the root of the Persian Empire when Daniel wrote. But this interpretation is not borne out by the Greek. The words cannot signify "which must soon *begin* to come to pass," but, "which, in their entirety, must soon come to pass." So that we are driven to the very same sense of **shortly** as that in Luke xviii. above, viz. to *God's speedy time*, though He seem to delay: in spite of the scorn which Hengstenberg pours on this meaning. His maxim, that a Prophet, speaking to men, must speak according to men's ideas, is quite worthless, and may be confuted by any similar prophetic saying, even by the one which he brings in its favour, Hagg. ii. 7: and his complaint, that thus we make the Seer and

even the Lord Himself like bad physicians who delude their patients with false hopes [so, in the main, Stern also], is unworthy of a Christian Expositor, after our Lord's own plain use of the same method of speech again and again in His prophecies in the Gospels and in this book. It remains to observe, that these words cannot with any fairness be used as furnishing a guide to the interpretation of the prophecy. They are far rather to be regarded as a prophetic formula, common with Him to whom a thousand years are as one day, and used in order to teach us how short our time, and the time of this our world, is. See on the whole, Ebrard's able note, and his remarks on the absurdity of Hengstenberg's pressing the words in favour of his praterist scheme; and He (*Jesus Christ*, not *God*, see ch. xxii. 16: the subject is changed, and the relative construction abandoned. So almost all Commentators) signified [it] sending by His angel (the Angel mentioned is the same who informs the Seer in chap. xvii. 1, 7, 15, xix. 9, xxi. 9, xxii. 1, 6, which latter place takes up this; ib. 8 ff.; and who is spoken of by our Lord ib. 16. It is remarkable that this angel does not appear as the impartor of the visions until ch. xvii. Some indeed, as Ewald, have fancied that they trace his presence in ch. iv. 1 and throughout: but ch. xvii. 1 is too manifestly the introduction to a new appearance for this to be the case; and previously to that the Seer receives his information from different persons. Our Lord Himself opens the Apocalyptic vision; but it is another voice which calls John up to the place of heavenly vision, ch. iv. 1. In vii. 13, one of the four and twenty elders speaks to him: in x. 8, it is the former voice again which addresses him, and in ib. 9, it is the angel who stands on the earth and the sea that gives him the book. Only in the great close of the prophecy, opening with ch. xvii., does one angel stand by him; referred to, as here, under the name **the angel**. In the visions of Daniel and Zechariah an angel mediated: Dan. viii. 16, ix. 20, x. 10 ff., Zech. i. 1, 19, al.) to His servant John (on the whole question of the writer of the



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

testified the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, † as much<sup>e</sup> as he saw. <sup>3</sup> † Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for <sup>g</sup> the time is at hand.

<sup>4</sup> JOHN to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto

† So, omitting and, all our MSS.  
<sup>e</sup> 1 John i. 1.  
<sup>f</sup> Luke xi. 28.  
 ch. xxii. 7.

<sup>g</sup> Rom. xiii. 11.  
 James v. 8.  
 1 Pet. iv. 7.  
 ch. xxii. 10.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. <sup>3</sup> Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.*

<sup>4</sup> JOHN to the seven churches which are in Asia:

book, see Introduction), 2.] who testified of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, whatsoever things he saw (these words must, in all fairness of construction, be referred to this present book, and not, as by some of the older Expositors, and recently by Ebrard, to the Gospel of St. John. The reasons given by Ebrard for such reference will not hold: see my Greek Test. Besides, the Evangelist distinctly tells us, John xx. 30, that in writing his Gospel, he did not set down as much as he saw, but only a portion of the things which Jesus did in the presence of His disciples, whereas in the case of this Revelation it was otherwise: he set down all which he saw, as a faithful transmitter of the Apocalyptic vision to the churches).

3.] Blessed is (or *be*, in the ordinary meaning of blessed: not necessarily referring on to eternal blessedness, as Hengst.) he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy and observe the things written in it; for the time is near (it can hardly be reasonably denied that in the terms, he that readeth, and they that hear, the Apostle had in his mind the one public reader and the many hearers. And so the great majority of Commentators. If the words are to be thus understood as above, they form at least a solemn rebuke to the most unjustifiable practice of the Church of England, which omits with one or two exceptions the whole of this book from her public readings. Not one word of the precious messages of the Spirit to the Churches is ever heard in the public services of a Church never weary of appealing to her *Scriptural* liturgies. Surely it is high time, that our timid rulers should gather courage to face their duties, and such an omission should be supplied.— Notice that not three classes of persons, but two only, are here indicated: he that reads,

and they that hear and do. those things which are written therein are the several exhortations to repentance, faith, patience, obedience, prayer, watchfulness, stedfastness, which are scattered up and down in the prophecy. The *time being near* makes the book of the more importance, and the blessedness of reading and observing it greater. The *nearness* spoken of is to be understood as alluding to the shortly of verse 1, which see. We know little now of relative nearness and distance in point of time: when the day of the Lord shall have opened our eyes to the true measure, we shall see, how near it always was).

CH. I. 4—III. 22.] INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPHECY, in the form of a *sevenfold Epistle* to the seven churches of Asia. And herein, vv. 4, 5, *address and greeting*, ending with *doxology*. [Ebrard, who seems to love singularity for its own sake, objects to the above arrangement, because the sevenfold epistle has not yet begun, and prefers calling this a dedicatory title to the whole book. But the other view is far simpler and better. The sevenfold Epistle is clearly before St. John's mind, and, full of the images of the vision which he had seen, he only interrupts it by solemn ejaculatory references to the glories of that vision and the sublime announcement of the Lord's coming, and then hastens on to introduce it by a prefatory account of his own circumstances when the Epistles were entrusted to him, and of the appearance of the Lord who thus entrusted them.] JOHN to the seven churches which are in Asia (the form of address is exactly that in the Epistles of St. Paul: see Rom. i. 1 ff., 1 Cor. i. 1 ff., &c. That St. Paul, in Romans and elsewhere, is careful to designate himself and his office, and St. John introduces himself without any such designation, be-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; <sup>5</sup> and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

you, and peace, from him <sup>h</sup> which is, <sup>h</sup> Exod. iii. 14. ver. 8.  
and <sup>i</sup> which was, and which is to <sup>i</sup> John i. 1.  
come, <sup>k</sup> and from the seven Spirits <sup>k</sup> Zech. iii. 9. & iv. 10.  
which are before his throne; <sup>5</sup> and <sup>ch. iii. 1. & iv. 5. & v. d.</sup>  
from Jesus Christ, <sup>l</sup> the faithful wit- <sup>l</sup> John viii. 14.  
ness, the <sup>m</sup> first begotten of the dead, <sup>1</sup> Tim. vi. 13.  
<sup>m</sup> <sup>1</sup> Cor. xv. 20. <sup>ch. iii. 14.</sup>  
<sup>Col. i. 18.</sup>

longs doubtless in part to the individual character of the two Apostles, but is besides a strong testimony that the John who here writes needed no such designation in the eyes of those to whom he was writing. See this, and other evidence as to the authorship, urged in the Introduction. See on the seven churches below, ver. 11. Asia, as always in the New Test., is the proconsular province so called. It consisted of Phrygia, Mysia, Caria, and Lydia: under Mysia and Lydia including Ionia and Eolia, and the neighbouring islands of the Egean. It was called proconsular, because it was governed by one of consular rank, under the title of proconsul): **Grace be to you and peace** (so St. Paul in all his Epistles except the three pastoral) **from Him who is and who was and who is to come** (a paraphrase of the unspeakable name *Jehovah*, resembling the paraphrase "I AM THAT I AM" in Exod. iii. 14, for which the Jerusalem Targum has, as here, "HE WHO WAS AND IS AND IS TO COME:" as has the Targum of Jonathan in Deut. xxxii. 39. It follows from what is remarked above, that the meaning of **is to come** is not here to be pressed as referring to any future *coming*. By doing so we should confuse the meaning of the compound appellation, which evidently is all to be applied to the Father. By some **He which is** is supposed to mean the Father, which was the Son ["*in the beginning was the Word*"], and **which is to come** the Spirit, as ever proceeding forth and descending on the Church), and **from the seven spirits which [are] before His throne** (Andreas takes these for the seven principal angels [ch. viii. 2]: so also many other Commentators. But this is highly improbable, as these angels are never called "**spirits**," and as surely mere creatures, however exalted, would not be equalized with the Father and the Son as fountains of grace. The common view is doubtless right, which regards the seven as *the energies of the Holy Spirit*:—

"Thou the anointing Spirit art, Who dost thy sevenfold gifts impart:" but rather perhaps to be regarded as expressing His plenitude and perfection, than to be separately assigned as [but query?] in the lines following of the hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus*. The key to this expression, which is an anticipation of the visions afterwards to be related, is ch. v. 6, where see notes: as also on ch. iv. 5. The **seven** can hardly be entirely without allusion to the *seven churches*, and to the *sevenfold* imagery throughout. The number seven denotes completeness, and was much noted by the Jewish Commentators as occurring in the Old Test. The seven spirits betoken the completeness and universality of working of God's Holy Spirit, as the seven churches typify and indicate the whole church. The reference to Isa. xi. 2 is but lamely made out, there being there but *six* energies of the Spirit mentioned. That to Zech. iv. 2, 10 is more to the point: see notes as above), and **from Jesus Christ** (as we have before had the Father and the Holy Spirit mentioned as the sources of grace and peace, so now the Son, coming last, on account of that which is to follow respecting Him, which has respect to His threefold office of Prophet, King, and Priest: see however below), **the faithful witness** (see John xviii. 37, "*To this end came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth.*" It is to the general mission of the Redeemer to bear witness to the truth, and not merely to the apocalyptic portion of His testimony which is to follow, that this title must be referred. This book [ver. 2] is *the testimony of Jesus Christ*: but the *title* reaches far wider. Embracing as it does that *testimony* before Pontius Pilate, and indeed that of His whole life of witnessing to the truth, we can perhaps hardly say that it marks out his prophetic office with sufficient distinctness for us to believe it indicated here), **the first-born of the dead** (death is regarded as the womb of the earth, from which the resurrection

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

n Eph. i. 20.  
ch. xvii. 14.  
& xix. 16.  
o John xiii. 34.  
& xv. 9.  
Gal. ii. 20.  
† So all our  
old MSS.  
p Heb. ix. 14.  
1 John i. 7.  
† Or, loosed  
us; see note.  
q 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9.  
ch. v. 10. &  
xx. 6.  
† So all our  
old MSS.  
r 1 Tim. vi. 16.  
Heb. xiii. 21.  
1 Pet. iv. 11.  
& v. 11.  
† So the Alex-  
andrine MS.  
s Dan. vii. 13.  
Matt. xxiv. 30. & xxvi. 64. Acts i. 11. t Zech. xii. 10. John xix. 37.

and <sup>n</sup> the Ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto him <sup>o</sup> that † loveth us, <sup>p</sup> and † washed us from our sins in his blood, <sup>q</sup> and he <sup>r</sup> made us a kingdom †, even priests unto God and his Father; <sup>s</sup> to him be the glory and the dominion for ever †. Amen. <sup>t</sup> Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and <sup>u</sup> they which pierced him:

dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, <sup>6</sup> and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. <sup>7</sup> Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced

is the birth: see note on Col. i. 18: and Acts ii. 24 note. The *firstfruits of them that sleep*, 1 Cor. xv. 20, is quite a different figure), and the Ruler of the kings of the earth (this kingly office of Christ is reached through his death and resurrection. In Ps. lxxxix. 27, the combination of titles is much as here, "I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth." See also Isa. lv. 4. "That which the Tempter held forth to Jesus, Matt. iv. 8, on condition of worshipping Him, He has now attained by the way of his humiliation unto death; viz. victory over the world, John xvi. 33." De Wette).—Now follows, consequent upon the glorious titles of Christ which have been enumerated, an ascription of praise to Him for his inestimable love to us.—Unto Him that loveth us (the present tense includes in itself the past, "that loved us," which is the feebler, as it is the more obvious reading. It is His ever-abiding character, that He loveth his own, John xiii. 1: out of that love sprang the mighty act of love which follows: but it did not exhaust its infinite depth: it endures now, as then. The waiting till He become, in the unfolding of the Father's purposes, the acknowledged Head over his Church, is in reality as great a proof of that love now, as the Cross was then) and washed (or, loosed: the difference between the two words in Greek is only that of one letter) us from our sins in His blood (the past tense here points to a definite event, viz. his sacrifice of Himself. In such an image as this, which occurs again ch. vii. 14, we have enwrapped together the double virtue of the atoning blood of Christ in justification, the deliverance from the guilt of sin, and sanctification, the deliverance from the power of sin: the forensic and the inherent purity,

of both which it is the efficient medium: of the former by its application in faith, of the latter by such faith, in its power, uniting us to Him who is filled with the Spirit of holiness. See 1 John i. 7, and note), **6.] and he made [us] a kingdom** (viz. the kingdom of God or of heaven, so much spoken of by our Lord Himself and his Apostles: consisting of those who are His, and consummated at His glorious coming. This kingdom is one in which His saints will themselves reign: see the parallel place ch. v. 10, where "and they shall reign upon the earth" is added: and Dan. vii. 27: but above all the place which is here referred to, Exod. xix. 6, "but ye shall be to me a royal priesthood and a holy nation" [1 Pet. ii. 9]), **priests** (the kingdom was the collective description: priests is the individual designation. See on the union of the two characters in the individual Christian, the note on 1 Pet. ii. 9) **to** (as belonging to; the Father being the ultimate object of reference, as His will is the origin, and His glory the result, of all that is brought about by the mediatorial work of Christ) **God and His Father, to Him be** (or, is, belongs: the like ambiguity is found in all doxological sentences) **the glory and the might unto the ages** (i. e. for ever. See note on Gal. i. 5): **Amen.**

**7, 8.] A solemn announcement of the coming of Christ, and declaration, by way of ratification, of the majesty and omnipotence of God** [see below]. **Behold He** (the Person last spoken of: the subject being continued from the preceding verses) **cometh with the clouds** (the clouds, viz. of heaven: so expressed in Dan. vii. 13, and Mark xiv. 62: compare "in the cloud," ch. xi. 12), **and every eye shall see Him** (by a well-known figure, not merely Hebraistic but common to all tongues, the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. <sup>8</sup> I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. <sup>9</sup> I John, who

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

and all the tribes of the earth shall wail because of him. Yea, Amen.

<sup>8</sup> I am the Alpha and the Omega, † saith the Lord God †, † which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

<sup>9</sup> I John, † your brother, and

† Isa. xli. 4. & xlv. 6. & xlviii. 12. ver. 11, 17. ch. ii. 8. & xxi. 6. & xxii. 13. † the beginning and the ending is omitted in two out of

our three oldest MSS. It has apparently been inserted from ch. xxii. 13. † also is omitted in all our old MSS.

† So all our old MSS.

acting member is said to do that which the man does by its means. This is to be understood of the whole human race, risen and summoned before Him), and (among them: the and does not couple a separate class, but selects a prominent one) **they** which (said of the whole class: almost equivalent to "whoever:" "all they, who") pierced Him (see John xix. 36 f. and note. As there St. John evidently shews what a deep impression the whole circumstance here referred to produced on his own mind, so it is remarkable here that he should again take up the prophecy of Zechariah [xii. 10] which he there cites, and speak of it as fulfilled. That this should be so, and that it should be done with the same word pierced him, not found in the Septuagint version of the passage, is a strong presumption that the Gospel and the Apocalypse were written by the same person. The persons intended in this expression are beyond doubt those to whom our Lord prophesied in like terms, Matt. xxvi. 64; viz. those who were His murderers, whether the Jews who delivered Him to be crucified, or the Romans, who actually inflicted His death. That the meaning must not here be generalized to signify all who have by their sins crucified the Son of God afresh, is plain from the consideration that this class are taken out from among that indicated by "every eye shall see Him" which precedes, whereas on that supposition they would be identical with it; for we all have pierced Him in this sense), and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn at Him (i. e. their mourning shall be directed towards Him as its object: in fear for themselves in regard to the consequences of His coming. The prophecy is in allusion to Matt. xxiv. 30; and its sense, that all, even the holiest of men, shall mourn at the visible approach of that day. But as Bengel well remarks, there will be then two causes of mourning:

hostile terror, and penitential terror. The former will prevail in the impenitent and careless world; the latter even in the comforted and rejoicing church. The holiest saint, when that Presence is manifested, in the midst of his "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him and He will save us," will personally feel with St. Peter, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." The whole is an adaptation and amplification of the words of Zechariah xii. 10). **Yea, Amen** (both these words are used in 2 Cor. i. 20 as forms of ratification. Both together answer to the "Thus saith the Lord" of the prophets. Andreas remarks, that the **Yea** is according to the Greek usage, to shew the unchangeableness of the things said, the **Amen** according to the Hebrew usage, assuring us that no obstacle shall intervene so as to hinder their fulfilment). **I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, He that is and that was and that is to come, the Almighty** (by whom are these words spoken? Certainly as they here stand, they must be understood as uttered by the Eternal Father. And similarly we find Him that sitteth on the throne speaking in ch. xxi. 5 ff. In our ver. 17, and in ch. xxii. 13, it is our Lord who speaks. Nor need we be surprised, that He who is of one essence with the Father should assert of Himself the same eternal being as the Father. This need not lead us to force the reference of any passage, but each must be ruled by considerations of its own context. Schöttgen gives examples of the Rabbinical usage of "from Aleph even to Tau," to signify "completely," "entirely:" and of the word *A-th* being a name of the glory of God, because it comprehends all the letters. The title Almighty answers in the Septuagint version of the Old Test. to the Hebr. *Jehovah Sabaoth*, also to *Shaddai*).

9—20.] Introduction to the Epistles.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

y Phil. i. 7. &  
iv. 14.  
2 Tim. i. 8.  
† in the is  
omitted in all  
our old  
MSS.  
z Rom. viii. 17.  
2 Tim. ii. 12.  
† So two of our  
three oldest  
MSS.: others  
vary, but  
only one  
later MS.  
reads as the  
A.V.

a ver. 2. ch. vi. 9.  
b Acts x. 10. 2 Cor. xii. 2.

y companion in the tribulation and †  
z kingdom and patience † in Jesus,  
was in the isle that is called Pat-  
mos, <sup>a</sup> on account of the word of  
God, and † the testimony of Jesus †.  
10<sup>b</sup> I was in the Spirit on <sup>c</sup> the

† for is omitted by two of our oldest MSS.  
c John xx. 20.

also am your brother, and  
companion in tribulation,  
and in the kingdom and  
patience of Jesus Christ,  
was in the isle that is  
called Patmos, for the  
word of God, and for the  
testimony of Jesus Christ.  
10 I was in the Spirit on

† Christ is omitted by all our old MSS.  
Acts xx. 7. 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

*Appearance of our Lord to St. John, and  
command to write what he saw, and to  
send it to the seven churches.* 9.]

*Description of the Writer, and of the  
place where the Revelation was seen.*

I John (so again ch. xxii. 8: so Daniel, viii. 1, ix. 2, x. 2) your brother (no inference can be drawn against the apostleship of the Writer from this his designation of himself. Indeed from his entire silence respecting himself in his Gospel, we may well believe that here, where mention of his name was absolutely required, it would be introduced thus humbly and unobtrusively), and fellow-partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance [or, patience] in Jesus (the construction and arrangement are peculiar. The conjunction of these terms seems to be made to express, a partaker, as in the kingdom, so in the tribulation and endurance which are in and by Christ: but the insertion of kingdom between tribulation and endurance is startling. Probably, the tribulation brings in the kingdom [Acts xiv. 22], and then as a corrective to the idea that the kingdom in its blessed fulness was yet present, the endurance is subjoined. "John introduces three portions of inheritances in which he declares himself partaker. But the middle one of these, i. e. the kingdom, cannot be possessed, unless with the exercise of tribulation on the one side, and the defence of patience on the other." Ambrose Ansbert [8th century], was (found myself) in the island which is called Patmos (see Introduction, § ii. par. 4) on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus (the substantives form the same expression as occurred before, ver. 2, where see note. There they indicated *this* portion of the divine word and testimony, of which John was a faithful reporter. Whether their meaning is the same here, will depend partly on what sense we assign to "on account of." In St. Paul's

usage, it would here signify for the sake of, i. e. for the purpose of receiving: so that the Apostle would thus have gone to Patmos by special revelation in order to receive this revelation. Again, keeping to this meaning, these words may mean, that he had visited Patmos in pursuance of, for the purposes of, his ordinary apostolic employment, which might well be designated by these substantives. And such perhaps would have been our acceptance of the words, but that three objections intervene. 1) From what has preceded in this verse, a strong impression remains on the mind that St. John wrote this in a season of tribulation and persecution. Why should he throw over his address this tinge of suffering given by the tribulation and patience, if this were not the case? 2) The usage of our Writer himself in two passages where he speaks of death by persecution [ch. vi. 9, xx. 4] shews that with him on account of [or, for] in this connexion is "because of," "in consequence of." And St. John's own usage is a better guide in St. John's writings, than that of St. Paul. Besides which, Origen's Greek ear found no offence in this usage, for he incorporated it into his own sentence, . . . "He condemned John in his testimony, on account of the word of truth, to the island Patmos." 3) An early patristic tradition relates that St. John was banished to Patmos. See the authorities in the Introduction, and the question discussed, whether we are justified in ascribing this tradition solely to our present passage. These considerations, mainly those arising from the passage itself, compel us, I believe, to understand the words of an exile in Patmos).

10, 11.] I was ("Je me trouvais:" not merely "I was," but "I became") in the Spirit (i. e. in a state of spiritual ecstacy or trance, becoming thereby receptive of the vision or revelation to follow. That this is the meaning is distinctly



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, <sup>11</sup> saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. <sup>12</sup> And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

Lord's day, and heard behind me <sup>d</sup> a <sup>d</sup> great voice as of a trumpet, <sup>11</sup> saying, † What thou seest, write in a book, and send unto the seven churches †; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamus, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. <sup>12</sup> And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And

<sup>d</sup> ch. iv. 1 & x. 8.

† I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and is omitted by all our old MSS. and versions. † which are in Asia is omitted by all our MSS. of every date.

shewn by the same phrase occurring in ch. iv. 2: where after seeing the door open in heaven, and hearing the "Come up hither," he adds, "immediately I became in the Spirit." See also ch. xxi. 10. Ehrard well says, "Connexion with surrounding objects through the senses is suspended, and a connexion with the invisible world established." On the attempt made by some to give the words a different meaning, see below) on the Lord's day (i. e. on the first day of the week, kept by the Christian church as the weekly festival of the Lord's resurrection. On any probable hypothesis of the date of this book, this is the earliest mention of the day by this name. This circumstance, coupled with a bias in favour of a peculiar method of interpretation, has led certain modern interpreters, of whom, as far as I know, Wetstein was the first, to interpret the words of the day of the Lord's coming. So Züllig, and in our own country, Drs. S. R. Maitland and Todd. But 1) the difficulty of the thus early occurrence of this term, "the Lord's day," is no real one. Dr. Maitland says [see Todd's Lectures on the Apoc., Note B, p. 295], "I know of nothing in the Scripture or in the works of the ante-Nicene Fathers on which to ground such an assumption." To this we may answer, that the extent of Dr. Maitland's knowledge of the ante-Nicene Fathers does not, happily for us, decide the question: as the expression occurs repeatedly in those very Fathers: see the citations in my Greek Test. Mr. Elliott, Hor. Apoc. iv. 367 note, has pointed out that the primitive Syriac version renders 1 Cor. xi. 20, "not as becometh the day of the Lord ye eat and drink," which is an

interesting proof of the early usage. This chronological objection being disposed of, and the matter 2) taken on its own merits, it really is astonishing how any even moderate Greek scholars can persuade themselves that the words can mean that which these Commentators maintain. See this shewn in my Greek Test.): and I heard a voice (see Ezek. iii. 12) behind me (Isa. xxx. 21), great as of a trumpet, saying (the trumpet is the instrument of festal proclamation, Numb. x. 10: John ii. 15, &c.: accompanies divine manifestations, Exod. xix. 19 f.; Joel ii. 1: Matt. xxiv. 31; 1 Thess. iv. 16. The similarity to the sound of the trumpet here was in the loudness and clearness of the voice: see also ch. iv. 1. From this latter it appears that this voice was not that of our Lord, but of one who there also spoke to the Apostle. Düsterdieck remarks that behind me leaves an indefiniteness as to the speaker), What thou seest (the present carries on the action through the vision now opening,—"*what thou art seeing*") write (forthwith) into a book, and send to the seven churches, to Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to Pergamus, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea (for all particulars respecting these churches, see the Introduction, § ii.).

12—20.] THE VISION, in which our Lord appears to St. John, and the command is repeated. This vision is the introduction, not only to the messages to the churches, but to the whole book: see further on ver. 19.

12.] And I turned about to see the voice which was speaking with me (the voice, the acting energy, being used to signify the person whose

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

being turned, <sup>e</sup> I saw seven golden candlesticks; <sup>13 f</sup> and in the midst of the seven candlesticks <sup>g</sup> one like unto the Son of man, <sup>h</sup> clothed with a garment down to the foot, and <sup>i</sup> girt about the breasts with a golden girdle. <sup>14</sup> His head and <sup>k</sup> his hairs were white as white wool, like snow; and <sup>l</sup> his eyes as a flame of fire; <sup>15 m</sup> and his feet like unto fine brass †, as if they had been burned in a furnace; and <sup>n</sup> his voice as the sound of many waters. <sup>16 o</sup> And having

e ver. 20.  
Exod. xxv.  
37. Zech. iv.  
2.

f ch. ii. 1.  
g Ezek. i. 26.  
Dan. vii. 13.  
& x. 16.  
ch. xiv. 14.  
h Dan. x. 5.

i ch. xv. 6.

k Dan. vii. 9.

l Dan. x. 6  
ch. ii. 18.

& xix. 12.  
m Ezek. i. 7.  
Dan. x. 6.  
ch. ii. 18.

† See note.

n Ezek. xliii. 2.

Dan. x. 6.  
ch. xiv. 2. &  
xix. 6.

o ver. 20.  
ch. ii. 1. & iii. 1.

voice it was): and when I had turned about I saw seven golden candlesticks (the seven golden candlesticks are [united in one] part of the furniture of the tabernacle, Exod. xxv. 31 ff. Again, in Zech. iv. 2. 11, we have the "candlestick, all of gold," with its seven lamps. Here there are seven separate candlesticks, typifying, as that *one*, the entire church, but now no longer bound together in one outward unity and one place. Each local church has now its candlestick, to be retained or removed from its place according to its own works): **13.] and in the midst of the candlesticks one like to the Son of Man** (i. e. to Christ: see John v. 27: not simply, "to a son of man"), clothed in a garment reaching to the feet (see the *reff.* in Daniel and Ezekiel, which the description and even the diction closely resemble. This long garment was a sign of high rank or office. Arethas supposes the dress to be that of the Melchisedek-priesthood; but without reason. See Ecclus. vii. 8, "If thou followest righteousness, thou shalt obtain her, and put her on, as a glorious long robe"), and girt round at the breasts with a golden girdle (in Dan. x. 5, Gabriel has his loins girt with gold of Uphaz. Some suppose a distinction—the girding round the loins betokening activity, while that round the breast is a sign of repose. But Hengstenberg well observes that this would hardly apply: for Christ is here in fulness of energy as ruler and orderer of His Church. Ebrard seems nearer the truth in regarding the higher girding as a sign of majesty. But perhaps after all the point is not to be pressed; for the angels

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; <sup>13</sup> and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. <sup>14</sup> His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; <sup>15</sup> and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. <sup>16</sup> And he

in ch. xv. 6 are also girt round the breasts. Nor is the golden girdle distinctive of regal majesty: for this they also bear, *ibid.*):

**14.] and his head and his hairs [were] white like white wool, as snow** (by the head is perhaps indicated the forehead; not the face, which is afterwards described. It is only in colour, not in material, that His hair is compared to white wool; and the words, as snow, are afterwards added to impress this still more. The whiteness signifies purity and glory, not as Augustine and others think, *eternity*, either here or in Dan. vii. 9), and his eyes as a flame of fire (so Dan. x. 6: representing perhaps, as Vitringa says, "the perspicacity of the divine and pure mind, piercing all secrets." This may be, notwithstanding that Gabriel has eyes like lamps of fire in Daniel. Though omniscience could not be ascribed to him, the figure might be relatively consistent. But it is perhaps better to consider these physical details rather as in themselves characteristic, than as emblematic of attributes lying beneath them. The "fiery eye" among the sons of men, is indicative of energy and power of command: so also in the Son of man Himself): **15.] and his feet were like to chalcobanus** (so literally. This word has defeated all the ingenuity of Commentators hitherto. I have in my Greek Testament discussed the various conjectures, which mostly vary between a *kind of brass* and a *species of incense*), as if they had been burnt in a furnace (and so red-hot and glowing): and his voice as the voice of many waters (Ebrard sees an allusion to the quiet and majestic sound of

15.] and his feet were like to chalcobanus (so literally. This word has defeated all the ingenuity of Commentators hitherto. I have in my Greek Testament discussed the various conjectures, which mostly vary between a kind of brass and a species of incense), as if they had been burnt in a furnace (and so red-hot and glowing): and his voice as the voice of many waters (Ebrard sees an allusion to the quiet and majestic sound of

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. <sup>17</sup> And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: <sup>18</sup> I am he

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

in his right hand seven stars: and <sup>p</sup> out of his mouth going forth a sharp two-edged sword: <sup>q</sup> and his countenance as the sun shineth in his strength. <sup>17</sup> And <sup>r</sup> when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And <sup>s</sup> he laid his right hand upon me, saying †, Fear not; † I am the first and the last, and the living <sup>u</sup> One;

xlviii. 12. ch. ii. 8. & xxii. 13. ver. 11.

<sup>p</sup> Isa. xlix. 2.  
Eph. vi. 17.  
Heb. iv. 12.  
ch. ii. 12, 16.  
xix. 15, 21.  
<sup>q</sup> Acts xxvi. 13.  
ch. x. 1.

<sup>r</sup> Ezek. i. 28.

<sup>s</sup> Dan. viii. 18.  
& x. 10.

† unto me is omitted by all our old MSS.  
<sup>t</sup> Isa. xli. 4. & xlv. 6. & u Rom. vi. 9.

the sea, appealing to ch. xvii. 1 and xiii. 1; but, as Düsterdieck remarks, there seems to be no such allusion here, but only to the power of the voice as resembling the rushing of many waters. So Dan. x. 6; Ezek. xliii. 2, where the same expression is found, i. 24, where the sound of the wings of the creatures is "as the noise of great water").

16.] And having (St. John takes up the description from time to time irrespective of the construction, as if with separate strokes of the pencil) in his right hand seven stars (not on his right hand, as a number of jewelled rings, but in his right hand, as a wreath or garland, held in it. De Wette well remarks that *this*, which is the more natural rendering, is also required by the symbolism. If the seven churches which the seven stars symbolize, were on the Lord's hand as rings, they would seem to be serving (adorning?) Him, and not to be the objects of his action: but now that He holds them in his hand, He appears as their Guardian, their Provider, their Nourisher: and, we may add, their Possessor, who brings them out and puts them forth to be seen when He pleases. His universal Church would hardly be thus represented, but only a portion of it which it pleases Him to take in his hand and hold forth as representing the rest): and out of his mouth a two-edged sharp sword going forth (compare Isa. xi. 4, xlix. 2: also our ch. ii. 16, and Wisd. xviii. 15. The same figure occurs with reference to men in Ps. lv. 21, lvii. 4, lix. 7: and examples of it are given from the Rabbinical writings. The thing signified may perhaps be as in 2 Thess. ii. 8, and in ch. xix. 21; but clearly we must not exclude the attributes of the word of God, Heb. iv. 12, Eph. vi. 17. And this all the more, inasmuch as 1) here the Lord is represented not as taking vengeance on his

enemies, but as speaking with his own, both in the way of comforting and of threatening: and 2) in ch. xix. 21, where this very sword is again alluded to as slaying the Lord's enemies, His title as sitting upon the horse is "the word of God": and his countenance (not general appearance. Had this been so, how should the Apostle have noted the details just mentioned? for the whole figure of our Lord would have been too dazzling for him to contemplate. It is natural that after describing the eyes, and that which proceeded from the mouth, he should give the general effect of the countenance) as the sun shineth in his strength (see Judges v. 31:—that is, when unclouded and in full power: not necessarily at midday, but at any time. The construction is again broken: "as the sun shining" would be the regular connexion). <sup>17, 18.]</sup>

And when I saw Him, I fell at his feet as dead (the effect of the divine appearance: see Exod. xxxiii. 20; Job xlii. 6; Isa. vi. 5; Ezek. i. 28; Dan. viii. 17 ff., x. 7 ff. There is no discrepancy in this bodily action with the spiritual nature of the vision, as De Wette thinks, either here or in the places where similar physical effects are described, ch. v. 4, xix. 10, xxii. 8 [Dan. vii. 15]. Düsterdieck well remarks in reply, that the being in the Spirit does not supersede existence in the body. Just as dreamers express their bodily feelings by physical acts, e. g. by starting or weeping, so might St. John while in this ecstasy: see Acts ix. 3). And he placed his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not (see Dan. x. 12, Luke i. 13, 30, ii. 10, Matt. xvii. 7, Mark xvi. 6. These places, and the whole character of our Lord's words, shew that the Apostle's falling down as dead was purely from fear, not, as Ebrard imagines, as an expression of ecstatic love); I am the first and the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

x ch. iv. 9. & v. 14. 18 and I was dead, and, behold, x I am alive for evermore †; and y have the keys of death and of Hadés.  
 † Amen is omitted by all our old MSS. Ps. lxxviii. 20. ch. xx. 1. † So all our old MSS. and versions. z ver. 12, &c. a ch. ii. 1, &c. b ch. iv. 1, &c.  
 c ver. 16.  
 d ver. 12.  
 e Mat. ii. 7. ch. ii. 1, &c.

19 Write therefore † z the things which thou sawest, a and what things they are, b and the things which shall be after these; 20 the mystery c of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, d and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are e angels of the seven churches:

that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. 19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; 20 the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the

last (see ver. 11 above: this is the meaning here, not as the semi-Socinian Commentators explain it, "both highest in dignity and also most humiliated;" it is the eternity of God which is expressed—of Him who is before all and after all, from and to everlasting), and the living One (not the life-giving One, however true the fact may be; nor here signifying alive from the dead; but it is the well-known attribute of God, the Eternal, not in bare duration, but in personal life. The giving life is included, but the word expresses far more. The A. V. is wrong in connecting these words with those that follow); and I was (I became: it was a state which I passed into) dead, and, behold, I am alive for evermore (see Rom. vi. 9, Acts xiii. 34. am alive expresses more emphatically than would the simple verb "live," the residence and effluence of life. By this mention of His own death and revival, the Lord reassures His Apostle. He is not only the living One in His majesty, but He has passed through death as one of us, and is come to confer life even in and through death); and I have the keys of death and of Hadés (not, of hell: the two words should never be confounded. I can bring up from death, yea even from the mysterious place of the spirits of the departed. The figure of the keys is often used in this book; see ch. iii. 7: ix. 1: xx. 1. The Targum of Jonathan on Deut. xxviii. 12 says, "There are four keys in the hand of the Lord . . . the key of life, of the tombs, of food, and of rain." We have the gates of death as opposed to the gates of the daughter of Zion, Ps. ix. 14; cf. also Job xxxviii. 17; and the gates of Hadés, Matt. xvi. 16, Isa. xxxviii. 10). 19.] Write therefore ("because I have vouchsafed thee this vision,—I whose majesty is such, and

whose manifested loving-kindness to thee." The connexion is better thus than with ver. 11, as some: "Now that thy fear is over, write what I bade thee." But it is very doubtful whether ver. 11 is spoken by our Lord at all: see there) the things which thou sawest (just now: the vision which was but now vouchsafed thee), and what things they are (two meanings of the words thus rendered are possible. 1) 'the things which are,' viz. which exist at the present time. This has been taken by many Commentators, ancient and modern. 2) as above, "what things they [the things which thou sawest] are," i. e. signify: so some of the ancients and moderns. Both on account of the construction in the original [see my Greek Test.], and because the verb are, unquestionably in this meaning of signify, occurs twice in the next verse, I have no hesitation in taking this latter meaning, as given above), and the things which are about to happen after these (viz. after the things which thou sawest: the next vision, beginning with ch. iv., which itself opens with "after these things I saw." I would take the verb be in the sense of happening, not in the wide ages of history, but in apocalyptic vision: seeing that, these things meaning "the things which thou sawest," a present vision, the things which shall be will by analogy mean the things which shall succeed these, i. e. a future vision. Notice, it is not "the things which must come to pass," as in ver. 1: not the necessity of prophecy, but only the sequence of things seen); 20.] the mystery (i. e. the secret signification) of the seven stars which thou sawest upon (held in, and so standing over, as a wreath) my right hand, and the seven candlesticks of gold (elliptic construction for 'and the mystery of the seven candlesticks,'



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

and † the seven candlesticks † are seven churches.

† Zech. iv. 2  
Matt. v. 15.  
Phil. ii. 15.  
† which thou  
sawest is  
omitted by all  
our oldest  
MSS.

&c.).—The seven stars are (signify) [the] angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks are seven churches (the import of the angels has been much disputed. Very many both ancient and modern Commentators take them for the *presiding presbyters*, or *bishops*, of the churches. This view is variously supported. It derives probability from the analogy of the vision itself, in which, seeing that the candelabra represent the churches themselves, existing vessels containing much light, the stars, concentrated sparks of light, should represent some actually existing persons in or connected with the churches. Again it is supported by our finding that throughout the seven Epistles the angel is treated as representing and responsible for the particular church. But before we pass on to the other great section of interpretation, we may at once dismiss those forms of this one which make the *angel* the *ideal representative* of the governing body, or an *ideal messenger* from the church, or an anticipatory idea of the office of Bishop, not yet instituted: or, in short, any idealism at all. As the *church* is an objective reality, so must the *angel* be, of whatever kind. This consideration will also affect the current of interpretation which takes the angels to be *the churches themselves*. The second line of interpretation is that which regards them as *angels*, in some way representing the churches. In favour of this is 1) the constant usage of this book, in which the word *angel* occurs only in this sense: 2) the further usage of this book, in which we have, ch. xvi. 4, the *angel of the waters* introduced without any explanation, who can be none other than the angel presiding over the waters: 3) the expression of our Lord Himself, Matt. xviii. 10, "*their angels in heaven do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven*," coupled with that expressed by the church in the house of Mary the mother of John Mark, Acts xii. 15, with regard to their disbelief of Peter standing at the door, "*it is his angel*:" both asserting the doctrine that angels are allotted to persons, and are regarded as representing them: a subject full of mystery, and requiring circumspect treatment, but by no means to be put aside, as is commonly done. 4) The extension of

this from individuals to nations in the book of Daniel, which is so often the key to apocalyptic interpretation. See Dan. x. 21, xii. 1: an analogy according to which there might well be angels not only of individuals, but of churches. 5) The fact that throughout these Epistles, nothing is ever addressed individually as to a teacher, but as to some one person reflecting as it were the complexion and fortunes of the church in a way in which no mere human teacher or ruler could. That there is no exception to this in ch. ii. 20, see maintained in note there. 6) To the objection advanced in the comment of Aretias, that "*the presiding angel had not sinned*, so as to want exhorting to repent, &c.," the reply may be made, with advantage to this interpretation, that there evidently is revealed to us a mysterious connexion between ministering angels and those to whom they minister, by which the former in some way are tinged by the fates and fortunes of the latter. E. g. in our Lord's saying cited above, the place of dignity there asserted of the angels of the little children is unquestionably connected with the character of those whose angels they are: and it cannot be following out such a revelation too far to say that, if some of the holy angels are thus and for this reason advanced to honour, others may be similarly, and for the opposite reason, placed in less honour and relatively disgraced. That this idea is found expressed in the Rabbinical writings is a mark of the further development of the truth, which seems to have been first revealed to Daniel. 7) It will be perceived that this interpretation does not lie under any of the objections stated above as idealizing that which ought to be an objective reality. For it contemplates the angels of the churches as really existent, not as ideal beings. It is only when this latter is the case, that those objections can apply. 8) It will also be perceived, that both the circumstances, which were cited as making for the former interpretation, tell equally for this: viz. a) that just noticed, the actual existence of these persons in or belonging to the churches, and b) the fact that in the Epistles the angel is treated as representing and responsible for the particular church.

So that I cannot but regard this second



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

II. <sup>1</sup> Unto the angel of the church in † Ephesus write; These things saith <sup>a</sup> he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, <sup>b</sup> he that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; <sup>2</sup> <sup>c</sup> I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and that thou canst not

II. <sup>1</sup> Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; <sup>2</sup> I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou

view as far the more likely one. It has been taken by Origen, Jerome, and several more of the ancients, and by many among the moderns.

The attempt to defend the interpretation of *angels* as bishops by the analogy of the *legate of the congregation*, in the synagogue, appears to be futile, inasmuch as that officer held quite an inferior place, in no way corresponding to a bishop, or any kind of president of the church.

As regards the symbolism, *stars* are the symbols of the angels of the churches, inasmuch as angels are beings of light, Heb. i. 7 [from Ps. civ. 4], where see note; Job xxxviii. 4, where they are called the morning stars. The same symbolism is used in the prophets of Lucifer, the day-star, the son of the morning, Isa. xiv. 12 ff., who would exalt his throne above the stars of God, ib. ver. 13; Rev. xii. 4, 9. See also Luke x. 18. That stars are also used to symbolize earthly authorities, is what might be expected from the very nature of the symbol, and should never have been alleged here as a reason against the literal interpretation of *angels*.

The churches themselves are represented by candlesticks, agreeably with the universal symbolism both of the prophetic and evangelic Scriptures. Compare Prov. iv. 18; Isa. lx. 1, 3; Matt. v. 14, 16; Luke xii. 35; Phil. ii. 15).

CH. II. 1—III. 22.] THE EPISTLES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES. Views have considerably differed respecting the character of these Epistles, whether they are to be regarded as simply historical, or historico-prophetical, or simply prophetical. The point on which all, I presume, will be agreed is, that the words contained in these Epistles are applicable to and intended for the guidance, warning, and encouragement of the whole Church Catholic, and its several parts, throughout all time. The differing interpretations will here be only briefly alluded to. One account of them will be found in Vitringa's (Latin)

Commentary, pp. 27—58: and (but scantily, as most interpreters pass over this portion of the book slightly) in the introductions to the principal commentaries. See also Abp. Trench's Appendix to his Commentary on the Seven Epistles, pp. 209—225.

Before commenting on each individual Epistle, I would notice the similar construction of all. This may be thus described. Each Epistle contains, 1. A command, to write to the angel of the particular church. 2. A sublime title of our Lord, taken for the most part from the imagery of the preceding vision. 3. An address to the angel of the church, always commencing with *I know*, introducing a statement of its present circumstances: continuing with an exhortation either to repentance or to constancy: and ending with a prophetic announcement, mostly respecting what shall be at the Lord's coming. 4. A promise made to "*him that overcometh*," generally accompanied with a solemn call to earnest attention, "*He that hath an ear, &c.*"

1—7.]—THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS. To the angel of the church in Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth fast (compare ch. ii. 25, iii. 11) the seven stars in his right hand, He that walketh in the midst of the seven candlesticks of gold (assertions of Christ's being the Lord, the Governor and the Upholder of His Church, agreeably to the vision of ch. i.: coming in suitably in this first Epistle, as beginning the complete number): I know (am aware of: not as some explain it, *approve*). The context determines this to be the fact here, but not this word. The *works* might be *bad* ones, see John iii. 19) thy works (so in all the Epistles, except those to Smyrna and Pergamus), and thy labour (1 Cor. iii. 8, xv. 58, the same word), and endurance (labour and endurance [or, patience] form the active and the passive sides of the energizing Christian life.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: <sup>3</sup> and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. <sup>4</sup> Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. <sup>5</sup> Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. <sup>6</sup> But this thou hast, that thou hatest the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

bear wicked persons: and <sup>d</sup> thou <sup>d</sup> John iv. 1. didst try them <sup>e</sup> which say they are <sup>e</sup> 2 Cor. xi. 13 apostles, and are not, and didst find <sup>2</sup> Pet. ii. 1. them false: <sup>3</sup> and hadst patience, and didst bear for my name's sake, and hast <sup>f</sup> not been weary <sup>†</sup>. <sup>4</sup> Nevertheless I have against thee that thou hast left thy first love. <sup>5</sup> Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; <sup>g</sup> or else I will come unto thee <sup>g</sup> Matt. xxi. †, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, if thou do not <sup>†</sup> quickly is omitted by our oldest MSS. repent. <sup>6</sup> Notwithstanding, this thou hast, that thou hatest the works of

The two are explanatory, in fact, of works; see 1 Cor. xv. 58: these being the resulting fruits of *labour* and *patience*, see ch. xiv. 13), and that thou canst not bear wicked persons (these are here regarded as a burden, an incubus, which the Ephesian church had thrown off. The assertion is as yet general: it is particularized in the next clause), and didst try (make experiment of) those who say that they are apostles, and are not, and didst find them false (this is deeply interesting in connexion with St. Paul's prophetic caution, Acts xx. 28—30. That which he foretold had come to pass, but they had profited by his apostolic warning): and hadst endurance, and didst bear (them, while trying them: or perhaps the verb is used absolutely) for my Name, and hast not been weary. Howbeit I have (nothing need be supplied: the following clause is the object to the verb "*I have*") against thee that thou hast left (deserted; or let go) thy love which was at first (towards whom? Arethas understands *charity to thy neighbours*. Grotius similarly, and others very variously. But there can I think be little question that the language is *conjugal*, and the love, as Ambrose Ansbert ["thou hast cast away the affection of a chaste spouse"], and others,—the first fervent chaste and pure love of the newly-wedded bride: see Jer. ii. 2. In what particular the Ephesian church had left her first love, is not stated. Perhaps, as

Ansbert says, "she was excited with the love of this world:" or, seeing that it is negative, rather than positive delinquency which is blamed, the love of first conversion had waxed cold, and given place to a lifeless and formal orthodoxy). Remember therefore whence thou hast fallen (the first fervour of love is regarded as a height, from which the church had declined), and repent (quickly and effectually, as the tense in the original implies), and do the first works (the works which sprung from that thy first love: those resume); but if not, I [will] come to thee (not Christ's final coming, but his coming in special judgment is here indicated), and will move thy candlestick out of its place (i. e. will make thee cease to be a church: see the fulfilment noticed in *Introduct.*, § iii. par. 7), if thou do not repent (shalt not have repented; i. e. by the speedy time indicated in the previous command). 6.] Notwithstanding, this thou hast (this one thing: there is no need to supply "*good*" or the like: of what sort *this one thing* is, is explained by what follows. We may notice the tender compassion of our blessed Lord, who, in his blame of a falling church, yet selects for praise one particular in which His mind is yet retained. This is for our comfort: but let us not forget that it is for our imitation also. "He in the midst of painful matters inserts encouraging ones, lest the church should be swallowed up by overmuch sorrow." Arethas [10th cen-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

h ver. 15. <sup>b</sup> the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.  
 i Matt. xi. 15. & xiii. 9, 43. <sup>7</sup> <sup>i</sup> He that hath an ear, let him  
 ver. 11, 17, 29. hear what the Spirit saith unto the  
 ch. iii. 9, 13, churches. To him that overcometh  
 22. & xiii. 9. will I give <sup>k</sup> to eat of <sup>l</sup> the tree of  
 k ch. xxii. 2, 14. life, which is in <sup>†</sup> the paradise of  
 l Gen. ii. 9. God.  
 † the midst of life, which is in <sup>†</sup> the paradise of  
 by all our old MSS. God.  
<sup>8</sup> And unto the angel of the church

*deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. <sup>7</sup> He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. <sup>8</sup> And*

ture]], that thou hatest the works ("he says not, the Nicolaitans themselves, but their works: because the persons are to be loved in charity, but their vices had in detestation." Lyra. It would have been well for the church, had this always been remembered. **the works**, see below, must be referred to the moral delinquencies of this sect) of the Nicolaitans (there has been much dispute who these were. The prevailing opinion among the fathers was, that they were a sect founded by Nicolaus the proselyte of Antioch, one of the seven deacons. But there early becomes evident a desire to vindicate Nicolaus the deacon from the opprobrium of having been the founder of such a sect; and in consequence we soon find another Nicolaus substituted for the deacon of that name. An apocryphal Acts of the Apostles speaks of a Corinthian of this name, infamous for licentious practices. We come now to the second principal view with regard to this sect, which supposes their name to be symbolic, and Nicolaus to be the Greek rendering of Balaam, and to mean, "*He ruined, or absorbed the people.*" Consequently the name Nicolaitans is said to be equivalent to Balaamites, as is also inferred from ver. 14. This view seems first to have been broached by Heumann in 1712, and since then has been the prevailing one. But in the first place, the names are by no means parallel; and next, the view derives no support from ver. 14 f., where the followers of Balaam are distinct from the Nicolaitans: see note there. And besides, there is no sort of reason for interpreting the name otherwise than historically. It occurs in a passage indicating simple matters of historical fact, just as the name Antipas does in ver. 13. If we do not gain trustworthy accounts of the sect from elsewhere, why not allow for the gulf which separates the history of the apostolic from that of the post-apostolic period, and be content with what we know

of them from these two passages? There is nothing repugnant to verisimilitude in the report mentioned by the Fathers, that Nicolaus fell into impurities; nor need all of those who were chosen to aid the Apostles in distributing alms, have been even to the end of their lives spotless and infallible. At least it may be enough for us to believe that possible of one of them, which the post-apostolic Fathers did not hesitate to receive), **which I also hate** (this strong expression in the mouth of our Lord unquestionably points at deeds of abomination and impurity: compare Isa. lxi. 8; Jer. xlv. 4; Amos v. 21; Zech. viii. 17). <sup>7.]</sup> Solemn conclusion of the Epistle. **He that hath an ear** (no fanciful distinction must be imagined between the singular, and the plural which is found in the Gospels [Matt. xi. 15, xiii. 9, &c.]). We have precisely the same use of the singular in Matt. x. 27, where a distinction will hardly be maintained), **let him hear what the Spirit** (speaking in its fulness, through Him to whom it is given without measure, to John who was *in the Spirit*, in a state of spiritual ecstasy and receptivity: compare John xvi. 13) **saith to the churches** (Ebrard well notices that not a colon [or semi-colon, as in A. V.], but a full stop must be put here, as indeed might be shewn from the way in which the proclamation is repeated in ver. 29 and in ch. iii. 6, 13, 22. It directs attention, not to that which follows only, but to the whole contents of the seven Epistles), **To him that conquereth** (the verb is absolute, without any object expressed. So of Christ Himself in ch. iii. 21) **I will give to him** (so literally: the personal pronoun is repeated both idiomatically and for emphasis) **to eat** (i. e. I will permit him to eat: not in the ordinary sense of *giving to eat*: see ch. iii. 21) of [the fruit of] **the tree** (see Gen. ii. 9, from which the words come: and to suit which apparently the words *in the midst of*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; <sup>9</sup> I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

<sup>10</sup> Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast

in Smyrna write; These things saith <sup>m</sup> the first and the last, which was dead, and revived; <sup>9</sup> <sup>n</sup> I know thy <sup>†</sup> tribulation, and thy poverty; nevertheless thou art <sup>o</sup> rich; and the slandering of thee by <sup>p</sup> them which say they are Jews, and are not, <sup>q</sup> but are the synagogue of Satan. <sup>10</sup> <sup>r</sup> Fear not <sup>†</sup> those things which thou art about to suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison,

<sup>m</sup> ch. i. 8, 17, 18.

<sup>n</sup> ver. 2.  
<sup>†</sup> works and is omitted by two out of our three oldest MSS. It was probably put in from ver. 2 and ch. iii. 1, 8, 15.

<sup>o</sup> Luke xii. 21.  
<sup>1</sup> Tim. vi. 18.  
James ii. 5.  
<sup>p</sup> Rom. ii. 17, 28, 29. & ix. 6.

<sup>q</sup> ch. iii. 9.  
<sup>r</sup> Matt. x. 22.  
<sup>†</sup> No two of our three oldest MSS., and the best of the later ones.

have been substituted for in) of life, which is in the paradise of God (the way to which tree was closed up after man's sin, Gen. iii. 24. The promise, and its expression, are in the closest connexion with our Lord's discourse in John vi., as will be seen by comparing Gen. iii. 22. But we need not therefore say that Christ is the tree of life here, nor confuse the figure by introducing one which in its character is distinct from it. Still less is the tree to be interpreted as being the Holy Spirit. See, for the imagery, ch. xxii. 2, 14, 19. The words of God, as following *paradise*, come from Ezek. xxviii. 13, and set forth the holiness and glory of that paradise, as consisting in God's dwelling and delighting in it).

8—11.] THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH AT SMYRNA. And to the angel of the church in Smyrna (in accordance with the idea of the angel representing the bishop, many of the ancient Commentators have inferred that Polycarp must have been here addressed. Whether this were chronologically possible, must depend on the date which we assign to the writing of the Apocalypse. He was martyred in A.D. 168, 86 years after his conversion) write; These things saith the first and the last, which was [became] dead and revived (see ch. i. 17, 18. The words here seem to point on to the promise in verses 10, 11): I know thy tribulation, and thy poverty (in outward wealth, arising probably from the *tribulation*, by the despoiling of the goods of the Christians); nevertheless thou art rich (spiritually; see 2 Cor. vi. 10, ch. iii. 18, and James ii. 5): and (I know) thy calumny from (arising from) those who profess themselves to be Jews, and they are not, but [are]

Satan's synagogue (these slanderers were in all probability actually Jews by birth, but not [see Rom. ii. 28; Matt. iii. 9; John viii. 33; 2 Cor. xi. 22; Phil. iii. 4 ff.] in spiritual reality; the same who every where, in St. Paul's time and afterwards, were the most active enemies of the Christians. When Polycarp was martyred, we read that "all the multitude of Gentiles and Jews dwelling in Smyrna cried out enraged with a loud voice:" and afterwards when faggots were collected for the pile, "the Jews most eagerly, as is their wont, giving help." This view is strengthened by the context. Had they been, as some have supposed, Christians, called *Jews* in a mystical sense, they would hardly have been spoken of as the principal source of calumny against the Church, nor would the collective epithet of *Satan's synagogue* be given to them. Abp. Trench brings out there, how *church*, the nobler word, was chosen by our Lord and His Apostles for the assembly of the called in Christ, while *synagogue*, which is only once found [James ii. 2] of a Christian assembly [and there, as Düsterdieck notes, not with *of God*, but *your*], was gradually abandoned entirely to the Jews, so that in this, the last book of the canon, such an expression as this can be used. See the opposite in Numb. xvi. 3, xx. 4, xxxi. 16,—the *Lord's synagogue* [so in the Septuagint version]).

10.] Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer (in the ways mentioned below. The expression indicates manifold tribulation, as there): behold for certain (the expression in the original gives the tone of present certainty and actuality), the devil (it is understood from the context, that the devil would act through the hostility of

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. <sup>s</sup> Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee <sup>t</sup> a crown of life. <sup>11 u</sup> He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. He that overcometh shall not be hurt by <sup>x</sup> the second death.

<sup>12</sup> And to the angel of the church in Pergamus write; These things saith <sup>y</sup> he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; <sup>13 z</sup> I know <sup>†</sup> where thou dwellest, even <sup>a</sup> where Satan's throne is: and thou holdest fast my name,

some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. <sup>11</sup> He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death. <sup>12</sup> And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; <sup>13</sup> I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast

human agents, and among them eminently these Jewish enemies) is about to cast [some] of you into prison (to be literally understood: the constant accompaniment of persecution, Acts xii. 3; xvi. 23), that ye may be tried (by temptations to fall away: not, that ye may be proved. This might be the end which Christ had in view in permitting the persecution: but the expression here rather gives the purpose of the agent in the previous clause, viz. *the devil*); and ye shall have tribulation ten days (the expression is probably used to signify a short and limited time: so in Gen. xxiv. 55; Judges xi. 19; Dan. i. 12: see also Numb. xiv. 22; 1 Sam. i. 8; Job xix. 3; Acts xxv. 6. All kinds of fanciful interpretations have been given: see in my Greek Test.). Be (literally, become: new circumstances of trial requiring new kinds and degrees of fidelity; which does not remain as it is, but takes accession) thou (it is quite futile to attempt to distinguish in these Epistles between what is said to the Angel in the singular, and what is said to the Church in the plural. This is shewn by the former part of this verse, "thou art about to suffer," . . . followed by some of you. Only where there is occasion to discriminate, is the plural used: see v. 24 f.: but wherever the whole church is spoken of it is in the singular, under the person of its representative angel) faithful unto (not, "until:" but "even unto," i. e. up to the point or measure of: Let not thy faithfulness stop short of enduring

death itself. Compare Phil. ii. 8) death, and (ref.) I will give thee the crown (the crown, as being the well-known prize promised to the faithful: as in James i. 22, 2 Tim. iv. 8) of life (genitive of apposition: the life itself being the crown: see note, and distinction, on 2 Tim. iv. 8). 11.] Conclusion: see above, verse 7.—He that conquereth shall not be injured (the form in the original gives great precision and certainty to the promise: there is no chance that he should be) by (as the source or original of injury) the second death (defined to be, in ch. xx. 14, *the lake of fire*. In this he shall have no part, nor it any power over him).

12—17.] THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH AT PERGAMUS. And to the angel of the church in Pergamus write; These things saith He that hath the sharp two-edged sword (the designation of our Lord is made with reference to ver. 16 below): I know where thou dwellest, (viz.) where is the throne of Satan (it is not easy to say, what these words import. Andreas (cent. vi.) and Arethas (cent. x.) say, "He calls Pergamus the throne of Satan, as being idolatrous beyond the rest of Asia." But it may be doubted whether it was more idolatrous than e. g. Ephesus. And so Vitringa and Bengel. A more likely direction in which to find the solution is that taken by Lyra: "Satan's throne, that is, his power, in inclining the unbelievers to persecute the church:" for above, ver. 10, the act of persecution is ascribed to the devil: and here we

<sup>s</sup> Matt. xxiv. 13.

<sup>t</sup> James i. 12. ch. iii. 11.

<sup>u</sup> ver. 7. ch. xiii. 9.

<sup>x</sup> ch. xx. 14. & xxi. 8.

<sup>y</sup> ch. i. 16.

<sup>z</sup> ver. 2.  
<sup>†</sup> thy works and is omitted by all our oldest MSS. See on ver. 9.  
<sup>a</sup> ver. 9.



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

<sup>14</sup> But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit for-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

and didst not deny the faith of me even in the days of Antipas my martyr, my faithful one †, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. <sup>14</sup> But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the teaching of <sup>b</sup> Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the sons of Israel, <sup>c</sup> to eat things sacrificed unto idols, <sup>d</sup> and to commit

<sup>1</sup> So two of our three oldest MSS.

<sup>b</sup> Numb. xxiv. 14, & xxv. 1, & xxxi. 16.  
<sup>2</sup> Pet. ii. 15.  
Jude 11.

<sup>c</sup> ver. 20.  
Acts xv. 20.  
1 Cor. viii. 9, 10, & x. 10, 20.

<sup>d</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 13, &c.

learn by what follows, that he had carried it at Pergamus to the extent of putting Antipas to death; which seems not to have been reached elsewhere at this time. Whether this may have been owing to the fact of the residence of the supreme magistracy at Pergamus, or to some fanatical zeal of the inhabitants for the worship of Æsculapius, or to some particular person or persons dwelling there especially hostile to the followers of Christ, must remain uncertain.—I may remark, that it is plainly out of the question to attempt, as has been done by some, to connect such an expression as this with the prophecies of the latter portion of the book, and to anticipate for the insignificant Pergamus a leading place in their fulfilment. The expression is relevant, as the context shews, merely to the then existing state of the city, and not to any future part which it should take in the fulfilment of prophecy: and thou holdest fast my name (the profession of thy faith in Me), and didst not deny the faith of me in the days of Antipas my witness (martyr), my faithful one, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth (of Antipas, the shortened form of Antipater,—after the analogy of Hermas for Hermodorus, Lucas and Silas for Lucanus and Silvanus,—nothing is known to us with certainty, except from this passage. Andreas (cent. vi.) says that he had read the account of his martyrdom: and Arethas (cent. x.) says, that his “martyrdom” was still extant. Ribera gives an account from Simeon Metaphrastes, that he was bishop of Pergamus, and lived to extreme old age: and that when a persecution arose, in the time of Domitian, after having frequently witnessed a good confession he suffered death by being scorched in a hot brazen bull.

The Greek and Roman martyrologies contain similar accounts at his day, April 11th. Respecting the childish symbolic meanings which have been imagined for his name, in defiance of philology and of sobriety alike, see my Greek Test. On the words where Satan dwelleth, see above).

14, 15.] Nevertheless I have against thee a few things (used as a term of comparison with the far greater number of approved things which remained) [that] (i. e. “namely, that,” introducing the form of the indictment): thou hast there (in Pergamus: the locality is specified probably on account of the description which has been just given of it as the place where a faithful martyr had suffered unto death) men holding the teaching of Balaam (not simply “doctrine corresponding to the character of the advice of Balaam,” but used in strict correspondence with the words “who taught” following: that which a man teaches being his doctrine. And to hold this teaching, is to follow the teaching), who taught Balak (it is not expressly asserted in Num. xxxi. 16 that it was Balak whom Balaam advised to use this agency against Israel: but the narrative almost implies it: Balak was in power, and was the most likely person to authorize and put in force the scheme. And so Josephus makes Balaam on departing call to him Balak and the princes of Midian, and give them the advice) to put a stumblingblock (an occasion of sin) before (in the way, or before the face of) the sons of Israel, to eat (i. e. inducing them to eat) things offered to idols (from Num. xxv. 1, 2, it was not only participation in things offered to idols, but the actual offering sacrifices to them, of which the children of Israel were

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

fornication. <sup>15</sup> So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine <sup>e</sup> of the Nicolaitans, † in like manner. <sup>16</sup> Repent therefore †, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and † will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. <sup>17g</sup> He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. To him that overcometh will I give † of the hidden manna, and will give him a

nication. <sup>15</sup> So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. <sup>16</sup> Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. <sup>17</sup> He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white

e ver. 6.

† So all our MSS., none reading as the A. V.

† So two out of our three oldest MSS.

f Isa. xl. 4.  
2 Thess. ii. 8.  
ch. i. 16 &  
xix. 15, 21.  
g ver. 7, 11.

† to eat is omitted by all our old MSS.

guilty. But seeing that the *participation* was that which was common to both, our Lord takes that as the point to be brought forward) and to commit fornication.

15.] Thus thou also hast (as well as those of old: not, as the Church at Ephesus, ver. 6) men holding (see above) the teaching of the Nicolaitans in like manner (viz. in eating things offered to idols, and fornication. We may remark, 1) that it is most according to the sense of the passage to understand these sins in the case of the Nicolaitans, as in that of those whom Balaam tempted, literally, and not mystically: 2) that the whole sense of the passage is against the idea of the identity of the Balaamites and the Nicolaitans: and would be in fact destroyed by it. The mere existence of the etymological relation is extremely doubtful [see above on ver. 6]: and even granting it,—to suppose the two identical, would be to destroy the historical illustration by which the present existing sect is described).

16.] Repent therefore (the command is addressed not only to the Nicolaitans, but to the church, which did not, like that of Ephesus, hate them, but apparently tolerated them): but if not, I [will] come to thee quickly (here again,—though in the common phrase which expresses the last great day,—not said of the Lord's final coming; as indeed the language shews, for then He will no longer "make war"), and will make war with them (the Nicolaitans) with (literally, in, as armed with or arrayed in) the sword of my mouth (many expositors suppose an allusion to the sword of the angel, armed with which he withstood Balaam in the way [Num. xxii. 23, 31], or to that and the sword by which those who sinned in the matter of Baalpeor [Num. xxv. 5]

and eventually Balaam himself [Num. xxxi. 8] were slain: but seeing that the connexion with ch. i. 16 is so plainly asserted by our ver. 12, it seems better to confine the allusion to that sword, and not to stretch it to what after all is a very doubtful analogy).

17.] Conclusion. For the former clause see on ver. 7. We may notice that in these three first Epistles, the proclamation precedes the promise to him that conquereth: in the four last, it follows the promise.—To him that conquereth I will give to him (see above on ver. 7) of the manna which is hidden (in this manna, there is unmistakably an allusion to the proper and heavenly food of the children of Israel, as contrasted with the unhallowed idol-offerings; but beyond that, there is an allusion again [see above on ver. 7] to our Lord's discourse in John vi., where He describes Himself as the true bread from heaven: not that we need here, any more than in ver. 7 [see note there], confuse the present figure by literally pressing the symbolism of that chapter. Christ's gifts may all be summed up in the gift of Himself: on the other hand, He may describe any of the manifold properties of his own Person and office as His gift. This manna is hidden, in allusion partly perhaps to the fact of the pot of manna laid up in the ark in the holy of holies [Exod. xvi. 33: compare our ch. xi. 19: not to the Jewish fable, that a pot of manna was hidden by Josiah before the wasting of the temple, and shall again be produced in the time of the Messiah]:—but principally to the fact that our spiritual life, with its springs and nourishments, is hid with Christ in God, Col. iii. 3. See also Ps. lxxviii. 24; cv. 40), and I will

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. <sup>18</sup> And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

white stone, and on the stone <sup>h</sup> a new <sup>h</sup> name written, which none knoweth saving he that receiveth it. <sup>h</sup> ch. iii. 12. & xix. 12.

<sup>18</sup> And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, <sup>i</sup> who <sup>i</sup> ch. i. 14, 15.

give to him a white stone (see below), and on the stone a new name written, which none knoweth except he that receiveth it (the views concerning this stone have been very various. Bede interprets it "the body, now white by baptism, then refulgent with the glory of incorruption." But this is surely out of the question. Some have connected this with the mention of the manna, and cited the Rabbinical tradition, that with the manna fell precious stones and pearls. Others again think of the precious stones bearing the names of the twelve tribes on the breastplate of the High Priest, the order for which was contemporary with the giving of the manna, Exod. xxviii. 17; xxxix. 10, and regard this as indicating the priestly dignity of the victorious Christian. Eberard remarks, that as the hidden manna was the reward for abstaining from idolment, so this for abstinence from fornication. Again Arethas and others have reminded us of the Gentile custom of presenting the victors at the games with a stone or ticket which entitled them to nourishment at the public expense, and to admission to royal festivals. Hence they regard the white stone as the ticket of admission to the heavenly feast. But it may be replied, 1) the feast is mentioned separately under the name of the hidden manna: and 2) the description of the writing on the stone, which follows, will not suit this view. Again, others, regarding the connexion of the white stone with the manna, refer to the use of the lot cast among the priests, which should offer the sacrifice: or to the writing a name, at election by ballot, on a stone or a bean: or to the custom of *absolving* criminals with a white stone and condemning them with a black one. Some expositors combine two or more of these expositions.

But it is against all these interpretations, that no one of them fits the conditions of this description. Each one halts in the explanation either of the stone itself, or of that which is written on it. Least of all, perhaps, does the last apply; the ver-

dict of *acquittal* would be a strange reward indeed to one who has fought and overcome in the strength of an acquittal long ago obtained, Col. iii. 13. The most probable view is that which Bengel gives a hint of, and which Hengstenberg and Düsterdieck hold, that the figure is derived from the practice of using small stones, inscribed with writing, for various purposes, and that, further than this, the imagery belongs to the occasion itself only. Taking it thus, the colour is that of victory, see ch. iii. 3; vi. 2; iv. 4; xix. 14. The *name inscribed* yet remains for consideration. It is in this, as it would be in every case, the inscription which gives the stone its real value, being, as it is, a token of reward and approval from the Son of God. But *what name* is this? not what name in each case, for an answer to this question is precluded by the very terms, "*which none, &c.?*" but *of what kind?* Is it the name of Christ Himself, or of God in Christ? This supposition is precluded also by the same terms: for any mysterious name of God or of Christ would either be hidden from all [so ch. xix. 12], or known to all who were similarly victorious through grace. These very terms seem to require that it should be the recipient's *own name*, a *new name* however; a revelation of his everlasting title, as a son of God, to glory in Christ, but consisting of, and revealed in, those personal marks and signs of God's peculiar adoption of *himself*, which he and none else is acquainted with. "If the heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddeth not with its joy" [Prov. xiv. 10], then the deep secret dealings of God with each of us during those times, by which our sonship is assured and our spiritual strife carried onward to victory, can, when revealed to us in the other blessed state, be known thoroughly to ourselves only).

18—29.] THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH AT THYATIRA. And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God (our Lord thus names Himself here, in accordance with the spirit

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass †; <sup>19</sup> <sup>k</sup> I know thy works, and thy love, and thy faith, and thy service, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. <sup>20</sup> Notwithstanding I have † against thee, that thou sufferest † thy wife <sup>1</sup> Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess; † and

† See note on ch. i. 15.  
k ver. 2.

† a few things is omitted by all our old MSS.; the Siwaite MS. has I have much against thee.

† See note.

1 1 Kings xvi. 31. & xxi. 25. 2 Kings ix. 7.

† So all our MSS.

of that which is to follow; ver. 27 being from Ps. ii., in which it is written, "*The Lord said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*"), who hath his eyes as a flame of fire (connected with ver. 23, "*I am he that searcheth the reins and the hearts*"), and his feet are like to chalcobalanus (for this word, see on ch. i. 15. There is here probably a connexion with ver. 27, "*as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to pieces*," which will be the work of the strongly shod feet): I know thy works, and the love (this, standing first, is probably quite general, to God and man) and the faith (general again: not *faithfulness*, but in its ordinary sense) and the ministration (viz. to the sick and poor, and all that need it: the natural proof of love and faith—faith working by love, Gal. v. 6) and the endurance (in tribulation: or perhaps the "*patient continuance in well-doing*" of Rom. ii. 7) of thee; and (that) thy last works (are) more (in number, or importance, or both) than the first (this praise is the opposite of the blame conveyed by ver. 5 to the Ephesian church).

20.] Notwithstanding, I have against thee that thou sufferest thy wife Jezebel (on the whole, the evidence for thy being inserted in the text seems to me to preponderate. It could not well have been inserted: and was sure to have been erased, from its difficulty, and possibly from other reasons, considering what was the common interpretation of the *angel*. It does not create any real difficulty: finding its meaning not in the matter of fact at Thyatira, but in the history from which the appellation Jezebel is taken. In 1 Kings xxi. 25 we read, "*Ahab, who did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord: whom*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; <sup>19</sup> I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. <sup>20</sup> Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to*

*Jezebel his wife stirred up:*" from which text the phrase is transferred entire, importing that this Jezebel was to the church at Thyatira what that other was to Ahab. It is not so easy to determine who is, or who are, imported by the term. The very fact of the name Jezebel being chosen [for it is impossible, even were this the actual name of a woman, that it should be used here with any other than the symbolic meaning], coupled with *thy wife*, as above explained, takes us out of the realms of simple fact into those of symbolism. The figure of "*Jezebel thy wife*" being once recognized in its historical import, it would not be needful that an individual woman should be found to answer to it: the conscience of the Thyatiran church could not fail to apply the severe reproof to whatever influence was being exerted in the direction here indicated. So that I should rate at very little the speculations of many Commentators on the supposed woman here pointed out. Düsterdieck, recently, remarks that the expression, *which calleth herself a prophetess*, has something individual about it. So it has: but may not this individuality belong just as well to the figure, as to the thing signified by it? The sect or individuals being once concentrated as Jezebel, this expression would follow of course, in the propriety of the figure. On the whole, however, I should feel it more probable that some individual *teacher*, high in repute and influence at the time, is pointed at. The denunciation of such a teacher under such a title would be at once startling and decisive. Nor would probability be violated by the other supposition, that a favoured and influential party in the Thyatiran church is designated. The church herself is represented by a woman: why may not a party

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. <sup>21</sup> And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. <sup>22</sup> Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. <sup>23</sup> And I will kill her

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

she teacheth and seduceth my servants <sup>m</sup> to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. <sup>21</sup> And I gave her time <sup>n</sup> to repent, and she will not repent of her fornication †. <sup>22</sup> Behold, I cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery together with her into great tribulation, except they repent of her † deeds. <sup>23</sup> And her children

<sup>m</sup> Exod. xxxiv 15. Acts xv. 20, 20. 1 Cor. x. 10, 20. ver. 14. <sup>n</sup> Rom. ii. 4. ch. ix. 20.

† So most of our old MSS.

† So all our old MSS., except the Alexandrine.

[compare the Jews, who are the “synagogue of Satan” of ver. 9] within the church be similarly symbolized? However this may be, the real solution must lie hidden until all that is hidden shall be known. See more below, who calleth herself a prophetess (this clause perhaps points at an individual: but there is on the other hand no reason why a sect claiming prophetic gifts should not be indicated: the feminine belonging as before to the historical symbol), and she teacheth and deceiveth my servants, to commit fornication and eat things sacrificed to idols (hence the propriety of the name Jezebel: for both these were the abominations of the historical Jezebel: 2 Kings ix. 22, 30 [See Jer. iv. 30; Nahum iii. 4]: the latter indeed in its more aggravated form of actual idolatry, 1 Kings xviii. 19. This specification of the mischief done shews us that this influence at Thyatira was in the same direction as the evil works of the Nicolaitans at Pergamus, ver. 14. The fact that this was the prevalent direction of the false teaching of the day, is important in a echronological point of view: see Introduction, § iii. par. 6). And I gave her time (not, “in my pre-ordination of what is to be,” as in Mark xiii. 20, but denoting historically that which the Lord had actually done, in vain. Notice that the “suffering” her, on which depended the time given her for repentance, is yet blamed [ver. 20] in the church of Thyatira as a sin) that she should repent, and she willeth not to repent of (literally, “out of,” so as to come out of) her fornication (the word is here to be taken, as in all these passages, in its literal sense. Otherwise, if taken figuratively, it would be only a repetition of the other particular, idolatry). <sup>22</sup>] Behold (arrests attention, and prepares the way for something un-

expected and terrible), I cast her (evidently against her will: but there is not necessarily violence in the word: it is the ordinary verb for being “cast” on a bed of sickness: so Matt. viii. 6, 14) into a bed (of sickness, see Ps. xli. 3: will change her bed of whoredom into a bed of anguish. So most Commentators. Perhaps the threat has reference to a future pestilence. Some understand the bed to be future punishment, referring to Isa. xiv. 11), and those who commit adultery (not now fornication, but a more general term, embracing in its wide meaning both the fornication and eating things sacrificed to idols, and well known as the word used of rebellious and idolatrous Israel, Jer. iii. 8, v. 7; Ezek. xvi. 32 &c.) together with her (not those who commit adultery with her, but those who, as well as she, commit adultery: those who share with her in her adulteries. These, as interpreted by the tone with which the rebuke began, will mean, those who by suffering and encouraging her, make themselves partakers of her sin. And this rather favours the idea that not one individual, but a dominant party, is intended. See below) into great tribulation (this clause forms a kind of parallelism with the former, so that into great tribulation is parallel with into a bed. But it is not to be regarded as interpreting the bed. Her punishment and that of her children [see below] is one thing; that of the partakers in her adulteries, those in the church who tolerated and encouraged her, another, viz. great tribulation. This is forcibly shewn by the words if they do not repent of her works following), if they do not (speedily and effectually, shall not have done so by the time which I have in my thoughts) repent of her (not their: they are Christ’s servants who are tampering with her tempta-



AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

will I kill with death; and all the churches shall know that <sup>o</sup> I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and <sup>p</sup> I will give unto every one of you according to your works. <sup>24</sup> But unto you I say, † unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, such as have not known the depths of Satan, as they call them; <sup>q</sup> I † put upon you none

o 1 Sam. xvi. 7.  
1 Chron. xxviii. 9. & xxix. 17.  
2 Chron. vi. 30. Ps. vii. 9. & xvii. 10. & xx. 12.  
John ii. 24.  
25. Acts i. 24. Rom. viii. 27.  
p Ps. lxxii. 12. Matt. xvi. 27. Rom. ii. 6. & xiv. 12.  
2 Cor. v. 10. Gal. vi. 5. ch. xx. 12.  
† and is omitted by all our MSS. q Acts xv. 28. † So two of our three oldest MSS.

children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. <sup>24</sup> But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I

tions and allowing themselves in her works, which are alien from their own spiritual life) works. And her children (emphatically put forward as distinguished from the last mentioned: as if it were, "And as to her children, &c.") These are her proper adherents: not those who suffer her, but those who are begotten of her, and go to constitute her. Some Commentators have vainly dreamt of the slaughter of Ahab's seventy sons, 2 Kings x.: but they were not *Jezebel's* children. The historical figure is obviously dropped here) I will slay with death (the expression is probably a rendering of the Hebrew idiom, which the Septuagint renders by "to kill with death," and which occurs Lev. xx. 10, in reference to adultery. But we need not suppose a direct reference to that passage: for there is nothing of adultery here: we have done with that, and are come to the judgment on *her children*); and all the churches (this remarkable expression, meaning not, all the Asiatic churches, but all the churches in the world to the end of time, lifts the whole of this threatening and its accompanying encouragements out of proconsular Asia, and gives us a glimpse into the universal character of these messages) shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and the hearts (which, see Rom. viii. 29, is the attribute of God: and therefore of the Son of God. Compare ver. 18 above, and note. Grotius says, "By the *reins* are understood the desires," as also Ps. cxix. 13, Jer. xii. 2, Prov. xxiii. 16: by the *heart*, the thoughts, 1 Sam. xvi. 7, 1 Kings viii. 39 &c. But it seems doubtful whether so minute a distinction is in the words; whether they are not rather a general designation for the whole inward part of a man); and I will give to you ('will render, in My doom of judgment.' The strain of the Lord's mes-

sage is suddenly changed into a direct address to those threatened) to each according to your works (not the mere outward products of the visible life, but the real acts and verities of the inward man, discerned by the piercing eye of the Son of God). <sup>24</sup>] But (contrast to those addressed before) to you I say, the rest who are in Thyatira, as many as have not (not only do not *hold*, but are free from any contact with) this teaching, such as have not known the depths (deep places) of Satan, as they call them (it was the characteristic of the falsely named *Gnosis* [Knowledge], to boast of its *Bathea*, or depths, of divine things. Tertullian says, in accusing the Valentinian heretics of dark deeds in secret, that if you ask plain questions about their mysteries, they knit their brows, and answer, "*It is deep.*" We may safely therefore refer the expression to the heretics spoken of. But it is not so clear to whom, as their subject, the words as they call them are to be appropriated, and again *whose* words "of Satan" are, whether those 1) of our Lord, 2) of the heretics, or 3) of the Christians addressed. If they belong to the *Christians*, then the sense will be, that they, the Christians, called the depths of the heretics the depths of Satan, and were content to profess their ignorance of them. So far would be true enough; but the sentence would thus be left very flat and pointless, and altogether inconsistent in its tone with the solemn and pregnant words of the rest of the message. If the words as they call them belong to the *heretics*, we have our choice between two views of the words of Satan; either 1) that the heretics themselves called their own mysteries the depths of Satan. But this, though held by some as a possible alternative,—can hardly be so, seeing that the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

will put upon you none other burden. <sup>25</sup> But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. <sup>26</sup> And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: <sup>27</sup> and he shall rule

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

other burden. <sup>25</sup> But <sup>r</sup> that which <sup>r</sup> ch. iii. 11. ye have, hold fast till I come. <sup>26</sup> And he that overcometh, and he that keepeth <sup>s</sup> my works unto the end, <sup>t</sup> to him will I give authority over the nations: <sup>27</sup> <sup>u</sup> and he

<sup>s</sup> John vi. 29.  
1 John iii. 23.  
<sup>t</sup> Matt. xix. 28.  
Luke xxii.  
29, 30. 1 Cor.  
vi. 3. ch. iii.  
21. & xx. 4.  
<sup>u</sup> 1's. ii. 8, 9.

& xlix. 14. Dan. vii. 22. ch. xii. 5. & xix. 15.

words surely would not bear the sense thus assigned to them, viz. that they could go deeper than and outwit Satan in his own kingdom: and seeing moreover, that no such formula, or any resembling it, is found as used by the ancient Gnostic heretics: or 2) that the words as they call them apply only to the word *depths*, and that, when, according to *their* way of speaking, "*of God*" should have followed [1 Cor. ii. 10], the Lord in indignation substitutes of *Satan*. This has been the sense taken by most Commentators. And it appears to me that this alone comes in any measure up to the requirements of the passage, in intensity of meaning and solemnity, as well as in likelihood); I cast not upon you any other burden (to what do the words refer? There can, I imagine, be little doubt as to the answer, if we remember some of the expressions used in the apostolic decree in which these very matters here in question, fornication and abstaining from unholy meats, were the only things forbidden to the Gentile converts. For our Lord here takes up and refers to those very words. In Acts xv. 28 we read, "*It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things, that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication.*" This act of simple obedience, and no deep matters beyond their reach, was what the Lord required of them. And this burden resolved itself into keeping the faith once delivered to the saints, as enjoined in the next sentence. The word has been very variously understood:—of the trouble given them by Jezebel and her followers:—of the punishments about to befall the heretics, which were not to be feared by the Christians:—of the burden of previous suffering implied in the word *patience* above,—and of the sense of "burden," so often occurring in the prophets when they denounce the divine threatenings. But to my mind the allusion to the apostolic de-

cre is too clear and prominent to allow of any other meaning coming into question: at least any other which sets that entirely aside. Others may be deduced and flow from that one, which have meaning for the church now that those former subjects of controversy have passed away): but ("*only:*" i. e., forget not that the licence just accorded involves this sacred obligation) that which ye have (see ch. iii. 11: not to be restricted in its sense to their steadfastness in resisting Jezebel and hers, but representing the sum total of Christian doctrine and hope and privilege; the "*faith once for all delivered to the saints*" of Jude 3), hold fast (the word in the original sets forth not so much the continuing habit, as the renewed and determined grasp of every intervening moment of the space prescribed) until the time when I shall come (the original gives an uncertainty when the time shall be, which we cannot convey in our language).

26.] And (the announcement of reward to the conqueror *now first* precedes the proclamation to hear what the Spirit saith to the churches: and is joined, *here alone*, by "and" to the preceding portion of the Epistle; being indeed more closely connected with it in this case than in any of the others: see below) he that conquereth and he that (by this second designation this second class is precluded from being taken as merely explanatory of the first, and is specified as included in it) keepeth to the end (it is remarkable, that immediately after the words, so pointedly alluded to above, in the apostolic decree, Acts xv. 28, was added, *from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well*) my works (contrast to *her works*, ver. 22: but extending beyond that contrast to a general and blessed truth. *My works*, i. e. which belong to Me, are the attributes of Myself and of Mine), I will give to him authority over the nations (compare the words, "*Have thou authority over the cities,*" Luke xix. 17, which is the reward of him who obeyed the command, "*Occupy*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of a potter are broken to shivers: as I also have received of my Father. <sup>28</sup> And I will give him <sup>x</sup> the morning star. <sup>29</sup> He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

III. <sup>1</sup> And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he <sup>a</sup> that hath the seven Spirits

x 2 Pet. i. 19.  
ch. xxii. 16.  
y ver. 7.

a ch. i. 4, 16.  
& iv. 5.  
& v. 6.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. <sup>28</sup> And I will give him the morning star. <sup>29</sup> He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

III. <sup>1</sup> And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven

*till I come.*" The authority here spoken of is that which shall be conferred on the saints when they shall inherit the earth, and reign with Christ in His Kingdom. It has been gradually realized, as the stone cut out without hands has broken in pieces other kingdoms; but shall only then find its entire fulfilment), and he shall govern (literally, "*shall shepherd.*" It is the Septuagint rendering of a similar word signifying to *break in pieces*, which they have taken as an Hebrew verb signifying to *shepherd*, in Ps. ii. 9. The saying, as rendered by them, is sanctioned by being thrice quoted in this book, see ch. xii. 5, xix. 15) **them with a rod of iron** (a sceptre of severity: i. e. of inflexible justice), **as the vessels of pottery are broken up** (crushed, or shivered: the original gives the idea of the multitudinous fragments collapsing into an heap: the "broken to shivers" of the A.V. is very good), **as I also have received from my Father** (viz. in Ps. ii. 9, in which Psalm it is said, "*Thou art my Son,*" ver. 7. The power there conferred on Me, I will delegate to my victorious servant). **And I will give to him the star of the morning** (it is not easy to say what, in strict exactness, these words import. The interpretations given are very various and inconsistent. The early Expositors, Andreas and Arethas, understand it of the Lucifer of Isa. xiv. 12, i. e. the devil, whom our Lord saw as lightning fall from heaven.—or, as there imported, the King of Babylon, the most powerful monarch on earth. Another ancient meaning given is the day-star arising in the hearts of the faithful, spoken of by St. Peter, 2 Pet. i. 19. Victorinus (century iv.) says it is *the first resurrection*. Many others, ancient and modern, understand Christ Himself, who, ch. xxii.

16, declares Himself to be *the bright and morning star*: and doubtless, as has been before remarked on the fruit of the tree of life, ver. 7, and on the hidden manna, ver. 17, in the mystical sense, Christ Himself is the sum and inclusion of all Christ's gifts: this truth serves to connect the symbolism of all these passages, but does not justify us in disturbing that of one by introducing that of another. Here the morning star clearly is not Christ Himself, the very terms of the sentence separating the two. Then again, we have Lyræ's interpretation, the glorious body; Grotius's, that it is brightness as much exceeding all other, as the morning star excels the other stars. And this interpretation is probably near the mark. In Dan. xii. 3 we read that the righteous shall shine *as the stars*, and in Matt. xiii. 43 that they *shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*. And in Prov. iv. 18, we read that "the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Still, this interpretation does not quite satisfy the words **I will give him**: unless indeed the poetic imagery be, that he is imagined as clad in the glory of that star, putting it on as a jewel, or as a glittering robe. De Wette supposes that the star is to be given to him as its ruler: but such an interpretation would lead into a wide field of speculation which does not seem to have been opened by Scripture, and is hardly required by the passage itself). <sup>29.</sup> See above, on ver. 7.

CHAP. III. 1—6.] THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH AT SARDIS. The spirit of this Epistle is one of rebuke and solemn denunciation. Even the promise, ver. 5, is tinged with the same hue. For the history, see Introduction.—**And to the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things**

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. <sup>2</sup> Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

of God, and the seven stars; <sup>b</sup> I <sup>b</sup> ch. ii. 2. know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, <sup>c</sup> and art <sup>c</sup> Eph. ii. 1, 5. <sup>1</sup> Tim. v. 6. dead. <sup>2</sup> Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that were ready to die: for I have not found

saith He that hath the seven spirits of God (this designation of our Lord has not before occurred: but it is new rather in form than in substance. We have mention in ch. i. 4 of the seven spirits which are before God's throne: and we there found occasion to interpret them of the plenitude of the Godhead in its attributes and energies. See, for further elucidation, ch. iv. 5, v. 6. These spirits, this plenitude, Christ, the Lord of the Church, possesses, is clothed and invested with, in all fulness. From Him the spiritual life of his churches comes as its source, in all its elements of vitality. He searches all the depths both of our depravity and of His own applications of grace. He has in his hand all the Spirit's power of conviction. He wields the fire of purification and the fire of destruction. Whether the Spirit informs, or rebukes, or warns, or comforts, or promises, whether He softens or hardens men's hearts, it is Christ who, searching the hearts as Son of God and feeling their feelings as Son of man, wields and applies the one and manifold Spirit. The designation here has its appropriateness in the whole character of this solemn Epistle. The Lord of the Church comes, armed with all the powers of the Spirit; searching the depths of hypocrisy, judging of the worthlessness of works not done in faith. The difficulty of this general attribute of Christ, and not any one selected specially as applying to Sardis being here introduced, seems to be best accounted for, not, as Ebrard, by the general prophetic import of the Epistle, but by the fact that the minatory strain of the Epistle justifies the alleging the whole weight and majesty of the divine character of our Lord, to create alarm and bring about repentance), and the seven stars (the former symbolism [ch. i. 16, 20] still holds in all its strictness. Nor have we the least right here, as some do, to suppose that the stars and the spirits are identical. The motive mentioned above would fully account for this designation also: The Lord of all the churches: He who appoints them their

ministering angels, and has them, and all that is theirs, in His hand): I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest (I need only mention for warning the childish fancy, that the Bishop of Sardis was named Zosimus or Vitalis (*living*). The expression explains itself: thou hast a repute that thou livest: art *nominal*ly, as we commonly now say, Christian), and (the mere copula carries the contrast far more vividly and pathetically than when it is made rhetorically complete by inserting "yet") art dead (spiritually dead: void of vitality and fruitfulness: sunk in that deep deadly sleep which, if not broken in upon and roused up, is death itself: so St. Paul, Eph. v. 14). Be (literally, become: because a change is involved: become what thou art not) watchful (we can hardly help in English substituting the adjective for the participle "watching;" thereby losing objective vividness, and getting instead a subjective attribute of character. "Awake and watch" would be, in paraphrase, tantamount to the text), and strengthen the remaining things, which were (the time is transferred to that indicated by the fulfilment of the command: which were, when thou shalt apply thyself to strengthen them) about to die (there is a question whether these *remaining matters* are to be understood as *things*, matters in which the Sardian church was not yet totally without spiritual vitality, or as *persons*, who were not yet passed into the almost universal death-slumber of hypocrisy. The latter view is taken by very many Commentators. And there is nothing in the construction to preclude it. But if I mistake not, there is in the context. For to assume that the *persons remaining* could be thus described, would surely be to leave no room for those mentioned with so much praise below in ver. 4. Had the things which remain not occurred, we might have well understood "strengthen those that were ready to die," of confirming those thy weak members who on account of the general deadness were near losing their spiritual life altogether: but

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

thy works perfect before my † God.  
 3<sup>d</sup> Remember [† therefore] how thou  
 hast received and heardest, and keep,  
 and <sup>e</sup> repent. <sup>f</sup> If therefore thou  
 shalt not watch, I will come † as a  
 thief, and thou shalt not know  
 what hour I will come upon thee.  
 4 † Nevertheless thou hast <sup>g</sup> a few  
 names † in Sardis which have not  
<sup>h</sup> defiled their garments; and they  
 shall walk with me <sup>i</sup> in white, be-

*not found thy works perfect before God.* <sup>3</sup> Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent. *If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.* <sup>4</sup> Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

<sup>g</sup> Acts i. 15.  
 11. & vii. 9, 13.

† even is omitted by all our MSS.

h Jude 23.

i ch. iv. 4. & vi.

with the former expression, this can hardly stand. We must therefore take the other view,—“strengthen those thy remaining few graces, which in thy spiritual deadly slumber are not yet quite extinct”): for I have not found thy works complete in the sight of my God (up to the mark and measure of being acceptable to Him: i. e. not wrought in that living faith which alone renders human works acceptable to God, by uniting them to Him on whom the Father looks with perfect approval. Düsterdieck well observes, “The express reference to the absolute rule of all Christian morality is here put the more strongly and strikingly, because this church had *among men* a name that she lived.” The *my* binds on the judgment of Him who speaks to that of God). Remember [therefore] how (not subjective, “with what manner of reception,” but objective, “after what sort:” as in Eph. iv. 20; 1 Cor. xv. 11) thou hast received (perfect tense; said of the permanent deposit of doctrine entrusted) and heardest (merely past tense: said of the act of hearing, when it took place), and keep (what thou hast received and heardest: keep, as an abiding habit), and repent (the command is of a quick and decisive act of amendment). If therefore (the therefore is hardly because it is assumed, in the present evil state of the Sardian church, that the exhortation will be in vain: far rather, because repentance is so grievously needed. And it follows on the plain declaration which has been made of that present evil state; coming forcibly and unexpectedly where we should rather have looked for “*But if*”) thou dost not watch (shalt not have awaked and become watchful, before the time about to be indicated in the threat

which is coming), I will come as a thief (these words do not here refer to our Lord’s final coming, but to some signal judgment in which He would overtake the Sardian church. Just as the formula derived from the great truth of the suddenness of His second coming is frequently applied to His final judgment in Jerusalem, so is it to other His partial and special advents to judgment in the case of individuals and churches), and thou shalt not know at what hour I will come upon thee. Nevertheless (notwithstanding this state of apathy even to spiritual death) thou hast (belonging to thee as members. Notice as Bengel remarks, that these few had not separated themselves from the church in Sardis, notwithstanding its degraded state) a few names (“men who may be counted by name:” compare Acts i. 15; ch. xi. 13, note. The term would hardly be used except of a limited number) in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments (literally, did not defile: the past tense is from the standing-point of the future day presently introduced, as so commonly when life is looked back on from the great time of retribution. The meaning of the figure [which occurs also in Jude 23] has been variously given. There can be little doubt that the simpler and more general explanation is the right one: viz. who have not sullied the purity of their Christian life (or falling into sin): and they shall walk with me in white (the white here is not to be identified with the undefiled garments which they now wear: it is a new and glorious hue of victory: see ch. vi. 11; vii. 9; xix. 8. The allusion which some have imagined, to their priesthood,—because when a judgment was held by the Sanhe-



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

<sup>5</sup> *He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.* <sup>6</sup> *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.* <sup>7</sup> *And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

cause they are worthy. <sup>5</sup> He that overcometh, <sup>k</sup> the same <sup>†</sup> shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not <sup>l</sup> blot out his name out of the <sup>m</sup> book of life; and <sup>n</sup> I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. <sup>6</sup> He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

<sup>7</sup> And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things

<sup>k</sup> ch. xix. 8.

<sup>†</sup> See note.

<sup>l</sup> Exod. xxxii.

<sup>32.</sup> Ps. lxxix.

<sup>28.</sup>

<sup>m</sup> Phil. iv. 3.

<sup>ch.</sup> xiii. 8.

<sup>&</sup> xvii. 8. &

<sup>xx.</sup> 12. &

<sup>xxi.</sup> 27.

<sup>n</sup> Matt. x. 32.

<sup>o</sup> Luke xii. 8.

<sup>o</sup> ch. ii. 7.

drim on the priests, those who were condemned were clothed in black, while the blameless wore a white robe,—seems, like so many of these rabbinical illustrations, to be far-fetched, and to spoil the simplicity of the passage. An allusion to Zech. iii. 3 ff. is far more obvious. **with me**, in remarkable accord with our Lord's prayer in John xvii. 24, "*Father, I will that they whom Thou hast given Me, where I am, there they also may be with me:*" see also Luke xxiii. 43), **for they are worthy** (the *worthiness* here is found in the terms of the sentence itself. They have *kept their garments undefiled*: they of all others then are the persons who should walk in the glorious white robes of heavenly triumph. Exactly thus in ch. xvi. 5, 6, "*They shed blood, and thou gavest them blood to drink: they are worthy.*" To dream of any merit here implied, is not only to miss, but to run counter to the sense of the whole saying and situation. The absence of defilement is only explained by ch. vii. 14, "*They washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb:*" and as Vitrina excellently says, "*Unworthiness* here marks the proportion and congruency which was between the state of grace in which they had been on earth, and of the glory which the Lord had decreed for them according to the measure of this very law of grace"). **He that conquereth, he** (the reading "*he that conquereth thus,*" found in so many MSS., seems to have arisen originally in a very usual confusion of the long and short *o* in Greek, and then to have been retained, from not being altogether without meaning; "*thus,*" i. e. as those first mentioned) **shall be clad in white garments** (the concluding promise takes the hue of what had gone before, and identifies those

just spoken of with these victorious ones); **and I will not wipe out his name out of the book of life** (this again takes its colour from the preceding. Those who have a name that they *live*, and are dead, are necessarily wiped out from the book of *life*: only he whose name is a living name, can remain on those pages. Here again the Rabbinical expositors have gone wrong in imagining that the genealogical tables of the priests are alluded to. Far rather is the reference to the ordinary lists of citizens, or of living members of any body or society, from which the dead are struck out. Thus they whose names have been once inscribed in this book, whether by their outward admission into Christ's church in baptism, or by their becoming living members of Him by faith, if they endure to the end as His soldiers and servants, and obtain the victory, shall not, as all His mere professed members shall, have their names erased from it. The figure itself, of the book of life, is found as early as Exod. xxxii. 32 f.); **and I will confess his name in the presence of my Father and in the presence of his angels** (see Matt. x. 32; Luke xii. 8, both of which are here combined: see also Luke ix. 26; Mark viii. 38. The promise implies that in the great day the Judge will expressly acknowledge the name thus written in the book of life, as belonging to one of His. See ch. xx. 15, xxi. 27; also Matt. vii. 23, [xxv. 12], where He repudiates those whom He knows not). **6.]** See above, ch. i. 7.

**7—13.] THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH AT PHILADELPHIA.** It has been remarked, that this Epistle bears a tinge throughout of Old Test. language and imagery, correspondent to the circumstances of the church as connected with the Jews dwell-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

p 1 John v. 20.  
ver. 14. ch.  
i. 5. & vi. 10.  
& xix. 11.  
† This order is  
found in two  
out of four three  
oldest MSS.  
q Acts iii 14.  
r Isa. xxii. 22.  
Luke i. 32.  
ch. i. 18.  
s Matt. xvi. 19.  
† So all our  
oldest MSS.  
t Job xii. 14.  
† The Sinaitic  
MS. and  
some later  
ones read  
shall open.  
u ver. 1.  
x 1 Cor. xvi. 19.  
2 Cor. ii. 12.  
y ch. ii. 9.  
† Not expressed  
in the original.

saith <sup>p</sup> † the true One, <sup>q</sup> the holy One,  
he that hath <sup>r</sup> the key of David,  
<sup>s</sup> he that openeth, and none † shall  
shut; and <sup>t</sup> shutteth, and none  
† openeth; <sup>8</sup> <sup>u</sup> I know thy works:  
behold, I have granted before thee  
<sup>x</sup> an open door, which none can  
shut: because thou hast little power,  
and thou didst keep my word, and  
didst not deny my name. <sup>9</sup> Behold,  
I give [<sup>y</sup> † them] of the synagogue

*holy, he that is true, he  
that hath the key of Da-  
vid, he that openeth, and  
no man shutteth; and  
shutteth, and no man  
openeth; <sup>8</sup> I know thy  
works: behold, I have set  
before thee an open door,  
and no man can shut it:  
for thou hast a little  
strength, and hast kept  
my word, and hast not  
denied my name. <sup>9</sup> Be-  
hold, I will make them*

ing there. For the history, &c., see Introduction). And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith the holy One (as opposed to the *synagogue of Satan* below; not with reference to Christ's High-priesthood, but expressive of moral attribute), the true One (this title would appear as if it were chosen to declare an attribute of our Lord, opposed to "those who say . . . and are not, but do lie" below), he that hath the key of David (i. e. He that is the Heir and Lord of the abiding theocracy. In Isa. xxii. 22, it is said of Eliakim son of Hilkiah, "The key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open:" which is manifestly the passage here incorporated into the Lord's message; and the sense is that whatever inferior degrees there may be of this power of opening and shutting the church [the house of David, with reference to the false Jews below], the supreme power, the one true key, belongs to the Lord Christ alone. It is hardly justified, and serves but little purpose, to attempt to set up a distinction between "the key of David" here, and "the key of the house of David" in Isaiah. The key is the same in both cases: but the One possesses it as his own by right, the other has it merely entrusted to him; laid on his shoulder. See on the whole sense, Matt. xvi. 19), who openeth, and no one shall shut; and shutteth, and no one shall open (these words are to be taken not merely of the power of Christ to forgive sins, but generally, as indeed the next ver. requires. Christ only has power to admit into and exclude from His kingdom; to enlarge the work and opportunities of His church, and to contract them): I know thy works

(these words stand by themselves; not as connected with what follows below, the intervening sentence, "behold, . . . shut," being considered parenthetical. They are words of comfort and support to the Philadelphian church): behold, I have given before thee a door opened (i. e. have granted, in my possession and administration of the key of David, that a door should stand opened. The door is variously understood: but most Expositors take it to mean, as in 1 Cor. xvi. 9; 2 Cor. ii. 12; Col. iv. 3 [otherwise in Acts xiv. 27], an opportunity for the mission work of the church. And this appears to be the true sense here, by what follows in ver. 9, promising conversion of those who were now foes. before thee, because the course is naturally forward), which no one is able to shut: because (gives the reason of what preceded; the Lord will confer this great advantage on the Philadelphian church, because . . .) thou hast little power (not as A. V. "a little strength," thereby virtually reversing the sense of the words: the original importing "thy strength is but small," and the A. V. importing "thou hast some strength," the fact of its smallness vanishing under the indefinite term "a little." This smallness of strength must not be attributed to a scanty bestowal of miraculous powers on the Philadelphian church, but to the fact of the fewness of the congregation of Christians there: possibly also to their poverty as contrasted with the wealth of their Jewish adversaries), and (using that little well) didst keep my word, and didst not deny my name (the past tenses perhaps refer to some time of especial trial when both these temptations, to break Christ's word and deny His name, were

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

<sup>10</sup> Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

<sup>11</sup> Behold, I come quickly:

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie,—behold, <sup>a</sup> I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. <sup>10</sup> Because thou

didst keep the word of my patience, <sup>a</sup> I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which is about to come upon <sup>b</sup> all the world, to try <sup>b</sup> them that dwell <sup>c</sup> upon the earth.

<sup>11</sup> <sup>†</sup> <sup>d</sup> I come quickly: <sup>e</sup> hold fast

MSS.

d Phil. iv. 5. ch. 1. 3. & xxii. 7, 12, 20.

a 2 Pet. ii. 9.  
b Luke ii. 1.  
c Isa. xxiv. 17.  
† Behold is omitted by all our old ver. 3. ch. ii. 25.

put before the church). Behold. I give (not, to thee, nor can we render it by *I will make*, as the A. V.: the sense is broken off in the following clause, and the verb *give* resumed by *I will make them*) of the synagogue of Satan (see on ch. ii. 9, where the same expression occurs of outward Jews who were not real Jews), who profess themselves to be Jews and they are not, but do lie,—behold, I will make them that they shall come, and shall worship before thy feet (so in Isa. lx. 14, “The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee: and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet: and they shall call thee the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.” See also Isa. xlix. 23; Zech. viii. 20—23), and that they may know that I loved thee (the English idiom requires, “have loved thee:” but the past tense has its propriety, referring as it does to the time preceding that in which they shall do this. Düsterdieck takes it as used of that great proof which Christ gave of His love by dying for His church, appealing to the same tense in Eph. v. 25; Gal. ii. 20; 1 John iv. 10, 11. But thus we lose the especial reference to the particular church which seems to be involved in the recognition. It is the love bestowed on the Philadelphian church, in signaling its success in the work of Christ, that these converted enemies shall recognize). Because thou didst keep the word of my endurance (or, patience: the word preached to thee, enjoining that endurance which belongs to Me and mine, see ch. i. 9), I also (I on my side: the also expressing reciprocity) will keep thee (thee, emphatic and prominent) from (from out of the

midst of: but whether by *immunity from*, or by *being brought safe through*, the preposition does not clearly define) the hour of temptation (the appointed season of sore trial: literally, of the temptation, of the well-known and signal temptation. But the article cannot be expressed in English, because it would unavoidably become the antecedent to “*which*” following) which is about to come upon the whole world (the time imported is that prophesied of in Matt. xxiv. 21 ff., viz. the great time of trouble which shall be before the Lord’s second coming. As such, it is immediately connected with *I come quickly* following), to try them that dwell upon the earth (see ch. viii. 13, &c., where the expression applies to those who are not of the church of Christ. In this great trial, the servants of Christ shall be kept safe, ch. vii. 3. The trial of the *temptation* will operate in two ways: on the faithful, by bringing out their fidelity; on the unfaithful and unbelieving, by hardening them in their impenitence, see ch. ix. 20, 21, xvi. 11, 21.

The Expositors have in many cases gone away from this broad and obvious meaning here, and have sought to identify the *hour of temptation* with various periods of trial and persecution of the Church: a line of interpretation carrying its own refutation with it in the very terms used in the text. Thus Grotius understands it of the persecution under Nero; Lyra, of the future increase of that under Domitian, which was raging as the Apostle wrote: others, of those under Trajan: others again, of the troubles which should arise on account of Antichrist, which is nearer the mark.

11.] I come quickly (these words, which in different senses and with varying re-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

that which thou hast, that no one take <sup>f</sup> thy crown. <sup>12</sup> He that overcometh, I will make him <sup>g</sup> a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall never more go out: and <sup>h</sup> I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God,

f ch. ii. 10.

g 1 Kings vii. 21. Gal. ii. 9.

h ch. ii. 17. &amp; xiv. 1. &amp; xxii. 4.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. <sup>12</sup> Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city*

ferences form the burden of this whole book, are here manifestly to be taken as an encouragement and comfort to the Philadelphian church, arising from the nearness of the Lord's coming to reward her; compare *thy crown* below): *hold fast that which thou hast* (this, in the language of these Epistles, imports any advantage, or progress in grace, already possessed; compare ch. ii. 6, "*This thou hast, that*" . . . This is regarded as a treasure, to be firmly grasped, as against those who are ever ready to snatch it away. In this case it was a rich treasure indeed: compare vv. 8, 10), *that no one take* (snatch away: but here the figure stops: it is not *for himself* that the robber would snatch it, but merely to deprive the possessor. So we have, to "*take peace out of the earth*," ch. vi. 4) *thy crown*. <sup>12.</sup>] The reward of the conqueror. *He that conquereth, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God* (i. e. he shall have a fixed and important place in the glorified church hereafter. That this, and nothing referring to any honour or dignity in the church militant, or in that as leading on to the church triumphant is intended, is manifest from the whole diction of this passage, as well as from comparing the corresponding promises, which all refer to the blessings of the future state of glory. It is no objection to this view, that in the heavenly Jerusalem there is no temple, ch. xxi. 22: but rather a corroboration of it. That glorious city is all temple, and Christ's victorious ones are its living stones and pillars. Thus as Düsterdieck well remarks, the imagery of the church militant, 1 Cor. iii. 16 ff.; Eph. ii. 19 ff.; 1 Pet. ii. 5 ff., is transferred to the church triumphant, but with this difference, that the saints are no longer the stones merely, but now the pillars themselves, standing in their immovable firmness. On my *God*, see note on ch. ii. 7), *and out of it he shall never more go out* (the subject is not the *pillar*, but *he that conquereth*;

and the sense, that he who is thus fixed in his eternal place as a pillar in the heavenly temple, will never more, from any cause, depart from it. Those Commentators who have understood the promise of the church *militant*, have been obliged to take the *going out* as passive, shall not be cast out. Lyra takes it in both senses—"neither by apostasy, nor by excommunication." And thus except that the latter word will have no place, we may well understand the general term here used: none shall thrust him out, nor shall he be any more in danger of falling, and thus thrusting himself out. It is well worth noticing the recorded fact, that Philadelphia was notorious for calamities by earthquake. The language in which Strabo describes this is remarkable in connexion with this promise of the pillar which should not be moved: "Philadelphia cannot trust to its walls, but day by day they are more or less shaken and crack. And the inhabitants always take into account these accidents of their land, and build with reference to its character." And still more so in another place: "The city of Philadelphia is full of earthquakes; the walls are constantly cracking, and some part or other of the city is always in trouble, wherefore the inhabitants are scanty." Tacitus tells us, that in the reign of Tiberius, when the twelve cities of provincial Asia were overthrown by an earthquake, Philadelphia suffered, and was in consequence excused its taxes, and in common with the others entrusted to a senatorian commissioner to repair): *and I will write upon him* (the conqueror; not the pillar) *the name of my God* (some think of the mitre breastplate of the high priests, on which was inscribed "Holiness to the Lord," Exod. xxviii. 36. But this does not seem applicable here, where, from this and the following particulars, it is rather a blessed belonging to God and the holy city and Christ, that is imported, than the priestly office of the glorified Christian),

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. <sup>13</sup> He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. <sup>14</sup> And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; <sup>15</sup> I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would

the <sup>i</sup> new Jerusalem, which cometh <sup>l</sup> Gal. iv. 20. Heb. xii. 22. ch. xxi. 2, 10. down out of heaven from my God,—  
<sup>k</sup> and mine own new name. <sup>13</sup> <sup>l</sup> He <sup>k</sup> ch. xxii. 4. <sup>l</sup> ch. ii. 7. that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.  
<sup>14</sup> And unto the angel of the church † in Laodicea write; <sup>m</sup> These † No all our MSS. m Isa. lxxv. 16. n ch. i. 5. & xix. 11. & xxii. 6. ver. 7. o Col. i. 15. things saith the Amen, <sup>n</sup> the faithful and true witness, <sup>o</sup> the beginning of the creation of God;  
<sup>15</sup> <sup>p</sup> I know thy works, that thou <sup>p</sup> ver. 1. art neither cold nor hot: I would

and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which descendeth out of heaven from my God (on the whole, see ch. xxi. 2, 3, and notes. It is possible, that the name Jehovah Shammah, Ezek. xlvi. 35, may be meant; but hardly probable, seeing that the Holy Name itself has before been mentioned as inscribed on him. The inscription of the name of the city would betoken citizenship),—and mine own new name (not the name mentioned ch. xix. 16, which is known and patent, but that indicated ch. xix. 12, “*which none knoweth but Himself*,” for this is clearly pointed at by the word *new*. By the inscription on him of this new name of the glorified Saviour is declared, that he belongs to Him in His new and glorious state of eternal rest and triumph). 13.] See above, ch. ii. 7.

14—22.] THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH IN LAODICEA. And to the angel (not, the bishop or ruler, see on ch. i. 20) of the church in Laodicea write; These things saith the Amen (see Isaiah. Christ is the Amen, inasmuch as His words shall never pass away, but shall find certain ratification. This, and not the particular case which is treated in 2 Cor. i. 20, seems to be the reference here, where not the ratification of promises merely, but general fidelity and certainty are concerned: as Arethas says, “This is the same as *these things saith the true One*: for Amen means yea. There is then *yea* in all things said of Him; i. e. all is truth, and none a lie”), the faithful and true witness (there does not seem in this title to be any allusion to the prophecies which are about

to follow in ch. iv. ff. as some have imagined. Far rather does it substantiate the witness borne in the Epistle itself, as we have seen in the case of the other introductions), the beginning of the creation of God (see Col. i. 15, and note. In Him the whole creation of God is begun and conditioned: He is its source and primary fountain-head. The mere word *beginning* would admit the meaning that Christ is the first-created being: see Gen. xlix. 3; Deut. xxi. 17; and Prov. viii. 22. And so the Arians here take it, and some who have followed them. But every consideration of the requirements of the context, and of the Person of Christ as set forth to us in this book, is against any such view. Dusterdieck asks the questions, “How could Christ write if it were only this present Epistle, if He were himself a creature? How could every creature in heaven and earth adore Him, if He were one of themselves [ch. xix. 10]? We need only think of the appellation of our Lord as the Alpha and Omega [ch. xxii. 13: compare i. 8] in its necessary fullness of import, and we shall see that in the Alpha lies the necessity of His being the *beginning* of the Creation, as in the Omega that of His coming to bring the visible creation to an end”): I know thy works, that (see above, ver. 1, where the construction is the same: I have thy whole course of life before me, and its testimony is, that . . .) thou art neither cold nor hot (the peculiar use of the similitude of physical cold and heat here, makes it necessary to interpret the former of the two somewhat differently to its common acceptation: so that while



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

thou wert cold or hot. <sup>16</sup> So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither † hot nor cold, I shall soon spue thee out of my mouth. <sup>17</sup> Because thou sayest, <sup>q</sup> I am rich, and I have become wealthy, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou of all others art the wretched one, and † the pitiable one, and poor and blind and naked: <sup>18</sup> I counsel thee <sup>r</sup> to buy of me gold

† So two of our three oldest MSS. and most of the later ones.  
q Hos. xii. 8.  
1 Cor. iv. 8.

† So the Alexandrine and the later MSS. The reading is in some confusion, the other ancient MSS. being divided.

r Isa. lv. 1. Matt. xiii. 44. & xxv. 9.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

thou wert cold or hot. <sup>16</sup> So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. <sup>17</sup> Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: <sup>18</sup> I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that

hot [compare Rom. xii. 11] keeps its meaning of *fervent*, warm and earnest in the life of faith and love, cold cannot here mean "dead and cold," as we say of the listless and careless professor of religion: for this is just what these Laodiceans were, and what is expressed by the word rendered lukewarm below. So that we must, so to speak, go further into coldness for the meaning of cold, and take it as signifying, not only entirely without the spark of spiritual life, but also and chiefly, by consequence, openly belonging to the world without, and having no part nor lot in Christ's church, and actively opposed to it. This, as well as the opposite state of spiritual fervour, would be an intelligible and plainly-marked condition: at all events, free from that danger of mixed motive and disregarded principle which belongs to the lukewarm state: inasmuch as a man in earnest, be he right or wrong, is ever a better man than one professing what he does not feel. This necessity of interpretation here has been much and properly pressed by some of the later Commentators, but was by the older ones very generally missed, and the coldness interpreted of the mere negative absence of spiritual life: would that thou wert cold or hot: so (expresses the actual relation of facts to the wish just expressed, as not fulfilling it: "seeing that this is not so") because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I shall soon spue thee out of my mouth (it being the known effect of the taking of lukewarm water, to produce vomiting. I shall soon is a mild expression, carrying with it a possibility of the determination being changed, dependently on a change in the state of the church). 17, 18.] In these verses, the

lukewarmness is further expanded, as inducing miserable unconsciousness of defect and need, and empty self-sufficiency. And the charge comes in the form of solemn and affectionate counsel. Because (forms the reason of *I advise* below: *seeing that*) thou sayest [that] I am rich, and am become wealthy, and have need in nothing (the three expressions form a climax: the first giving the act of being rich, the second the process of having become so [in which there is not merely outward fact, but some self-laudation: see Hosea xii. 8], the third the result, self-sufficiency. From the whole context it is evident that not, as many have imagined, outward worldly wealth, but imagined spiritual riches, are in question. The imagined spiritual self-sufficiency was doubtless the natural growth of an outwardly prosperous condition: but the great self-deceit of which the Lord here complains was not concerning worldly wealth, which was a patent fact, but concerning spiritual, which was a baseless fiction), and knowest not that thou (emphatic; "thou, of all others;" corresponding to the use of the articles below) art the wretched and the pitiable one (in both cases, as distinguished above others, as the person to whom above all others the epithets belong. And these epithets are especially opposed to the idea that there was no want of any thing), and poor and blind and naked (observe, the counsel which follows takes up these three points in order, thereby bringing them out as distinct from and not subordinate to the two preceding), I advise thee (there is a deep irony in this word. One who has need of nothing, yet needs counsel on the vital points of self-preservation) to buy (at the cost only of thy good self-opinion.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. <sup>19</sup> As many as I love,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

fresh smelted from the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and <sup>s</sup> white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness may not be made manifest; and eye-salve † to anoint thine eyes, † that thou mayest see. <sup>19</sup> † As many

<sup>#</sup> 2 Cor. v. 3  
ch. vii. 13. &  
xvi. 15. &  
xix. 8.

† So all our  
oldest MSS.

† Job v. 17.  
Prov. iii. 11,  
12. Heb. xii. 5, 6. James i. 12.

That a pauper should be advised to buy gold and raiment, and ointment, might of itself shew what kind of buying is meant, even if Isa. lv. 1, "Nay, without money and without price," had not clearly defined it. Yet notwithstanding such clear warning not to go wrong, the Roman-Catholic expositors have here again handled the word of God deceitfully, and explained, as Lyra, "Buy, i.e. with good works;" Cornelius-a-lapide, "The word *buy* signifies that a man must do many things and contribute many things in order to be fit to receive these gifts from God." The term, in fact, continues the irony. "All this lofty self-sufficiency must be expended in the labour of getting from Me these absolute necessaries." So most of the later expositors. So even the Roman-Catholic Stern, but disguising the truth under an appearance of some price being given: "What is the price? Has not the Lord Himself said that she is poor and pitiable and naked and wretched? She must give up her heart to Christ, her feelings, thoughts, and active work; must entirely give up herself to the Lord for His own possession, Matt. xiii. 45, 46") gold from me (who am the source of all true spiritual wealth, Eph. iii. 8) [fresh] burnt from the fire (the from gives the sense of being just fresh from the burning or smelting, and thus not only tried by the process, but bright and new from the furnace. This is better than, with many Commentators, to make the from almost equivalent to *by*, signifying the source from which the burning comes. In the interpretation, this gold represents all spiritual wealth, in its sterling reality, as contrasted with that merely imaginary sort on which the Laodiceans prided themselves. It is narrowing it too much to interpret it as *charity*, or *faith*, or indeed any one spiritual grace, as distinguished from the sum total of them all), that thou mayest be (literally, mayest have become, viz., by the purchase) rich; and white gar-

ments (Düsterdieck rightly remarks that the white garments are distinct from the gold only in being a different image in the form of expression, not really in the thing signified. On the meaning, see ver. 4, ch. vii. 14, xix. 8. The lack of *righteousness*, which can be only bought from Christ, and that at the price of all fancied righteousness of our own, is just as much a poverty as the other), that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness be not made manifest (the choice of the word seems as if some particular time were in view when such manifestation would take place. If we are to assign one, it will naturally be that of the Lord's coming, when "we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ," 2 Cor. v. 10: when the Lord of the Church will come to see his guests, and all not clad in the wedding robe will be cast out, Matt. xxii. 11 ff.); and collyrium (eye-salve; the use of which is apparent from what follows. The *collyrium* was so called from its shape, being a stick or roll of ointment for the eyes, in the shape of a bread-cake) to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see (in the spiritual interpretation, this collyrium will import the anointing of the Holy Spirit, which, like the gold of His unsearchable riches, and the white garment of His righteousness, is to be obtained from Him, John xvi. 7, 14; Acts ii. 33; and also at the price of the surrender of our own fancied wisdom. The analogy of 1 John ii. 20, 27 is not to be overlooked: see notes at those places).

19.] Importing that these rich proofs of Christ's love are only to be sought by such as the Laodiceans in the way of rebuke and chastisement: and reciprocally, as tending not to despair, but to encouragement, that rebuke and chastisement are no signs of rejection from Christ, but of His abiding and pleading love, even to the lukewarm and careless. I (emphatically prefixed: I, for my part:

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. <sup>20</sup> Behold, <sup>u</sup> I stand at the door, and knock: <sup>x</sup> if any man hear my voice, and open the door, <sup>y</sup> I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. <sup>21</sup> He that overcometh,

u Cant. v. 2.

x Luke xii. 37.

y John xiv. 23.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. <sup>20</sup> Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. <sup>21</sup> To him that overcometh will I grant to sit*

it is one of My ways, which are unlike men's ways), as many as I love (not, as Grotius, "meaning those whom I have determined only not to cast out and abjure;" but in its fullest and most blessed sense. Nor is the assertion addressed only to the better portion of the church, but to all, as a gracious call to repentance; as is evident from the words next following), I rebuke and chasten (the *rebuking*, the convincing of sin, producing conviction, is a portion of the Lord's chastening: the latter may extend very much wider than the former, even to judgments and personal infliction, which, however they may subserve the purpose of *convicting*, are not, properly speaking, part of it. "*Rebuke* pertains to words, *chastisement* to stripes." Ansbert); be zealous then (in thy habit of Christian life), and repent (begin that life of zeal by an act, decisive and effective, of change of purpose. Change of purpose must, in the fact, precede *zeal*, which is the effectual working in a man's life of that change of purpose). 20.] Behold, I stand at the door, and knock (the reference to Sol. Song, v. 2, is too plain to be for a moment doubted: and if so, the interpretation must be grounded in that conjugal relation between Christ and the church,—Christ and the soul,—of which that mysterious book is expressive. This being granted, we may well say, that the vivid depiction of Christ *standing at the door* is introduced, to bring home to the lukewarm and careless church the truth of His constant presence, which she was so deeply forgetting. His *knocking* was taking place partly by the utterance of these very rebukes, partly by every interference in judgment and in mercy. Whenever His hand is heard, He is knocking at the door. But it is not His hand only that may be heard: see below): if any man hear my voice (here we have more than the mere sound of his knock: He speaks. See Acts xii. 13 f., "*As Peter knocked at the door*" . . . "*when she knew Peter's voice*."—In that case we must conceive

Rhoda to have asked, "Who is there?" and Peter to have answered. It may not be uninstrutive to fill up this connexion in a similar manner. "It is I," is an answer the soul may often hear, if it will enquire the reason of an unexpected knock at the door of its slumbers; or we may compare Sol. Song, v. 2, "*It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me*"), and open the door (literally, "shall have heard," "shall have opened;" but it would be pedantry thus to render in our language. On the sense, see Sol. Song, v. 6. Our verse is a striking and decisive testimony to the practical freedom of our will to receive or reject the heavenly Guest: without the recognition of which, the love and tenderness of the saying become a hideous mockery. We then open the door to Christ, when we admit Him, His voice, His commands, His example, to a share in our inner counsels and sources of action. To say that this can be done *without* His grace, is ignorance: to say it is done only by that grace irresistibly exerted, is far worse,—it is, to deprive His gracious pleadings of all meaning), I will enter in to him, and I will sup with him, and he with me (the imagery is taken from the usages of intimate hospitality. But whereas in these it would be merely the guest who would sup with the host who lets him in, here the guest becomes himself the host, because He is the bread of life, and the Giver of the great feast of fat things and of the great marriage supper [Matt. viii. 11, xxv. 1 ff.; Rev. xix. 7, 9]. St. John is especially fond of reporting these sayings of reciprocity which our Lord uttered; compare John vi. 56 [x. 38], xiv. 20, xv. 4, 5, xvii. 21, 26. This blessed admission of Christ into our hearts will lead to His becoming our guest, ever present with us and sharing in all our blessings—and, which is even more, to our being ever in close union with Him, partaking ever of His fulness, until we sit down at His table in His Kingdom).—He that conquereth (see above, ch. ii. 26, and ver. 12, for the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.  
 22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

IV. 1 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

to him <sup>z</sup> will I grant to sit with me <sup>z</sup> in my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father in his throne. 22 <sup>a</sup> He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

IV. 1 After these things I saw, and, behold, a door set open in heaven: and the <sup>a</sup> former voice <sup>a</sup>

<sup>z</sup> Matt. xix. 29.  
<sup>z</sup> Luke xxii. 30.  
 1 Cor. vi. 2.  
 2 Tim. ii. 12.  
 ch. ii. 20, 27.

<sup>a</sup> ch. ii. 7.

<sup>a</sup> ch. i. 10.

construction), I will give to him to sit (in the blessed life of glory hereafter: such promises cannot be regarded, as this by some, as partially fulfilled in this life: for thus the following analogy, "as I also, &c." would fail) with me (compare John xvii. 24) on my throne (have a share in My kingly power, as ch. ii. 27, xx. 6), as I also conquered, and sat down with my Father on His throne (the past tenses refer to the historical facts of the Resurrection and Ascension. By the latter, Christ sat down at the right hand of God, or of the throne of God, as Heb. xii. 2. No distinction must be made between the throne of the Father, on which Christ sits, and that of Christ, on which the victorious believer is to sit with Him: they are one and the same, called "the throne of God and the Lamb," ch. xxii. 1; and the glory of the redeemed will be a participation in that of the Father and the Son, John xvii. 22).—Doubtless the occurrence of this, the highest and most glorious of all the promises, in this place, is to be explained not entirely from any especial aptness to the circumstances of the Laodicean church, though such has been attempted to be assigned [e. g. by Ebrard—because the victory over lukewarmness would be so much more difficult than that in any other case], but also from the fact of its occurring at the end of all the Epistles, and as it were gathering them all into one. It must not be forgotten too, that the words, I sat down with my Father on His throne, form a link to the next part of the book, where we soon, ch. v. 5, 6, read, And I saw in the midst of the throne . . . a Lamb standing, as it were slain. 22.] See on ch. ii. 7.

From this point begins the Revelation proper, extending to the end of the book. And herein we have a first great portion, embracing chapp. iv.—xi., the opening of the seals and the sounding of the trumpets.

But preparatory to both these series of revelations, we have described to us in chapp. iv. v., the heavenly scenery which furnishes the local ground for these visions. Of these, ch. iv. is properly the scene itself: ch. v. being a further unfolding of its details with a view to the vision of the seals which is to follow. So that we have,—

CH. IV. 1—11.] THE VISION OF GOD'S PRESENCE IN HEAVEN. "Decrees respecting the fortunes of the future rest with God, and from Him comes the revelation of them through Jesus Christ. Hence the Revelation begins with the imparting to the Apostle, through Christ, of the vision of God's presence." De Wette.

1.] After these things (or, "after this,"—is a formula frequently occurring in this book, and nowhere indicating a break in the ecstatic state of the Seer, but only the succession of separate visions. Those are mistaken, e. g. Bengel, Hengstenberg, who imagine an interval, here and in the other places, during which the Seer wrote down that which had been previously revealed to him. The whole is conceived as imparted in one continuous revelation consisting of many parts. See below on ver. 2) I saw (not with the bodily eye, but with the eye of ecstatic vision, as throughout the book. He is throughout in the Spirit. It is not I looked, as in A. V.: not the directing of the Seer's attention which discovers the door to him, but the simple reception of the vision which is recorded), and, behold, a door set open (not, was opened, as A. V., which gives the idea that the Seer witnessed the act of opening. For the same reason the word "opened" is objectionable, as it may be mistaken for the past tense of the neuter verb to open) in heaven (notice the difference between this vision and that in Ezek. i. 1; Matt. iii. 16; Acts vii. 56, x. 11. In those, the heaven itself parts asunder, and discloses

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

b ch. xi. 12.

c ch. i. 10.  
& xxii. 6.

d ch. i. 10. &amp;

xvii. 8. &amp;

xxi. 10.

e ISA. vi. 1.

JER. xvii. 12.

EZEK. i. 26.

&amp; X. 1.

DAN. vii. 9.

† was is omitted

by all our

MSS.

f EZEK. i. 28.

which I heard as of a trumpet talking with me, saying, <sup>b</sup> Come up hither, <sup>c</sup> and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. <sup>2</sup> And immediately <sup>d</sup> I was in the spirit: and, behold, <sup>e</sup> a throne was there in heaven, and one sitting upon the throne. <sup>3</sup> And he that sat, † in appearance like a jasper and a sardine stone: <sup>f</sup> and a rainbow

was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. <sup>2</sup> And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. <sup>3</sup> And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round

the vision to those below on earth: here the heaven, the house or palace of God [Ps. xi. 4, xviii. 6, xxix. 9], remains firmly shut to those on earth, but a door is opened, and the Seer is rapt in the Spirit through it. Henceforth usually he looks from the heaven down on the earth, seeing however both alike, and being present in either, as the localities of his various visions require: and the former voice (much confusion has been introduced here by rendering, as A. V., "*the first voice which,*" &c., giving the idea that it means, *first after the door was seen set open*; whereas it is *the voice which I heard at first*, viz. in ch. i. 10) which I heard (at the beginning) as of a trumpet speaking with me (viz. ch. i. 10). This clause is not predicative, "*was as . . .*" as A. V. and Treg. The construction simply is—"behold, a door . . . and the voice . . ." both clauses being dependent on "*behold.*"—The voice is not that of Christ, but of some undefined heavenly being or angel. As Düsterdieck observes, all we can say of it is that it is the *same voice* as that in ch. i. 10, which there, ver. 17, is followed by that of our Lord, not "*as of a trumpet,*" but "*as of many waters,*" as stated by anticipation in ver. 15), saying, Come up hither (viz. through the opened door), and I will shew thee (it is surprising how Stier can allege this I will shew thee as a proof that the Lord Himself only can be speaking: compare ch. xxi. 9, 10, xxii. 8, 9, which latter place is decisive against him) the things which must (of prophetic necessity) take place after these things (so literally: viz., the things now present: as in ch. i. 19, but the things not being the same in the two cases. So that after these things has very much the general meaning given by the "*hereafter*" of the A. V.: this clause corresponds to "which are about to happen

after these things" of ch. i. 19).

2.] Immediately I was (became) in the Spirit (i. e. I experienced a new accession of the Spirit's powerful influence, which transported me thither: "I was in a trance of ecstasy:" see on ch. i. 10. It is hardly credible that any scholar should have proposed to understand "*there*" after *was*, "*immediately I was there* in the Spirit:" but this was done by Züllig, and has found an advocate in England in Dr. Maitland): and, behold, a throne stood (the A. V. "*was set,*" gives too much the idea that the placing of the throne formed part of the vision: "*lay*" would be our best word, but we do not use it of any thing so lofty as a throne. I have therefore adopted *was there*, as best, indicating mere position) in heaven, and upon the throne one sitting (called henceforward throughout the book, He that sitteth upon the throne, and being the Eternal Father [not as Lyra, *the Three-One God*; for He that sitteth on the throne is distinguished in ch. vi. 16, vii. 10 from the Son, and in ver. 5 from the Holy Spirit]: see ch. vii. 10, xix. 4, where we read expressly "*to God that sitteth upon the throne.*" So that it is not for the reasons sometimes suggested, that the Name is not expressed: e. g. on account of the Jewish unwillingness to express the sacred Name: or, that the mind has no figure and the tongue no word by which to express it. The simple reason seems to be, as assigned by Hengstenberg and Düsterdieck, that St. John would describe simply that which he saw, *as he saw it*. For the same reason he does not name Christ expressly in the first vision, ch. i. 13): and he that sat (no need to supply "*was:*" the nominatives are all correlative after *behold*) like in appearance (lit. "*in vision,*" "*in sight,*" as A. V. in the next clause) to a jasper and sardine stone (the jasper appears to have been a beautiful



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. <sup>4</sup> And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. <sup>5</sup> And out of the throne

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

round about the throne, like the appearance of an emerald. <sup>4g</sup> And round about the throne, four and twenty thrones: and upon the four and twenty thrones, <sup>†</sup> elders sitting, <sup>h</sup> clothed in white raiment; <sup>i</sup> and <sup>†</sup> on their heads crowns of gold. <sup>5</sup> And out of the throne

<sup>†</sup> So, omitting I saw, nearly all our MSS., and all the versions.  
<sup>h</sup> ch. iii. 4, 5. & vi. 11. & vii. 9, 13, 14. & xix. 4.  
<sup>i</sup> ver. 10.

<sup>†</sup> they had is omitted by all our MSS. and versions.

stone of various wavy colours, semi-opaque, granulous in texture, used in ancient times for gems and ornaments, but in more modern ones on a larger scale for pavements and tables. The altar in Canterbury Cathedral stands on a platform of yellow jasper pavement, 30 feet by 14 feet. The **sardine** is a red stone, commonly supposed to answer to our cornelian. But Epiphanius, in his treatise on the twelve stones in Aaron's breastplate, says of it, that it is a Babylonian stone, blood red in colour, like the gleam of the **sardine** fish when pickled, and semi-opaque. Several of the Commentators have said much on the symbolic significance of these stones as representing the glory of God. Thus much only seems, in the great uncertainty and variety of views, to stand firm for us: that if the **jasper** is to be taken as in ch. xxi. 11, as, by the reference there to *the glory of God* it certainly seems it must, then it represents a watery crystalline brightness, whereas the **sardine** is on all hands acknowledged to be fiery red. Thus we shall have ample material for symbolic meaning: whether, as some take it, of the one great judgment by water [or of baptism], and the other by fire,—as others, of the goodness of God in nature [jasper being taken as *green*] and His severity in judgment,—as Ansbert, of the divinity and humanity [because His humanity at the time of His passion was tinged with blood], &c., or as the moderns mostly, of the holiness of God and His justice. This last seems to me the more probable, especially as the same mixture of white light with fire seems to pervade the Old Testament and Apocalyptic visions of the divine majesty. Compare Ezek. i. 4, viii. 2; Dan. vii. 9: and our ch. i. 14, x. 1. But nothing can be confidently asserted, in our ignorance of the precise import of the **jasper**): and a **rain-bow** (Gen. ix. 12—17; Ezek. i. 28) round about the throne (i. e. in all probability, surrounding the throne vertically, as a

umbus; not horizontally), like to the appearance of an emerald (on this name, in Greek "*smaragdus*," all seem agreed, that it represents the stone so well known among us as the *emerald*, of a lovely green colour. Almost all the Commentators think of the gracious and federal character of the bow of God, Gen. ix. 12—17. Nor is it any objection to this that the bow or glory here is green, instead of prismatic: the *form* is that of the covenant bow, the colour even more refreshing and more directly symbolizing grace and mercy. So far at least we may be sure of as to the symbolism of this appearance of Him that sitteth on the throne: that the brightness of His glory and fire of His judgment is ever girded by, and found within, the refreshment and surety of His mercy and goodness. So that, as Düsterdieck says well, "This fundamental vision contains all that may serve for terror to the enemies, and consolation to the friends, of Him that sitteth on the throne. . .").

4.] *The assessors of the enthroned One.*—The construction after *behold* still continues. And round the throne twenty-four thrones (i. e.) evidently smaller thrones, and probably lower than the throne): and upon the twenty-four thrones, elders sitting, clothed in white garments; and on their heads golden crowns (these twenty-four elders are not *angels*, as maintained by some, as is shewn [not by ch. v. 9, as generally argued, even by Elliott, vol. i. p. 81 f.: see text there: but] by their white robes and crowns, the rewards of *endurance*, ch. iii. 5, ii. 10,—but *representatives of the Church*, as generally understood. But if so, what sort of representatives, and why twenty-four in number? This has been variously answered. The usual understanding has been that of our earliest Commentator, Victorinus; who says, "twelve Apostles, and as many Patriarchs." And this is in all probability right in the main: the key to the inter-

AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

k ch. viii. 5. & xvi. 18.  
 † Such is the order in all our old MSS. and versions.  
 † Exod. xxxvii. 23. 2 Chron. iv. 20.  
 Ezek. i. 13. Zech. iv. 2.  
 † Many MSS. read his throne.  
 m ch. i. 4. & iii. 1. & v. 6.  
 † The is omitted by most of the later MSS.

proceed <sup>k</sup>lightnings and † voices and thunderings: <sup>l</sup>and [there were] seven lamps of fire burning before the † throne, which are [<sup>m</sup>† the] seven Spirits of God: <sup>6</sup>and before the throne as it were † a sea of glass like unto crystal.

† So all our oldest MSS.

n Exod. xxxviii. 8. ch. xv. 2.

proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. <sup>6</sup>And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal:

pretation being the *analogy with* the sayings of our Lord to the Apostles, Matt. xix. 28; Luke xxii. 30. That those sayings do not regard the *same* session as this, is no argument against the inference from analogy. The Abbot Joachim brings against this view that the twelve patriarchs were not personally holy men, and never are held up as distinguished in the Old Testament. But this obviously is no valid objection. It is not the personal characters, but the symbolical, that are here in question. It might be said with equal justice that the number of the actual Apostles is not definitely twelve. It is no small confirmation of the view, that in ch. xv. 3, we find the double idea of the church, as made up of Old Testament and New Testament saints, plainly revealed to St. John; for he heard the victorious saints sing the *song of Moses*, and the *song of the Lamb*. See also ch. xxi. 12, 14, where the twelve *gates* of the New Jerusalem are inscribed with the names of the twelve tribes, and its twelve *foundations* with those of the twelve Apostles. Various other interpretations are given in my Greek Test.).

5.] **And out of the throne go forth** (the tense is changed, and the narrative assumes the direct form, which, however, is immediately dropped again, and the accumulation of details resumed) **lightnings and voices and thunders** (the imagery seems to be in analogy with that in the Old Testament, where God's presence to give his law was thus accompanied: Exod. xix. 16; where lightnings and voices occur in juxtaposition as here. If this idea be correct, then we have here represented the sovereignty and almightiness of God): **and seven lamps of fire burning before the throne [itself], which are the seven Spirits of God** (see notes on ch. i. 4, v. 6. These seem to represent the Holy Spirit in his sevenfold working: in his enlightening and cheering as well as his purifying and consuming

agency. So most Commentators. De Wette and Ebrard regard the representation as that of the Holy Spirit, the principle of physical and spiritual life, which appears only wrong by being too limited. Hengstenberg is quite beside the mark in confidently [as usual] *confining* the interpretation of the lamps of fire to the consuming power of the Spirit in judgment. The fact of the parallel ch. v. 6 speaking of *seven eyes*, and such texts as ch. xxi. 23; Ps. exix. 105, should have kept him from this mistake. The whole of this glorious vision is of a composite and twofold nature: comfort is mingled with terror, the fire of love with the fire of judgment): **and before the throne as it were a sea of glass** (not, "*glassy*," as rendered by Elliott: the word describes not the appearance, but the material, of the sea: it appeared like a sea of glass—so clear, and so calm) **like to crystal** (and that not common glass, which among the ancients was, as we see from its remains, cloudy and semi-opaque, but like rock crystal for transparency and beauty, as Victorinus, "clear water, steady, unruffled by the wind." Compare by way of contrast her that sitteth on the *many waters*, the multitudinous and turbulent waters, ch. xvii. 1.—In seeking the explanation of this, we must first track the image from its Old Test. earlier usage. There, in Exod. xxiv. 10, we have in the Septuagint version, "*And they saw the place where the God of Israel stood: and that which was under His feet was as it were work of sapphire bricks, and as the appearance of the firmament of heaven in its purity.*" Compare with this Ezek. i. 22, "*And the likeness over the heads of the living beings themselves was as it were a firmament, stretched out over their wings above.*" In Job xxxvii. 18 also, the sky is said to be "as a molten looking-glass." If we are to follow these indices, the primary reference will be to the clear ether in which the throne of God is upborne: and the intent of setting this space in front of the throne

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. <sup>7</sup> And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. <sup>8</sup> And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. <sup>9</sup> And

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

° And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, four beings full of eyes before <sup>p</sup> and behind. <sup>7</sup> <sup>q</sup> And the first being [was] like a lion, and the second being [was] like a steer, and the third being had a face as a man, and the fourth being [was] like a flying eagle. <sup>8</sup> And the four beings had each of them <sup>r</sup> six wings. Around and <sup>s</sup> within they are full of eyes: and they have no rest day and night, saying, <sup>t</sup> Holy, holy, holy †, <sup>u</sup> Lord God Almighty, <sup>x</sup> which was, and which is, and which is to come. <sup>9</sup> And whensoever those beings shall

o Ezek. i. 5.

p ver. 8.

q Numb. ii. 2.  
&c. Ezek. i.  
10. & x. 14.

r Isa. vi. 2.

s ver. 6.

t Isa. vi. 3.

† This word is repeated eight times in the Sinaitic MS.; nine times in the (later) Vatican MS.:

some others twice, six times, eight times. In the Alexandrine MS. and many others, and the Versions, it occurs three times, as in our text. u ch. i. 8. x ch. i. 4.

will be, to betoken its separation and insulation from the place where the Seer stood, and indeed from all else around it. The material and appearance of this pavement of the throne seem chosen to indicate majestic repose and ethereal purity. All kinds of symbolic interpretations, more or less fanciful, have been given. See some of them specified in my Greek Testament). And in the midst of the throne (not, as Hengstenberg, under the throne: their movements are free, see ch. xv. 7. See below), and round about the throne (i. e. so that in the Apostle's view they partly hid the throne, partly overlapped the throne, being symmetrically arranged with regard to it, i. e., as the number necessitates, one in the midst of each side), four living-beings (the A. V., "beasts," is the most unfortunate word that could be imagined. A far better one is that now generally adopted, "living-creatures:" the only objection to it being that when we come to vv. 9, 11, we give the idea, in conjoining "living-creatures" and "created," of a close relation which is not found in the Greek. I have therefore preferred living-beings, or, beings, which gives the same idea) full of eyes before and behind (this, from their respective positions, could be seen by St. John; their faces being naturally towards the throne. On the symbolism, see below). And the first living-being like to a lion, and the second living-being like to a

steer (the Greek word is not necessarily to be pressed to its proper primary meaning, as indicating the young calf in distinction from the grown bullock: the Septuagint use <sup>!</sup> for an ox generally), and the third living-being having its face as of a man (or, the face of a man), and the fourth living-being like to a flying eagle. And the four living-beings, each of them having six wings apiece. All round and within (I prefer much putting a period at apiece, to carrying on the construction; as more in accord with the general style of this description.

Understand, after both around, and within,—their wings: the object of St. John being to shew, that the six wings in each case did not interfere with that which he had before declared, viz. that they were full of eyes before and behind. Round the outside of each wing, and up the inside of each [half-expanded] wing, and of the part of the body also which was in that inside recess) they are full of eyes: and they have no rest by day and by night (these words may belong either to "have no rest," or to "saying." I prefer joining it with the latter), saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty (so far is identical with the seraphim's ascription of praise in Isa. vi. 3: Almighty answering usually in the Septuagint to Sabaoth, though not in that place), which was, and which is, and which is to come (see on ch. i. 8). These four living-beings are

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

give glory and honour and thanks  
to him that sitteth upon the throne,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

when those beasts give glory  
and honour and thanks to  
him that sat on the throne,

in the main identical with the cherubim of the Old Test. [compare Ezek. i. 5—10, x. 20], which are called by the same name of living-creatures, and are similarly described. We may trace however some differences. In Ezekiel's vision, each living-being has all four faces, Ez. i. 6, whereas here the four belong severally, one to each. Again in Ezekiel's vision, it is apparently the *wheels* which are full of eyes, Ezek. i. 18; though in ch. x. 12, it would appear as if the animals also were included. Again, the having *six* wings apiece is not found in the cherubim of Ezekiel, which have *four*, Ezek. i. 6,—but belongs to the seraphim described in Isa. vi. 2, to whom also [see above] belongs the ascription of praise here given. So that these are forms compounded out of the most significant particulars of more than one Old Test. vision.

In enquiring after their symbolic import, we are met by the most remarkable diversity of interpretation. 1) Our earliest Commentator, Victorinus, may serve as the type of those who have understood them to symbolize the Four Evangelists, or rather, *Gospels*:—"The animal like a *lion* is the Gospel according to Mark, in which the voice of a lion roaring in the desert is heard, the voice of one crying in the desert, Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Under the figure of a *man*, Matthew strives to announce to us the generation of Mary from whom Christ received flesh. So while he enumerates from Abraham to David and Joseph, he has spoken as of a man. Therefore his preaching shews the effigy of a *man*. Luke, while he tells of the priesthood of Zacharias offering a victim for the people, and the angel appearing to him,—on account of the priesthood, and the description of the victim, is represented by an *ox*. And the Evangelist John, like an *eagle*, taking wing and hastening up to loftier things, treats of the Word of God." I have cited this comment at length, to shew on what fanciful and untenable ground it rests. For with perhaps the one exception of the last of the four, not one of the Evangelists has any inner or substantial accordance with the character thus assigned. Consequently these characteristics are found varied, and that in the earliest writer in whom the view can be traced, viz. Irenæus,

who makes the lion to be the gospel of St. John; the steer that of St. Luke, as above; the man, that of St. Matthew; the eagle, that of St. Mark. So also Andreas. But again Augustine attributes the lion to St. Matthew, the man to St. Mark, the steer to St. Luke, and the eagle to St. John. These notices may again serve to shew with what uncertainty the whole view is beset. It has nevertheless been adopted by Jerome, Primasius, Bede, and many others of old, and among the moderns by Williams [on the Study of the Gospels, pp. 1—92], Scott [Interpretation of the Apocalypse, p. 132, but making, as Augustine above, the lion, St. Matthew; the man, St. Mark; the ox, St. Luke; and the eagle, St. John], Wordsworth [Lectures on the Apocalypse, p. 116, who, as in his statements on the other details, so here, ascribes unanimity [see below!] to the ancients: "in them the ancient church beheld a figure of the four gospels," suppressing also the fact of discrepancies in the application to the individual gospels], &c. The principal of the other interpretations prevalent among the ancients and moderns have been: 2) the 4 elements: 3) the 4 cardinal virtues: 4) the 4 faculties and powers of the human soul: 5) Our Lord in the four-fold great events of Redemption: 6) the 4 patriarchal-churches: the lion being Jerusalem, for its constancy; the ox, Antioch, for its obedience; the man, Alexandria, for its human learning; the eagle, Constantinople, for having produced the men of most elevated contemplation: and Cornelius-a-lapide, who adopts this, interprets the throne of God to be "the see of Rome, in which sits the lion of God:" 7) the 4 great Apostles, Peter, fervent as the *lion*: James the Lord's brother, patient as the *ox*: Matthew, good as the *man*: Paul, always flying about as the *eagle*: 8) all the doctors of the church: 9) four orders of churchmen, pastors, deacons, doctors, contemplatives: 10) the 4 representatives of the New Test. church, as the four standards of the tribes Reuben, Judah, Ephraim, and Dan, which are traditionally thus reported [see also Num. ii.], were of the Old Test. church: 11) the 4 virtues of the Apostles, magnanimity, beneficence, equity, wisdom: 12) the 4 principal angels: 13) the angelic, or equal-to-angelic, state of the glorified

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

who liveth for ever and ever,<sup>10</sup> the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

who liveth for ever and ever,<sup>y ch. i. 13. & v. 14. & xv. 7.</sup>  
 10 <sup>z</sup> the four and twenty elders shall fall down before him that sitteth upon the throne,<sup>a</sup> and shall worship him that liveth for ever and ever,<sup>a ver. 9.</sup>

church: so Elliott, vol. i. p. 87. But thus we have no account given of the peculiar symbolism of these living-beings, nor of the part which they perform in the act of praise below. There are many other interpretations and ramifications of interpretation, hardly worth recounting. But the one which above all these seems to me to require our notice is that which is indicated in the rabbinical sentence cited by Schöttgen here: "There are four which hold pre-eminence in this world: man among all animals; the eagle among birds; the ox among cattle; the lion among beasts." The four cherubic forms are the representatives of animated nature—of God's sentient creation. In Ezekiel, each form is compounded of the four. Here, the four forms are distinct. There [xxviii. 12], where the prince of Tyrus is compared to one of them, it is called the impression of similitude, and the crown of beauty: in Isaiah vi. where the seraphim, which enter into the composition of these living-beings, ascribe holiness to Jehovah, they cry, "His glory is the fulness of the whole earth." With this view every thing that follows is in accordance. For when these, and the 24 elders, in vv. 9—11, fall down before the throne, the part which these living-beings bear in the great chorus of praise is sufficiently indicated by the reason which they give for their ascription, viz. *for Thou art worthy, because Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they were, and were created.* The objection brought against this view by Ebrard, viz. that Behemoth, the king of the waters, is not here represented, is mere trifling. He forgets that in the record of creation, the noblest of the creatures sprung from the waters are not fishes, but birds; and that the eagle represents both. It is in strict accordance also with this view, that these living-beings are full of eyes, ever wakeful, ever declaring the glory of God: that they have each six wings, which doubtless are to be taken as in Isa. vi. from which the figure comes—"with twain he covered his face [*reverence*, in not venturing to look on the divine majesty], and with twain ho

covered his feet [*humility*, hiding his own created form from the glory of the Creator], and with twain he did fly [*obedience*, readiness to perform the divine commands]." This view is taken by the best of the modern Commentators: by Herder, De Wette, Rinck, Hengstenberg, Düsterdieck. Ebrard differs only in this, that he regards them as symbolic not of creation itself, but of the creative power of God. Stern, whose commentary on this whole passage is very able and beautiful, inclines rather to take them as representing the power of divine grace within the church of God: but in his usual interpretation treats them as "the whole creative-life of nature." See also my Hulsean Lectures for 1841, vol. i. Lecture ii. We have thus the throne of God surrounded by His Church and His animated world: the former represented by the 24 elders, the latter by the four living-beings.

9—11.] *The everlasting song of praise of creation in which the church joins.* It is well observed by Düsterdieck, that the ground of this ascription of praise is not *redemption*, which first comes in at ch. v. 9 ff.—but the power and glory of God as manifested in Creation; so that the words of the elders are in beautiful harmony with the praise of the four living-beings, and with the signification of the whole vision. **And whosoever the living-beings shall give** (the future must not be pressed quite so strongly as is done by De Wette [so also Stern], "from henceforth for all the time to come: see ch. vii. 15 ff.: before-time it was not so, seeing that the 24 elders have only assumed their place since Christ's work of Redemption has been proceeding and His victory developing." Still, it has a distinct pointing onward towards the future, implying eternal repetition of the act) **glory and honour** (i. e., recognition of His glory and honour) **and thanksgiving** (i. e., actual giving of thanks) **to Him that sitteth upon the throne, to Him that liveth to the ages of the ages, the twenty-four elders shall fall down before Him that sitteth upon the throne, and shall worship Him that liveth to the ages of the ages** (ch. v. 8,



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

b ver. 4.

and shall cast down their crowns before the throne, saying, <sup>11</sup> "Thou art worthy, our Lord and God †, to receive the glory and the honour and the might: <sup>d</sup> because thou didst create all things, and by reason of thy will they † were, and were created.

c ch. v. 12.

† The ancient MSS. here differ widely. The Alexandrine and the (later) Vatican read as in our text, the (later) Vatican however and some others adding, the Holy One; the Sinaitic reads, O Lord, who art our Lord and end.  
d Gen. i. 1. Acts xvii. 24. Eph. iii. 9. Col. i. 16. ch. x. 6.

V. <sup>1</sup> And I saw on the right hand of him that sat upon the throne <sup>a</sup> a book written within and on the

their crowns before the throne, saying, <sup>11</sup> Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

V. <sup>1</sup> And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the

xix. 4), and shall cast down their crowns (to disclaim all honour and dignity of their own, and acknowledge that all belongs to Him. Instances of casting down crowns are cited by the Commentators. Tacitus relates that Tiridates advanced to the image of Nero, took his crown from his head and threw it down at the feet of the image) before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord and our (Düsterdieck remarks that the our has a force here peculiarly belonging to the 24 elders, as representing the redeemed, and thus standing in a covenant relation to God nearer than that of the 4 living-beings. But we must not forget, that Creation is only a part of Redemption, Col. i. 20) God, to receive the glory (the glory &c., as alluding to the glory &c., ver. 9, ascribed by the living-beings. The articles are improperly omitted in the A. V.) and the honour and the might (observe that the might, in the mouth of the 24 elders, represents thanksgiving in that of the 4 living-beings. The elders, though themselves belonging to creation, in this ascription of praise look on creation from without, and that thanksgiving, which creation renders for its being, becomes in their view a tribute to Him who called them into being, and thus a testimony to His creative power. And thus the reason follows): because Thou didst create all things ("this universal whole," the universe), and on account of Thy will (i. e., because Thou didst will it: "for thy pleasure," of the A. V., introduces an element entirely strange to the context, and, however true in fact, most inappropriate here, where the because renders a reason for the worthiness to receive the glory, honour, and power) they were (not exactly came into being: for this the word

cannot signify: nor again, though thus the requirement of the word would be satisfied, were, in thy decree from eternity, before they were created: nor again as Bengel, "all things were, from the creation down to the time of this ascription of praise and henceforward." The best explanation is that of Düsterdieck, they existed, as in contrast to their previous non-existence: whereby not their coming into being, but the simple fact of their being, is asserted. A remarkable reading of some of our MSS. is worth notice: "by reason of Thy will they were not, and were created:" i. e., "they were created out of nothing"), and were created (they both had their being,—and received it from Thee by a definite act of Thine).

CH. V. 1—14.] The book with seven seals, containing the things which must happen after these things, which the Seer was to be shewn, ch. iv. 1. None found worthy to open it but the Lamb, who takes it for this purpose, amidst the praises of the heavenly host, of the church, and of the creation of God.

1.] The sealed book. And I saw (notice, that from the general vision, in the last chapter, of the heavenly Presence of God, the scene is so far only changed that, all that remaining as described, a particular incident is now seen for the first time, and is introduced by And I saw) (lying) on the right hand (i. e. the right hand was open, and the book lay on the open hand. So in ch. xx. 1, where see note. The common rendering, in the right hand, misses this sense. The lying on the open hand imports, that on God's part there was no withholding of His future purposes as contained in this book. The only obstacle to unsealing it was as follows, ver. 3) of Him that sat upon the

† So our two most ancient MSS. See note.

a EZEK. ii. 9, 10.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

backside, sealed with seven seals. <sup>2</sup> And I saw a strong angel proclaiming

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

back, <sup>b</sup> sealed with seven seals. <sup>b</sup> Isa. xxix. 11. Dan. xii. 4.  
<sup>2</sup> And I saw a strong angel pro-

throned a book (i. e., "a roll of a book," as in Ezek. ii. 9 f. This explanation alone will suit the meaning of the word as applied to the contemporary practice regarding sacred writings. See also Jer. xxxvi. 2, 23; Zech. v. 2: and below) written within and behind (such scrolls, written not only, as commonly, on the inner side, but also on the outer, which, to one reading the inner, was behind [see below], are mentioned by Pliny, Lucian, Juvenal, and Martial. This writing, within and without, so that the whole roll was full, seems to betoken the completeness of the contents as containing the divine counsels: there was no room for addition to that which was therein written. This would be of itself a sufficient reason for the fulness of the scroll. To see two divisions of written matter indicated, by the writing within, and by that on the back, correspondent to one another, seems hardly warranted by the text), fast-sealed with seven seals (not, consisting of seven writings, each sealed with one seal, as various Commentators hold: but one book, fastened with seven seals, which were visible to the Apostle. Various ingenious methods have been imagined, by which the opening of each of these seals may have loosened a corresponding portion of the roll. But they all proceed on the assumption that the roll in the vision was unfolded, which is nowhere to be gathered from the text. Nor have we any right to say that the separate visions which follow the opening of each seal are identical with separate portions of writing on the roll. These visions are merely symbolic representations of the progress of God's manifestation of the purpose of His will; but no portion of the roll is actually unfolded, nor is any thing read out of the book. Not its contents, but the gradual steps of access to it, are represented by these visions. What is in that book, shall not be known, until there shall be known to the powers and authorities in the heavenly places, by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God, Eph. iii. 10: till those material events, which marked the gradual opening of the sum of God's purposes, are all past, and the roll is contemplated in its completeness by the spirits of the glorified hereafter. This completeness is here set forth to us again by the mystic number

seven. There are some excellent remarks on the entire distinctness of the opening of the seals, and the reading of the book, in Cornelius-a-lapide: "For nothing in the book would be read, except after the opening of all seven seals; for when all were opened, then at length the book could be opened and read, not before." So also Ribera: "Those calamities which were involved in the seals, were all to come, before the things which were written in the book appeared and were known."

Mr. Elliott, in his work "Apocalypsis Alfordiana," specially directed against my commentary on this book, treats this view with all the scorn which is unfortunately so characteristic of him: calling it absurd, unscriptural, &c. He has not produced a word of proof, or even illustrative corroboration, of his own view, that the opening of each seal corresponds to the unrolling of a certain portion of the scroll: but has contented himself with re-asserting it in the strongest language, and pouring contempt on those who hold the other view. I grieve to say, that this is so often the case throughout his above-mentioned work, as to render it impossible for me, in many places, to meet his objections in argument. One who distrusts his own as well as all other explanations, and believes that much of this mysterious book is as yet unfathomed, is no match for one who hesitates not on every occasion to shew his confidence that he is in the right, and all who differ from him are wrong. An enquiry here arises, *What is represented by this Book?* Opinions have been very various. 1) Some of our earliest Commentators understood by it the Old Testament: or the Old and New conjoined. It will appear from the extracts given in my Greek Test., that the opening of the seals was very generally by the earlier fathers and interpreters taken to mean, the fulfilment, and consequent bringing to light, of Old Test. prophecy by the events of Redemption as accomplished in the Person of our Lord. But, if so, then this view cannot consist with what follows in the Apocalypse. For manifestly the opening of the seals, as notified by the symbolic visions belonging to each, does not relate to things past, but to things which were yet future when this book was written. Nor can this apparent consensus of the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

claiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? <sup>3</sup> And no one <sup>c</sup>in heaven †, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. <sup>4</sup> And I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open † the book, or to look thereon.

c ver. 13.  
† Many MSS.  
read in  
heaven  
above.

† and to read  
is omitted by  
all our oldest MSS.

early expositors be cited, as it has been e. g. by Dr. Adams, in support of any *other* view than theirs, in which this Book shall still represent the Old Test. Such for example is that of Dr. Adams himself, who regards the opening of the sealed book as symbolizing a future republication of the genuine text of the Old Test., by which the Jewish people is to be converted. The untenableness of this view appears at once, if only from [so to speak] its touching the apocalyptic course of visions at this point only, and finding no justification or expansion in any of the symbolic visions accompanying the opening of the seals. 2) Some have held the Book to be *Christ Himself*. But for the same reasons as above, neither can this be maintained. 3) Wetstein takes it to be "the writing of divorcement written by God against the Jewish nation;" which for the same reason falls to the ground. 4) Schöttgen, the sentence pronounced by the Judge and His assessors against the enemies of the Church: and similarly, in the main, Hengstenberg: but this view, though strongly defended by Hengstenberg, is not borne out by the contents of these chapters. 5) Alcasar holds it to be that part of the Apocalypse which treats of the opening of the seven seals [ch. vi.—xi.]: and nearly so Hengstenberg also, except that he allows only from vi. 1 to viii. 1 for this portion. But both are obviously wrong, seeing that the opening of the seventh seal evolves a series of symbolic actions which only ends with the book itself. So that this comes to 6) the Book being the Apocalypse itself: so Cornelius-a-lapide, seeing in the seven seals that part relating to their opening, and after that regarding the subsequent visions concerning Antichrist and the end of the world, as the *contents of the book itself*. But he seems, in concluding his

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? <sup>3</sup> And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. <sup>4</sup> And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look*

paragraph, to resolve this view into the wider one, 7) that the Book represents "the deliberation and decision of the Divine Providence, wherein God determined with Himself to do or permit, &c." This is very nearly that of Arethas, Lyra, Vitringa, Mede, Ewald, De Wette, Stern, Düsterdieck, and others. And this is, in the main, my own view. We may observe, that it is in fact but a limitation of this meaning, when many understand the Book to contain the prophetic fortunes of the Church of Christ: but also that it is a limitation which has arisen from the mistake noticed above, of confounding the opening of the seals with the reading of the contents of the book. Those successive openings, or if we will, the fortunes and periods of the Church and world, are but so many preparations for that final state of perfection in which the Lamb shall reveal to the Church the contents of the Book itself.

2.] **And I saw a strong angel** (the epithet strong is by no means superfluous, but corresponds to the *loud voice* below, which, as appears by what followed, penetrated heaven and earth, and Hadés. Compare ch. x. 1, 3 and notes) **proclaiming in a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals of it? and no one was able, in heaven, nor yet upon the earth, nor yet under the earth** (in Hadés, the place of departed spirits: not, in the *sea*), **to open the book, nor yet to look on it** (the looking on the book is an act subsequent to the opening it,—the looking on the book, with a view to read it. For the claim to open the book must be founded on a claim of worthiness to see that which was contained in it).

4.] **And I** (emphatic, 'I, for my part') **wept much, because no one was found worthy to open the book, nor to look upon it** (it

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

thereon. <sup>5</sup> And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. <sup>6</sup> And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having

Asa, and lo, and in the midst, &c., omitting I beheld. John i. 29, 36. 1 Pet. i. 19. ch. xiii. 8. ver. 9, 12.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>5</sup> And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, <sup>d</sup> the Lion which is of the tribe of Judah, <sup>e</sup> the Root of David, conquered, [so as] to open the book, <sup>f</sup> and <sup>†</sup> the seven seals thereof. <sup>6</sup> And I beheld <sup>†</sup> in the midst of the throne and of the four living-beings, and in the midst of the elders, <sup>g</sup> a Lamb standing as if slain, having seven horns and

<sup>d</sup> Gen. xlix. 9, 10. Heb. vii. 14.  
<sup>e</sup> Isa. xl. 1, 10. Rom. xv. 12. ch. xxii. 16.  
<sup>f</sup> ver. 1. ch. vi. 1.  
<sup>†</sup> to loose is omitted by almost all our MSS. and versions: the Sinaitic MS. inserts it. and lo is omitted by most MSS. The Alexandrine MS. g Isa. liii. 7.

Hardly any read as the A. V.

had been promised to him, ch. iv. 1, that he should be shewn future events: and now it seemed as if this promise were about to be frustrated by the lack of one worthy to open the book. There was no weakness of faith, as Hengstenberg fancies: indeed such a supposition is entirely out of place here: St. John is in this book the simple recipient of the Apocalypse; for *that* he is summoned to the heavenly scene, for *that* he is waiting in humility: but that now seems to be precluded, and his tears burst forth in the earnestness of disappointed desire after the fulfilment of the promise. Christ, as the opener of the book, is not yet revealed to him: and to have him anticipating that revelation by the power of his individual faith, would be to put him out of his place and violate consistency.

5.] And one from among the elders ("some say," says Lyra, "that it was Matthew the Evangelist, who said in the person of Christ, 'All power is given unto me in heaven and earth:,'" he himself preferring Peter, who had before this suffered martyrdom, and who was "one, that is first, among the Apostles." But see the interpretation of the elders above, iv. 4. The elders, in their triumphant place round God's throne, know better than the Evangelist, yet clothed with the infirmities of this earthly state, the nature and extent of the victory and glory of Christ.

It is the practice of the book to introduce the heavenly beings thus talking with the Seer: compare ch. vii. 13 f.; x. 4, 8 ff.; xvii. 1; xix. 9; xxi. 9, &c.; xxii. 8, &c.) saith to me, Weep not: behold, the Lion which is from the tribe of Judah (from Gen. xlix. 9: the lion, as victorious: from the tribe of Judah, as the Messiah of promise, sprung

from among the brethren of the Seer, and so carrying more comfort to him), the Root of David (from Isa. xi. 1, 10: i. e. the branch or sucker come up from the ancient root, and so representing it: not, as some, the divine root which brought forth David: for the evident design here is to set forth Christ as sprung from the tribe of Judah and lineage of David, and His victory as his exaltation through suffering, ver. 6), conquered (the A. V., "hath prevailed to open," loses sight of the victory of Christ, and of the uniform sense in which the verb to conquer is constantly used in this book. The past tense must not be resolved into a perfect, but points to the past event of that great victory, by virtue of which the opening is in His power), [so as] to open the book, and (in order to that) its seven seals.

6.] The vision of the Lamb. And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living-beings, and in the midst of the elders (the words seem to indicate the middle point before the throne: whether on the glassy sea or not, does not appear: but certainly not on the throne, from what follows in the next verse), a Lamb (literally, a little lamb; the diminutive, as applied to our Lord, is peculiar to the Apocalypse. It is difficult to say what precise idea is meant to be conveyed by this form of the word. Elsewhere, we have another form: John i. 29, 36; 1 Pet. i. 19; Acts viii. 32: and as *that* is found in Isa. liii. 7, from which the figure here is taken, the alteration of the word appears to be purposely made. Possibly it may be to put forward more prominently the idea of meekness and innocence) standing (i. e. in its natural lying position: the word is probably chosen on account of what immediately follows. Though as *if slain*,



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

h Zech. iii. 9.  
& iv. 10.  
i ch. iv. 5.

† So our two  
oldest MSS.,  
and many  
others.  
k ch. iv. 2.

l ch. iv. 8, 10.

m ch. xiv. 2.  
& xv. 2.  
† So our three  
oldest, and  
many other  
MSS.  
n Ps. cxli. 2.  
ch. viii. 3, 4.

<sup>h</sup> seven eyes, which are <sup>i</sup> the seven  
Spirits of God sent forth into all the  
earth. <sup>7</sup> And he came and took † it  
out of the right hand <sup>k</sup> of him that  
sat upon the throne. <sup>8</sup> And when  
he took the book, <sup>l</sup> the four living-  
beings and the four and twenty  
elders fell down before the Lamb,  
having each one a <sup>m</sup> harp †, and  
golden vials full of incense, <sup>n</sup> which  
are the prayers of the saints. <sup>9</sup> And

seven horns and seven eyes,  
which are the seven Spirits  
of God sent forth into all  
the earth. <sup>7</sup> And he came  
and took the book out of  
the right hand of him that  
sat upon the throne. <sup>8</sup> And  
when he had taken the book,  
the four beasts and four  
and twenty elders fell down  
before the Lamb, having  
every one of them harps,  
and golden vials full of  
odours, which are the  
prayers of saints. <sup>9</sup> And

it was not lying, but standing) as if slain (i. e. retaining the appearance of death-wounds on its body: looking as if it had been slain: compare ch. i. 18. So the majority of Commentators. Ebrard is quite wrong in supposing that the as if has any emphasis on it: it merely serves to solve the apparent paradox lying in the juxtaposition of standing and slain), having seven horns (the horn is the well-known emblem of might: compare 1 Sam. ii. 10; 1 Kings xxii. 11; Ps. cxii. 9, cxlviii. 14; Dan. vii. 1, 20 ff., viii. 3 ff.; ch. xvii. 3 ff. The perfect number seven represents that "all power is given unto Him in heaven and earth," Matt. xxviii. 18) and seven eyes, which (eyes) are the seven spirits of God sent forth into the whole earth (i. e. which eyes represent the watchful active operation of God's Spirit poured forth through the Death and by the victory of the Lamb, upon all flesh and all creation. As the seven burning lamps before the throne represented the Spirit of God immanent in the Godhead, so the seven eyes of the Lamb represent the same Spirit in his sevenfold perfection, profuent, so to speak, from the incarnate Redeemer: busied in His world-wide and world-long energy: the very word used, *apostalmena*, reminding us of the *apostolic* work and church. Compare Zech. iv. 10: "Those seven . . . they are the eyes of the Lord which run to and fro through the whole earth").

7.] *The Lamb takes the Book.* And he (or, it) came and took (not, 'received,' as Ebrard. The book lay on the open hand of Him that sat on the throne, for any to take who was found worthy) it (i. e. the Book; compare next verse) out of the right hand of Him that sat

upon the throne (Vitringa's enquiry, whether we are to imagine the Lamb to have had partly a human form and hands, is rightly dismissed by Dusterdieck as unneeded, and bespeaking want of tact).

8.] *Song of praise following thereupon.* And when he took (not, "when he had taken," as A. V., but a pure past: the context, and not the word itself, indicating that the act to be described was subsequent to that thus expressed) the book, the four living-beings and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb (who shares the divine throne, and honour, and worship, ver. 13; ch. xxii. 1; and ch. iii. 21), having each [of them] (this apparently applies only to the elders: not for any grammatical reason, but on account of the symbolism: for 1) it is unnatural to suppose figures described as the four living-beings are, having harps or vials; and even if this is not to be pressed [see above on ver. 7], yet 2) it is inconsistent with the right view of the four living-beings, as representing creation, that they should present the prayers of the Saints) a harp (properly a zithern or kind of guitar, played either with the hand, or with a plectrum or quill), and golden vials (cups, or bowls: or, by the context, censers) full of incense, which (vials: each vial being full of incense) are (represent) the prayers of the saints (see especially ch. viii. 3: Ps. cxl. 2, "Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense." The twenty-four elders, representing as they do the whole church of God, are represented as offering the praises and the prayers of the whole church: the harps representing the former, the censers the latter. Of any thing approaching intercession on the part of the glorified



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; <sup>10</sup> and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. <sup>11</sup> And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

o they sing a new song, saying, o  
 p Thou art worthy to take the book,  
 and to open the seals thereof: q for  
 thou wast slain, and r didst redeem  
 [† us] to God by thy blood s out  
 of every kindred, and tongue, and  
 people, and nation; <sup>10</sup> t and didst  
 make † them [† unto our God] † a  
 kingdom and priests: and † they  
 reign on the earth. <sup>11</sup> And I be-  
 held, and I heard [† as it were] a

o Ps. xl. 3.  
 ch. xiv. 3.  
 p ch. iv. 11.

q ver. 6.  
 r Acts xx. 28.  
 Rom. iii. 24.  
 1 Cor. vi. 20.  
 & vii. 23.  
 Eph. i. 7.  
 Col. i. 14.  
 Heb. ix. 12.  
 1 Pet. i. 18,  
 10. 2 Pet. ii.  
 1. 1 John i. 7.  
 ch. xiv. 4.  
 † us is omitted  
 by the Alex-  
 andrine MS.:  
 see below.  
 s Dan. iv. 1.  
 & vi. 25.  
 ch. vii. 9. &  
 xi. 0. & xiv.

6. † Exod. xix. 6. 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9. ch. i. 6. & xx. 6. & xxii. 5. † So all our MSS., except one of the 14th century, and that is only presumed to read as the A.V.: it has not been examined. † unto our God is omitted by the Alexandrine MS. † So our two most ancient MSS. The Sinaitic also reads, and a priesthood. † So the Alexandrine and later Vatican MSS., and many others: the Sinaitic has, they shall reign. Hardly any read as the A.V. † So the Sinaitic MS., and many others: the Alexan- drine and the rest omitting as it were.

saints for the church below, or indeed of the glorified saints at all, there is not the least mention, nor does this passage touch the question of the fact of such intercession. In the division of the two employments, the most of prayer falls to the lot of the church in trial, and the most of praise to the church in glory: and this is perhaps the reason why, while they have harps on which they themselves play, they only offer or present the vials of incense. De Wette remarks, that the Writer of the Apocalypse seems not to know any thing of the intercessory office of Christ. But that office is prominent through this whole scene. What is the Lamb as it had been slain—what the confession, “Thou redeemedst us to God by Thy blood,” but recognitions of it? It underlies the whole book): and they sing (why present? Is it because the sound still lingered in his ears? Or more probably, as describing their special and glorious office generally, rather than the mere one particular case of its exercise?) a new song (new, because the occasion was new; the manifestation of the worthiness of the Lamb calls forth fresh words springing from fresh and living thoughts. These words which follow could not be spoken except by those who had seen Christ’s redemption complete; therefore they must needs be new), saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals of it: for Thou wast slain, and didst redeem (the object is not expressed, nor need it be: see similar constructions, Matt. xxv. 8; 1 John iv. 13. The us, which is in the MSS. added or prefixed to

the verb, has considerable authority, but on the whole seems more likely to have been inserted, considering the prevalent early interpretation of the elders as Apostles and Prophets, than omitted because they were imagined to be angels) to God by (literally, in, as the vehicle, and conditioning element of redemption) thy blood out of every tribe, and tongue and people and nation (the only thing to be noticed is the quadruple number of these specifications, as indicating universality: see again below, ver. 13); and madest them a kingdom and priests, and they reign upon the earth (“this clause differs from that in ch. i. 6, both by the and before ‘priests,’ and by the important addition ‘and they reign,’ &c. Here we have three particulars: 1) that those who are bought to be God’s own are made into a kingdom, viz. God’s,—2) that they are made into priests,—3) that they are invested with kingly power. So rightly Ebrard.” Düsterdieck. The present tense, they reign, is not to be rendered as a future, but keeps its own meaning [the whole aspect and reference of this heavenly vision being not future, but present: the world and church as now existing, compare Eph. ii. 6]. The Church even now, in Christ her Head, reigns on the earth: all things are being put under her feet, as under His: and even if this meaning be questioned, we have her kingly rank and office asserted in the present, even in the midst of persecution and contempt).

11, 12.] The assenting chorus of the host of angels. And I saw (not in a general vague sense, introducing a fresh par-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

u ch. iv. 4, 6. voice of many angels <sup>u</sup> round about the throne and the living-beings and the elders: and the number of them was <sup>x</sup> myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands; <sup>12</sup> saying with a loud voice, <sup>y</sup> Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing. <sup>13</sup> And <sup>z</sup> every creature which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and upon the sea, and the things that are in them, heard I all saying, Unto him <sup>a</sup> that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb be the <sup>b</sup> blessing and

a ch. vi. 16. & vii. 10.  
 b 1 Chron. xxix. 11. Rom. ix. 5. & xvi. 27. 1 Tim. vi. 16. 1 Pet. iv. 11. & v. 11. ch. i. 6.

angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; <sup>12</sup> saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. <sup>13</sup> And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

ticular merely; but in its proper sense: John saw the host of angels whose voice he heard: compare ch. vi. 1 f.) and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne and the living-beings and the elders (i. e. surrounding on all sides, in the more distant space, the smaller circle hitherto described. The Church, as the vehicle of the work of Redemption, of which Creation is but a part, is the central and crowning manifestation of God's power and love and wisdom. Round it, and Him who is its Head, the heavenly hosts are ranged in humble admiration; and into its wonders they desire to look. Compare Eph. iii. 10; 1 Pet. i. 12); and the number of them was myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands (i. e. innumerable in its vastness. See Ps. lxxviii. 18, and Dan. vii. 10), saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive (by way of ascribed praise: see ch. iv. 11 and note) the power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing (here, as in ch. vii. 12, but in differing order, we have seven particulars of ascription. But here there is a difference both from ch. vii. 12 and iv. 11. In each of those places the article the is repeated before each particular: here, one article includes them all. Bengel well remarks, that we must regard them all as if they formed but one word. And when they are thus regarded, the article seems to point

out the fact of all these, as one, belonging to God, whose power and glory the Lamb is declared worthy to share. Of the particulars themselves, riches is better kept in its generality, all riches and fulness, than limited to *spiritual* riches; see 1 Chron. xxix. 11: blessing is in the sense so frequent when the word and its cognate verb are used of an act passing from man to God: viz. that of ascribed praise: the *will* on the part of the creature, though unaccompanied by the *power*, to return blessing for blessing conferred. The idea of Bengel, that the septenary number has to do with the seven seals, is hardly probable: the number, as indicating completeness, running through the whole book).

13, 14.] *The chorus of assenting praise from Creation itself. And every creature* (i. e. by the very terms, animated creature: for heaven and earth and sea themselves are mentioned as the *abodes* of these creatures) *which is in the heaven* (the chorus being *universal*, this will include the angels, previously mentioned, and the glorified saints), *and on the earth, and under the earth* (i. e. not the devils, as even Vitringa: but as in Phil. ii. 10, the departed spirits in Hades: see note there), *and upon the sea* (i. e. most probably, on the surface of the sea; meaning not those on ships, but those sea-animals which are regarded as being on the surface), *and the things in them* (so in Exod. xx. 11), *I heard all saying, Unto Him*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

<sup>14</sup> And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

VI. <sup>1</sup> And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. <sup>2</sup> And I saw, and behold

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

the honour and the glory and the might for ever and ever. <sup>14</sup> <sup>c</sup> And <sup>c</sup> ch. xix. 4. the four living-beings said, Amen.

And the † elders fell down and worshipped †.

VI. <sup>1</sup> And <sup>a</sup> I saw when the Lamb opened one of the † seven seals, and I heard <sup>b</sup> one of the four living-beings saying, † as it were the voice of thunder, Come †. <sup>2</sup> And I saw,

<sup>b</sup> ch. iv. 7.

† So all our old MSS.

† and see is omitted by two out of our three oldest MSS, the Alexandrine and the Paris, and by many others. The Sinaitic and the later Vatican and others have it, but in different words from the commonly received text, which variety seems to mark it as a spurious addition.

that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb (the Church, including Creation, gives praise to the Lamb for Redemption, vv. 9, 10: the angels praise the infinite condescension of the Son of God: the entire universe celebrates the glory of the universal Father, and of the Redeemer, thence accruing) be (or, *is, belongs*) the blessing and the honour and the glory and the might (notice the fourfold arrangement where *universality* is set forth; and the repeated article, exhaustive of each predicate separately. It is fanciful, with Bengel, to allot the four ascriptions among the four classes of creatures above mentioned. In each case the number has the same signification: but they need not separately correspond) to the ages of the ages.

14.] *The solemn assent of the celestial representatives of Creation and of the Church. And [I heard] the four living-beings saying Amen* (as above, in ch. iv. 11, the four living-beings assert the worthiness of God to receive the glory and the honour and the power on account of His having created all things, so here they say their Amen to creation's chorus of praise: being themselves the representatives of the animated Creation). *And the elders fell down and worshipped* (in silent adoration of God and of the Lamb).

CHAP. VI. 1—VIII. 1.] THE OPENING OF THE SEVEN SEALS. As preliminary to the exposition of this section, I may observe that it is of the first importance to bear in mind, that the openings of these seals correspond to the various arrangements of God's Providence by which the way is prepared for the final opening of the closed book of His purposes to His glorified Church. That opening shall not fully and

freely be made, till His people will know even as they are known. And that will not be, till they are fully gathered in to His heavenly garner. This book the Lamb opens, containing as it does matters which "no one knoweth, neither the angels which are in heaven, nor even the Son," first by the acts and procedures of His establishment of His reign over the earth, and then finally by His great second coming, the necessary condition of His elect being gathered out of the four winds into His glory. When these preparations for His coming have taken place, and that coming itself has passed, and the elect are gathered into glory, then will be the time when the last hindrance to our perfect knowledge will be removed, and the book of God's eternal purposes will lie open—the theme of eternity's praise.

I may add that for the sake of perspicuity, I shall mainly follow, in these notes, the track of that interpretation which seems to me to be required; noticing only differences in those of other Commentators where absolutely necessary.

1—8.] *The opening of the first four seals*, marked by the ministration of the four living-beings.

1.] *And I saw when the Lamb opened one from among the seven seals, and I heard one from among the four living-beings saying, as the voice of thunder* (which is to be taken not as peculiarly belonging to this first as resembling a lion, but as belonging to all alike, and accounted for by their mysterious and exalted nature: compare ch. i. 10, x. 3), *Come* (to whom, and with what meaning is this spoken? The great majority of Commentators have taken the received reading, which fixes it by adding "and look;" or, "and see," as an address

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

c Zech. vi. 3. and behold <sup>c</sup> a white horse : <sup>d</sup> and  
 ch. xix. 11. he that sat on him having a bow ;  
 d Ps. xlv. 4, 5. e and a crown was given unto him :  
 e Zech. vi. 11. and he went forth conquering, and  
 ch. xiv. 14. in order that he might conquer.  
<sup>3</sup> And when he opened the second

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

a white horse : and he that sat on him had a bow ; and a crown was given unto him : and he went forth conquering, and to conquer. <sup>3</sup> And when he

to the Seer, to approach nearer and look at the coming vision. And even those who have rejected this addition have yet regarded it as a true gloss, and the "Come" as addressed to the Seer. But whither was he to come? Separated as he was by the glassy sea from the throne, was he to cross it? Compare the place where the Seer is to come and take the little book [ch. x. 8], and see how different is the whole form of expression. In interpreting so unusual a term of address, surely we should rather begin by enquiring whether we have not the key to it in the book itself. And in this enquiry, are we justified in leaving out of consideration such a verse as ch. xxii. 17, "*The Spirit and the Bride say Come* [the same word, and in the same number and person], and let him that heareth say *Come*," and the following "*Anen, Come, Lord Jesus*," xxii. 22? This seems to shew, in my mind, beyond a doubt, what, in the mind of the Seer, this remarkable and insulated exclamation imported. It was a cry addressed, not to himself, but to the Lord Jesus : and as each of these four first seals is accompanied by a similar cry from one of the four living-beings, I see represented in this fourfold *Come* the groaning and travailling together of creation for the manifestation of the sons of God, expressed in each case in a prayer for Christ's coming : and in the things revealed when the seals are opened, His fourfold preparation for His coming on earth. Then at the opening of the fifth seal the longing of the martyred saints for the same great consummation is expressed, and at that of the sixth it actually arrives). **And I saw, and behold a white horse, and he that sat on him having a bow ; and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering, and in order that he may conquer** (in the first place, the figure of the horses and their riders at once brings to mind the similar vision in Zechariah, i. 7—11, vi. 1—8, where the men on the horses are they whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro through the whole earth. In Zech. i. as here, that

part of the vision is followed, ver. 12, by the cry of the "*How long?*" Here the horses and their riders are the various aspects of the divine dispensations which should come upon the earth preparatory to the great day of the Lord's coming. As regards this first, the whole imagery speaks of *victory*. The horses of the Roman commanders in their triumphs were white. The *bow* serves to identify the imagery here with that in Habakkuk iii. 9, where God goes forth for the salvation of His people : see also Isa. xli. 2 ; Zech. ix. 13 ; and even more strikingly with that in Ps. xlv. 4, 5, "In thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth and meekness and righteousness : and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies ; whereby the people fall under thee." It is hardly possible that one whose mind was full of such imagery, should have had any other meaning in his thoughts than that to which these prophecies point. The *crown* finds its parallel in the vision of Zech. vi., where, ver. 11, it is said, "Take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest." The *going forth conquering and in order to conquer* can only, it seems to me, point to one interpretation. The *conquering* might be said of any victorious earthly power whose victories should endure for the time then present, and afterwards pass away : but the *in order that he may conquer* can only be said of a power whose victories should last for ever. Final and permanent victory then is here imported. Victory, we may safely say, on the part of that kingdom against which the gates of hell shall not prevail : whose fortunes and whose trials are the great subject of this revelation. Such is the first vision, the opening of the first seal in the mystery of the divine purposes : *victory for God's church and people* : the great key-note, so to speak, of all the apocalyptic harmonies. And notice, that in this interpretation, there is no lack of correspondence with the three visions which follow.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. <sup>4</sup> And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword. <sup>5</sup> And when he

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

seal, <sup>f</sup> I heard the second living-being saying, Come <sup>†</sup>. <sup>4</sup> <sup>g</sup> And there went out another horse, red: it was given to him that sat thereon to take away peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and <sup>h</sup> there was given unto him a great sword. <sup>5</sup> And when he opened the

<sup>f</sup> ch. iv. 7.

<sup>†</sup> This time (see on ver. 1) the later Vatican also, and many more MSS, omit and see. <sup>g</sup> Zech. vi. 2.

<sup>h</sup> Matt. x. 34.

All four are judgments upon the earth: the beating down of earthly power, the breaking up of earthly peace, the exhausting of earthly wealth, the destruction of earthly life. Nor is this analogy disturbed, when we come to enquire, *who is the rider on this white horse*. We must not, in reply, on the one hand, too hastily introduce the Person of our Lord Himself, or on the other, be startled at the objection that we shall be paralleling Him, or one closely resembling Him, with the far different forms which follow. Doubtless, the resemblance to the rider in ch. xix. 11 ff. is very close, and is intended to be very close. The difference however is considerable. There, He is set forth as *present* in His triumph, followed by the hosts of heaven: here, He is working, in bodily absence, and the rider is not Himself, but only a symbol of His victorious power, the embodiment of His advancing kingdom as regards that side of its progress where it breaks down earthly power, and makes the kingdom of the world to be the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ. Further it would not be wise, nor indeed according to the analogy of these visions, to specify. In all cases but the last, these riders are left in the vagueness of their symbolic offices. If we attempt in this case to specify further, e. g. as Victorinus, "The white horse is the word of preaching with the aid of the Holy Spirit sent forth into the world; for the Lord saith, This gospel shall be preached through all the world, for a testimony before the nations, and then shall the end come,"—while we are sure that we are thus far right, we are but partially right: we do not cover the extent of the symbol, seeing that there are other aspects and instruments of victory of the kingdom of Christ, besides the preaching of the Word. The same might be said of any other of the partial interpretations which have been given by those who have taken this view. And

it was taken, with divergences of separate detail, by all expositors from the earliest times down to the year 1500).

3, 4.] And when he opened the second seal, I heard the second living-being saying, Come (see above on ver. 1). And there came forth another horse, red (the colour of blood. The colour of the horse in each case has reference to the employment of the rider), and to him that sat upon him it was given to take away peace (not "the peace left by the former seal," for 1) the former seal neither implies nor leaves such peace, and 2) these four seals are strictly correlative, not consecutive on one another; but, peace in its entirety) out of the earth (generally, as ever: not, Judæa, nor the Roman empire, nor any special portion merely) and that they (men: the inhabitants of the earth) shall kill (so literally: not only importing the result of purpose, but including also matter of fact, "that they may . . . which they also shall") one another: and there was given to him a great sword (the key to the interpretation of this seal is to be found in Matt. x. 34 and parallels: "Think not that I came to send peace upon the earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword." It represents to us the taking away of peace from the earth, the slaying one another, the reign of the sword, as one of the destined concomitants of the growing and conquering power of Christ, and one of the world-long and world-wide preparations for His coming. Observe, all limitations of this meaning are wrong; whether to the persecutions of the Christians, or to any period of time, ancient or modern. The above was the most ancient interpretation; e. g. we have in Victorinus, "The red horse, and he that sat upon him having a sword, are future wars, as we read in the gospel, for nation shall rise against nation, &c." Matt. xxiv. 7).

5, 6.] And when he opened the third



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

i ch. iv. 7. third seal,<sup>i</sup> I heard the third living-being saying, Come†. And I saw, and lo<sup>k</sup> a black horse; and he that sat on him having a balance in his hand. <sup>6</sup> And I heard † as it were a voice in the midst of the four living-beings, saying, † A measure of wheat for a † penny, and three † measures of barley for a † penny; and <sup>1</sup> the oil and the wine hurt thou not. <sup>7</sup> And

† This time it is nearly as in ver. 1, on which etc.  
k Ζεχν. vi. 2.

† So our three oldest MSS.

† See note.

1 ch. ix. 4.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. <sup>6</sup> And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine. <sup>7</sup> And when he had*

seal, I heard the third living-being saying, Come (see above on ver. 1). And I saw, and behold a black horse (the colour is indicative of the mournful nature of the employment of the rider: see below), and he that sat on him having a balance (the symbol of scarcity, during which the bread is doled out by weight: see Ezek. iv. 16, "They shall eat bread by weight, and with care;" and Levit. xxvi. 26, "When I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver you your bread again by weight; and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied.") The meaning "yoke," instead of balance, is one which in this connexion cannot be justified. On the import, see below) in his hand. And I heard as it were (this qualification must apparently be taken with the whole clause—"something like [a voice in the midst of the four living-beings]," the uncertainty applying to the situation, not to its being a voice, which it was) a voice in the midst of the four living-beings (it is not specified, whose voice: but the point from which the voice comes is appropriate to its intent, which is to mitigate the woes of creation, represented by the four living-beings: see below), saying (Let there be) A chœnix (see below) of wheat for a denarius, and three chœnixes of barley for a denarius (the sense seems to be, Take care that there be thus much food for thus much price. The denarius was the ordinary soldier's pay for a day in the time of Tiberius [see note on Matt. xx. 2], and has been usually and not unfairly assumed to be twice mentioned here as representing a day's wages. The chœnix appears in like manner to be taken for a day's provision: for so it is used in several of the numerous places cited by the Commentators. Herodotus, in estimating the amount of food consumed by the army

of Xerxes, assumes this: "I find by calculation," he says, "supposing that each consumed a chœnix a day and no more . . ." and similarly Thecydides, speaking of the allowance made to the Lacedæmonians in Sphacteria while negotiations were going on. A proverb also is mentioned, "Don't sit upon a chœnix," meaning, "don't confine your provision to the current day, a chœnix being an allowance for the day." Nothing can be more decisive than such proverbial usage. The tendency of the voice is then to check or limit the agency of the rider on the black horse, and to provide that, notwithstanding his errand of famine, sustenance shall not utterly fail. With regard to the three chœnixes of barley, the cheaper and less profitable grain, it seems to have been rightly interpreted as taking in the other case, of the workman who, out of his denarius a day, has to maintain not himself only, but his family also, and cannot consequently afford the dearer wheaten bread); and the oil and the wine do not thou injure (not, "do thou not commit injustice in the matter of the oil and the wine.") The usage of this book should have prevented such an interpretation: for the verb here used with the accusative of the material object hurt or injured is the constant habit of our Writer: and in no case do we find the other construction used by him, or indeed by any other writer to my knowledge. Rinck gives another meaning, equally untenable, "waste not the oil and the wine," seeing they are so costly.

As regards the meaning, the spirit of the saying is as explained above: the rider on the black horse, symbolizing Famine, is limited in his desolating action by the command given, that enough is to be reserved for sustenance. Wheat, barley, oil, and wine, formed the ordinary sources of nourishment: see Ps. civ. 14, 15. Sp that

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. <sup>8</sup> And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth. <sup>9</sup> And when he had opened the fifth

when he opened the fourth seal, <sup>m</sup> I <sup>m</sup> ch. iv. 7. heard the voice of the fourth living-being saying, Come †. <sup>8 n</sup> And I † *This time it is nearly as in ver. 1, on which see.* looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hadés was following with him. And authority was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, <sup>o</sup> to kill with sword, and <sup>o</sup> *Ezek. xiv. 21.* with famine, and with death, <sup>p</sup> and <sup>p</sup> *Lev. xxvi. 22.* by the beasts of the earth.

<sup>9</sup> And when he opened the fifth

as regards its *intent*, the command is parallel with that saying of our Lord in Matt. xxiv. 22. It is the mercy of God, tempering His judgments. And in its general interpretation, as the opening of the first seal revealed the certain proceeding on to victory of Christ and His church, and the second, that His coming should be prepared in the world not by peace but by the sword, so now by this third we learn that Famine, the pressure of want on men, not sweeping them away by utter failure of the means of subsistence, but keeping them far below the ordinary standard of comfort, and especially those who depend on their daily labour, will be one of the four judgments by which the way of the Lord's coming will be opened. This seems to point not so much to *death* by famine, which belongs to the next vision, as to agrarian distress with all its dreadful consequences: ripening in some cases [see below] into the hunger-death, properly the consequence of Famine.

The above interpretation of the third seal is given in the main by Victorinus—"The black horse signifies famine: for the Lord saith, '*There shall be famines in places:*'" but he allegorizes the latter part of the vision: "*hurt not the oil and the wine,*" i. e., "strike not with plagues the spiritual man").

7, 8.] And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard [the voice of] the fourth living-being saying, Come (see above on ver. 1). And I saw, and behold a livid horse (the word, meaning originally and properly grass-green, when used of flesh implies that greenish pallor which we know as *livid*: the colour of the corpse in incipient decay, or of the complexion extremely pale through disease), and he that sat upon him his name was Death (i. e.

he was death personified. In this case only of the four is the explanation given. It is wrong to understand Pestilence by *this* death: see below), and Hadés (the impersonation of the place of the departed: see ch. i. 18, xx. 14, where as here *Death and Hadés* go together. Eichhorn and Ebrard understand it of the whole multitude of the departed: but this clearly is beside the purpose: personification being the prevailing character of these four riders) **was following with him** (in his train: ready to engulf and detain his victims), **and there was given to them** (Death and Hadés, considered as joint partners in the baleful work) **power over the fourth part of the earth** (perhaps owing to the four-fold division of these former seals: not implying thereby that this last rider divided the earth with the three former, but thus specifying his portion as being one of four. At all events this suggests itself here as a possible reference of the number four: whereas in ch. viii. the continually recurring *third part* has no such assignable solution. The expositors for the most part pass it over, merely as signifying a considerable portion. Our principal English *historical* interpreter, with whose historical interpretation it will not square, takes refuge in the reading of the vulgate, "*over [the] four parts of the earth.*" But the reading cannot for a moment be received on such authority; nor are we at liberty to arrange the sacred text so as to square with our preconceived systems) **to kill with sword and with famine and with death** (i. e. here, *pestilence*: see below), **and by** (by, seeing that the other three were rather general indications of the manner in which, but this last of the actual agent by whose adminis-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

q ch. viii 3.  
& ix. 13. &  
xiv. 18.  
r ch. xx. 4.

seal, I saw under <sup>q</sup> the altar <sup>r</sup> the  
souls of them that have been slain

seal, I saw under the altar  
the souls of them that were

tration) the wild beasts of the earth (the enumeration comprehends the "four sore judgments" enumerated in Ezek. xiv. 21, and in the same terms. This fixes the meaning of this second and subordinate death as above. This seal also is

interpreted as above by the earliest Commentators: e. g. Victorinus: "These same also, among other means of death, the Lord had foretold, great coming pests and mortalities." But as on the third seal, so here also, he goes off into vague allegory about the latter part of the vision).

We have now passed the four first seals, after which the character of the vision changes. One feature common to these four is, Personification: the representation of processions of events by the impersonation of their leading features. Another is, the share which the four living-creatures bear in the representation, which after this point ceases, as far as the seals are concerned. In my mind, no interpretation can be right, which does not take both these common features into account. And this may best be done by viewing, as above, these four visions as the four solemn preparations for the coming of the Lord as regards the visible Creation, which these four living-beings symbolize. The whole Creation demands His coming. **COME**, is the cry of all its tribes. This cry is answered, first by the vision of the great Conqueror, whose arrows are in the heart of his enemies, and whose career is the world's history. The breaking of this first seal is the great opening of the mystery of God. This in some sense includes and brings in the others. Those others then, as we might expect, hold a place subordinate to this. They are, in fact, but exponents of the mysteries enwrapped within this conquering career: visions of the method of its being carried out to the end in its operation on the outward world. That the world-wide declaration of the everlasting Gospel should be accompanied by war, by famine, by pestilence, and other forms of death, had been announced by our Lord Himself [Matt. xxiv. 11], and is now repeated in this series of visions. The fulfilment of each of these judgments is, as it were, the removing a seal from the book of God's mysterious purposes: the bringing nearer of the time when that book shall be open for all the redeemed to read.

With regard to the question whether

these four visions are to be regarded as consecutive or contemporaneous, I have already expressed an opinion. In their *fulness*, I believe them to be contemporaneous, and each of them to extend through the whole lifetime of the church. The analogy of the whole four symbols seems to require this. We read nothing implying that there are "days" of the opening of any particular seal, as there are, ch. x. 7, of the sounding of the several trumpets. The **in order that he may conquer** of the first seal speaks of a purpose which will not be accomplished till the earth be all subjugated: and if I am right in supposing the other visions subordinate to this, their agency is necessarily included in its process. At the same time I would by no means deny that they may receive continually recurring, or even ultimate fulfilments, as the ages of the world go on, in distinct periods of time, and by distinctly assignable events. So far we may derive benefit from the commentaries of those who imagine that they have discovered their fulfilment in successive periods of history, that, from the very variety and discrepancy of the periods assigned by them, we may verify the fact of the prevalence of these announced judgments, hitherto, throughout the whole lifetime of the Church.

As regards *ultimate* fulfilment, there can be no doubt, that all these judgments on the world without, as well as the manifestation [of which they form a part] of the conquering career of the Kingdom of Christ, will reach their culminating point before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord.

I may add, that no account whatever is taken, in the common *historic* interpretation, of the *distinctive* character of the four first seals, as introduced by the cry of the four living-beings: nor indeed is any interpretation commonly given of that cry itself.

**9—11.] OPENING OF THE FIFTH SEAL.** We may at once observe, that the whole character of the vision is altered. The four living-beings have uttered each his cry of **Come**, and are now silent. No more horses and riders go forth upon the earth. The scene is changed to the heavenly altar, and the cry is from thence. Any interpretation which makes this vision of the same kind with and consecutive to the four preceding, must so far be wrong. In one

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: <sup>10</sup> and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? <sup>11</sup> And white robes were given unto every one of

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>a</sup> for the word of God, and for <sup>s</sup> ch. i. 9.  
<sup>t</sup> the testimony which they bore: <sup>t</sup> 2 Tim. i. 8.  
<sup>10</sup> and they cried with a loud <sup>ch. xii. 17.</sup>  
 voice, saying, <sup>u</sup> How long, Thou <sup>& xix. 10.</sup>  
 Master <sup>x</sup> holy and true, <sup>y</sup> dost thou <sup>u</sup> Zech. i. 12.  
 not judge and avenge our blood on <sup>x</sup> ch. iii. 7.  
 them that dwell on the earth? <sup>y</sup> ch. xi. 18.  
<sup>11</sup> And <sup>& xix. 2.</sup>  
 there was given unto every one of

point only is the character of the former vision sustained. It is the "dwellers upon the earth" who are the objects of the judgment invoked: as it was the earth, and its inhabitants, and its produce, which were the objects of the former judgments. See again below on the sixth seal.

9.] And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar (it is an altar of sacrifice which is here meant; the peculiar form of the word *slain*, which follows, seems plainly to imply this: see below) the souls (i. e. departed spirits. It is manifestly idle to enquire, seeing that the Apostle was in a state of spiritual and supernatural vision, how these disembodied spirits became visible to him. That they were not clothed with bodies is manifest) of those that have been slain on account of the word of God and on account of the testimony which they had (so literally: i. e., which was committed to them to bear, and which they bore: see ch. xii. 17.

Much has been said about the souls of the martyrs not being their departed spirits, which must be conceived of as being in bliss with Christ, and in consequence it has been imagined that these were only their animal lives, resident in the blood and shed forth with it. But no such difficulty really exists. We know, whatever be the bliss of the departed martyrs and confessors, that they are waiting for the coming of the Lord, without which they are not perfect: and in the holy fire of their purified zeal, they look forward to that day as one of righteous judgment on the ungodly world. The representation here, in which they are seen under the altar, is simply symbolical, carrying out the likening of them to victims slain on an altar. Even as the blood of these victims was poured under the altar and the life was in the blood, so their souls are represented as under the symbolical altar in heaven, crying for vengeance, as blood is often said to do. After this, it hardly need be said

that no inference can be drawn from this vision respecting the intermediate state between the death of the saints and the coming of the Lord): and they cried with a great voice, saying (they, viz. the souls, which are identified in the sentence with the persons themselves: not, as some think, the *slain* as distinguished from the *souls*), Until when (i. e. how long), thou Master (it is God who is here addressed; with Him rests the time when to avenge His elect, see Luke xviii. 7, 8) holy and true, dost thou not judge (give decision in the matter of) and exact vengeance for our blood from them that dwell on the earth (i. e. the ungodly world, as distinguished from the church of God)? As hitherto, so here again, the analogy and order of our Lord's great prophecy in Matt. xxiv. 11 is closely followed. "The signs of His coming, and of the end of the world" were there announced by Himself as war, famine, and pestilence, vv. 6, 7. And when He had declared that these were but the beginning of sorrows, He next, vv. 9 f., announces the persecution and martyrdom of His people. Similarly here, after the judgments already announced, we have the prayer for vengeance on the part of the martyrs, and the announcement of more such martyrdoms to come. And as our Lord's prophecies received a partial fulfilment in the events preceding the destruction of Jerusalem, and may have done so again and again since, but await their great and final fulfilment when the day of His coming approaches, so it is with these. The cry of the martyrs' blood has been ever going up before God since Stephen fell: ever and anon, at some great time of persecution, it has waxed louder: and so on through the ages it shall accumulate and gather strength, till the great issue of the parable Luke xviii. 1 ff. is accomplished. And there was given to them each a white robe (there will be no real

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

z ch. iii. 4, 5.  
& vii. 9, 14.  
† So all our old  
MSS., none  
being known  
to read as  
A. V.  
a Heb. xi. 40.  
ch. xiv. 13.

them a <sup>z</sup> white robe †; and it was said unto them, <sup>a</sup> that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

b ch. xvi. 18.  
† lo is omitted  
by two of our  
three oldest  
MSS., and by  
many others.  
c Joel ii. 10,  
31, & iii. 15,  
Matt. xxiv.  
29. Acts ii.  
20.  
† So all our  
older MSS.  
and versions.  
d ch. viii. 10. & ix. 1.

<sup>12</sup> And I beheld when he opened the sixth seal, <sup>b</sup> and † there was a great earthquake; and <sup>c</sup> the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the † whole moon became as blood; <sup>13</sup> <sup>d</sup> and the stars of the heaven fell unto the earth, as a fig-tree casteth her un-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. <sup>12</sup> And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; <sup>13</sup> and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her un-

difficulty in understanding this, if we are careful to mark its real place and interpret it accordingly. The white robe, in this book, is the vestment of acknowledged and glorified righteousness in which the saints walk and reign with Christ: see ch. iii. 4; vii. 13 ff., al. This was given to the martyrs: but their prayer for vengeance was not yet granted. The Seer saw in vision that this was so. The white robe was not actually bestowed as some additional boon, but seemed in vision to be thus bestowed, because in that vision one side only of the martyrs' intermediate state had been presented, viz. the fact of their slaughter and their collective cry for vengeance. Now, as over against that, the other more glorious side is presented, viz. that though the collective cry for vengeance is not yet answered, yet individually they are blessed in glory with Christ, and waiting for their fellows to be fully complete), and it was said to them that they should rest (not merely, *abstain from their cry for vengeance, be quiet*;—but, *rest in blessedness*, see ch. xiv. 13, and Dan. xii. 13) yet a little while, until their fellow-servants (a title corresponding to Master above) also and their brethren (the two substantives describe the same persons; those who are at the same time their fellow-servants and their brethren: the former term reminding them of the necessity of completeness as far as the service of their one Master is concerned: the latter, as far as they belong to one and the same great family) shall have accomplished (viz. "their course"), who are about to be slain as also they were.

12—VII. 17.] OPENING OF THE SIXTH

SEAL, AND ITS ATTENDANT VISIONS. And herein [12—17] *Immediate approach of the great day of the Lord*, Matt. xxiv. 29: (vii. 1—8) *gathering of the elect out of the four winds*, Matt. xxiv. 31: (vii. 8—17) *vision of the whole glorified church*, Matt. xxv.

The interpretation of this sixth seal is a crucial point in Apocalyptic exegesis. We may unhesitatingly set down all interpretations as wrong, which view as the fulfilment of this passage any period except that of the coming of the Lord. See the grounds of this below. **And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and a great earthquake took place** (we have no word but "earthquake" for the word, literally shaking, here used in the original: but it does not by any means cover the meaning. For here the heavens are shaken, and the sea, and the dry land. See Hag. ii. 6, 7, and the comment in Heb. xii. 26 f. Compare also Zech. xiv. 4, 5), and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair (see Isa. l. 3. The cloth meant is the *cilicium*, or hair cloth: see note on Acts xviii. 3. This answers to Matt. xxiv. 29,—"*Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened,*" . . . and to "*the sun shall be turned into darkness,*" in Joel ii. 31), and the whole moon (i. e. not the moon in her crescent or her incomplete form, but entire; as we say, the full moon) became as blood (so Matt. as before, "*and the moon shall not give her light:*" and Joel ii. 31, "*and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come*"), and the stars of the heaven fell to the earth (so Matt. as before, "*and the stars shall fall*



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

timely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. <sup>14</sup> And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. <sup>15</sup> And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; <sup>16</sup> and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: <sup>17</sup> for the great day of his wrath

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

ripe figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. <sup>14</sup><sup>e</sup> And the heaven parted asunder as a scroll when it is rolled together; and <sup>f</sup>every mountain and island were moved out of their places. <sup>15</sup> And the kings of the earth, and the great men, <sup>†</sup> and the chief captains, and the rich men, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, <sup>g</sup> hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains; <sup>16</sup><sup>h</sup> and say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: <sup>17</sup><sup>i</sup> for the great day of his

<sup>e</sup> Ps. cii. 20.  
Isa. xxxiv. 4.  
Heb. i. 12, 13.

<sup>f</sup> Jer. lli. 23.  
& iv. 24.  
ch. xvi. 20.

<sup>†</sup> So all our  
older MSS.

<sup>g</sup> Isa. ii. 19.

<sup>h</sup> Hos. x. 8.  
Luke xxiii.  
30. ch. ix. 6.

<sup>i</sup> Isa. xlii. 6.  
&c. Zeph. i.  
14, &c. ch. xvi. 14.

from heaven"), as a fig-tree casteth her unripe figs (De Wette explains it to mean, the winter figs, which almost always fall off unripe) when shaken by a great wind (so Matt. again, "and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." It is remarkable, that in Matt., when the description has finished, the next words are, "learn the parable from the fig-tree." The similitude from the fig-tree, though a different one, rises to the mind of the Apostle as he sees in vision the fulfilment of his Master's words which were so shortly followed by a similar illustration. The imagery itself, as that in the beginning of the next verse, is from Isa. xxxiv. 4). And the heaven parted asunder as a scroll when rolled up (the stars having fallen from it, the firmament itself was removed away, as an open scroll which is rolled up and put by. So also almost verbatim, Isa. xxxiv. 4), and every mountain and island were moved out of their places (compare again Matt. xxiv. 35, "heaven and earth shall pass away:" the whole earth is broken up by a change as total as any of those previous ones which have prepared it for its present inhabitants. Compare ch. xvi. 20; and Nahum i. 5). And the kings of the earth, and the great men (the great civil officers, statesmen and courtiers, as distinguished from the next following), and the chief captains (in Acts xxi.—

xxv., the officer in command of the garrison at Jerusalem is so called), and the rich men and the strong men (hitherto the enumeration has comprised all those who from their circumstances would have most ground for trust in the permanence of the existing state of the earth: these last being perhaps the physically strong, see Ps. xxxiii. 16: or perhaps all those who on account of any strength, physical or intellectual, are of the number of the sturdy or stout-hearted. Now, the catalogue becomes more general), and every man, bond and free, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains (see Isa. ii. 19, from which the imagery comes), and say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall upon us, and hide us from the countenance (see Nahum i. 6: and compare Ps. xxxiv. 16, "The countenance [face] of the Lord is against them that do evil") of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb (the imagery is from Hosea x. 8, further impressed by our Lord's solemn saying on the way to Calvary, Luke xxiii. 30:—the meaning, that all these shall seek death or annihilation in terror of the coming day, when they shall have to stand before God): because the great day (we have no way in English of expressing the title here used without an awkward periphrasis.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

k Ps. lxxvi. 7. wrath is come; <sup>k</sup> and who is able to stand?

† *So all our old MSS.*

VII. <sup>1</sup> And after † this I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, <sup>a</sup> holding the four winds of the earth, <sup>b</sup> that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor against any tree. <sup>2</sup> And I saw another angel coming up from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four

a Dan. vii. 2.

b ch. ix. 4.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

is come; and who shall be able to stand?

VII. <sup>1</sup> And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. <sup>2</sup> And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four

It is literally, 'the day, that great day.' This name, if properly considered, should have kept expositors firm here to the great verity of this part of the Apocalyptic visions, and prevented them from going into all sorts of incongruous interpretations, as they have done) of His wrath is come, and who is able to stand?—We are thus brought to the very threshold itself of the great day of the Lord's coming. It has not yet happened: but the tribes of the earth are troubled at its immediate approach, and those terrible signs with which all Scripture ushers it in, have taken place. We are now then arrived at the time described in Matt. xxiv. 30: the coming itself of the Son of man being for a while kept in the background, as hereafter to be resumed. He is seen as it were coming: but before the vengeance is fully accomplished, the elect of God then living on the earth must be gathered, as Matt. xxiv. 31, out of the four winds of heaven, from among the inhabitants of the earth. To this ingathering the sealing in our text is the necessary preliminary. The correspondence between the series of prophecies holds even in the minutest particulars, and where they do not correspond, their very differences are full of instruction. See these pointed out as we proceed.

CH. VII. 1—8.] THE SEALING OF THE ELECT. [And] after this (these words shew that the opening of the sixth seal is complete, and that what is now to follow, —viz. the two visions each introduced with similar words, after this [or, these things] I saw,—comes in by way of episode. They represent two great events, the sealing of the elect on earth, and

the final assemblage of the saints in heaven. The great day of the Lord's judgment is not described; it is all but brought before us under the sixth seal, and is actually going on in the first of these episodes [see below]: but only that part of it which regards the saints appears to us, and that only by its result—their gathering in to heaven) I saw four angels (not, as many interpreters, bad angels; nor does it necessarily follow that we are to adopt the analogy of ch. xvi. 5 and to regard them as "angels of the winds:" but simply angels, to whom this office is committed. This is all that is declared to us in the text, and it is idle to enquire beyond it. All allegorizing and all individualizing interpretations are out of the question) standing upon the four corners of the earth (i. e. North, South, East, and West, the cardinal points from which the winds blow) holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind may not blow on the earth nor on the sea nor against any tree. And I saw another angel (as before, simply an angel: not as has been fancied, our Lord, nor the Holy Spirit; compare the words, of our God, below) coming up from the rising of the sun (coming up, because the rising of the sun is low on the earth's horizon, whereas the Apostle was in heaven, looking down on the earth: and from the rising of the sun, as naturally agreeing with the glorious and salutary nature of his employment. Compare Ezek. xliii. 2; Mal. iii. 2. The allegorical interpretations which have been given are entirely uncountenanced in the text), having the seal of the living God (living, as giving to the seal solemnity and vital import); and he cried with a

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, <sup>3</sup> saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. <sup>4</sup> And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. <sup>5</sup> Of the tribe of Juda

angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, <sup>3</sup> saying, <sup>c</sup> Hurt ye not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, till we have <sup>d</sup> sealed the servants of our God <sup>e</sup> upon their foreheads. <sup>4</sup> <sup>f</sup> And I heard the number of them which were sealed: <sup>g</sup> an hundred and forty-four thousand were sealed of all the tribes of the sons of Israel. <sup>5</sup> Of

<sup>c</sup> ch. vi. 6. & ix. 4.

<sup>d</sup> Ezek. ix. 4. ch. xiv. 1. <sup>e</sup> ch. xxii. 4. <sup>f</sup> ch. ix. 16.

<sup>g</sup> ch. xiv. 1.

great voice to the four angels to whom it was given to injure (viz. by letting loose the winds, which they as yet held in) the earth and the sea, saying, Do not ye injure the earth nor the sea nor the trees, until we (not, I: see Matt. xxiv. 31, cited below) shall have sealed the servants of our God (the God alike of the speaker and of those addressed) upon their foreheads (the noblest, as well as the most conspicuous part, of the human frame).

This vision stands in the closest analogy with Matt. xxiv. 31, where immediately after the appearing of the sign of the Son of man and the mourning of the tribes of the earth, we read, *And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.* The judgment of the great day is in fact going on in the background; but in this first and general summary of the divine judgments and dealings, in which the sighs of Creation and of the Church for Christ's coming are set before us, only that portion of its proceedings is described which has reference to these two. When the strain is again taken up, the case and reference are different.

The questions now arise, 1) who are these that are sealed? and 2) what is the intent of their being sealed? 1) Those who have followed the preceding course of interpretation will have no difficulty in anticipating the reply. They are, primarily, those elect of God who shall be living upon earth at the time here indicated, viz. that of the coming of the Lord: those indicated in Matt. xxiv. 31, above cited. (On the import and reason of the use of *Israel* and its tribes, I shall speak below.) As such, they are not *identical with*, but

are *included in*, the great multitude which no man can number of ver. 9 ff. But they are also symbolical of the first-fruits of the church: see notes on ch. xiv. 1 ff.

4.] And I heard the number of the sealed, an hundred and forty-four thousand sealed (the number is symbolical of fixedness and full completion, 12 × 12 taken a thousand fold. No one that I am aware of has taken it literally, and supposed that just this particular number and no more is imported. The import for us is, that the Lord knoweth and sealeth His own: that the fulness of their number shall be accomplished and not one shall fail: and, from what follows, that the least as well as the greatest of the portions of his Church shall furnish its quota to this blessed company: see more below) **from every tribe** (i. e. from the sum of the tribes; from every tribe, all being taken together. This is evident from what follows) **of the sons of Israel** (this has been variously understood. By many, and even by the most recent Commentator, Dusterdieck, these sealed ones are taken to represent Jewish believers: the chosen out of the actual children of Israel. I need hardly say that such an interpretation seems to me to be quite inconsistent with the usage of this book. Our rule in such cases must be, to interpret a term, where it may possibly be ambiguous, by the use of the same term, if we can discover any, in a place or places where it is clear and unmistakable. Now in the description of the heavenly Jerusalem, ch. xxi. 9 ff., we have the names *of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel* inscribed on its twelve gates. Can there be any doubt as to the import of those names in that place? Is it not, that the city thus inscribed is the dwelling-place of the Israel of God? Or are the upholders

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben, †

were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve

† were sealed, in these places, is omitted by all our old MSS.

of the literal sense here prepared to carry it out there, and to regard these inscribed names as importing that none but the literal descendants of Israel dwelt within? [For observe that such an inference could not be escaped by the fact of the names of the twelve Apostles being inscribed on its foundations: those being individual names, the others collective.] It seems certain, by this expression being again used there in the same words, that the Apostle must here, as there, have intended Israel to be taken not as the Jewish nation, but as the Israel of God. Again, we have a striking indication furnished in ch. iii. 12, who these children of Israel are:—"He that overcometh, . . . . I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God,—and my new name." These words serve to bind together the sealing here, and the vision of the new Jerusalem in ch. xxi. Nor is it any valid objection to this view that the persons calling themselves Jews in ch. ii. 9, iii. 9, have been taken to be actual Jews. There is a wide difference in the circumstances there, as there is also in the appellation itself): out of the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand sealed, &c. &c.—The points to be noticed in this enumeration are, 1) That with the exception of Judah being placed first, the order of the tribes does not seem to follow any assignable principle. It may indeed be not without reason, that Reuben, the eldest, next follows Judah, and Benjamin the youngest is placed last, with Joseph his own brother: but beyond this, all is uncertainty: as any one will find, who attempts to apply to the order any imaginable rule of arrangement. So far has been generally confessed. "No order is kept, because all are equal in Christ," says Grotius. 2) That the tribe of Dan is omitted. This is accounted for by the fathers and ancient interpreters, from the idea [founded on Gen. xlix. 17] that anti-christ was to arise from this tribe: by most Commentators, from the fact, that this tribe was the first to fall into idolatry, see Judg. xviii.: by others, from the fact that this tribe had been long ago as good as extinct. Grotius quotes for this a Jewish tradition. Accordingly we find in 1 Chron.

iv. ff. where all Israel are reckoned by genealogies, that this tribe is omitted altogether. This latter seems the more probable account here, seeing that in order to the number 12 being kept, some one of the smaller tribes must be omitted. In Dent. xxxiii., Simeon is omitted. 3) That instead of Ephraim, Joseph is mentioned. We have a somewhat similar instance in Numb. xiii. 11, with this difference, that there it is "of the tribe of Joseph, namely of the tribe of Manasseh." The substitution here has been accounted for by the "untheocratic" recollections connected with the name Ephraim. But this may well be questioned. In the prophecy of Hosea, where the name so frequently occurs, it designates Israel repentant, as well as Israel backsliding; compare especially ch. xiv. 4—8, the recollection of which would admirably fit the spirit of this present passage. I should rather suppose that some practice had arisen which the Apostle adopts, of calling the tribe of Ephraim by this name. 4) That the tribe of Levi is included among the rest, hardly appears to depend on the reason assigned by Bengel and others, that the Levitical ceremonies being now at an end, all are alike priests and have access to God: for in some Old Test. catalogues, even where territorial division is in question, Levi is not omitted: the cities of the priests being mentioned under the head of this tribe. See 1 Chron. vi.

It yet remains to enquire, before passing on to the second vision in this episode, what is the import and intent of the sealing here mentioned. It has been the general view, that it was to exempt those sealed from the judgments which were to come on the unbelieving. And it can hardly be denied, that this view receives strong support from Scripture analogy, e. g. that of Exod. xii. and Ezek. ix., especially the latter, where the exempted ones are marked, as here, on their foreheads. It is also borne out by our ch. ix. 4, where these sealed ones are by implication exempted from the plague of the locusts from the pit. It is again hardly possible to weigh fairly the language used in this place itself, without coming to the same conclusion. The four angels are commanded not to begin their

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. <sup>6</sup> Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. <sup>7</sup> Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. <sup>8</sup> Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand. <sup>9</sup> After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad, † twelve thousand. <sup>6</sup> Of the tribe of Aser, † twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim, † twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses, † twelve thousand. <sup>7</sup> Of the tribe of Simeon, † twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi, † twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar, † twelve thousand. <sup>8</sup> Of the tribe of Zabulon, † twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph, † twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand. <sup>9</sup> After this I beheld, and, lo, <sup>h</sup> a great multitude, which no one could number, <sup>i</sup> of every nation, and all tribes, and peoples, and tongues,

† were sealed, in these places, is omitted by all our old MSS.

<sup>h</sup> Rom. xi. 25.

<sup>i</sup> ch. v. 9.

work of destruction, until the sealing has taken place. For what imaginable reason could such a prohibition be uttered, unless those who were to be sealed were to be marked out for some purpose connected with that work? And for what purpose could they be thus marked out, if not for exemption? The objection brought against this view by Düsterdieck, that so far from being exempt from trials, the saints in glory have come out of great tribulation, is grounded on the mistake of not distinguishing between the trials of the people of God and the judgments on the unbelieving world. In the latter, the saints have no part, as neither had the children of Israel in the plagues of Egypt. And indeed the very symbolism here used, in which the elect are pointed out under the names of the 12 tribes, serves to remind us of this ancient exemption. At the same time, exemption from the coming plagues is not the only object of the sealing. It serves a positive as well as a negative purpose. It appropriates to God those upon whom it has passed. For the seal contains His own Name, see ch. iii. 12, xiv. 1. And thus they are not only gathered out of the world, but declared to be ready to be

gathered into the city of God. And thus the way is prepared for the next vision in the episode.

9—17.] THE GREAT MULTITUDE OF THE REDEEMED IN HEAVEN. The opening of the sixth seal introduced the coming of the Lord. The first vision of the episode revealed the gathering together of the elect from the four winds. But before the seventh and *last* seal can be opened, and the book of God's purposes be unrolled, not only must all things on this earth be accomplished, but the whole multitude of the redeemed must be gathered in to the joy of their Lord. Then, and not till then, shall we know even as we are known, and read the mystery of God's ways without hindrance. Accordingly, in this sublime vision we are admitted to a sight of the finished state of glory, in which the seventh seal shall be opened. **After these things** (see above on ver. 1. The term indicates separation from that which went before, and introduces a second and distinct vision in the episode) **I beheld, and lo a great multitude, which no one could** (not that the attempt was actually made, but that if made it was sure to fail) **number, out of every nation** (see ch. v. 9),



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, <sup>k</sup> clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; <sup>10</sup> and they cry <sup>†</sup> with a loud voice, saying, <sup>1</sup> Salvation to our God <sup>m</sup> which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. <sup>11</sup> <sup>n</sup> And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four living-beings, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, <sup>12</sup> <sup>o</sup> saying, Amen: The blessing, and the glory, and the wisdom, and the thanksgiving, and the honour, and the power, and the might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. <sup>13</sup> And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in <sup>p</sup> white robes? and whence came

<sup>k</sup> ch. iii. 5, 15.  
& iv. 4. & vi.  
11. ver. 14.

<sup>†</sup> *So all our  
oldest MSS.*

<sup>1</sup> Ps. iii. 8,  
Isa. xliii. 11.  
<sup>Jer. iii. 23.</sup>  
<sup>Hos. xii. 4.</sup>  
ch. xix. 1.  
<sup>m</sup> ch. v. 13.  
<sup>n</sup> ch. iv. 6.

<sup>o</sup> ch. v. 13, 14.

<sup>p</sup> ver. 9.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;* <sup>10</sup> *and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.* <sup>11</sup> *And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,* <sup>12</sup> *saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.* <sup>13</sup> *And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence*

and [all] tribes and peoples and tongues (observe, that this very specification, of a multitude without number, carries us on past the first or millennial resurrection, indicated in the two former parables of Matt. xxv. [see notes there], and past the final judgment sublimely described at the end of that chapter: "*the righteous unto life eternal*" is the point at which our vision takes up that prophecy. We have *the righteous*, in their robes of righteousness, made white in the blood of the Lamb, already, vv. 15—17, in the midst of those pleasures for evermore, which always stand in Scripture for a description of the employments of the life everlasting), **standing before the throne, and before the Lamb** (by these words the vision is fixed as belonging to that heaven itself which has been previously described, ch. iv. The celestial scene becomes filled with this innumerable throng: its other inhabitants remaining as before) **clothed in white robes** (see ch. vi. 11, note: and below, ver. 14), and **palm-branches in their hands** (bearing the palm-branch was a mark of festal joy, compare John xii. 13; 1 Macc. xiii. 51); and **they cry** (the present tense expresses their unceasing occupation) **with a loud voice,**

saying, Salvation (literally, "the salvation:" i. e., the praise of our salvation: the ascription of the salvation which we have obtained) [be] to our God who sitteth on the throne and unto the Lamb.

11, 12.] The choir of angels, as in ver. 11, respond to the ascription of praise. And all the angels were standing round the throne and the elders and the four living-beings, and fell before the throne on their faces (then they were in the vision in the similitude of men), and worshipped God, saying, Amen: the blessing and the glory and the wisdom and the thanksgiving and the honour and the power and the might (observe the sevenfold ascription) be to our God unto the ages of the ages. Amen.

13—17.] *Explanation of the vision.* And one of the elders answered (on this use of the word answered see Matt. xi. 25, Deut. xxv. 9. The reply is made, not to words actually uttered, but to thoughts, or to circumstances requiring remark), **saying to me** (the elders symbolizing the Church, one of them fitly stands out as the interpreter of this vision in which the glorified Church is represented), **These that are clothed in the white robes, who are**

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

came they? <sup>14</sup> And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. <sup>15</sup> Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

they? <sup>14</sup> And I said unto him, My † lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, <sup>†</sup> These are they which come out of the great tribulation, and <sup>†</sup> they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. <sup>15</sup> Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall spread his habitation over them.

† So three of our four oldest MSS. q ch. vi. 9. & xvii. 6.

† Isa. i. 18. Ps. li. 7. Heb. ix. 14. 1 John i. 7. ch. i. 6. See Zech. iii. 3—5.

† Isa. iv. 6, 8. ch. xxi. 3.

they, and whence came they (the questions are those ordinarily put when we seek for information respecting strangers; but put here for the sake of furnishing the explanation. Both enquiries are answered in ver. 14)? And I said to him, My lord (the address is one of deep reverence, as to a heavenly being. See the limits of this reverence in ch. xix. 10, xxii. 8, 9), thou knowest (see Ezek. xxxvii. 3, from which the form of expression comes. The words must not, with Ebrard, be forced to mean, "I know well, but thou knowest better;" but must be taken in their simple acceptation, "I know not, but thou dost." And this again need not mean that the Apostle had no thought on the subject, but that he regarded himself as ignorant in comparison with his heavenly interlocutor). And he said to me, These are they that come (not, as A. V., "that came:" nor again must the present be put prominently forward, that are coming, as if the number in the vision were not yet complete: still less is it to be taken as a quasi-future, "that shall come:" but the present tense is merely one of designation. Their description, generically, is, that "they are they that come, &c.") out of the great tribulation (the definite article ought not to be omitted, as in A. V. It is most emphatic: "out of the tribulation, the great one." And in consequence some have explained the words of that last great time of trial which is to try the saints before the coming of the Lord. But to limit it to this only, is manifestly out of keeping with the spirit of the vision. I would rather understand it of the whole sum of the trials of the saints of God, viewed by the Elder as now complete, and designated by this emphatic and general name: "all that tribulation"), and they washed their robes (the past tense is that so often used of the

course of this life when looked back upon from its yonder side: they did this in that life on earth which is now [in the vision] past and gone by) and made them white (the references are full of interest) in the blood of the Lamb (i. e. by that faith in the atoning blood of Christ of which it is said, "cleansing their hearts by the faith," Acts xv. 9: and 1 John i. 7, "the blood of Jesus Christ . . . cleauseth us from all sin." See also Eph. v. 25—27. Observe, we must not separate the two acts, washing and making white, as Hengstenberg does, interpreting the former of the forgiveness of sins, the latter of sanctification: the latter is only the result of the former: they washed them, and by so doing made them white. The act was a life-long one,—the continued purification of the man, body, soul, and spirit, by the application of the blood of Christ in its cleansing power). On this account (because they washed their robes white in Christ's atoning and purifying blood: for nothing that has spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, can stand where they are standing: compare again Eph. v. 27: none will be there who are not thus washed) they are before the throne of God (in the presence of His throne: seeing Him [Matt. v. 8; 1 Cor. xiii. 12] as He sees them), and they serve Him by day and by night ("this," says Bede, "is a way of expressing eternity in our human language") in His temple (as His priests, conducting the sweet praises of that heavenly choir, ver. 10, and doing what other high and blessed service He may delight to employ them in): and He that sitteth on the throne shall spread His habitation over them (it is exceedingly difficult to express the sense of these glorious words, in which the fulfilment of the Old Test. promises, such as Levit. xxvi.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

t Isa. xlix. 10. 16 <sup>t</sup> They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; <sup>u</sup> neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. 17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne <sup>x</sup> shall tend them, and shall lead them unto the fountains of the waters of life: <sup>y</sup> and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes.

u Ps. cxxi. 6.  
ch. xxi. 4.

x Ps. xxiii. 1.  
& xxxvi. 8.  
John x. 11,  
14.

y Isa. xxv. 8.  
ch. xxi. 4.

a ch. vi. 1.

VIII. 1 And <sup>a</sup> when he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. 2 And <sup>b</sup> I saw the seven

b Matt. xviii.  
10. Luke i.  
19.

11; Isa. iv. 5, 6; Ezek. xxxvii. 27, is announced. They give the fact of the dwelling of God *among* them, united with the fact of His protection being over them, and assuring to them the exemptions next to be mentioned. In the term **shall tabernacle** [so literally] are contained a multitude of recollections: of the pillar in the wilderness, of the Shechinah in the holy place, of the tabernacle of witness with all its symbolism. These will all now be realized and superseded by the overshadowing presence of God Himself). **They shall not hunger any more, nor yet** (the repeated negative is exclusive, and carries a climax in each clause) **thirst any more, neither shall the sun ever light upon them, no, nor any heat** (as, e. g., the burning wind, the sirocco, which word is used in Isa. xlix. 10, from whence this whole sentence is taken): **because the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne** (the term in the midst of is somewhat difficult to express in its strict meaning. Probably, the two points required for estimating the position would be the two extreme ends of the throne to the right and to the left) **shall tend them** (as a shepherd his flock), and **shall guide them to the fountains of the waters of life** (see ch. xxii. 1, and Ps. xxiii. 2): **and God shall wipe away every tear out of their eyes.**

All is now ready for the final disclosure by the Lamb of the book of God's eternal purposes. The coming of the Lord has passed, and the elect are gathered in. Accordingly, **THE LAST SEAL IS NOW OPENED**, which lets loose the roll.

CH. VIII. 1.] **And when** (or, whenever. This word occurs in the opening of this seal only, giving it an indefiniteness which

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

16 *They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.* 17 *For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*

VIII. 1 *And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.* 2 *And I saw the seven angels which*

does not belong to any of the rest. The touch is so slight as not to be reproducible in another language: but it can hardly be denied that in the Writer's mind it exists) **he opened the seventh seal** (what sign may we expect to follow? The other six seals have been accompanied each by its appropriate vision. Since the opening of the last one, followed as it was by the portents and terrors of the day of the Lord, there has been an episodic series of visions, setting forth the gathering in of the elect, and the innumerable multitude of the glorified Church. What incident is appropriate for the removal of this last, the only obstacle yet remaining to the entire disclosure of the secret purposes of God?) **there was** (there became, there came on, supervened, from a state very different, viz. the choral songs of the great multitude, re-echoed by the angelic host) **silence in the heaven about half an hour** (in enquiring into the meaning of this silence, let us first see whether we have any indication by analogy in the book itself, which may guide us. In ch. x. 4, when the Apostle is about to write down the voices of the seven thunders, he is commanded to abstain, and not to write them down. And though neither the manner nor the place of that *withholding* exactly corresponds to this half-hour's silence, yet it holds a place relating to the sounding of the seventh trumpet, quite sufficiently near to that of this, with regard to the seventh seal, to be brought into comparison with it. It imports 1) a passing over and withholding, as far as the Apostle is concerned, of that which the seventh seal revealed: i. e. of that complete unrolling of God's book of

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

stood before God; and to them were given seven

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

angels which stand before God; and to them were given seven

c 2 Chron. xlix. 25-28.

His eternal purposes, of the times and seasons which He holds in His own power. For this unrolling, every thing has been prepared: even to the taking off of the last seal which bound the mysterious roll. But as to what the roll itself contains, there is silence. 2) But it also imports, as Victorinus beautifully says, "*that the half-hour is the beginning of eternal rest:*" the commencement of that blessed sabbatical state of rest, during which the people of God shall be in full possession of those things which ear hath not heard nor eye seen. With equal truth and beauty does the same, our earliest apocalyptic expositor, proceed; "but he takes merely a part, because the interruption repeats the same things as far as order is concerned. For if the silence had been eternal, there would have been an end of narration." So that the vexed question, whether what follows belongs, or not, to the seventh seal, is, in fact, a question not worth seriously answering. Out of the completion of the former vision rise up a new series of visions, bearing a different character, but distinguished by the same number, indicating perfection, and shewing us that though evolved out of the completion of the former series, they do not belong to the last particular member of that series, any further than as it leads the way to them. Even more marked is this again below in ch. xi. —xvi., where the pouring out of the seven vials can in no way be said to belong to or form part of the blowing of the seventh trumpet. It will be seen then that I believe all interpretation to be wrong, which regards the blowing of the seven trumpets as forming a portion of the vision accompanying the seventh seal in particular: and again that I place in the same category all that which regards it as taking up and going over the same ground again. In the seven seals, we had revealed, as was fitting, the opening of the great Revelation, the progress and fortunes of God's Church and people in relation to the world, and of the world in relation to the church.

With regard to the trumpets themselves, we may observe, 1) That they repeat again the same mystic number *seven*, indicating that the course of events (see below) represented by this sounding is complete in itself, as was that indicated before by the breaking of the seals, and as is also that

afterwards to be indicated by the pouring out of the vials: 2) That as in the case of the seals, there is a distinction made between the first four and the following three. Compare below, ver. 13. 3) That as also in the case of the seals, there is an interval, with two episodal visions, between the sixth and the seventh trumpet. Compare ch. x., and ch. xi. 1—14. 4) That of the trumpets, six only announce visions partaking of the common character of judgments, whereas the seventh forms, as we also saw in the case of the seventh seal, the solemn close to the rest. 5) And further, that as regards this seventh trumpet, the matters imported by it as being *the third woe* (ch. xi. 14) are not given, but merely indicated by "*the time of the dead is come to be judged, &c.*" (ch. xi. 18): just as we saw that the things imported by the opening of the seventh seal were not detailed, but only indicated by the episodal visions, and by the nature of the similitude used. 6) That before the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the mystery of God is finished, as far as relates to the subject of this course of visions. This is indicated by the great Angel in ch. x. 7; and again by implication in ch. xi. 15—19, both by the purport of the voices in heaven, v. 15, and by the ascriptions of praise, vv. 16—18. This is the same again at the pouring out of the seventh vial, where the great voice from the throne announces "*It is past,*" ch. xvi. 17: as we saw that it was at the opening of the seventh seal, as indicated by the silence of half an hour. Each course of visions is complete in itself: each course of visions ends in the accomplishment of that series of divine actions which it sets forth. 7) That as, when the preparation for the seven angels to sound their trumpets is evolved out of the opening of the seventh seal, the vision of the seals is solemnly closed in by "*there were thunders and voices and lightnings and an earthquake,*" so the vision of the trumpets is solemnly closed in by "*there were lightnings and voices and thunders and a great hail.*" That the similar occurrence, ch. xvi. 18, does not close the series of the vials, seems to be owing to special circumstances belonging to the outpouring of the seventh vial: see there (ch. xvi. 21). 8) That as in vv. 3—5, which form the close of the vision of the seals, and the opening

AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

trumpets. <sup>3</sup> And another angel came and stood over the altar, having a

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*trumpets. <sup>3</sup> And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden*

of that of the trumpets, the offering of the prayers of the saints is the prominent feature (see notes below), so in the close of the series of the trumpets we have a prominent disclosure of the ark of the covenant of God, declaring and sealing His faithfulness to His Church. Similarly again at the beginning of the series of the vials, we have the temple of the tabernacle of witness opened. Why we have not a similar appearance at the close of that series, is to be accounted for as above. 9) That, seeing that this course of visions opens and closes as last noticed, it (to say nothing at present of the following series of the vials) is to be regarded as embracing a course of judgments (for such evidently is every one of its six visions) inflicted in answer to those prayers, and forming a portion of that avenging invoked by the souls of the martyrs in ch. vi. 10. 10) If this be so, then, as this series of visions is manifestly to be regarded as extending to the end of the whole period of *time* (compare ch. x. 7, "*in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he was about to blow his trumpet, and the mystery of God was finished,*" &c.), we may fairly say that it takes up the great world-wide vision of the seals at the point where it was said to the vengeance-invoking martyrs that "*they should rest yet for a time:*" and that the judgments of this series of visions occur during the time of waiting. This view is confirmed by finding that *the dwellers on the earth*, upon whom the vengeance is invoked in ch. vi. 10, are the objects of vengeance during this series of judgments, compare ver. 13. 11) In reference to this last remark, we may observe that no one portion especially of the earth's inhabitants are pointed out as objects of this series of judgments, but all the ungodly, as usurpers of the kingdom of Christ. This is plain, by the expressions in the ascription of praise with which it closes, I mean, the kingdom of this world, &c. Earthly domination is cast down, and the Lord's Kingdom is brought in. And it is also plain, from the expression used in that same ascription of praise, "*and to destroy those that are destroying the earth,*" of what character have been these ungodly—the corrupters of the earth—the tainters and wasters of the means and accessories of life. 12) Whatever be the interpreta-

tion which follows from the foregoing considerations, two canons must not be violated. a) As in the case of the seals, so it is manifest here, from ch. xi. 18, "*the time of the dead to be judged is come,*" that the series of visions reaches forward to the time of the end, and is only terminated by the great events indicated in those words. And b) as yet, no particular city, no especial people is designated as the subject of the apocalyptic vision. All is general. The earth, the trees, the grass, the sea, the waters, the lights of heaven, mankind,—these are at present the objects in our field of view. There is as yet no *throne of the beast*, as in the outpouring of the vials, ch. xvi. 10. The prophecy goes on becoming more specific as it advances: and it is not for us to anticipate its course, nor to localize and individualize where it is as yet general and undefined. The further details will be treated as we go on).

2.) *First appearance of the seven trumpet-angels. And I saw* (viz. during the symbolic silence, at the end of the half-hour. What now follows is not to be considered as in the interpretation chronologically consequent upon that which was indicated by the seals, but merely as in the *vision* chronologically consequent on that course of visions. The evolution of the courses of visions out of one another does not legitimately lead to the conclusion that the *events represented by them* are consecutive in order of *time*. There are other and more important sequences than that of *time*: they may be independent of it, or they may concur with it) **the seven angels which stand before God** (compare Tobit xii. 15, "*I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before [more properly, enter in before] the glory of the Holy One.*" The agreement is not entire, inasmuch as here *another angel*, and not one of the seven, presently offers the prayers of the saints. These are not the archangels, nor are they the seven spirits of ch. iv. 5: nor again are they merely seven angels selected on account of the seven trumpets: this is entirely precluded by the article, **the seven angels which stand**, &c. It is clear that the passage in Tobit and the words here refer to the same matter, and that the fact was part of that revelation with regard to the



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should mingle it with <sup>d</sup> the prayers <sup>d</sup> ch. v. 8. of all the saints upon <sup>e</sup> the golden <sup>e</sup> Exod. xxx. 1. ch. vi. 9. altar which was before the throne.

order and employments of the holy angels, which seems to have taken place during the captivity), and there were given to them seven trumpets (understand, with intent that they themselves should blow them). And another angel (not to be identified with Christ, as is done by Bede, Vitringa, Calovius, and others, and recently [for doctrinal reasons] by Elliott: for thus confusion is introduced into the whole imagery of the vision, in which the Lord Jesus is otherwise present, viz., as the Lamb in the midst of the throne. In ch. v. 8, we have the twenty-four elders falling down with vials containing the prayers of the saints: here we have an angel offering incense that it may mingle with the prayers on the heavenly altar. Any theological difficulty which belongs to the one belongs also to the other; and it is a canon which we must strictly observe in interpretation, that we are not, on account of any supposed doctrinal propriety, to depart from the plain meaning of words. In ch. vii. 2 we have "another angel" in the sense of a created angel [see note there]: and would it be probable that St. John would after this, and I may add with his constant usage of the term throughout the book for angel in its ordinary sense, designate our Lord by this title? There is something to me far more revolting from theological propriety in such a supposition, than in an angel being seen in the heavenly ministrations offering incense to mix with the prayers of the saints. It ought really to be needless to remark, in thus advocating consistency of verbal interpretation, that no countenance is hereby given to the invocation of angels: the whole truth of their being and ministration protesting against such an inference. They are simply ministering spirits, and the action here described is a portion of that their ministry. *Through Whom* the prayers are offered, we all know. He is our only Mediator and channel of grace) came and stood over (so that his form appeared above it; the altar being between the Apostle and him) the altar (viz. the altar named ch. vi. 9, as the repetition of the word with the article shews:

see below on ver. 5), having a golden censer (the word used signifies elsewhere the frankincense itself. But here it unquestionably means a censer; see below, ver. 5, where the word is the same. No argument can be derived from the censer being a golden one. The spirit of the heavenly imagery will account for this without going further: we have, throughout, crowns [iv. 4], incense-vials [v. 8], vengeance-vials, [xv. 7], girdles [xv. 6], a measuring-reed [xvi. 15], &c., all of the same costly metal). And there was given to him (viz. by divine appointment, through those ministering: not, by the saints who offered the prayers, for two reasons: 1) because the incense is mentioned as something distinct from the prayers of the saints; see below: 2) because no forcing of the expression, there was given unto him, will extract this meaning from it. It is a frequent apocalyptic formula in reference to those things or instruments with which, or actions by which, the ministrations necessary to the progress of the visions are performed: compare ch. vi. 2, 4 [twice], 8, 11, vii. 2, viii. 2, ix. 1, &c.) much incense (see ch. v. 8, and on the difference of the imagery, below), that he might give it to (so literally: various renderings and supplyings of the construction have been devised: but the simple dative after "give it" appears the only legitimate one: and the sense as expressed by Calovius, "that he might add it to the prayers of the saints, and so make them prayers of sweet savour." The object was, to incense the prayers of the Saints: on the import, see below) the prayers of all the saints (not only now of those martyred ones in ch. vi. 9: the trumpets which follow are in answer to the whole prayers of God's church. The martyrs' cry for vengeance is the loudest note, but all join) upon (the preposition in the original carries the idea of motion with it; which thus incensed were offered on the golden altar, &c. From what follows it would seem that the prayers were already before God: see below) the altar of gold which was before the throne (this may be a different

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

f Ps. cxli. 2.  
Luke i. 10.

g ch. xvi. 18.

† No old MSS. have the order as in the A. V.: the Alexandrine has thunders and lightnings and voices; the Sinaitic and the later Vatican as in the text. Probably the changes were made to bring thunders and lightnings together.  
1 Kings xix. 11. Acts iv. 31.

† So all our oldest MSS.

altar from that over which the angel was standing; or it may be the same further specified. The latter alternative seems the more probable. We must not imagine that we have in these visions a counterpart of the Jewish tabernacle, or attempt to force the details into accordance with its arrangements. No such correspondence has been satisfactorily made out: indeed to assume such here would be perhaps inconsistent with ch. xi. 19, where first the temple of God in heaven is opened. A general analogy, in the use and character of the heavenly furniture, is all that we can look for). **And the smoke of the incense ascended** (such again seems to be the only legitimate rendering of the dative in the original. The common one, "with," cannot be justified. The prayers, being already offered, received the smoke of the incense. The whole imagery introduces the fact that those prayers are about to be answered in the following judgments) **the prayers of the saints out of the hand of the angel, before God** (notice, that no countenance is given by this vision to the idea of angelic intercession. The angel is simply a minister. The incense [importing here, we may perhaps say, acceptability owing to the ripeness of the season in the divine purposes, so that the prayers, lying unanswered before, become, by the fulness of the time, acceptable as regards an immediate reply] is given to him: he merely wafts the incense up, so that it mingles with the prayers. Düsterdieck well remarks, that the angel, in performing sacerdotal offices, is but a fellow-servant of the saints [ch. xix. 10], who are them-

† And † the smoke of the incense ascended up to the prayers of the saints out of the angel's hand before God. <sup>5</sup> And the angel took the censer, and filled it from the fire of the altar, and cast it towards the earth: and <sup>6</sup> there were thunders, †, and voices, and lightnings, <sup>h</sup> and an earthquake. <sup>6</sup> And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. <sup>7</sup> And the first † sounded,

throne. <sup>4</sup> And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. <sup>5</sup> And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake. <sup>6</sup> And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. <sup>7</sup> The first angel

h 2 Sam. xxii. 8.

selves priests [ch. i. 6, v. 10, vii. 15]).

<sup>5</sup> And the angel took the censer (after having used it as above, i. e. shaken from it the incense on the altar) and filled it (while the smoke was ascending) from the fire of the altar (i. e. from the ashes which were on the altar), and cast it (i. e. the fire with which the censer was filled: the hot ashes) towards the earth (to signify that the answer to the prayers was about to descend in the fire of God's vengeance: see below, and compare Ezek. x. 2); and there took place thunders and lightnings and voices and an earthquake ("by means of the prayers of the saints," says Cornelius-a-lapide, "praying for vengeance on the ungodly and their persecutors, the fire of vengeance, viz. thunders, lightnings, and the following plagues of the seven angels and trumpets, was sent down on the ungodly." All these immediate consequences of the casting down of the hot ashes on the earth are the symbolic precursors of the divine judgments about to be inflicted).

One point must here be noticed: the intimate connexion between the act of this incense-offering angel and the seven trumpets which follow. It belongs to them all; it takes place when now the seven angels have had their trumpets given them, and this series of visions is introduced. So that every interpretation must take this into account: remembering that the judgments which follow are answers to the prayers of the saints, and are inflicted on the enemies of the church.

<sup>6</sup> And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves that they might blow (raised their trumpets to

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast

and there was hail and fire mingled <sup>i</sup> in blood, and it was cast <sup>k</sup> upon the <sup>i</sup> Ezek. xxxviii. 23. <sup>k</sup> ch. xvi. 2.

their mouths, and stood in attitude to blow them).

7—12.] *The first four trumpets.* It has been before observed, that as in the case of the seals, so here, the first four are marked off from the last three. The distinction is here made, not only, as there, by an intrinsic feature running through the four, but by the voice of the eagle in ver. 13, introducing those latter trumpets and giving them also a distinguishing feature. And as we there maintained [see note on ch. vi. 8] that any interpretation, to be right, must take into account this difference between the four and the three, so here also. But in order to the taking into account of this difference, we must gain some approximate idea of its import. Does the intrinsic feature, common to these four plagues, bear a general interpretation which will suit their character as distinguished from the other three? I imagine it does. For, whereas each of those three [or rather of the former two of them, for, as has been observed, the seventh forms the solemn conclusion to the whole] evolves a course of plagues including separate and independent details, these four are connected and interdependent. Their common feature is destruction and corruption: not total, it is true, but partial: in each case to the amount expressed by the *third part*: but this fractional extent of action appears again under the sixth trumpet, ch. ix. 15, 18, and therefore clearly must not be pressed as carrying the distinctive character of the first four (on its import see note below, ver. 7). It is in the *kind* of exercise which their agency finds, that these four trumpets are especially distinguished. The plagues indicated by them are entirely inflicted on *natural objects*: the earth, trees, grass, sea, rivers, lights of heaven: whereas those indicated by the two latter are expressly said to be inflicted on *men*, and *not* on natural objects: compare ch. ix. 4, 15. Surely, however those natural objects are in each case to be understood, this is a point not lightly to be passed over. Nor can it fail to strike every unprejudiced student, that we must not, as is done by many expositors, interpret the *earth* and *grass* and *trees* as signifying nations and men in the former portion of the series of visions, and then, when the distinction between these and men is made in the latter part,

be content with the literal meaning. With every allowance for the indisputable intermixture, in many places, of literal and allegorical meanings, all analogy requires that in the same series of visions, when one judgment is to destroy earth, trees, and grass, and another not to injure earth, trees, or grass, but men only, the earth, trees, and grass should bear the same meaning in the two cases. We may fairly say then, that the plagues of the four former trumpets affect the accessories of life—the earth, the trees, the green grass, the waters as means of transit and of subsistence, the lights of heaven:—whereas those of the last two affect life itself, the former by the infliction of pain, the latter of death.

A certain analogy may be noticed, but not a very close one, between these plagues and those in Egypt of old. The analogy is not close, for the order is not the same, nor are all particulars contained in the one series which are contained in the other: but the resemblance is far too striking to pass without remark. We have the hail and fire, the water turned to blood, the darkness, the locusts [the infliction of death]: five, in fact, if not six, out of the ten. The Egyptian plagues are beyond doubt remembered in the sacred imagery, if they are not reproduced.

The secret of interpretation here I believe to be this: The whole seven trumpets bring before us the punishment of the enemies of God during the period indicated by their course. These punishments are not merely direct inflictions of plagues, but consist in great part of that judicial retribution on them that know not God, which arises from their own depravity, and in which their own sins are made to punish themselves. This kind of punishment comes before us especially in the four first trumpet-visions. The various natural accessories of life are ravaged, or are turned to poison. In the first, the earth and its produce are ravaged with fire: in the second, the sea is mingled with blood, and ships, which should have been for men's convenience, are destroyed. In the third, the waters and springs, the essential refreshments of life, are poisoned, and death is occasioned by drinking of them. In the fourth, the natural lights of heaven are darkened. So that I regard these first four

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

† So all our oldest MSS.

earth: † and the third part of the earth was burnt up, and the third

upon the earth: and the third part of trees was

trumpets as setting forth the gradual subjugation of the earth to Him whose kingdom it is in the end to become, by judgments inflicted on the ungodly, as regards the vitiating and destroying the ordinary means of subsistence, and comfort, and knowledge. In the details of these judgments, as also of the two following, there are many particulars which I cannot interpret, and with regard to which it may be a question whether they are to be considered as other than belonging to the requisite symbolic machinery of the prophecy. But in confessing this I must also say, that I have never seen, in any apocalyptic Commentator, an interpretation of these details at all approaching to verisimilitude: never any which is not obliged to force the plain sense of words, or the certain course of history, to make them fit the requisite theory. Many examples of these will be found in the history of apocalyptic interpretation given by Mr. Elliott in vol. iv. of his *Horæ Apocalypticæ*.

7.] And the first blew his trumpet, and there took place hail and fire mingled in blood (i. e. the hail and the fire were mingled together in blood, as their flux or vehicle; the stones of hail and the balls of fire [not lightning] fell in a shower of blood, just as hail and fireballs commonly fall in a shower of rain. There is here manifestly an allusion to the plague of hail in Egypt, of which it is said that "the fire ran along upon the ground:" "there was hail and fire mingled with the hail," Exod. ix. 24: but with the addition of the blood. With regard to this latter, we may remark, that both here and under the vials, where the earth, seas, and rivers are again the objects of the first three judgments, *blood* is a feature common to all three. It appears rather to indicate a general character of the judgments, than to require any special interpretation in each particular case. In blood is life: in the shedding, or in the appearing, of blood, is implied the destruction of life, with which, as a consequence, all these judgments must be accompanied), and it was cast into the earth (towards the surface of the earth): and the third part (this expression first occurring here, it will be well once for all to enquire into its meaning in these prophecies. I may first say, that all *special* interpretations

seem to me utterly to have failed; e. g. that of Elliott, which would understand it of a tripartite division of the Roman Empire at the time to which he assigns this judgment. It is fatal to this whole class of interpretations, that it is not said the hail &c. were cast on a third part, but that the destruction occasioned by them extended to a third part of the earth on which they were cast. And this is most expressly declared to be so in this first case, by all green grass being also destroyed, not a third part: a fact of which this interpretation takes no notice. It is this mixture of the fractional third with other designations of extent of mischief, which will lead us I believe to the right interpretation. We find it again under the third trumpet, where the star Wormwood is cast "on the third part of the rivers, and on the springs of the waters:" the result being that the third part of the waters was embittered. This lax usage would of itself lead us to suppose that we are not to look for strict definiteness in the interpretation. And if we refer to the prophecy in Zech. xiii. 7 ff., where the import is to announce judgment on a greater part and the escape of a remnant, we find the same tripartite division: "And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die, but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, &c." Nay, in the Apocalypse itself, we have the third part used where the sense can hardly but be similarly indefinite: e. g., under the sixth trumpet, ch. ix. 15, 18, and xii. 4, where it is said that the dragon's tail "draweth the third part of the stars of heaven:" the use of the present shewing that it is rather a general power, than a particular event which is designated. Compare again the use of "the fourth part of the earth," in ch. vi. 8, and of "the tenth part of the city," in ch. xi. 13. All these seem to shew, that such prophetic expressions are to be taken rather in their import as to amount, than in any strict fractional division. Here, for instance, I would take the pervading third part as signifying, that though the judgment is undoubtedly, as to extent, fearful and sweeping, yet that God in inflicting it, spares more than he smites: two-thirds



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

<sup>8</sup> And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; <sup>9</sup> and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

<sup>10</sup> And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

part <sup>1</sup> of trees was burnt up, and all <sup>1</sup> Isa. ii. 13. green grass was burnt up. <sup>ch. ix. 4.</sup>

<sup>8</sup> And the second angel sounded, <sup>m</sup> and as it were a great mountain <sup>m Jer. li. 25. Amos vii. 4.</sup> burning with fire was cast into the sea: <sup>n</sup> and the third part of the sea <sup>n ch. xvi. 3.</sup>

<sup>o</sup> became blood; <sup>9 p</sup> and the third <sup>o Ezek. xiv. 10. p ch. xvi. 3.</sup> part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

<sup>10</sup> And the third angel sounded, <sup>q</sup> and there fell a great star from <sup>q Isa. xiv. 12. ch. ix. 1.</sup> heaven, burning as a lamp, <sup>r</sup> and it <sup>r ch. xvi. 4.</sup> fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of the waters;

escape in each case, while one is smitten) of the earth (i. e. plainly of the surface of the earth, and that, of the cultivated soil, which admitted of such a devastation) was burnt up (so that the fire prevails in the plague, not the hail nor the blood), and the third part of the trees (in all the earth, not in the third part) was burnt up, and all green grass (upon earth: no longer a third part: possibly because green grass would first and unavoidably every where scorch up at the approach of such a plague, whereas the hardier crops and trees might partially escape) was burnt up.

8.] And the second angel blew his trumpet: and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea (first, by the as it were, that which was cast into the sea was *not* a mountain, but only a burning mass so large as to look like one. Then, it was *this mass itself*, not any thing proceeding from it, which was cast down. So that the introduction of a volcano into the imagery is quite unjustifiable. In the language [hardly in the sense] there seems to be a reminiscence of Jer. li. 25, "I will make thee a burnt mountain." It is remarkable that there the mountain should be characterized as "O destroying mountain . . . which destroyest all the earth." compare our ch. xi. 18): and the third part of the sea became blood (so in the Egyptian plague the Nile and all the Egyptian waters. By the non-consequence of the result of

the fiery mass falling into the sea is again represented to us that in the infliction of this plague from above, the instrument of it is merely described as it appeared (as it were), not as it really was. So that all ideas imported into the interpretation which take the mountain, or the fiery character of it, as elements in the symbolism, are departures from the real intent of the description): and the third part of the creatures [that were] in the sea (not, as Elliott, "in the third part of the sea," but in the whole. Nor again must we stretch the words "in the sea" to mean the maritime coasts, nor the islands, nor the transmarine provinces: a usage not even shewn to exist by the examples cited by him) died (compare Exod. vii. 17—21), those which have life (animal souls), and the third part of the ships were destroyed (another inconsequent result, and teaching us as before.

We may remark, at the end of this second trumpet, that the judgments inflicted by these first two are distinctly those which in ch. vii. 3 were held back until the servants of God were sealed: "Hurt not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, until we have sealed, &c." So that, as before generally remarked, the place of these trumpet-plagues must be sought after that sealing; and consequently [see there] in very close conjunction with the day of the Lord itself).

10.] And the third angel blew his trumpet, and there fell from heaven a great star burning as a lamp, and it



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

s Ruth i. 20.

t Exod. xv. 23.  
Jer. ix. 15.  
& xxiii. 15.u Isa. xlii. 10.  
Amos viii. 9.x ch. xiv. 6.  
& xix. 17.† *No all our oldest MSS.*

11<sup>s</sup> and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

12<sup>u</sup> And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; that the third part of them might be darkened, and the day might not shine for the third part of it, and the night in like manner.

13 And I saw<sup>x</sup> and heard an eagle †

waters; <sup>11</sup> and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter. <sup>12</sup> And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise. <sup>13</sup> And I beheld, and heard an angel

fell upon the third part of the rivers and upon the fountains of the waters (it can hardly be said, as Düsterdieck, that we are here as matter of course to understand, on the *third part* of the fountains, any more than we are to limit "*all green grass*" in ver. 7 to all the grass within the third part of the earth). And the name of the star is called Wormwood (in the original, *Apsinthos*. The medicinal use of the plant was known to the ancients), and the third part of the waters became (*was turned into*) wormwood: and many [of the] men (who dwelt by these waters: such may be the force of the art. But the expression may be general: many men) died from the waters, because they were embittered (compare the converse history, Exod. xv. 23 ff., of the bitter waters being made sweet by casting a certain tree into them. See also 2 Kings ii. 19 ff. The question whether wormwood was a deadly poison or not, is out of place here. It is not said that all who drank, died. And the effect of any bitter drug, however medicinally valuable, being mixed with the water ordinarily used, would be to occasion sickness and death. It is hardly possible to read of this third plague, and not to think of the deadly effect of those strong spirituous drinks which are in fact water turned into poison. The very name *absinthe* is not unknown in their nomenclature: and there is no effect which could be so aptly described by the falling of fire into water, as this, which results in *ardent*

spirit,—in that which the simple islanders of the South Sea call *firewater*. That this plague may go on to destroy even this fearful proportion of the ungodly in the latter days, is far from impossible, considering its prevalence even now in some parts of the civilized world. But I mention this rather as an illustration, than as an interpretation). And the fourth angel blew his trumpet: and the third part of the sun was struck (it is not said, as in the case of the former three trumpets, *with what*. And this absence of an instrument in the fourth of these correlative visions perhaps teaches us not to attribute too much import to the instruments by which the previous ones are brought about. It is the stroke itself, not its instrument, on which attention should be directed) and the third part of the moon and the third part of the stars, that the third part of them might be darkened, and the day might not shine during the third part of it (the limitation of the third part is now manifestly to time, not to brightness. So A. V. rightly, "for a third part of it." That this consequence is no natural one following upon the obscuration of a third portion of the sun, &c., is not to be alleged as any objection, but belongs to the altogether supernatural region in which these visions are situated. Thus we have a globe of fire turning seawater to blood—a burning star embittering the waters: &c.), and the night in like manner (i. e. the night as far as she is, by virtue of the moon and stars, a time

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!*

*IX. <sup>1</sup> And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottom-*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, <sup>y</sup>Woe, <sup>y</sup> ch. ix. 12. & xi. 14. woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are about to sound!

IX. <sup>1</sup> And the fifth angel sounded, <sup>a</sup> and I saw a star fallen out of heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of <sup>b</sup> the pit of the

<sup>a</sup> Luke x. 18. ch. viii. 10.

<sup>b</sup> Luke viii. 37. ch. xvii. 8. & xx. 1. ver. 2, 11.

of light. And this is far more so under the glorious Eastern moon and stars, than in our mist-laden climate).

13.] *Introduction of the three remaining trumpets by three woes. And I saw and heard an (literally, one. This may carry meaning—a single or solitary eagle,—as might also be the case in ch. xviii. 21, see there) eagle (hardly to be identified with the eagles of Matt. xxiv. 28; for 1) that saying is more proverbial than prophetic: and 2) any application of that saying would be far more aptly reserved for our ch. xix. 17. Nor again is the eagle a bird of ill omen, as Ewald says: nor a contrast to the dove in John i. 32, as Hengstenberg: but far more probably the symbol of judgment and vengeance rushing to its prey, as in Deut. xxviii. 49; Hos. viii. 1; Hab. i. 8. Nor again is it to be understood as an angel in eagle's shape: but a veritable eagle in the vision. Thus we have the altar speaking, ch. xvi. 7) flying in mid-heaven (i. e. in the south or noon-day sky, where the sun reaches the meridian. So that the word does not signify the space intermediate between heaven and earth, but as above. And the eagle flies there, to be seen and heard of all. I may also notice that the whole expression favours the true reading, eagle, as against the substituted "angel"), saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to those that dwell upon the earth (the objects of the vengeance invoked in the prayers of the martyrs, ch. vi. 10: the ungodly world, as distinguished from the church) by reason of the remaining voices of the trumpet (the singular is used generically: the three voices all having this common to them, that they are the sound of a trumpet) of the three angels who are about to blow.*

*trumpets. These, as well as the first four, have a character of their own, corresponding in some measure to that of the visions at the opening of the three last seals. The particulars related under them are separate and detailed, not symmetrical and correspondent. And as in the seals, so here, the seventh forms rather the solemn conclusion to the whole, than a distinct judgment of itself. Here also, as there, it is introduced by two episodal passages, having reference to the visions which are to follow, and which take up the thread of prophecy again at a period previous to things detailed before.*

1—12.] *The fifth, or first Woe trumpet. And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star fallen (not, as A. V. fall, which gives an entirely wrong view of the transactions of the vision. The star had fallen before, and is first seen as thus fallen) out of heaven to the earth (the reader will at once think on Isa. xiv. 12, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" And on Luke x. 18, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." And, doubtless, as the personal import of this star is made clear in the following words, such is the reference here. We may also notice that this expression forms a connecting link to another place, ch. xii. 9, in this book, where Satan is represented as cast out of heaven to the earth: see notes there. It is hardly possible, with some Commentators, to understand a good angel by this fallen star. His description, as well as his work, corresponds only to an agent of evil. Andreas is obliged to distort words to bring in this view: "descended upon earth; for this is meant by fallen," is enough to condemn any interpretation), and there was given to him (was given, as usual, for the purpose of the part which he is to bear in the*

[Ch. IX.—XI.] *The last three, or woes.*  
VOL. II.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

abyss. <sup>2</sup> And he opened the pit of the abyss; and <sup>c</sup> there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. <sup>3</sup> And out of the smoke came forth <sup>d</sup> locusts over the earth: and unto them was given power, <sup>e</sup> as the scorpions of the earth have power. <sup>4</sup> And it was commanded them <sup>f</sup> that they should not hurt <sup>g</sup> the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not <sup>h</sup> the seal of God upon their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> And it was given to them

<sup>c</sup> Joel ii. 2, 10.

<sup>d</sup> Exod. x. 4.  
Judg. vii. 12.

<sup>e</sup> ver. 10.

<sup>f</sup> ch. vi. 6.  
& vii. 3.  
<sup>g</sup> ch. viii. 7.

<sup>h</sup> ch. vii. 3.  
See Exod.  
xii. 23.  
Ezek. ix. 4.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*less pit. <sup>2</sup> And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. <sup>3</sup> And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. <sup>4</sup> And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> And to them it was given*

vision) the key of the pit of the abyss (viz. of hell, which in the vision is a vast profundity opening by a pit or shaft upon the surface of the earth, imagined as shut down by a cover, and locked. This abyss is in the Apocalypse the habitation of the devil and his angels: compare ver. 11, ch. xx. 1, 3; see also ch. xi. 7, xvii. 8. See further in note on ch. xx. 10), and he opened the pit of the abyss, and there went up smoke from the pit as smoke of a great furnace (see Gen. xix. 28), and the sun was darkened and the air (not meaning, the air inasmuch as it receives its light from the sun: for the sun may be obscured, as by a cloud, without the air being darkened) by reason of the smoke of the pit. And out of the smoke (which therefore was their vehicle or envelope) came forth locusts into (towards, over, so as to spread over: it gives more the sense of distribution than "upon" would) the earth, and there was given to them power as the scorpions of the earth (not as noting any distinction between land and water-scorpions, as Ewald, but because the scorpions are natural and of the earth, whereas these locusts are infernal and not of nature) have power (viz. to sting, as below explained); and it was commanded them that they shall not hurt the grass of the earth, nor yet every (i. e. any) green thing, nor yet every (any) tree (the usual objects on which locusts prey: compare Exod. x. 13,

15), but only (literally, *except*: the former sentence being regarded as if it had run, "that they should hurt nothing,"—and then "*except*" follows naturally) the men, the which (so literally: it designates the class or kind) have not the seal of God upon their foreheads (this, as before noticed, fixes this fifth trumpet to the time following the sealing in ch. vii. It denotes a plague which falls on the unbelieving inhabitants of the earth after the servants of God have been marked out among them, and of which the saints are not partakers. Either then it denotes something purely spiritual, some misery from which those are exempt who have peace with God,—which can hardly be, consistently with vv. 5, 6,—or it takes place in a state totally different from this present one, in which the wheat and tares are mingled together. One or other of these considerations will at once dismiss by far the greater number of interpretations. The fact of Mahomet's mission being avowedly against corrupt Christianity as idolatry, does not in the remotest degree answer the conditions. In the very midst of this corrupt Christianity were at that time God's elect scattered up and down: and it is surely too much to say that every such person escaped scathless from the Turkish sword). And it was given to them (allotted to them by God as the limit of their appointed work and office: here the statement expresses rather

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. <sup>6</sup> And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. <sup>7</sup> And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

that they should not kill them, <sup>1</sup> but <sup>1</sup> ch. xi. 7. ver. 10.  
that they should be tormented five months: and their torment is as the torment of a scorpion, when it hath stricken a man. <sup>6</sup> And in those days <sup>k</sup> shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall vehemently desire to die, and death shall flee from them. <sup>7</sup> And <sup>1</sup> the shapes <sup>1</sup> Joel ii. 4.  
of the locusts were like unto horses prepared for war; <sup>m</sup> and on their <sup>m</sup> Nahum iii. 17.  
heads were as it were crowns like gold, <sup>n</sup> and their faces were as the <sup>n</sup> Dan. vii. 8.

the limitation than the extension of the grant) that they should not kill them (the unsealed), but that they (the unsealed: the subject is changed) shall be tormented five months (the reason seems to be correct, which several Commentators have given for this number being chosen: viz., that five months is the ordinary time in the year during which locusts commit their ravages. At all events we are thus in some measure delivered from the endless perplexities of capricious fancy in which the historical interpreters involve us): and their torment (i. e. that of the sufferers) is as the torment of (arising from) a scorpion, when it has smitten (by its bite or sting) a man. And in those days men shall seek death (observe the transition of the style from the descriptive to the prophetic. For the first time the Apostle ceases to be the exponent of what he saw, and becomes the direct organ of the Spirit), and shall not find it: and they shall vehemently desire (*desire* alone is not strong enough) to die, and death fleeth (the pres., of the *habitual* avoidance in those days) from them (the longing to die arises from the excruciating pain of the sting. See Jer. viii. 3.

I cannot forbear noticing as we pass, the caprice of historical interpreters. On the command *not to kill* the men, &c., in ver. 5, our principal modern historical interpreter says, "i. e. not to annihilate them as a political Christian body." If then the same rule of interpretation is to hold, the present verse must mean that the "political Christian body" will be so sorely beset by these Mahometan locusts, that it will vehemently desire to be annihilated,

and not find any way. For it surely cannot be allowed that the *killing of men* should be said of their annihilation as a political body in our verse, and their *desiring to die* in the next should be said of something totally different, and applicable to their individual misery).

7.] The Apostle now returns to the description of the locusts themselves. And the shapes of the locusts [were] like horses made ready for war (in this resemblance,—compare Joel ii. 4, "*the appearance of them is as the appearance of horses*,"—has been noticed by travellers. Ewald remarks that one German name for the grasshopper is *Heu-pferd*, the *grass-horse*. And especially does the likeness hold good when the horse is equipped for war; the plates of the horse's armour being represented by the hard laminæ of the outer shell of the locust: see below, ver. 9), and on their heads as it were crowns like unto gold (it is not easy to say what this part of the description imports. An attempt has been made to apply it to the turban: but granting some latitude to the word *crowns*, like *gold* will hardly bear this. The appearance of a turban, even when ornamented with gold, is hardly *golden*. I should understand the words, of the head actually ending in a crown-shaped fillet which resembled gold in its material, just as the wings of some of the beetle tribe might be said to blaze with gold and gems. So we have below, "*they had breastplates as it were breastplates of iron*:" the material not being metallic, but only as it were metallic. Some understand these crowns of soldiers' helmets: but this is quite arbitrary and gratuitous): and

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

o Joel i. 6. faces of men. <sup>8</sup> And they had hair as the hair of women, and <sup>o</sup> their teeth were as the teeth of lions. <sup>9</sup> And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was <sup>p</sup> as the sound of chariots of many horses running to war †. <sup>10</sup> And they have tails like unto scorpions, and stings in their tails: <sup>q</sup> and in their tails was their power to hurt men five months. <sup>11</sup> † † They have as king over them <sup>s</sup> the angel of the abyss, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue

faces were as the faces of men. <sup>8</sup> And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. <sup>9</sup> And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. <sup>10</sup> And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. <sup>11</sup> And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek

their faces [were] as the faces of men (Düsterdieck well observes, that we must not suppose them actually to have had human faces, but that the face of the locust, which under ordinary circumstances has a distant resemblance to the human countenance, bore this resemblance even more notably in the case of these supernatural locusts. It is not *their faces were the faces of men*, but, "*were as the faces of men.*" Nor again can we agree with the idea that men is here used to designate the male sex: an interpretation recommended here,—the general word in the original importing both sexes,—by the wish to introduce the moustache of the Arabs. It is much more natural to take the general term in its usual and wider meaning:—their faces were like human faces: and then comes the limitation, not in the face, but in another particular), and they had hair as the hair of women (i. e. long and flowing, 1 Cor. xi. 14 f. De Wette quotes from Niebuhr an Arabic proverb in which the antlers of locusts are compared to the hair of girls. But perhaps we must regard the comparison as rather belonging to the supernatural portion of our description. Ewald would understand the hair on the legs, or on the bodies, of the locusts, to be meant, referring to *rough caterpillars*, Jer. li. 27. To infer, from this feature, licentiousness as a characteristic in the interpretation, is entirely beside the purpose): and their teeth were as the teeth of lions (so also of

the locust in Joel i. 6. Ewald rightly designates as very doubtful a fancied resemblance to a lion in the under jaw. We may observe that this, as some other features in the description, is purely graphic, and does not in any way apply to the plague to be inflicted by these mystic locusts), and they had breastplates as iron breastplates (the plate which forms the thorax of the natural locust, was in their case as if of iron), and the sound of their wings [was] as a sound of chariots of many horses (by the two genitives the sound of both, the chariots and the horses, is included. The chariots are regarded as an appendage to the horses) as they run to war. And they have tails like to scorpions (i. e. to the tails of scorpions), and stings (viz. in their tails: this is the particular especially in which the comparison finds its aptitude): and in their tails is their power to hurt men five months (see above on ver. 5). They have as king over them (or, "they have a king over them, viz." . . . It favours this last alternative, that in this particular, of having a king, they are distinguished from natural locusts: for Prov. xxx. 27, "*the locusts have no king*") the angel of the abyss; his name is in Hebrew Abaddon (i. e., perdition; used in the Old Test. for the place of perdition, Orcus, in Job xxvi. 6; Prov. xxvii. 20, in both of which places it is joined with Hadés (Sheol),—Ps. lxxxviii. 12; Job xxviii. 22. In all these places the Septuagint trans-



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

tongue hath his name Apollyon. <sup>12</sup> One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter. <sup>13</sup> And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, <sup>14</sup> saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

he hath his name Apollyon. <sup>12</sup> † One † ch. viii. 13. woe is past; behold, there come two woes more after these things. <sup>13</sup> And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the [four] † horns of the golden altar † which is before God, <sup>14</sup> saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels

*The reading is uncertain. We have here but two very ancient MSS., and of those the Alexandrine omits four, while*

*the Sinaitic omits altogether the words from the four horns of: reading, I heard the voice of the golden altar, &c.*

lators express it by *perdition* (*apoleia*). So that this is the local name personified: or rather perhaps that abstract name personified, from which the local import itself is derived), and in the Greek he has for his name Apollyon (the name seems chosen from the Septuagint word *apoleia*: see above.

It is a question, who this angel of the abyss is. Perhaps, for accurate distinction's sake, we must not identify him with Satan himself,—compare ch. xii. 3, 9,—but must regard him as one of the principal of the bad angels. The one (first) woe hath passed: behold, there cometh (singular, the verb applying simply to that which is future, without reference as yet to its plurality) two woes after these things.

There is an endless Babel of allegorical and historical interpretation of these locusts from the pit. The most that we can say of their import is, that they belong to a series of judgments on the ungodly which will immediately precede the second advent of our Lord: that the various and mysterious particulars of the vision will no doubt clear themselves up to the church of God, when the time of its fulfilment arrives: but that no such clearing up has yet taken place, a very few hours of research among histories of apocalyptic interpretation will serve to convince any reader who is not himself the servant of a preconceived system.

13—21.] *The sixth Trumpet.* And the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice (literally, one voice: but it is doubtful, in the uncertain authenticity of the word *four*, whether any stress is to be laid on this one or not. Vitringa gives it the emphasis,—“that the four horns simultaneously uttered, not a diverse, but one and the same voice:” and so Hengstenberg. The allegorical interpreters give it various imports—the agreement of the four Gospels,—that of the prayers of exiled Jews, &c.) out of the [four] horns of the golden altar which was before God

(the same altar as that previously mentioned in ch. viii. 3 and vi. 9, where see notes. From ch. xvi. 7 it would appear that the voice probably proceeded from the altar itself, represented as uttering the cry of vengeance for the blood shed on it; compare ch. vi. 9, with which cry of the martyred saints the whole series of retributive judgments is connected. The reading of the Sinaitic MS. [see margin] is very remarkable, and may represent the original text. To suppose that the cry from the altar is indicative of an altar having been the scene of some special sin on the part of the men of Roman Christendom, and so to apply it to the perversions of Christian rites in the Romish Church, is surely to confuse the whole imagery of the vision. For it is not of any altar in the abstract that we are reading, but of the golden altar which was before God, where the prayers of the saints had been offered by the angel, ch. viii. 3, 5: and the voice is the result of those prayers, in accordance with which those judgments are inflicted.

The horns again, representing the enceinte of the altar, not any special rites with which the horns of an altar were concerned, cannot be pressed into the service of the above-noticed interpretation, but simply belong to the propriety of that heard and seen. The voice proceeded from the surface of the altar, on which the prayers had been offered: and that surface was bounded by the horns) saying to the sixth angel, who had the trumpet (viz. that one now before us,—belonging to the present vision), Loose (it is too much to say that the angel himself is made the active minister of this loosing: we do not read “and he went and loosed” following, but simply “and the four angels, &c. were loosed.” We must therefore believe that the command is given to him only in so far as he is the representative and herald of all that takes place under his trumpet-blowing) the four

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

u ch. xvi. 12.

which are bound <sup>u</sup> on the great river Euphrates. <sup>15</sup> And the four angels were loosed, which had been prepared against the hour, and day, and month, and year, that they might slay the third part of men.

x Ps. lxxviii. 17.

Dan. vii. 10.

y Ezek.

xxxviii. 4.

z ch. vii. 4.

<sup>16</sup> And <sup>x</sup> the number of the armies <sup>y</sup> of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: <sup>z</sup> and I heard the number of them. <sup>17</sup> And after this manner I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. <sup>15</sup> And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. <sup>16</sup> And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.*

*<sup>17</sup> And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them,*

angels which are bound (so A. V. rightly: "are bound" is the true perfect passive, not "have been bound") on (not "in," as A. V.) the great river Euphrates (the whole imagery here has been a crux of the interpreters: as to who these angels are, and what is indicated by the locality here described. I will only venture to point out, amidst the surging tumult of controversy, one or two points of apparent refuge to which we *must not* betake ourselves. First, we must not yield to the temptation, so attractive at first sight, of identifying these four angels with the four angels standing on the four corners of the earth and holding in the four winds, in ch. vii. 1 ff. For the mission of these angels is totally distinct from theirs, as the locality is also. There is not a syllable of *winds* here, nor any hurting of earth, sea, or trees. Secondly, the question need not perplex us here, whether these are good or bad angels: for it does not enter in any way into consideration. They simply appear, as in other parts of this book, as ministers of the divine purposes, and pass out of view as soon as mentioned. Here, it would almost seem as if the angelic persons were little more than personifications: for they are immediately resolved into the host of cavalry. Thirdly, that there is nothing in the text to prevent "the great river Euphrates" from being meant literally. Düsterdieck maintains, that because the rest of the vision has a mystical meaning, therefore this local designation must have one also: and that if we are to take the Euphrates literally and the rest mystically, endless confusion would be introduced. But this is quite a mistake, as the slightest consideration will shew. It is a common practice in

Scripture allegory to intermingle with its mystic language literal designations of time and place. Take for instance the allegory in Ps. lxxx. 8, 11, "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt . . . it sent out its boughs unto the sea, and its branches unto the river:" where, though the vine and its boughs and branches are mystical, Egypt, the sea, and the river, are all literal. See some good remarks on this in Mr. Elliott's 1st vol., p. 331 ff., where the above example is cited among others). And the four angels were loosed, which had been prepared against (in reference to) the hour and day and month and year (viz. which had been appointed by God: the appointed hour occurring in the appointed day, and that in the appointed month, and that in the appointed year. The article *the*, prefixed, and not repeated, seems to make this meaning imperative. Had the article been repeated before each, the ideas of the appointed hour, day, month, and year would have been separated, not, as now, united: had there been no article, we *might* have understood that the four were to be added together to make up the time, though even thus the "*against*" occurring once only would have made some difficulty), that they should kill the third part of men (on the third part, see above, ver. 7. It seems necessary, that in this term, *men*, we are to include only the "*dwellers on the earth*" of ch. viii. 13, not any of the servants of God): and the number of the armies of the cavalry was twice myriads of myriads (i. e. 20,000 × 10,000: = 200,000,000, two hundred millions. The number seems to be founded on those in Ps. lxxviii. 17, Dan. vii. 10);—I heard the number of them. And after this manner (i. e. according to

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. <sup>18</sup> By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. <sup>19</sup> For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. <sup>20</sup> And the rest of the men which were not

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

having breastplates red, as fire, and blue, as smoke, and yellow, as brimstone: <sup>a</sup> and the heads of the horses are as heads of lions; and out of their mouths issueth fire and smoke and brimstone. <sup>18</sup> From these three plagues † were the third part of men killed, by the fire, and the smoke, and the brimstone, which issueth out of their mouths. <sup>19</sup> For the power of the horses † is in their mouth, and in their tails: <sup>b</sup> for their tails are like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. <sup>20</sup> And the rest of men, which were

<sup>a</sup> 1 Chron. xii. 8. Isa. v. 28, 29.

† So all our oldest MSS., and almost all the rest: and all the versions, and the fathers, Greek and Latin.

† So all our oldest MSS. (except that the Alexandrine reads places instead of horses), and almost all the rest: with all the versions and b Isa. ix. 15.

fathers.

the following description) saw I the horses in my vision (Düsterdieck suggests, and it seems likely enough, that this express reference to *sight* is inserted on account of the words "*I heard*," which preceded) and those who sat upon them, having (most naturally refers to both horses and riders, not to riders only. The armour of both was uniform) breastplates red, as fire (the three epithets express the colours of the breastplates, and are to be separated, as belonging each to one portion of the host, and corresponding to the fire, smoke, and brimstone which proceeded out of the horses' mouths below), and blue, as smoke (literally, hyacinthine. The hyacinth of the Greeks is supposed to have been our dark blue iris), and yellow, as brimstone (light yellow: such a colour as would be produced by the settling funes of brimstone): and the heads of the horses (the horses are taken up again, both horses and riders having been treated of in the preceding sentence) [were] as heads of lions, and out of their mouths goeth forth fire and smoke and brimstone (i.e. separately, one of these out of the mouths of each division of the host. It is remarkable, that these divisions are *three*, though the angels were *four*). From (indicates not directly the instrumentality, but the *direction from which* the result comes) these three plagues were killed the third part of men, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which goeth forth out of their mouths. For the power of the horses is in their mouth (principally; seeing that by what

proceeded from their mouth their mission, to slay the third part of men, was accomplished) and in their tails: for their tails were like serpents, having heads, and with them they hurt (i.e. inflict pain: viz. with the bites of the serpent heads in which they terminate.

I cannot but mention, in no unfriendly spirit, but because, both being friends, Truth is the dearer, that which may be designated the culminating instance of incongruous interpretation in the modern English historical exposition of these prophecies. These tails are, according to the Commentator, the horsetails, borne as symbols of authority by the Turkish Pachas. Well may Mr. Barker say [Friendly Strictures, p. 32], "an interpretation so wild, if it refutes not itself, seems scarcely capable of refutation." Happily, it does refute itself. For it is convicted, by altogether leaving out of view the power in the *mouths*, which is the principal feature in the original vision: by making no reference to the serpent-like character of these tails, but being wholly inconsistent with it: by distorting the canon of symmetrical interpretation in making the *heads* attached to the tails to mean that the tails are symbols of authority: and by being compelled to render instead of *they hurt*, "*they commit injustice*," a meaning which, in this reference, the word will not bear. When it is said of fire- and smoke- and brimstone-breathing horses which kill the third part of men, that besides having power in their mouths they have it in their tails, which

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

not killed by these plagues, <sup>c</sup> did not even repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship <sup>d</sup> devils, <sup>e</sup> and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: <sup>21</sup> neither repented they of their murders, <sup>f</sup> nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

X. <sup>1</sup> And I saw another strong

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: <sup>21</sup> neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.*

X. <sup>1</sup> And I saw another

are like serpents, ending in heads, it would be a strange anti-climax to end, "and with these they do injustice." I will venture to say, that a more self-condemnatory interpretation was never broached than this of the horsetails of the Pachas). **And the rest of men** (this specification which follows clearly shews what sort of men are meant: viz. the ungodly alone) **who were not killed by** (literally, in: i. e. the course of) **these plagues, did not even repent of** (literally, out of: so as to come out from) **the works of their hands** (i. e. as the context here necessitates, not, the whole course of their lives, but the idols which their hands had made. This will at once appear on comparing our passage with Deut. iv. 28, and Ps. cxxxv. 15. See also Acts vii. 44) **that they should not** (in order not to) **worship devils** (see 1 Cor. x. 20; 1 Tim. iv. 1, and notes there. The objects of worship of the heathen, and of semi-heathen Christians, are in fact devils, by whatever name they may be called), **and images of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk: and they did not repent of their murders nor of their witchcrafts** (literally, their drugs: concrete in sense of abstract) **nor of their fornication nor of their thefts.** The character of these sins points out very plainly who are the sufferers by this sixth, or second woe trumpet, and the survivors who do not repent. We are taught by St. Paul that the heathen are without excuse for degrading the majesty of God into an image made like unto corruptible things, and for degenerating into gross immoralities in spite of God's testimony given through the natural conscience. And even thus will the heathen world continue in the main until the second advent of our Lord, of which these judg-

ments are to be the immediate precursors. Nor will these terrible inflictions themselves bring those to repentance, who shall ultimately reject the Gospel which shall be preached among all nations. Whether, or how far, those Christians who have fallen back into these sins of the heathen, are here included, is a question not easy to decide. That they are not formally in the Apostle's view, seems clear. We are not yet dealing with the apostasy and fornication within the church herself. But that they, having become as the *dwellers upon the earth*, even so far as to inherit *their* character of persecutors of the saints, may by the very nature of the case, be individually included in the suffering of these plagues,—just as we believe and trust that many individually belonging to Babylon may be found among God's elect,—it is of course impossible to deny.

CH. X. 1—XI. 14.] EPISODICAL AND ANTICIPATORY. As after the sixth seal, so here after the sixth trumpet, we have a passage interposed, containing two episodes, completing that which has been already detailed, and introducing the final member of the current series. But it is not so easy here as there, to ascertain the relevance and force of the episodes. Their subjects here seem further off: their action more complicated. In order to appreciate them, it will be necessary to lay down clearly the point at which we have arrived, and to observe what is at that point required.

The last vision witnessed the destruction of a third part of the ungodly by the horsemen from the East, and left the remainder in a state of impenitent idolatry and sin. Manifestly then the prayers of the saints are not yet answered, however near the time may be for that answer. If

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud,<sup>a</sup> and the rain-<sup>a</sup> Ezek. i. 28.

then this Episode contains some assurance of the approach of that answer in its completeness, it will be what we might expect at this point in the series of visions.

At the same time, looking onwards to the rest of the book, we see, that as out of the more general series of visions at the opening of the seals, affecting both the church and the world, there sprang a new and more particular series of the trumpets, having reference to one incident in the former vision, and affecting especially the "inhabitants of the earth," so if now the gaze of prophecy once more turns to the church and her fortunes, and the Apostle receives a new commission to utter a second series of prophecies, mainly on that subject, it will also be no more than what we might fairly look for. Again: if

the episodal vision in its character and hue partakes of the complexion of the whole series of trumpet-visions, and, as regards the church, carries a tinge of persecution, and of the still crying prayer for vengeance, not yet fully answered,—while at the same time it contains expressions and allusions which can only be explained by reference onward to the visions yet to come; this complex character is just that which would suit the point of transition at which we are now standing, when the series of visions immediately dependent on one feature in the opening of the seals is just at its end, and a new one evolving the other great subject of that general series is about to begin.

Now each one of these particulars is found as described above. For 1) the angel of ch. x. declares, with reference to the great vengeance-burden of the whole series of the trumpet-visions, respecting which the souls of the martyrs had been commanded "*that they should rest yet for a time,*" ch. vi. 11,—that "*there should be no more delay,*" but that in the days of the seventh angel, when he is about to blow, the whole mystery of prophecy would be fulfilled.

2) The same angel gives to the Seer the open little book, with a distinct announcement that he is to begin a new series of prophecies, and that series, by what immediately follows, ch. xi. 1 ff., evidently relating to the church of God in an especial manner.

3) The whole complexion of the episodal

vision of the two witnesses, ch. xi. 3 ff., is tinged with the hue which has pervaded the series of trumpet-visions, from their source in ch. vi. 9—11, viz., that of vengeance for the sufferings of the saints: while at the same time allusions occur in it which are at present inexplicable, but will receive light hereafter, when the new series of visions is unfolded. Such are the allusions to "*the wild beast which cometh up out of the abyss,*" ch. x. 7, and to "*the great city,*" ib. ver. 8.

With these preliminary considerations, we may, I think, approach these episodal visions with less uncertainty.

1—11.] THE VISION OF THE LITTLE BOOK. And I saw another strong angel (another, perhaps in allusion to the many which have been mentioned: but seeing that the epithet **strong** occurs only in the mention of the angel who cried out in reference to the sealed book, ch. v. 2, and that the present angel's errand also regards a book, we can hardly help taking **another** with both substantive and adjective, and referring it to that first **strong** angel in ch. v. 2. And this consideration may serve to introduce the assertion, to me hardly admitting of a doubt, that this angel is not, and cannot be, our Lord Himself. Such a supposition would, it seems to me, entirely break through the consistency of apocalyptic analogy. Throughout the book, as before observed, on ch. viii. 3, angels are the ministers of the divine purposes, and the carriers out of the apocalyptic course of procedure, but are every where *distinct from the divine Persons themselves*. In order to this their ministry, they are invested with such symbols and such delegated attributes as beseeem in each case the particular object in view: but no apparent fitness of such symbolical investiture to the divine character should induce us to break through the distinction, and introduce indistinctness and confusion into the book. When St. John means to indicate the Son of God, he indicates Him plainly: none more so: when these plain indications are absent, and I find the name **angel** used, I must take leave to regard the agent as distinct from Him,—however clothed, for the purposes of the particular vision, with His delegated power and attributes) **descending out of heaven** (the place of the Seer yet continues in heaven: see below,



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

b Matt. xvii. 2. bow upon his head, and <sup>b</sup> his face as  
 ch. i. 16. it were the sun, and <sup>c</sup> his feet as  
 c ch. i. 15. pillars of fire: <sup>2</sup> and having in his  
 d Matt. xxviii. hand a little book open. <sup>d</sup> And he  
 18. set his right foot upon the sea, and  
 his left foot on the earth, <sup>3</sup> and  
 cried with a loud voice, as a lion  
 roareth: and when he cried, the  
 e ch. viii. 5. <sup>e</sup> seven thunders uttered their voices.  
<sup>4</sup> And when the seven thunders  
 spoke †, I was about to write: and  
 I heard a voice out of heaven say-  
 ing unto me, † Seal up the things  
 which the seven thunders spoke,  
 and write them not. <sup>5</sup> And the

was upon his head, and his  
 face was as it were the sun,  
 and his feet as pillars of  
 fire; <sup>2</sup> and he had in his  
 hand a little book open:  
 and he set his right foot  
 upon the sea, and his left  
 foot on the earth, <sup>3</sup> and  
 cried with a loud voice, as  
 when a lion roareth: and  
 when he had cried, seven  
 thunders uttered their  
 voices. <sup>4</sup> And when the  
 seven thunders had uttered  
 their voices, I was about  
 to write: and I heard a  
 voice from heaven saying  
 unto me, Seal up those  
 things which the seven  
 thunders uttered, and write  
 them not. <sup>5</sup> And the angel

† their voices  
 is omitted by  
 all our MSS.,  
 versions, and  
 fathers. One  
 MS. of the  
 11th century  
 contains the  
 words, but  
 not in the  
 same order  
 as the common  
 text.

f Dan. viii. 20. & xii. 4, 9.  
 vv. 8, 9), clothed with a cloud (as a mes-  
 senger of divine judgment: see ch. i. 7),  
 and the rainbow upon his head (the, i. e.,  
 the well-known, ordinary rainbow: indi-  
 cating, agreeably with its first origin,  
 God's covenant of mercy. See note on  
 ch. iv. 3), and his face as the sun (indi-  
 cating the divine glory with which he was  
 invested: see ch. i. 16, xviii. 1: and com-  
 pare Luke ix. 26), and his feet as pillars  
 of fire (see ch. i. 15. The symbols with  
 which this angel is accompanied, as those  
 which surrounded the throne of God in  
 ch. iv. 2 ff., betoken judgment tempered  
 with mercy, the character of his ministra-  
 tion, which, at the same time that it pro-  
 claims the near approach of the completion  
 of God's judgments, furnishes to the Seer  
 the book of his subsequent prophecy, the  
 following out of God's purposes of mercy),  
 and having in his hand (his left hand, by  
 what follows, ver. 5) a little book (the  
 diminutive has been taken by some to  
 point to the subsequent eating of the book  
 by the Apostle: but Düsterdieck remarks  
 that if so, even the little book would be  
 too large:—by others, to the size relatively  
 to the angel. But the most natural reason  
 for its use is to be found by comparison  
 with the book of ch. v. ff. That was the  
 great sealed roll of God's purposes: this  
 [see below] but one portion of those pur-  
 poses, which was to be made the Seer's  
 own for his future prophesying. On the  
 signification, &c., of this little book or roll,  
 see below, ver. 8, notes) open. And he

placed his right foot on the sea, and his  
 left on the earth, and cried with a loud  
 voice as a lion roareth (the whole imagery  
 represents the glory and majesty of Him  
 whose messenger this angel is: and is to  
 be taken literally in the vision, the earth  
 meaning the earth; the sea, the sea: and  
 the description of the loudness of the voice  
 being simply thus descriptive). And when  
 he cried, the seven thunders (it is prob-  
 able that the article *the* is prefixed  
 because, like the seven stars, churches,  
 seals, trumpets, and vials, these seven  
 thunders form a complete portion of the  
 apocalyptic machinery: and, having no  
 other designation, for the very reason that  
 their meaning is not revealed, they are  
 thus designated, as "*the seven thunders*")  
 spoke their (literally, their own: but this  
 cannot be expressed in the English; and  
 there appears to be no further stress on  
 the possessive, than as it belongs to the  
 peculiar character of the utterances of  
 these thunders. They were to be con-  
 cealed, remaining unwritten: and this  
 fact, I conceive, reflects back a tinge on  
 the possessive genitive, making it so far  
 emphatic: the voices were, and remained,  
 their own: not shared by being perpetu-  
 ated) voices. And when the seven  
 thunders spoke, I was about to write (in  
 obedience to the command in ch. i. 19):  
 and (as I was about to write, a new cir-  
 cumstance arose) I heard a voice out of  
 heaven (from which it does not follow  
 that the Seer is on earth, any more than

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,<sup>g</sup> and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

angel whom I saw standing upon the sea and upon the earth <sup>g</sup> lifted up his <sup>†</sup> right hand to heaven,<sup>6</sup> and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever,<sup>h</sup> who created the heaven and the things therein, and the earth and the things therein, and the sea and the things therein,<sup>i</sup> that there shall be delay no longer:

<sup>g</sup> Exod. vi. 8.  
Dan. xii. 7.  
<sup>†</sup> So most of our oldest and other MSS. The Alexandrine MS. and a few others have as the A. V.  
<sup>h</sup> Neh. ix. 6.  
ch. iv. 11.  
& xiv. 7.  
<sup>i</sup> Dan. xii. 7.  
ch. xvii. 17.

in ver. 1) saying, Seal up the things which the seven thunders spoke, and do not write them (compare the contrary command, ch. xxii. 10. Many speculations have been raised as to the purport of the utterances of the seven thunders, and the reason for concealing them. From the very nature of the case, these must be utterly in vain. The wisdom of Him, who signified this Revelation to His servant John, has not seen fit to reveal these things to us. But the very nature of the case also convicts some of these speculations of error. The thunders, e. g., did not speak "things exceeding human comprehension," as Ewald thinks, seeing that not only did St. John understand their utterances, but he was about to write them down for others to read, as intelligible to them also. Again, they were not any utterances of mere human device. They were spoken by command of the great angel, as ver. 3 necessarily implies: they, in common with the seals, trumpets, and vials, form part of the divinely-arranged machinery of the Apocalypse. It is matter of surprise and grief therefore, when we find historical interpreters of our day explaining them of the papal anathemas of the time of the Reformation. It seems to me that no interpretation could be more unfortunate—none more thoroughly condemnatory of the system which is compelled to have recourse to it. For, merely to insist upon one point,—if it were so, then the Apostle sealed the utterances in vain, for all know what those thunders have uttered: then the command should have run "seal the book even to the time of the end," as in Dan. xii. 4, instead of an absolute command as here. Thus much we may infer; from the very character of thunder,—that the utterances were of fearful import: from the place which they hold,—that they related to the church: from the command

to conceal them,—first, encouragement, that God in His tender mercy to His own does not reveal all His terrors: secondly, godly fear, seeing that the arrows of His quiver are not exhausted, but besides things expressly foretold, there are more behind not revealed to us).

5—7.] *The oath of the strong angel, that the time of fulfilment of all prophecy was close at hand.* In this portion of the vision, the reminiscences of Dan. xii. 7 are very frequent:—"And I heard the man clothed in fine linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by Him that liveth for ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and a half: and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished." And the angel whom I saw standing upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted his right hand (not both hands, as in Daniel above, seeing that the little book lay open on his left. On the practice of lifting the hand in swearing, compare Gen. xiv. 22 [Exod. vi. 8 and Num. xiv. 30, margin], Deut. xxxii. 40) towards heaven (as God's dwelling-place, Isa. lvii. 15), and swore by Him that liveth to the ages of the ages (compare Dan. above), who created the heaven and the things in it, and the earth and the things in it, and the sea and the things in it (this full and formal designation of God as Creator of all is given, because the subject of the angel's oath is, the mystery of God, which necessarily rests in His power alone who made all things. We may observe, that the fact as well as the form of this oath is against the supposition, that this strong angel is the Lord Himself. Considering St. John's own declarations respecting the Son of God, it is utterly inconceivable that he should have related as spoken by Him an oath couched

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

k ch. xi. 15. 7 but <sup>k</sup> in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God is finished, as he declared the glad tidings to his servants the prophets.

1 ver. 4. <sup>8</sup> And <sup>1</sup> the voice which I heard from heaven [I] again [heard] speaking unto me, † and saying, Go take the book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. <sup>9</sup> And I

*longer : 7 but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. 8 And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. 9 And I went unto*

† So two out of our three most ancient MSS.

in these terms), that time (i. e., delay: see below) should no longer be (i. e. should no more intervene: in allusion to the answer given to the cry of the souls of the martyrs, ch. vi. 11, "And it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a time." This whole series of trumpet-judgments has been an answer to the prayers of the saints, and now the vengeance is about to receive its entire fulfilment: time shall no longer intervene: the appointed delay is at an end. That this is the meaning, is shewn by what follows. Several erroneous views have been taken of this saying: e. g., 1) that of Bede and others, that the succession of secular times should cease at the last trumpet, and apparently the A.V. ["that there should be time no longer"], —that it imports the ending of the state of time, and the beginning of eternity: 2) the chronological one of Bengel, who allots a definite length, viz. 1111½ years (?) to a time, and then interprets "there shall not elapse a time:" bringing the end, on his successive-historical system, to the year 1836; which is self-refuted: 3) the view of Vitringa and Hengstenberg, which grounds an error on the right understanding of these words themselves,—"that there should interpose no delay of time between the sound of the seventh trumpet and the fulfilment of the prophetic oracles:" for the assertion of ver. 7, which is the carrying out of this denial, expressly identifies the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, with the immediate fulfilment of all prophecy: but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel (i. e. the days indicated, in the fulfilment of the vision, by the sounding of the seventh angel's trumpet), when he is about to blow his trumpet (these words, when he is about,

are used in their strictest propriety. For when the seventh angel *does* sound, the completed time of the fulfilment is simultaneous with his blowing: compare ch. xi. 18: so that it is properly said that the fulfilment comes in the days when he is about to blow. I have shewn in my Greek Test. that the version which has been suggested, "at what time soever he may have to sound," can hardly be the rendering of the words. The A.V., "when he shall begin to sound," is inadmissible), then the mystery of God (this expression will be best understood by Rom. xvi. 25, connected as it is here with the verb evangelized, or, declared the glad tidings [see below]. It is the mystery of the kingdom, as unfolded in the course of the Gospel dispensation, as is clearly shewn by the thanksgiving after the blowing of the seventh trumpet in ch. xi. 15 ff.) is fulfilled (literally, *was fulfilled*, —the speaker looking back, in prophetic anticipation, on the days spoken of, from a point when they should have become a thing past), as He evangelized His servants the prophets (i. e. as in our text, as He declared the glad tidings to His servants the prophets).

8—11.] The delivery of the little book to John, and announcement of a further work of prophecy to be carried on by him. And the voice which I heard out of heaven, [I] again [heard] talking with me and saying, Go take the book which lieth open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went away (so literally: i. e., from my former place as a spectator in heaven: from which, however, the Seer does not seem wholly to remove, compare ch. xi. 16, xix. 1 ff., although his principal spot of observation

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. <sup>10</sup> And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. <sup>11</sup> And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

went unto the angel, and told him to give me the little book. And he said unto me, <sup>m</sup> Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. <sup>10</sup> And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; <sup>n</sup> and it was in my mouth as sweet honey, and as soon as I had eaten it, <sup>o</sup> my belly was embittered. <sup>11</sup> And <sup>†</sup> they say unto me, Thou must prophesy again concerning peoples, and nations, and tongues, and many kings.

<sup>m</sup> Jer. xv. 16.  
Ezek. ii. 8,  
& iii. 1-3.

<sup>n</sup> Ezek. iii. 3.

<sup>o</sup> Ezek. ii. 10.

<sup>†</sup> So all our  
oldest MSS.

is henceforth the earth: see ch. xi. 1, xii. 18, xiv. 1, xvii. 3, &c.) to the angel telling him to give me the little book. And he saith to me, Take and eat it up (compare Ezek. iii. 1 ff.; Jer. xv. 16; Ps. xl. 9); and it shall embitter thy belly, but in thy mouth shall be sweet as honey. And I took the book out of the hand of the angel, and ate it up: and it was in my mouth as honey; and when I had eaten it up, my belly was embittered (there is the difference between Ezekiel's roll and this, that in the prophet's case, only the sweetness in the mouth is mentioned. The Angel, dwelling most on the most important thing, the working of the contents of the book, puts the bitterness first: the Evangelist, in relating what happened, follows the order of time. The text itself will guard us against some misinterpretations of this bitterness and sweetness. It is plain that we must understand these to belong, not to differing characters of different portions of the contents of the book [as some], but to different sensations of the Evangelist in different parts of his body respecting one and the same content of the book. Nor again must we invert the order, imagining [as others] that the first bitterness leads afterwards to sweetness and joy, or [as others again] that the bitterness in the belly indicates the reception by the Evangelist, but the sweetness in the mouth, the declaration to others; proceeding on a misunderstanding of ver. 11). For further particulars, see below on ver. 11). And they say (this leaves the speakers quite

indefinite; amounting in fact to no more than "it was said") to me, Thou must (i. e. it is God's will that thou shouldst: a command is laid upon thee so to do) again prophesy (as thou hast done before in writing the former part of the revelation: see in the interpretation below) concerning (not as A. V. "before:" nor can the original bear such a meaning. The substantives which follow the preposition are the *objects* of the prophecy) peoples and nations and languages and many kings (i. e. concerning the inhabitants of the earth, as before: compare ch. v. 9, where the Lamb's worthiness to open the former book is connected with His having redeemed some out of every tribe and language and people and nation).

I have postponed till this point the question, what we are to understand by the little book, and the Seer's concern with it. And I will at once say, before discussing the various differing interpretations, that I conceive the simple acceptance of the description and symbolism here can lead but to one conclusion: viz. that it represents the *mystery of God* above spoken of, the subject of the remainder of the Apocalyptic prophecies. So far, many of the principal Commentators are at one. Indeed it is difficult to conceive how any other interpretation can have been thought of, except as made necessary by some previous self-committal of the Expositor regarding the sealed book of ch. v., or by the exigencies of some historical system. But within the limits of



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

<sup>a</sup> Ezek. xl. 3,  
 &c. Zech. ii.  
 1. ch. xxi. 15.  
 † So, omitting  
 and the  
 angel stood, all our ancient MSS. For saying, which is the reading of the Alexandrine and most MSS., the Sinaitic has  
 he saith.

XI. <sup>1</sup> And there was given me <sup>a</sup> a reed like unto a rod, † saying, <sup>b</sup> Rise,

XI. <sup>1</sup> And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood,

this agreed meaning, there are many different views as to the extent of the reference of the "little book" to that which follows, and as to its relation to the seven-sealed book of ch. v. As regards these points, we may remark, 1) that the contents of the "little book" cannot well be confined to ch. xi. 1—13, or we should not have had so solemn an inauguration of it, nor so wide-reaching an announcement of the duty of the Apostle consequent on the receipt of it: 2) that the oath of the Angel must necessarily be connected with his bearing of the open book on his hand, and if so, makes it necessary to infer that the contents of the book are identical with the mystery, respecting which he swears: 3) that the episode which follows, containing the first work of the Apostle under that his new prophetic commission, inaugurates an entirely new matter—the things which befall the Church of God and the holy city, which new character of incidents continues to prevail until the very end of the book: 4) that the relation of this "little book" to the sealed book of ch. v. can hardly be doubtful to the readers of this Commentary, seeing that we have maintained that book to be the sum of the divine purposes, which is not opened at all within the limits of the apocalyptic vision, but only prepared to be opened by the removal of its seven seals. That this is not that complete record of the divine purposes, nor, technically speaking, any portion of it, must be evident to us. For it forms a small detached roll or volume, lying open on the angel's hand: it is destined for the especial individual behoof of the Seer, into whom it passes, and becomes assimilated with himself, to be given forth as he should be directed to utter it. 5) That it contained *more than* we possess in the remaining portion of this book, is probable. St. John doubtless knew more than he has told us. Previously to this, he knew what the seven thunders uttered: and subsequently to this, we can hardly imagine that he was ignorant of the name of the wild-beast, whose number he has given us.

It remains that we say something on the circumstances accompanying the Apostle's reception of the mysterious book. Its *sweetness*, when he tasted it, allusive

as it is to the same circumstance in Ezekiel's eating the roll which was all lamentation, mourning, and woe, doubtless represents present satisfaction at being informed of, and admitted to know, a portion of God's holy will: of those words of which the Psalmist said, Ps. cxix. 103, "How sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea sweeter than honey unto my mouth!" But when the roll came to be not only tasted, but digested,—the nature of its contents felt within the man,—bitterness took the place of sweetness: the persecutions, the apostasies, the judgments, of the church and people of the Lord, saddened the spirit of the Seer, and dashed his joy at the first reception of the mystery of God.

CH. XI. 1—13.] *The measurement of the temple of God. The two witnesses: their testimony, death, resurrection, and assumption into heaven: the earthquake, and its consequences.*

This passage may well be called, even more than that previous one, ch. x. 1 ff., the *crux* of interpreters; as it is undoubtedly one of the most difficult in the whole Apocalypse. Referring to the histories of apocalyptic exposition for an account of the various interpretations, I will, as I have done in similar cases, endeavour to lay down a few landmarks, which may serve for guidance at least to avoid inconsistency, if we cannot do more. And I will remark, 1) that we are not bound to the hard "wooden" literal sense so insisted on in our day by some of the modern German Expositors. I would strongly recommend any one who takes that view, who will have Jerusalem mean nothing but Jerusalem, and confine the two witnesses to two persons bodily appearing there, to read through the very unsatisfactory and shuffling comment of Düsterdieck here: the result of which is, that finding, as he of course does, many discrepancies between this and our Lord's prophecy of the same destruction of Jerusalem, he is driven to the refuge that while our Lord describes matters of fact, St. John *idealizes* the catastrophe, setting it forth not as it really took place, but according to its inner connexion with the final accomplishment of the mystery of God, and correspondently to the hope which God's Old Testament



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that wor-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship

people possessed as contrasted with the heathen power of this world, which abides in "Babylon." But really, if we have come thus far by fighting for the literal interpretation, why not a little further? Or rather why *so far*? If "Babylon" is the abode of the world, why not "Jerusalem" of the church? If our interpreter, maintaining the literal sense, is allowed so far to "idealize," as to exempt the temple of God itself [ver. 2] from a destruction which we know overtook it, and nine-tenths of the city [ver. 13] from an overthrow which destroyed it all, surely there is an end to the meaning of words. If Jerusalem here is simply Jerusalem, and the prophecy regards her overthrow by the Romans, and especially if this passage is to be made such use of as to set aside the testimony of Irenæus as to the date of the Apocalypse by the stronger testimony of the Apocalypse itself [so Düsterdieck from Lücke], then must every particular be shewn to tally with known history; or if this cannot be done, at least it must be shewn that none contradicts it. If *this* cannot be done, then we may fairly infer that the prophecy has no such reference, or only remotely, here and there, and not as its principal subject. 2) Into whatever difficulty we may be led by the remark, it is no less true, that the "holy city" of ver. 2 cannot be the same as the "great city" of ver. 8. This has been felt by the literal interpreters, and they have devised ingenious reasons why the holy city should afterwards be called the great city: so De Wette, "he named Jerusalem the great city, because he can no more call her holy after her desecration" [but he need not therefore call her *great*, by which epithet she is never called].—Düsterdieck, "because it is impossible in one breath to call a city 'holy,' and 'Sodom and Egypt'" [most true: then must we not look for some other city than one which this very prophecy has called holy?]. So far Joachim says well, "But his saying, '*in the streets of the great city,*' does not seem to favour the literal sense. For it [Jerusalem] is never called *the great city*, but rather Nineveh and Babylon are thus called: because many are called and but few chosen." His other reason see in the interpretation below. 3) We are compelled, if I am not mistaken,

to carry the above considerations somewhat further, by the very conditions of the prophecy itself. For it is manifestly and undeniably of an *anticipatory* character. It is not, and cannot be, complete in itself. The words of ver. 7, "*the wild-beast which cometh up out of the abyss,*" bear no meaning where they stand, but require, in order to be understood at all, to be carried on into the succeeding visions of ch. xiii. ff. And if into those visions, then into a period when this wild-beast has received power from the dragon,—when, as in ch. xiii. 7, he makes war with the saints and conquers them, and all on earth except the elect are worshipping him. 4) Let us observe the result as affecting our interpretation. We are necessarily carried on by the very terms of our present compendious prophecy, into the midst of another prophecy, far more detailed and full of persons and incidents: of one which has its *great city, its temple of God, its worshippers in it, its witness of Jesus*, and other coincident particulars. What inference does a sound principle of interpretation force upon us? What, if not this—that our present compendious prophecy, as in the particular of the beast that comes out of the abyss, so in its other features, must be understood as giving in summary, and introducing, that larger one? and consequently, that its terms are to be understood by those of that larger one, not servilely and literally where they stand? And observe, this is deduced from the very necessity of the case itself, as shewn in ver. 7, not from any system throwing its attraction forward and biasing our views. *We cannot understand this prophecy at all, except in the light of those that follow: for it introduces by anticipation their dramatis personæ.* 5) If I mistake not, we thus gain much light on the difficulties of this prophecy. If it is a compendium of the more detailed prophecies which follow, opening the great series regarding God's church, and reaching forward to the time of the seventh trumpet, then its separate parts, so hard to assign on any other view, at once fall into their places. Then, e.g. we at once know what is meant by the temple and its worshippers, viz., that these expressions are identical in reference with those others in the subsequent prophecy which point out an elect remnant, a Goshen in Egypt,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>c</sup> Ezek. xl. 17, 20. therein. <sup>2</sup> And <sup>c</sup> the court which is without the temple cast thou out, and measure not it; <sup>d</sup> for it was given unto the Gentiles: and the

<sup>d</sup> Ps. lxxix. 1.  
Luke xxi. 24.

a Zoar from Sodom, a number who do not worship the wild-beast and his image, who are not defiled with women, &c. And so of the rest.—6) It will then be on this principle that I shall attempt the exposition of this difficult prophecy. Regarding it as a summary of the more detailed one which follows, I shall endeavour to make the two cast light on one another: searching for the meaning of the symbols here used in their fuller explanation there, and gaining perhaps some further insight into meanings there from expressions occurring here.

1, 2.] *Command to measure the temple, but not the outer court, which is given to the Gentiles. And there was given to me* (by whom, is not said, but it is left indefinite, as at ch. vi. 11, viii. 2) *a reed like to a staff* (see *refl.*), *saying*, (this word, *saying*, is out of the construction, and indefinite: as in ch. iv. 1), *Arise* (this word does not necessarily imply that the Apostle was kneeling before) and *measure the temple of God and the altar* (apparently, the altar of incense: as that alone stood in the temple, properly so called. But perhaps we must not be too minute in particularizing), *and them that worship in it* (see the previous remarks on this prophecy. The *measuring* here is evidently for the purpose of taking account of, understanding the bearing and dimensions of, that which is to be measured: see ch. xxi. 15, where the heavenly Jerusalem is measured by the angel. But here two questions arise: 1) What is that which is measured? and 2) when does the measuring take place? 1) I have no doubt that, as above hinted, the *temple of God* and its *altar* are to be here taken symbolically, as the other principal features of the prophecy: and to one believing this, there can be but little further doubt as to what meaning he shall assign to the terms. Thus understood, they can only bear one meaning: viz., that of the Church of the elect servants of God, every where in this book symbolized by Jews in deed and truth. The society of these, as a whole, is the *temple*, agreeably to Scripture symbolism elsewhere, e. g. 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17, and is symbolized by the inner or holy place of the Jerusalem temple, in and among which they as true Israelites

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*ship therein.* <sup>2</sup> *But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the*

and priests unto God, have a right to worship and minister. These are they who, properly speaking, alone are *measured*: estimated again and again in this book by tale and number—partakers in the first resurrection,—the Church of the first-born. Then as to our question 2), it is one which, so far as I know, has not engaged the attention of expositors. When a command is elsewhere in this book given to the Seer, we may observe that his fulfilment of it is commonly indicated. He is commanded to write, and the writing before us proves his obedience. He is ordered to take the little book, and he goes and takes it. But of the fulfilment by him of this command, *Arise and measure*, no hint appears to be given. The voice goes on continuously, until it melts imperceptibly into the narrative of the vision, and we are startled by "*and I heard a loud voice*," in ver. 12, when we had thought it to be still speaking. After that, we hear no more of the measuring, till another and more glorious building is measured in ch. xxi. This being so, either 1) which is inconceivable, the measurement does not take place at all, or 2) which is hardly probable, it takes place and no result is communicated to us, or 3) the result of it is found in the subsequent prophecies: in the minute and careful distinctions between the servants of God and those who receive the mark of the wild-beast—in all those indications which point out to us the length and breadth and depth and height, both of faith, and of unfaithfulness). *And the court which is outside the temple* (i. e. apparently, every thing except the *temple* itself: not merely the outer court or court of the Gentiles. That only the *temple* itself, in the strictest sense, is to be measured, is significant for the meaning above maintained) *cast out* (of thy measurement. But these strong words, conveying so slight a meaning, doubtless bear in them a tinge also of the stronger meaning, "*reckon as profane*," "*account not as included in the sacred precinct*"), *and measure not it* (it has a slight emphasis: otherwise, it need not have been expressed in the original), *because it was given* (viz. at the time when the state of things subsisting in the vision came in: or, in God's apportionment) *to the Gentiles*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. <sup>3</sup> And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

*holy city shall they <sup>e</sup> tread under <sup>e</sup> Dan. viii. 10. foot <sup>f</sup> forty and two months. <sup>3</sup> And <sup>f</sup> ch. xiii. 5. I will give unto my two <sup>g</sup> witnesses, <sup>g</sup> ch. xx. 4. <sup>h</sup> and they shall prophesy <sup>h</sup> a thou- <sup>h</sup> ch. xix. 10. <sup>i</sup> ch. xii. 6.*

(if the *temple* and the *worshippers* represent the elect church of the first-born, the *nations* will correspond to those who are outside this sacred enclosure: those over whom eventually the millennial reign of ch. xx. shall be exercised: those from among whom shall spring the enmity against God's church, but among whom also shall be many who shall fear, and give God glory, compare ver. 13. Of these is formed the outward seeming church, mixed up with the world; in them, though not in each case commensurate with them, is Babylon, is the reign of the wild-beast, the agency of the false prophet: they are the *dwellers on the earth*, the material on which judgment and mercy are severally exercised in the rest of this book [see especially ver. 18], as contrasted with God's own people, gathered and to be gathered out from among them), and they shall tread down (i.e. trample as conquerors, the outer church being in subjection to them: see Luke xxi. 24, Dan. viii. 13. The other meaning, *shall tread*, merely, is of course included; but must not be made the prevalent one. The period named shall be one during which "*the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and violent men take it by force,*" Matt. xi. 12) the *holy city* (Jerusalem, in the literal sense of the prophecy: the whole temple except the *temple proper*, or sanctuary itself, being counted with the city outside) **forty and two months** (this period occurs in three forms in this book: 1) as forty-two months; see ch. xiii. 5: 2) as 1260 days = 42 months  $\times$  30, see ver. 3, ch. xii. 6: 3) as time, times, and half a time =  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years =  $3 \times 360 + 180 = 1260$  days, see ch. xii. 14. This latter designation is also found in Dan. vii. 25, xii. 7. With respect to these periods, I may say that, *equal* as they certainly seem to be, we have no right to suppose them, in any two given cases, to be *identical*, unless the context requires such a supposition. For instance, in these two verses, 2 and 3, there is strong temptation to regard the two equal periods as coincident and identical: but it is plain that such a view is not required by the context; the prophecy contains no note of such coincidence, but may be very simply read with-

out it, on the view that the two periods are equal in duration, but independent of one another: and the rather, that this prophecy, as has been already shewn, is of a compendious character, hereafter to be stated at large. I will further remark, and the reader will find this abundantly borne out by research into histories of apocalyptic exegesis, that no solution at all approaching to a satisfactory one has ever yet been given of any one of these periods. This being so, my principle is to regard them as being still among the things unknown to the Church, and awaiting their elucidation by the event. It is our duty to feel our way by all the indications which Scripture furnishes, and by the light which history, in its main and obvious salient events, has thrown on Scripture: and, when those fail us, to be content to confess our ignorance. An apocalyptic commentary which explains every thing, is self-convicted of error).

3—13.] THE TWO WITNESSES: *their testimony, death, resurrection, ascension: consequences on the beholders.* The remarks just made are here especially applicable. No solution has ever been given of this portion of the prophecy. Either the two witnesses are literal,—two individual men,—or they are symbolical,—two individuals taken as the concentration of principles and characteristics, and this either in themselves, or as representing men who embodied those principles and characteristics. In the following notes I shall point out how far one, how far another of these views, is favoured by the text, and leave the reader to judge. **And I will give to my two witnesses** (the heavenly voice is still speaking in the name of Christ. That we must not press the *my* to the inference that *Christ himself* speaks, is plain by the words, *where also their Lord was crucified*, below. The definite article *the* [in the original, it is, *to the two witnesses of me*] seems as if the two witnesses were well known, and distinct in their individuality. The *two* is essential to the prophecy, and is not to be explained away. No interpretation can be right which does not, either in individuals, or in characteristic lines of testimony, retain and bring out this dualism. See further below), **and they shall prophesy**

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

sand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. <sup>4</sup> These are the <sup>k</sup> two olive trees, and the two candlesticks which stand before the † Lord of the earth. <sup>5</sup> And if any one is minded to hurt them, <sup>1</sup> fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: <sup>m</sup> and if any one is minded to hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

<sup>k</sup> Ps. lii. 8.  
Jer. xi. 16.  
Zech. iv. 3,  
11, 14.

† So all our  
ancient MSS.,  
and almost  
all others.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings i. 10,  
12. Jer. i. 10.  
& v. 14.  
Ezek. xliii. 3.  
Hosen vi. 5.  
<sup>m</sup> Numb. xvi.  
29.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.*  
<sup>4</sup> *These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.* <sup>5</sup> *And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.*

(this has generally been taken to mean, *shall preach repentance*. It may be so: but in ch. x. 11, the verb is used in its later and stricter sense of *foretelling events*, as in 1 Pet. i. 19; Jude 14. If their testimony consisted in denouncing judgment, the other would necessarily be combined with it) a thousand two hundred and sixty days (Düsterdieck remarks that the fact of a period of the same length as the forty-two months being now expressed in *days*, implies that they will prophesy day by day throughout it. The reader will of course see, that the two questions, of these days being *days* or *years*, and of the individuality or the symbolical character of the witnesses, are mutually connected together. He will also bear in mind that it is a pure assumption that the two periods, the forty-two months and the 1260 days, coincide over the same space of time. The duration of time is that during which the power of Elijah's prophecy shut up the heaven: viz. three years and six months: see Luke iv. 25, and more on ver. 6 below), clothed in sackcloth (in token of need of repentance and of approaching judgment: see Isa. xxii. 12; Jer. iv. 8, vi. 26; Jonah iii. 5. Certainly this portion of the prophetic description strongly favours the individual interpretation. For first, it is hard to conceive how whole bodies of men and churches could be thus described: and secondly, the principal symbolical interpreters have left out, or passed very slightly, this important particular. One does not see how bodies of men who lived like other men [their being the victims of persecution is another matter], can be said to have prophesied *clothed in sackcloth*. It is to be observed that such was the garment of Elijah; see 2 Kings i. 8, and compare Matt. iii. 4). These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks which stand before the Lord

of the earth (the whole from ref. Zech., to which the article the refers. But it is to be observed that while in Zech. we have the two olive trees, and spoken of in the same terms as here, there is but one candlestick, with its seven lights, which very seven lights, as there interpreted in ver. 10, are referred to in our ch. iv. 5, v. 6. So that it is somewhat difficult to say, whence the two candlesticks have come. The most probable view is that St. John has taken up and amplified the prophetic symbolism of Zechariah, carrying it on by the well-known figure of lights, as representing God's testifying servants. Who the two "sons of oil" in the prophet were, whether Zerubbabel and Joshua, or the prophets Zechariah and Haggai, is of no import to our text here); and if any one be minded to harm them, fire goeth forth (the present tense, used of that which is habitual and settled, though yet future: see also on ver. 7 below) out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies (so Elijah, 2 Kings i. 10 ff.: and so ran the word of promise to Jeremiah, Jer. v. 14, "I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them:" the two being here combined together. Compare also Eccus. xlviii. 1, "Then stood up Elias the prophet as fire, and his word burned like a lamp"): and if any one be minded to harm them, after this manner (see Eccus. xlviii. 3, "He three times brought down fire") he must be killed (this whole description is most difficult to apply, on the allegorical interpretation; as is that which follows. And as might have been expected, the allegorists halt and are perplexed exceedingly. The double announcement here seems to stamp the literal sense, and the words, if any one, and, he must be killed, are decisive against any mere *national*



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>6</sup> These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. <sup>7</sup> And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and shall kill them. <sup>8</sup> And their dead bodies shall lie in the

<sup>6</sup> These <sup>n</sup> have power to shut the heaven, that rain may not fall during the days of their prophecy: and they <sup>o</sup> have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they will. <sup>7</sup> And when they <sup>p</sup> have finished their testimony, <sup>q</sup> the wild-beast that cometh up <sup>r</sup> out of the abyss <sup>s</sup> shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

<sup>8</sup> And their dead <sup>†</sup> body [<sup>†</sup> is] upon <sup>†</sup> So two out of our three ancient MSS.,

and most of the others. The Sinaitic reads bodies: see below on ver. 9.

<sup>†</sup> Not expressed in the original.

application of the words. *Individuality* could not be more strongly indicated. These have (see on the present tense above) [the] power to shut the heaven, that the rain may not rain during the days of their prophecy (as did Elijah: the duration of the time also corresponding: see *reff.*): and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood (as had Moses, *ref.*), and to smite the earth with (see 1 Sam. iv. 8, from which, applying to the plagues in Egypt, the expression is taken) every plague as often as they shall be minded (all this points out the spirit and power of Moses, combined with that of Elias. And undoubtedly, it is in these two directions that we must look for the two witnesses, or lines of witnesses. The one impersonates the law, the other the prophets. The one reminds us of the prophet whom God should raise up like unto Moses; the other of Elias the prophet, who should come before the great and terrible day of the Lord; "*Who wast ordained for reproof in their times, to pacify the wrath of the Lord's judgment, before it brake forth into fury,*" *Eccles.* *xlvi.* 10. But whether we are to regard these prophecies as to be fulfilled by individuals, or by lines of testimony, must depend entirely on the indications here given). And when they have finished (the tense used in the original implies, as plainly as words can imply it, that the whole period of their testimony will be at an end when that which is next said shall happen. All attempts of the allegorical expositors to escape this plain meaning of the words are in vain. Such

is, "when they shall be about finishing:" "whilst they shall perform:" "when they shall have completed their testimony," meaning thereby not the whole course of it, but any one complete delivery of it, which others might have followed) their testimony, the wild-beast that cometh up out of the abyss (this is the first mention of the wild-beast; and the whole description, as remarked above, is anticipatory. The present tense gives simply *designation*, as so often: and is not to be interpreted future, "that is to come up." The character of the beast is that he cometh up out of the abyss. This wild-beast is evidently identical with that mentioned in *ch.* *xvii.* 8, of which the same term is used, "*which is about to come up out of the abyss:*" and if so, with that also which is introduced *ch.* *xiii.* 1 ff., as "*a wild-beast coming up out of the sea,*" seeing that the same details, of the seven heads and ten horns, are ascribed to the two. But, though the appellation is anticipatory as far as this book is concerned, the beast spoken of was already familiar to its readers from *Dan.* *vii.*: see below) shall make war with them (the very expression is from *Dan.* *vii.* 21), and shall conquer them and shall kill them. And their corpse ("their wreck." The singular is used, not for any mystical reason, but simply because the word in the original does not properly signify a dead body, but that which has fallen, be it of one, or of many. Below, where the context requires the separate corpses to be specified, we have the



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

t ch. xiv. 8. &  
xvii. 1, 5. &  
xviii. 10.

u Heb. xiii. 12.  
ch. xviii. 24.

† So two of our  
three ancient  
MSS., and  
almost all  
the rest, and  
the versions  
and fathers.  
The Sinaitic,  
the third of  
the ancient  
MSS., has,  
the Lord.

x ch. xvii. 15.

† So all our ancient MSS. here, and most of the others.

the open street of 'the great city,  
namely, that which spiritually is  
called Sodom and Egypt, <sup>u</sup> where  
also † their Lord was crucified.  
<sup>9</sup> x And some from among the peo-  
ple and tribes and tongues and  
nations look upon their dead † body  
three days and an half, <sup>y</sup> and † suffer

y Ps. lxxix. 2, 3.

*street of the great city  
which spiritually is called  
Sodom and Egypt, where  
also our Lord was cru-  
cified. <sup>9</sup> And they of the  
people and kindreds and  
tongues and nations shall  
see their dead bodies three  
days and an half, and  
shall not suffer their dead*

† So all our ancient MSS.

plural) [is] (the present is best to supply, on account of the verbs following, which are in the present, until we come to *shall send*: and with which the portion relating to the corpses is bound up) upon the open street (literally, the wide space) of the great city (not Jerusalem [see above], which is never called by this name: but the *great city* of the succeeding visions, of which this is anticipatory and compendious), namely, that which is called spiritually (i. e. allegorically; in a sense higher than the literal and obvious one. The only other place in which we find this usage of the word is in 1 Cor. ii. 14, which see, and notes there) Sodom and Egypt (those Commentators who maintain that the literal Jerusalem is here meant, allege Isa. i. 9 ff., and Ezek. xvi. 48, as places where she is called Sodom. But the latter place is no example: for there Jerusalem is compared, in point of sinfulness, with her sisters, Samaria and Sodom, and is not called Sodom at all. And in Isaiah i. 9 ff., 1) it is not Jerusalem, but the Jewish people in general [see also Isa. iii. 9] that are called by this name: and that 2) not so much in respect of depravity, as of the desolation of Judæa, which [vv. 7—9] almost equalled that of the devoted cities. And even supposing this to be a case in point, no instance can be alleged of Jerusalem being called Egypt, or any thing bearing such an interpretation. Whereas in the subsequent prophecy both these comparisons are naturally suggested with regard to the great city there mentioned: viz. that of Sodom by ch. xix. 3, compared with Gen. xix. 28, and that of Egypt, and indeed Sodom also, by ch. xviii. 4 ff.), where their Lord also (as well as they: not the specific term *crucifixion*, but the general fact of death by persecution, underlying it, being in the Writer's mind) was crucified (these words

have principally led those who hold the literal Jerusalem to be meant. But if, as I believe I have shewn, such an interpretation is forbidden by the previous words, then we must not fall back on an erroneous view on account of the apparent requirements of these words, but enquire whether by the light of the subsequent prophecy, which is an expansion of this, we may find some meaning for them in accordance with the preceding conditions. And this is surely not difficult to discover. If we compare ch. xviii. 24 with Matt. xxiii. 35, we shall find a wider ground than the mere literal Jerusalem on which to place the Lord's own martyrdom and that of His saints. It is true, He was crucified at Jerusalem: but it is also true that He was crucified not in, but outside the city, and by the hands, not of Jews, but of Romans. The fact is, that the literal Jerusalem, in whom was found the blood of all the saints who had been slain on earth, has been superseded by that wider and greater city, of which this prophecy speaks: and as the temple, in prophetic language, has become the church of God, so the outer city, in the same language, has become the great city which will be the subject of God's final judgments. For those who consider this, there can be no hesitation in interpreting even this local designation also of this great city). And some from among the peoples and tribes and languages and nations look upon (the prophetic history is carried on in the present, as in ch. xviii. 11 compared with ver. 9, and elsewhere) their corpse (see above) three days and a half (on this period we may remark, that these 3½ days are connected by analogy with the periods previously mentioned: with the 1260 days and 42 months = 3½ years: and that in each case the half of the mystic number 7 enters. Also, that Elliott's calculation

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

bodies to be put in graves.  
 10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. 11 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.  
 12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.  
 13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

not their dead bodies to be put in a tomb. 10<sup>z</sup> And they that dwell upon the earth † rejoice over them, and make merry, <sup>a</sup> and shall send gifts one to another; <sup>b</sup> because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. 11<sup>c</sup> And after the three days<sup>e</sup> and an half<sup>d</sup> the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which beheld them. 12 And they heard a great voice out of heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. <sup>e</sup> And they went up to heaven <sup>f</sup> in the clouds; <sup>g</sup> and their enemies beheld them. 13 And in that hour there <sup>h</sup> was a great earthquake, <sup>i</sup> and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain names

<sup>z</sup> ch. xii. 12. & xiii. 8.

<sup>†</sup> So all our MSS., ancient and modern, except one of the 13th century, which however has the future in another form from the common text.

<sup>a</sup> Esth. ix. 19, 22.

<sup>b</sup> ch. xvi. 10.

<sup>c</sup> ver. 9.

<sup>d</sup> Ezek. xxxvii 5, 9, 10, 14.

<sup>e</sup> Isa. xiv. 13.

ch. xii. 5.

<sup>f</sup> Isa. lx. 8.

Acts i. 9.

<sup>g</sup> 2 Kings ii. 1, 5, 7.

<sup>h</sup> ch. vi. 12.

<sup>i</sup> ch. xvi. 19.

of this period as 3½ years, by which he makes out that that period elapsed, “precisely, to a day,” between the ninth session of the Lateran council, and the posting up of the theses by Luther at Wittenberg,—and on the accuracy of which he exclaims, “O wonderful prophecy! O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the foreknowledge of God!”—labours under this fatal defect;—that whereas his 3 years, from May 5, 1514, to May 5, 1517, are years of 365 days, his half-year, from May 5, 1517, to Oct. 31, of the same year, is “180, or half 360 days:” i. e. wanting 2½ days of the time required according to that reckoning. I may observe, that in his *Apocalypsis Alfordiana*, p. 128, he has repeated *this inconsistency*, and do not permit their corpses to be put into a tomb (the word in the original means not a grave, but a monument, or a tomb). And they that dwell upon the earth (i. e., the godless world) rejoice over them (at their fall) and are glad, and shall send gifts to one another (as on a day of festival, see Neh. viii. 10, 12; Esth. ix. 19, 22), because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt upon the earth (viz. by the plagues above mentioned, vv. 5, 6). And after the three days and an half, the Spirit of life (not, a

*spirit*: the whole diction is closely imitated from that used of the dry bones in Ezek. xxxvii.) from God (these words, *from God*, belong not only to life, but to the Spirit of life) entered in them, and they stood upon their feet (the very words of Ezek. xxxvii. 10), and great fear fell upon those who beheld them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying to them, Come up hither. And they went up to heaven in the cloud (or, as we more commonly say in English, *the clouds*: viz. the cloud which ordinarily floats in the air; the mist: not, “the cloud of Christ’s glory:” nor needing identification with any cloud previously mentioned in this book. But the ascension of the witnesses partakes of the character of His ascension. No attempt has been made to explain this ascension by those who interpret the witnesses figuratively of the Old and New Testament, or the like. The modern historical system, which can interpret such a Scripture phrase of “calling up to political ascendancy and power,” surely needs no refutation from me), and their enemies beheld them. And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city (the great city, as above) fell, and

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

of men seven thousand: and the remnant became affrighted, <sup>k</sup> and gave glory to the God of heaven. <sup>l</sup> The second woe is past; behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

<sup>15</sup> And <sup>m</sup> the seventh angel sounded; <sup>n</sup> and there were great voices in heaven, saying, <sup>o</sup> The † kingdom

κ Josh. vii. 10.  
ch. xiv. 7.  
& xv. 4.

l ch. viii. 13.  
& ix. 12.  
& xv. 1.

m ch. x. 7.

n Isa. xxvii. 13.  
ch. xvi. 17.  
& xix. 6.  
o ch. xii. 10.

† So all our ancient MSS., and nearly all the rest, and all the versions and fathers.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven. <sup>14</sup> The second woe is past: and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly. <sup>15</sup> And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are

there were slain in the earthquake names of men (i. e. men themselves, the expression shewing that the number is carefully and precisely stated, as if the name of each were recounted: see below) seven thousands (i. e. the number 7000. In every place of the 23 where the word "*chilias*" occurs in the New Test., it signifies simply the numeral 1000, and never a chiliad, or a province, as the historical interpretation, forcing the expression to mean the seven Dutch united provinces, which were lost to the Papacy at the Reformation. It also forces the expression names of men out of its idiomatic sense to import "titles of dignity and command," Duchies, Marquisates, Lordships, and the rest (of the inhabitants of the city) became terrified, and gave glory (it would be entirely needless to contend that gave belongs to the same subject as became terrified, viz. the rest, had not an attempt been made to supply "the ascended witnesses" as a new subject. To say nothing of the inapplicability of the instances cited to justify such a view, our ch. xiv. 7 is decisive against it, where men are exhorted to "*fear God, and give Him glory:*" as also ch. xvi. 9, where the men tormented "*did not repent, to give Him glory.*" In fact, the giving glory to God is not equivalent in the Scriptures to thanking God, but is, as Bengel notices, "a mark of conversion," or at all events, of the recognition of God. The exceptions to this are more apparent than real, e. g. Luke xvii. 18, where recognition is the main feature: Rev. iv. 9, where glory does not stand alone. See also 1 Sam. vi. 5. Josh. vii. 19 is a remarkable example of the ordinary meaning of the phrase) to the God of heaven (an expression otherwise confined to the later books of the Old Test.). The second woe is past (see on ch. ix. 12): behold, the third woe cometh quickly (the

episodical visions of ch. x. 1—11, xi. 1—13, are finished; and the prophecy recurs to the plagues of the sixth trumpet, ch. ix. 13—21. These formed the second woe: and upon these the third is to follow. But in actual relation, and in detail, it does not immediately follow. Instead of it, we have voices of thanksgiving in heaven, for that the hour of God's kingdom and vengeance is come. The Seer is not yet prepared to set forth the nature of this taking of the kingdom; this remand to God's servants, this destruction of the destroyers of the earth. Before he does so, another series of prophetic visions must be given, regarding not merely the dwellers on the earth, but the Church herself, her glory and her shame, her faithfulness and her apostasy. When this series has been given, then shall be declared in its fulness the manner and the process of the time of the end. And consequently as at the end of the vision of the seals, so here also. The sixth seal gave the immediately preceding signs of the great day—we were shewn in anticipatory episodes, the gathering of the elect and the multitude before the throne, and then the veil was dropt upon that series of visions and another began. And now, God's avenging judgments on the earth, in answer to the prayers of His saints, having reached their final point of accomplishment, and the armies of heaven having given solemn thanks for the hour being come, again the veil is dropt, and again a new procession of visions begins from the beginning. The third woe, so soon to come, is in narration deferred until all the various underplots, so to speak, of God's Providence have been brought onward to a point ready for the great and final dénouement).

15—19.] *The seventh trumpet. And the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were great voices in heaven (notice, a) that the seventh seal, the seventh*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. <sup>16</sup> And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, <sup>17</sup> saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. <sup>18</sup> And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged,

over the world is become our Lord's, and of his Christ; <sup>p</sup> and he shall reign for ever and ever. <sup>16</sup> And <sup>q</sup> the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, <sup>17</sup> saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, <sup>r</sup> which art, and wast <sup>†</sup>; because thou hast taken thy great might, <sup>s</sup> and hast reigned. <sup>18</sup> <sup>t</sup> And the nations were angry, and thine anger came, <sup>u</sup> and the time of the dead, to be judged,

<sup>p</sup> Dan. ii. 44.  
& vii. 14, 18,  
27.

<sup>q</sup> ch. iv. 4.  
& v. 8. &  
xix. 4.

<sup>r</sup> ch. i. 4, 8.  
& iv. 8. &  
xvi. 5.  
<sup>†</sup> and art to  
come is  
omitted by all  
our ancient  
MSS., and  
nearly all  
the rest.  
<sup>s</sup> ch. xix. 6.  
<sup>t</sup> ver. 2, 9.  
<sup>u</sup> Dan. vii. 9,  
10.  
ch. vi. 10.

trumpet, and the seventh vial, are all differently accompanied from any of the preceding series in each case. b) At each seventh member of the series we hear what is done, not on earth, but in heaven,—the half-hour's silence, the song of thanksgiving, the voice from the temple and the throne, saying, "It is done." c) At each seventh member likewise we have it related in the form of a solemn conclusion, that thunders, and lightnings, and voices (and an earthquake, and a great hail) occurred: see ch. xvi. 18 ff. d) At each seventh member we have plain indication in the imagery or by direct expression, that the end is come, or close at hand: 1) by the imagery of the sixth seal, and the two episodes, preceding the seventh seal: 2) by the declaration here, "*the time of the dead is come to be judged*;" 3) by "*It is done*," sounding from the temple and the throne on the pouring out of the seventh vial. e) All this forms strong ground for inference, that the three series of visions are not continuous, but resumptive: not indeed going over the same ground with one another, either of time or of occurrence, but each evolving something which was not in the former, and putting the course of God's Providence in a different light. It is true, that the seals involve the trumpets, the trumpets the vials: but it is not in mere temporal succession: the involution and inclusion are far deeper: the world-wide vision of the seals containing the cry for vengeance, out of which is evolved the series of the trumpets: and this again containing the episodical visions

of the little book and the witnesses, out of which are evolved the visions of ecclesiastical faithfulness and apostasy which follow) saying (whose these voices were, is not specified: but we may fairly assume them to have been those of the armies of heaven and the four living-beings, as distinguished from the twenty-four elders which follow), **The Kingdom over the world is become our Lord's and of his Christ** (no supply, such as "*the Kingdom*," is required. The genitive in both cases is one merely of possession), and **He** (no emphasis on *He*, as we are almost sure to lay on it, perhaps from the accent unavoidable in the Hallelujah Chorus of Handel) **shall reign to the ages of the ages** (this announcement necessarily belongs to the time close on the millennial reign: and this is no more than we might expect from the declaration of the strong angel in ch. x. 7). **And the twenty-four elders** (representing the church in glory) **which before God sat upon their thrones, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thanks to Thee, O Lord God the Almighty** (this ascription of thanks is the return for the answer to the prayers of the saints furnished by the judgments of the trumpets), **who art and wast, because Thou hast taken Thy great might and hast reigned. And the nations were angry** (the Septuagint translators begin Ps. xcviii. [our 99th] with these words: "*The Lord reigned, let the people be angry*"), and **Thine anger came, and the time of the dead, to be judged** (another indication that the end is at hand when these words are

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

and to give their reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, the <sup>x</sup> small and the great; <sup>y</sup> and to destroy them which destroy the earth. <sup>19</sup> And <sup>z</sup> the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of his covenant was seen in his temple: and <sup>a</sup> there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, <sup>b</sup> and a great hail.

<sup>x</sup> ch. xix. 5.  
<sup>y</sup> ch. xiii. 10.  
& xviii. 6.

<sup>z</sup> ch. xv. 5, 8.

<sup>a</sup> ch. viii. 6.  
& xvi. 18.

<sup>b</sup> ch. xvi. 21.

XII. <sup>1</sup> And a great sign was seen in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. <sup>19</sup> And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.*

*XII. <sup>1</sup> And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the*

spoken), and [the time] to give their reward to Thy servants the prophets (see especially Matt. x. 41, to which reference seems to be made), and to the saints, and to them that fear Thy name, the small and the great (the three terms together include the whole church), and to destroy the destroyers of the earth (all this looks onward to judgments and acts of God yet to come when the words are spoken. The thanksgiving is not that God hath done all this, but that the hour is come for it all to take place. Before it does, another important series of visions has to be unfolded).

19.] *Concluding, and transitional.* And the temple of God was opened in the heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple (the episode of ch. xi. 1 ff. began with measuring the temple of God, the shadow of things in the heavens; and now, when the time is come for the judgments there indicated to be fulfilled, that temple itself in the heavens is laid open. The ark of the Covenant is seen, the symbol of God's faithfulness in bestowing grace on His people, and inflicting vengeance on His people's enemies. This is evidently a solemn and befitting inauguration of God's final judgments, as it is a conclusion of the series pointed out by the trumpets, which have been inflicted in answer to the prayers of His saints. It is from this temple that the judgments proceeded forth [compare ch. xiv. 15, 17, xv. 5 ff., xvi. 17]; from His inmost and holiest place that those acts of vengeance are wrought which the great multitude in

heaven recognize as faithful and true, ch. xix. 2. The symbolism of this verse, the opening for the first time of the heavenly temple, also indicates of what nature the succeeding visions are to be: that they will relate to God's covenant people and His dealings with them): and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and a great hail (the solemn salvos, so to speak, of the artillery of heaven, with which each series of visions is concluded: see this commented on above, at the beginning of this section).

CHAP. XII.] THE VISION OF THE WOMAN AND THE GREAT RED DRAGON. On the nature of this vision, as introductory of the whole imagery of the latter part of the Apocalypse, I have already remarked at ch. xi. It is only needful now to add, that the principal details of the present section are rather descriptive than strictly prophetic: relating, just as in the prophets the descriptions of Israel and Judah, to things passed and passing, and serving for the purpose of full identification and of giving completeness to the whole vision. And a great (important in its meaning, as well as vast in its appearance) sign (one of those appearances by which God signified to John the revelations of this book, ch. i. 1) was seen in heaven (heaven here is manifestly *not only* the show-place of the visions as seen by the Seer, but has a substantial place in the vision: for below, ver. 7 ff., we have the heaven contrasted with the earth, and the dragon cast out of heaven into the earth.



AUTHORIZED VERSION.

moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: <sup>2</sup> and she being with child cried, *travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.* <sup>3</sup> And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. <sup>4</sup> And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. <sup>5</sup> And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all

AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: <sup>2</sup> and she being with child crieth, <sup>a</sup> *travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.* <sup>3</sup> And another sign was seen in heaven; and behold <sup>b</sup> a great red dragon, <sup>c</sup> having seven heads and ten horns, <sup>d</sup> and upon his heads seven diadems. <sup>4</sup> And <sup>e</sup> his tail draweth (down) the third part <sup>f</sup> of the stars of heaven, <sup>g</sup> and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon standeth <sup>h</sup> before the woman which is ready to be delivered, that when she hath borne, <sup>i</sup> he may devour her child. <sup>5</sup> And she brought forth a man child, <sup>k</sup> who shall rule all the na-

<sup>a</sup> Isa. lxxvi. 7.  
<sup>Gal.</sup> iv. 19.

<sup>b</sup> ch. xvii. 3.

<sup>c</sup> ch. xvii. 9, 10.

<sup>d</sup> ch. xiii. 1.

<sup>e</sup> ch. ix. 10, 10.

<sup>f</sup> ch. xvii. 18.

<sup>g</sup> Dan. viii. 10.

<sup>h</sup> ver. 2.

<sup>i</sup> Exod. i. 16.

<sup>k</sup> Ps. ii. 9.  
ch. ii. 27.  
& xix. 15.

See more there), a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon beneath her feet (see Cant. vi. 10, which seems to be borne in mind), and on her head a crown of twelve stars (the whole symbolism points to the Church, the bride of God: and of course, from the circumstances afterwards related, the Old Test. church, at least at this beginning of the vision. That the blessed Virgin cannot be intended, is plain from the subsequent details, and was recognized by the early expositors. The crown of twelve stars represents the Patriarchs. Victorinus interprets the woman as the ancient church, and the twelve stars as above), and [she is] (or, being) with child [and] crieth out in pangs and tormented to bring forth. And another sign was seen in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon (interpreted below, ver. 9, to be the devil, the ancient serpent: see also vv. 13, 15. He is red perhaps for the combined reasons, of the wasting properties of fire, and the redness of blood: see John viii. 44), having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his head seven diadems (the Dragon being the devil, these symbolic features must be interpreted of the assuming by him of some of those details in the form of the beast in ch. xiii. 1 ff., to whom afterwards he gives his power and his throne: in other words, as indicating that he lays wait for the woman's offspring

in the form of that antichristian power which is afterwards represented by the beast. At the same time, the *seven crowned heads* may possess an appropriateness of their own, belonging as they do to the dragon alone [the beast has the crowns on his horns, ch. xiii. 1]. They may represent, as he is Prince of this world, universality of earthly dominion. The ten horns belong to the fourth beast of Daniel, vii. 7, 20). And his tail draggeth down the third part of the stars of the heaven, and cast them to the earth (so the little horn in Dan. viii. 10, "cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them." The allusion here may be to the devil having persuaded and drawn down to perdition the rebel angels. The magnitude and fury of the dragon are graphically given by the fact of its tail, in its lashing backwards and forwards in fury, sweeping down the stars of heaven). And the dragon standeth (not "stood." Pliny describes the *dragon* as not prone and gliding like a serpent, but walking lofty and erect) before the woman which is about to bear, that when she hath borne he may devour her child (this was what the devil instigated Herod the Great to do, who was the dependant of the Roman Empire. But doubtless the reference is wider than this: even to the whole course of hostility against the Lord during His

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

tions with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. <sup>6</sup> And <sup>1</sup> the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they may feed her there <sup>m</sup> a thousand two hundred and threescore days. <sup>7</sup> And there was war in heaven: <sup>n</sup> Michael and his angels

*nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. <sup>6</sup> And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. <sup>7</sup> And there was war in heaven: Michael and his*

1 ver. 4.

m ch. xi. 3.

n Dan. x. 13,  
21. & xii. 1.

humiliation: see below). **And she bore a male son, who shall rule** (literally, shepherd, i. e. order and guide) **all the nations with a rod of iron** (these words, cited verbatim from the Septuagint version of the Messianic Psalm ii., leave no possibility of doubt, who is here intended. The man child is the Lord Jesus Christ, and none other. And this result is a most important one for the fixity of reference of the whole prophecy. It forms one of those landmarks by which the legitimacy of various interpretations may be tested; and of which we may say, notwithstanding the contradiction sure to be given to the saying, that every interpretation which oversteps their measure is thereby convicted of error. Again, the exigencies of this passage require that the birth should be understood literally and historically, of that Birth of which all Christians know. And be it observed, that this rule of interpretation is no confident assertion of mine, as has been represented, but a result from the identifying use of words of the prophetic Scripture, spoken of Him who will not suffer His honour to be given to another): **and her child was caught up to God and to his throne** (i. e. after a conflict with the Prince of this world, who came and tried Him but found nothing in Him, the Son of the woman was taken up to heaven and sat on the right hand of God. Words can hardly be plainer than these. It surely is but needful to set against them, thus understood, the interpretation which would regard them as fulfilled by the "mighty issue of the consummated birth of a son of the church, a baptized emperor, to political supremacy in the Roman empire," "united with the solemn public profession of the divinity of the Son of man"). **And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath there (so literally) a place prepared from (so literally: the source of the preparation being His command) God, that they**

(the subject to the verb is left indefinite. In ver. 14 below, it is simply passive, where she *is nourished*) **may nourish her there for a thousand two hundred and sixty days** (the whole of this verse is anticipatory: the same incident being repeated with its details and in its own place in the order of the narrative below, vv. 13 ff. See there the comment and interpretation. The fact of its being here inserted by anticipation is very instructive as to that which now next follows, as not being consecutive in time after the flight of the woman, but occurring before it, and in fact referred to now in the prophecy as leading to that pursuit of the woman by the dragon, which led to it). **7 ff.] And there was war in heaven** (we now enter upon a mysterious series of events in the world of spirits, with regard to which merely fragmentary hints are given us in the Scriptures. In the Old Test. we find the adversary Satan in heaven. In Job i., ii., he appears before God as the Tempter of His saints: in Zech. iii. we have him accusing Joshua the high priest in God's presence. Again our Lord in Luke x. 18 exclaims, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven," where see note. Compare also John xii. 31. So that this casting down of Satan from the office of accuser in heaven was evidently connected with the great justifying work of redemption. His voice is heard before God no more: the day of acceptance in Christ Jesus has dawned. And his angels, those rebel spirits whom he led away, are cast down with him, into the earth, where now the conflict is waging during the short time which shall elapse between the Ascension and the second Advent, when he shall be bound. All this harmonizes together: and though we know no more of the matter, we have at least this sign that our knowledge, as far as it goes, is sound,—that the few hints given us do not, when thus interpreted, contradict one another, but agree

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. <sup>9</sup> And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. <sup>10</sup> And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. <sup>11</sup> And they overcame him by the blood of

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

fighting <sup>o</sup> with the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, <sup>8</sup> and prevailed not; nor was even their place found any more in heaven. <sup>9</sup> And <sup>p</sup> the great dragon was cast out, <sup>q</sup> the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, <sup>r</sup> which deceiveth the whole world: <sup>s</sup> he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. <sup>10</sup> And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, <sup>t</sup> Now is come the salvation and the might and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: because the accuser of our brethren is cast down, <sup>u</sup> which accuseth them before our God day and night. <sup>11</sup> And <sup>x</sup> they overcame

<sup>o</sup> ver. 3. ch. xx. 2.  
<sup>p</sup> Luke x. 18. John xii. 31.  
<sup>q</sup> Gen. iii. 1, 4. ch. xx. 2.  
<sup>r</sup> ch. xx. 3.  
<sup>s</sup> ch. ix. 1.  
<sup>t</sup> ch. xi. 15. & xix. 1.  
<sup>u</sup> Job i. 9. & ii. 5. Zech. iii. 1.  
<sup>x</sup> Rom. viii. 33, 37. & xvi. 20.

as portions of one whole. The war here spoken of appears in some of its features in the book of Daniel, ch. x. 13, 21, xii. 1. In Jude 9 also, we find Michael the adversary of the devil in the matter of the saints of God; Michael ("one of the chief princes," Dan. x. 13: "your prince," i. e. of the Jewish nation, ib. ver. 21: "the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people," ib. xii. 1: "the archangel," Jude 9: not to be identified with Christ, any more than any other of the great angels in this book. Such identification here would confuse hopelessly the actors in this heavenly scene. Satan's being cast out of heaven to the earth is the result, not of his contest with the Lord Himself, of which it is only an incident leading to a new phase, but of the appointed conflict with his faithful fellow-angels led on by the archangel Michael. The expression, *his angels*, in both cases requires a nearer correspondence in the two chiefs than is found between Satan and the Son of God) and his angels to war with the dragon, and the dragon warred and his angels, and [they] (or, *he*: the reading is doubtful) prevailed not, nor was even (this brings in a climax) their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast down, the ancient serpent (in allusion to the history in Gen. iii. Re-

member also that St. John had related the saying of our Lord, that the devil was "*a murderer from the beginning*," the cognate term in the original to ancient here), he who is called the devil and Satan, he who deceiveth the whole [inhabited] world, was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast with him (I would appeal, in passing, to the solemnity of the terms here used, and the particularity of the designation, and ask whether it is possible to understand this of the mere casting down of paganism from the throne of the Roman empire? whether the words themselves do not vindicate their plain literal sense, as further illustrated by the song of rejoicing which follows?). And I heard a great voice in heaven (proceeding apparently from the elders, representing the church [compare our brethren below]: but it is left uncertain) saying, Now is come the salvation and the might and the Kingdom of our God and the power of His Christ (i. e. the realization of all these: *the salvation of our God* being, as so often, that salvation which belongs to God as its Author: see Luke iii. 6): because the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth (the present participle implies the usual habit, though that his office was now at an end) them before our God by day and by night. And they con-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; <sup>y</sup> and they loved not their lives unto the death. <sup>12</sup> Therefore <sup>z</sup> rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. <sup>a</sup> Woe to <sup>†</sup> the earth and the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, <sup>b</sup> because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. <sup>13</sup> And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted <sup>c</sup> the woman which brought forth the man child. <sup>14</sup> <sup>d</sup> And to the woman were given [the] two wings of the great eagle, <sup>e</sup> that she

y Luke xiv. 26.

z Ps. xvi. 11.  
Isa. xlix. 13.  
ch. xviii. 20.  
a ch. viii. 13.  
& xi. 10.  
† So all our  
old MSS. and  
versions.

b ch. x. 6.

c ver. 5.

d Exod. xix. 4.  
Deut. xxxii.  
11.

e ver. 6.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. <sup>12</sup> Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. <sup>13</sup> And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. <sup>14</sup> And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the

quered him on account of the blood of the Lamb (i. e. by virtue of that blood having been shed; not as in A. V., "by the blood," which is an ungrammatical rendering. The meaning is far more significant; their victory over Satan was grounded in, was a consequence of, His having shed his precious blood: without that, the adversary's charges against them would have been unanswerable. It is remarkable, that the rabbinical books give a tradition that Satan accuses men all the days of the year, *except on the Day of Atonement*) and on account of the word of their testimony (the strict sense of the preposition must again be kept. It is *because* they have given a faithful testimony, even unto death, that they are victorious: this is *their* part, their appropriation of and standing in the virtue of that blood of the Lamb. Without both these, victory would not have been theirs: both together form its ground); and they loved not their life unto death (i. e. they carried their not-love of their life even unto death). For this cause (viz., because the dragon is cast down: as is shewn by the contrast below) rejoice, ye heavens and they that dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil is come down to you (the earth and sea) having great wrath (the enmity, which was manifested as his natural state towards Christ, ver. 4, being now kindled into wrath), because he knoweth that he hath but a short season (i. e. because the Lord cometh quickly, and then

the period of his active hostility against the church and the race whom Christ has redeemed will be at an end: he will be bound and cast into the pit. Until then, he is carrying it on, in ways which the prophecy goes on to detail). And when the dragon saw that he was cast down to the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the male child (the narrative at ver. 6 is again taken up and given more in detail. There, the reason of the woman's flight is matter of inference: here, it is plainly expressed, and the manner of the flight also is related). And there were given (in the usual apocalyptic sense, i. e. granted by God for His purposes) to the woman [the] two wings of the great eagle (the figure is taken from Old Test. expressions used by God in reference to the flight of Israel from Egypt. The most remarkable of these is in Exod. xix. 4, "I bare you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto myself." So also Deuteronomy in the ref. But the articles are not to be taken as identifying the eagle with the figure used in those places, which would be most unnatural: much less must they be supposed to identify this eagle with that in ch. viii. 13, with which it has no connexion. The articles are simply generic. With these Old Test. references before us, we can hardly be justified in pressing the figure of the eagle's wings to an interpretation in the fulfilment of the prophecy, or in making it mean that the flight took place under the protection of the Roman eagles, as some

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. <sup>15</sup> And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. <sup>16</sup> And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. <sup>17</sup> And the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

might fly <sup>f</sup> into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished <sup>g</sup> for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. <sup>15</sup> And the serpent <sup>h</sup> cast out of his mouth after the woman water as a river, that he might cause her to be carried away by the river. <sup>16</sup> And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed down the river which the dragon cast out of his mouth. <sup>17</sup> And

<sup>f</sup> ch. xvii. 3.

<sup>g</sup> Dan. vii. 25. & xii. 7.

<sup>h</sup> Isa. lix. 19.

have done), that she might fly into the wilderness (the flight of Israel out of Egypt is still borne in mind) to her place (prepared of God, ver. 6: so also in Exod. xxiii. 20), where she is nourished (as God nourished Israel with manna in the wilderness, see Deut. viii. 3, 16) a time and times and half a time (i. e. 3½ years; 42 months, ch. xi. 2; 1260 days, ver. 6 and ch. xi. 3) from (importing "safe from," "far from," "hidden from") the face of the dragon. And the serpent cast out of his mouth after the woman water as a river, that he might make her to be borne away by the river. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed down the river which the dragon cast out of his mouth (in passing to the interpretation, we cannot help being struck with the continued analogy between this prophecy and the history of the Exodus. There we have the flight into the wilderness, there the feeding in the wilderness, as already remarked: there again the forty-two stations, corresponding to the forty-two months of the three years and half of this prophecy: there too the miraculous passage of the Red Sea, not indeed in strict correspondence with this last feature, but at least suggestive of it. These analogies themselves suggest caution in the application of the words of the prophecy; and in this direction. The church in the wilderness of old was not, as some expositors would represent this woman, the pure church of God: His veritable servants were hidden in the midst of that church, as much as that church itself was withdrawn from the enmity of Pharaoh. And, it is to be noted, it was that very church herself

which afterwards, when seated at Jerusalem, forsook her Lord and Husband, and committed adultery with the kings of the earth, and became drunk with the blood of the saints. It would seem then that we must not understand the woman of the invisible spiritual church of Christ, nor her flight into the wilderness of the withdrawal of God's true servants from the eyes of the world. They indeed have been just as much withdrawn from the eyes of the world at all times, and will continue so till the great manifestation of the sons of God. I own that, considering the analogies and the language used, I am much more disposed to interpret the persecution of the woman by the dragon of the various persecutions by Jews which followed the Ascension, and her flight into the wilderness of the gradual withdrawal of the church and her agency from Jerusalem and Judæa, finally consummated by the flight to the mountains on the approaching siege, commanded by our Lord Himself. And then the river which the dragon sent out of his mouth after the woman might be variously understood,—of the Roman armies which threatened to sweep away Christianity in the wreck of the Jewish nation,—or of the persecutions which followed the church into her retreats, but eventually became absorbed by the civil power turning Christian,—or of the Jewish nation itself, banded together against Christianity wherever it appeared, but eventually itself becoming powerless against it by its dispersion and ruin,—or again, of the influx of heretical opinions from the Pagan philosophies which tended to swamp the true faith. I confess that not one of these seems to me satisfactorily



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

1 Gen. iii. 15.  
ch. xi. 7. &  
xiii. 7.  
k ch. xiv. 12.

1 1 Cor. ii. 1.  
1 John v. 10.  
ch. i. 2, 9. &  
vi. 9. & xx. 4.

the dragon was wroth with the woman, <sup>i</sup> and departed to make war with the rest of her seed, <sup>k</sup> which keep the commandments of God, and have <sup>l</sup> the testimony of Jesus †.

*dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

† Christ is omitted by almost all our MSS. and versions: for Jesus, the Sinaitic MS. has God.

to answer the conditions: nor do we gain any thing by their combination. But any thing within reasonable regard for the analogies and symbolism of the text seems better than the now too commonly received historical interpretation, with its wild fancies and arbitrary assignment of words and figures. As to the time indicated by the 1260 days or 3½ years, the interpretations given have not been convincing, nor even specious. We may observe thus much in this place: that if we regard this prophecy as including long historic periods, we are driven to one of two resources with regard to these numbers: either we must adopt the *year-day* theory (that which reckons a day for a year, and consequently a month for thirty years,—and should reckon a year for 360 or 365 years), or we must believe the numbers to have merely a symbolical and mystical, not a chronological force. If [and this second alternative is best stated in an inverse form] we regard the periods mentioned as to be literally accepted, then the prophecy cannot refer to long historic periods, but must be limited to a succession of incidents concentrated in one place and space of time either in the far past or in the far future. Of all prophecies about which these questions can be raised, the present is the one which least satisfactorily admits of such literal interpretation and its consequences. Its actors, the woman and the dragon, are beyond all controversy mystical personages: one of them is expressly interpreted for us to be the devil: respecting the other there can be little doubt that she is the Church of God: her seed being, as expressly interpreted to be, God's Christian people. The conflict then is that between Satan and the church. Its first great incident is the birth and triumph of the Son of God and of man. Is it likely that a few days or years will limit the duration of a prophecy confessedly of such wide import? I own it seems to me that this vision, even if it stood alone, is decisive against the literal acceptance of the stated periods. Rejecting that, how do we

stand with regard to the other alternative in its two forms? Granting for the moment the year-day principle, will it help us here? If we take the flight into the wilderness as happening at any time between the Ascension, A.D. 30, and the destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70, 1260 years will bring us to some time between A.D. 1290 and 1330: a period during which no event can be pointed out as putting an end to the wilderness-state of the church. If again we enlarge our limit for the former event, and bring it down as late as Elliott does, i. e. to the period between the fourth and seventh centuries, we fall into all the difficulties which beset his most unsatisfactory explanation of the man-child and his being caught up to God's throne, and besides, into this one: that if the occultation of true religion [the condition of the invisible church] was the beginning of the wilderness-state, then either the open establishment of the Protestant churches was the end of the wilderness-state of concealment, or those churches are no true churches: either of which alternatives would hardly be allowed by that author. And if on the other hand we desert the year-day principle, and say that these defined and constantly recurring periods are not to be pressed, but indicate only long spaces of time thus pointed out mystically or analogically, we seem to incur danger of missing the prophetic sense, and leaving unfixed that which apparently the Spirit of God intended us to ascertain). And the dragon was wroth at the woman and departed (from his pursuit of her) to make war with the rest of her seed, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus (as in ch. vi. 9; see note there. Notice as important elements for the interpretation, 1) That the woman has seed besides the Man-child who was caught up to God's throne [for this is the reference of the rest], who are not only distinct from herself, but who do not accompany her in her flight into the wilderness: 2) That those persons are described as being they who keep the commandments of God and

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

XIII. <sup>1</sup> And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. <sup>2</sup> And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

XIII. <sup>1</sup> And † he stood upon the sand of the sea. † *So all our oldest MSS.*

And I saw <sup>a</sup> a wild-beast coming up out of the sea, <sup>b</sup> having ten horns and seven heads, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. <sup>2</sup> <sup>c</sup> And the wild-beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, <sup>d</sup> and his

<sup>a</sup> Dan. vii. 2, 7.

<sup>b</sup> ch. xii. 3. & xvii. 3, 9, 12.

<sup>c</sup> Dan. vii. 6.

<sup>d</sup> Dan. vii. 5.

have the testimony of Jesus: 3) That during the woman's time of her being fed in the wilderness, the dragon is making war, not against her, but against this remnant of her seed: 4) That by the form of expression here, descriptive of habit, and occurring at the breaking off of the vision as regards the general description of the dragon's agency, it is almost necessarily implied, that the woman, while hidden in the wilderness from the dragon's wrath, goes on bringing forth sons and daughters thus described.

If I mistake not, the above considerations are fatal to the view which makes the flight of the woman into the wilderness consist in the withdrawal of God's true servants from the world and from open recognition. For thus she must be identical with this remnant of her seed, and would herself be the object of the dragon's hostile warfare, at the very time when, by the terms of the prophecy, she is safely hidden from it. I own that I have been led by these circumstances to think whether after all the woman may represent, not the invisible church of God's true people which under all conditions of the world must be known only to Him, but the *true visible Church*; that Church which in its divinely prescribed form as existing at Jerusalem was the mother of our Lord according to the flesh, and which continued as established by our Lord and His Apostles, in unbroken unity during the first centuries, but which as time went on was broken up by evil men and evil doctrines, and has remained, unseen, unrealized, her unity an article of faith, not of sight, but still multiplying her seed, those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus, in various sects and distant countries, waiting the day for her comely order and oneness again to be manifested—the day when she shall “come up out of the wilderness, leaning on her Beloved;” when our Lord's prayer for the unity of His being accomplished, the world

shall believe that the Father has sent Him. If we are disposed to carry out this idea, we might see the great realization of the flight into the wilderness in the final severance of the Eastern and Western churches in the seventh century, and the flood east after the woman by the dragon in the irruption of the Mahometan armies. But this, though not less satisfactory than the other interpretations, is as unsatisfactory. The latter part of the vision yet waits its clearing up).

CHAP. XIII. 1—10.] THE VISION OF THE BEAST THAT CAME UP OUT OF THE SEA. See Dan. vii. 7, 8, 19—27, to which continual reference will be made in the Commentary. And he (i. e. the dragon) stood upon the sand of the sea (see Dan. vii. 2, where the four winds of heaven are striving upon the great sea); and I saw out of the sea a wild-beast (so the word used here and in the next description imports. It is not the same, and should be carefully distinguished from, that unhappily rendered *beasts* in our A. V. in the vision of ch. iv. and since) coming up, having ten horns (now put first, because they are crowned. The ten horns are found also in the fourth beast of Daniel, vii. 7) and seven heads, and upon his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy (whether we read singular, or, as some MSS., plural, the meaning will be the same—on each head a name. The heads are [see for the interpretation ch. xvii. 9, 10, where it is given by the angel] Kings, in the widest acceptation of the word; Kings, as representing their kingdoms; not necessarily individual Kings (see as above):—the name or names of blasphemy, the divine titles given to those Kings, “Lord of the whole earth,” and the like: in the Roman form, “Deus” or “Divns.” Hereafter, when the great harlot succeeds to the character and symbolic details of the beast, this is carried yet further). And the beast which I saw

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

e Dan. vii. 4. feet were as the feet of a bear, <sup>e</sup> and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: f ch. xii. 9. and <sup>f</sup> the dragon gave to it his power, <sup>g</sup> and his throne, <sup>h</sup> and great authority. <sup>3</sup> And [<sup>†</sup> I saw] one of its heads <sup>1</sup> as it were wounded to death; and the stroke of its death was healed: and <sup>k</sup> the whole earth wondered after the beast. <sup>4</sup> And they worshipped the dragon, because he gave his power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, <sup>1</sup> Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? <sup>5</sup> And there was given unto him <sup>m</sup> a mouth speaking great and blasphemous

*his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. <sup>3</sup> And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. <sup>4</sup> And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? <sup>5</sup> And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies;*

was like to a leopard, and its feet as of a bear (see *reff.*), and its mouth as the mouth of a lion (thus uniting in itself the three previous kingdoms of Dan. vii. 4 ff., the first of which was like a lion, the second like a bear, the third like a leopard; and in consequence representing, not the Roman Empire merely, but the aggregate of the Empires of this world as opposed to Christ and His kingdom). And the dragon gave to it his might and his throne and great power (i. e. this beast, this earthly persecuting power, was the vicegerent and instrument of the devil, the prince of this world, and used by him for his purposes of hostility against the remnant of the seed of the woman). And [I saw] one among his heads as it were wounded unto death (this seems to represent the Roman pagan Empire, which having long been a head of the beast, was crushed and to all appearance exterminated), and the stroke of its death was healed (in the establishment of the Christian Roman Empire). The period now treated of is the same, introduced here by anticipation, but hereafter to be described in detail, as that during which the woman sits on the beast and guides it. Very many Commentators have explained these seven heads as individual kings, and supposed the one who was wounded to death to be Nero, and these last words to allude to the idea that Nero would return from the dead and become antichrist. But this idea was certainly not prevalent in this

form at the time when the Apocalypse was written. Tacitus merely relates, that there were many rumours about Nero's death, and that in consequence many feigned or believed that he was alive, and that on the strength of this, a Pseudo-Nero arose in the East. The first who mentions the idea of Nero *returning from the dead*, is Augustine, in explaining 2 Thess. ii. 3 ff. But it is observable that Augustine does not connect the idea with the Apocalypse. This is first done by Sulpicius Severus, and completed by Victorinus, whose very words betray the origin of the idea having been from this passage itself). And the whole earth wondered after (wondered at, as they followed, or gazed, after) the beast, and worshipped the dragon, because he gave the (or, *his*) power to the beast, and worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like to the beast? And who is able to war with him (these words are a sort of parody, in their blasphemy, on ascriptions of praise to God: compare Exod. xv. 11; Ps. xxxv. 10; lxxi. 19; exlii. 5; Isa. xl. 18, 25; xlii. 5; Jer. xxix. 20 [xlix. 19]; Micah vii. 18: they represent to us the relapse into all the substantial blasphemies of paganism under the resuscitated Empire of Rome, and the retention of pagan titles and forms. I may remark, that nothing in those words finds any representative in the history of the times of the Pagan Empire)? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great and blasphemous things (so we read

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. <sup>6</sup> And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. <sup>7</sup> And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. <sup>8</sup> And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. <sup>9</sup> If any man have

mous things; and authority was given unto him to work <sup>n</sup> forty-two months. <sup>6</sup> And he opened his mouth for blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name, <sup>o</sup> and his tabernacle, <sup>†</sup> which dwell in heaven. <sup>7</sup> And it was given unto him <sup>p</sup> to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: <sup>q</sup> and authority was given him over <sup>†</sup> every tribe and people and tongue and nation. <sup>8</sup> And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, [<sup>†</sup> every one] <sup>r</sup> whose name is not written in the book of life of the Lamb which is slain <sup>s</sup> from the foundation of the world. <sup>9</sup> <sup>†</sup> If any hath an ear, let

n ch. xi. 2. & xii. 6.

o John i. 14. Col. ii. 9.

† and is omitted by all our oldest MSS.

p Dan. vii. 21. ch. xi. 7. & xii. 17.

q ch. xi. 18. & xvii. 15.

† So all our ancient MSS.

† Not expressed in the original.

r Exod. xxxii. 32. Dan. xii. 1. Phil. iv. 3. ch. iii. 5. & xx. 12, 16. & xxi. 27.

s ch. xvii. 8.

† ch. ii. 7.

of the little horn in Daniel vii. 8): and there was given to it power to work (this is more probably the meaning than "to spend" merely) forty-two months (the well-known period of the agency of antichrist;  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years; 1260 days: see Introduction), and he opened his mouth (spoken of the commencement of a series of discourses. These vv. 6, 7, in fact expand into detail that which ver. 5 gave compendiously) for blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, which dwell in heaven (the apposition is strange, but if the *and* must be omitted, the meaning is to enhance the enormity of the blasphemy by bringing out the lofty nature of God's holy Name and dwelling-place). And there was given to it (or him: so throughout) to make war with the saints and to conquer them (see ch. xi. 7, of which this is a wider statement): and there was given to it power over every tribe and people and tongue and nation (viz. universal empire). And all shall worship it who dwell upon the earth, [every one] whose (the change into the singular arises from resolving all into its component individuals) name is not written in the book of life of the Lamb which is slain from the foundation of the world (these last words are ambiguously placed. They may belong either to *is written*, or to *is slain*. The former connexion is taken by many. But the other

is far more obvious and natural: and had it not been for the apparent difficulty of the sense thus conveyed, the going so far back as to *is written* for a connexion would never have been thought of. The difficulty of the saying is but apparent: 1 Pet. i. 19, 20 says more fully the same thing. That death of Christ which was fore-ordained from the foundation of the world, is said to have *taken place* in the counsels of Him with whom the end and the beginning are one. Ch. xvii. 8, which is cited by De Wette as decisive for his view, is irrelevant. Of course, where simply the writing in the book of life from the foundation of the world is expressed, no other element is to be introduced: but it does not therefore follow, that where, as here, other elements are by the construction introduced, that, and that alone is to be understood).

9, 10.] These verses bear various meanings, according to the reading which we adopt. If the ordinary text, represented in the A. V., be taken, they express a consolation to the persecuted saints in the form of a law of retribution: the judgment of God will overtake the persecutors, and in that form in which their persecution was exercised. If we take the reading in the text, they form a prophetic declaration how it shall fare with the saints in the day of persecution, and declare also that in holy suffering of captivity and death consists their faith and patience. The latter appears to



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

† *The readings in this passage are in great confusion. That in the text is, as far as can be gathered, that of all our ancient MSS. One confusing element is, that in two, the Parisian and Sinaitic, the transcribers have passed by mistake from the first occurrence of captivity to the second. But no one of the most ancient MSS. reads as the A. V., and apparently of the more modern, only that one out of which Erasmus constructed the present received text.*  
 † *The readings here also are confused. That in the text (see note) is found in the Alexandrine MS.*

him hear. <sup>10</sup> †<sup>u</sup> If any is for captivity, into captivity he goeth: †<sup>x</sup> if any to be slain with the sword, he must be slain with the sword.  
<sup>v</sup> Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

<sup>11</sup> And I beheld another wild-

*an ear, let him hear. <sup>10</sup> He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. <sup>11</sup> And I beheld another beast coming up*

*x Gen. ix. 6. Matt. xxvi. 52 y ch. xiv. 12.*

me, both from critical and contextual considerations, by far the more eligible. Thus we have what is so frequent in this book, an Old Test. citation (see below): and all falls into its place in connexion with the victorious war of the beast against the saints: whereas the other declaration is at least out of place in the context.—If any man hath an ear, let him hear (this notice is given to bespeak solemn attention to what follows, as warning Christians of their fate in the days of the beast's persecution). If any one is for captivity, into captivity he goeth: if any to be slain with the sword (i. e. it is necessary that, as the other reading supplies), he must be slain with the sword (so Jer. xv. 2, "Such as are for death, to death: and such as are for the sword, to the sword: and such as are for the famine, to the famine: and such as are for captivity, to captivity:" compare also Jer. xliii. 11 and Zech. xi. 9. As that was the order and process of God's anger in his judgments on his people of old, so shall the issue be with the saints in the war of persecution which the beast shall wage with them). Here is (viz. in the endurance of these persecutions) the endurance and the faith of the saints.

11—17.] THE SECOND WILD-BEAST, THE REVIVER AND THE UPHOLDER OF THE FIRST. It may be well to premise a few remarks, tending to the right understanding of this portion of the prophecy. 1) These two beasts are identical as to genus: they are both wild-beasts, ravaging powers, hostile to God's flock and fold. 2) They are diverse in origin. The former came up out of the sea: that is, if we go back to the symbolism of Daniel, was an empire, rising up out of confusion into order and life: the latter comes out of the earth: i. e. we may not unreasonably say, arises out of human society and its progress: which, as interpreted by the context, will import its origin and gradual de-

velopment during the reign and progress of the secular empire denoted by the former beast. 3) The second beast is, in its zeal and action, entirely subsidiary to the first. It wields its authority, works miracles in its support, causes men to make and to worship its image; nay, itself is lost in the splendour and importance of the other. 4) An important distinction exists between the two beasts, in that this second one has two horns like a lamb. In other words, this second beast puts on a mild and lamb-like appearance, which the other did not. But it speaks as a dragon: its words, which carry its real character, are fierce and unrelenting: while it professes that which is gentle, its behests are cruel. And now I may appeal to the reader, whether all these requisites do not meet in that great wasting Power which arose, not out of anarchy and conquest, but out of men's daily life and habits, out of and in the presence of the last form of the secular power, which was the Empire of Pagan Rome; I mean, the sacerdotal persecuting power, which, gentle in its aspect and professions, was yet cruel in its actions; which did all the deeds of the Empire, in its presence, which kept up its image, its laws, its formulae, its privileges; which, coming in as it did by a corrupt and ambitious priesthood, deceived by its miracles the dwellers on earth, and by them maintained the image of the despotic secular power? Surely it is this Latin Christianity, in its ecclesiastico-secular form, not identical with, but as preparing the way for, the great apostasy, helping, so to speak, to place the woman on the beast, as in ch. xvii., that is here depicted before us. It is this which, owing its power in the main to imposture and unwarrantably assumed spiritual authority, deserves best the name of the false prophet, expressly given to this second beast in ch. xix. 20. Nor would I limit the interpretation, as has generally been done,



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. <sup>12</sup> And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. <sup>13</sup> And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

i. 10, 12.

† from heaven is omitted by two out of our three most ancient MSS., and almost all the rest.

beast <sup>z</sup> coming up out of the earth; <sup>z</sup> ch. xl. 7. and it had two horns like a lamb, and it spake like a dragon. <sup>12</sup> And it exerciseth all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, <sup>a</sup> whose deadly wound was <sup>a</sup> ver. 3. healed; <sup>13</sup> and <sup>b</sup> worketh great miracles, <sup>c</sup> so that it even maketh fire come down † on the earth in the

<sup>b</sup> Deut. xlii. 1, 3. Matt. xxiv. 24. <sup>c</sup> Thess. ii. 9. ch. xvi. 14. <sup>d</sup> 1 Kings xvlii. 38. <sup>e</sup> 2 Kings

by dividing off Pagan from Christian. Primarily, this second beast plainly sets forth the Pagan sacerdotal power; this it was that made the image of the Emperors, that compelled Christians to worship that image, that wrought signs and wonders by its omens and magic. But as the first beast, still subsisting, has passed into a so-called Christian Roman Empire, so has the second beast into a so-called Christian priesthood, the veritable inheritor of pagan rites, images, and superstitions; actually the continuators, under a different name, of the same worship in the same places; that of the Virgin for that of Venus, Cosmas and Damian for Romulus and Remus, the image of Peter for that of Jupiter Tonans: lamb-like in profession, with the names and appearances of Christianity, but dragon-like in word and act. And this was surely never more strikingly shewn than at the times when I am writing, when the Papal priesthood is zealously combining in the suicidal act of upholding the temporal power, as necessary to the spiritual pre-eminence of their "Lord God the Pope." So that I believe the interpretation of the second beast to be, the sacerdotal persecuting power, pagan and Christian, as the first is the secular persecuting power, pagan or Christian. I conceive the view which would limit it to the priesthood of Paganism quite insufficient for the importance of the prophecy; while that of Elliott, &c., which would limit it to the priesthood of the Papacy, fails notably in giving a meaning to its acts as here described, the making an image to the beast and causing men to worship it. And I saw another wild-beast coming up out of the earth (see the preceding note), and it had two horns like a lamb (i. e. like the two horns of a lamb: see ref. It is quite

true that the absence of the definite article before the word **lamb** forbids the idea that a direct comparison is intended between this lamb-like beast, and the Lamb on Mount Zion: but it does not follow from this that no reference is made to that Lamb in the choice of the animal to which this beast is compared. I believe the choice is made to set forth the hybrid character of this second beast: see more below. The *number* may perhaps be of no special import, but merely inserted to complete the similarity: it, as a lamb has, had two horns), and it spoke as a dragon (here again, we cannot doubt that the term is chosen on account of the dragon which has been before mentioned. It is no objection to this, that we do not hear of that dragon speaking: the character of the animal explains what kind of speech is meant, and the acts of the dragon were of that kind. And as to this second beast, though its appearance and profession are sacerdotal, its words and acts are devilish. The whole description strongly recalls to our mind our Lord's warning, "Beware of false prophets which come unto you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves," Matt. vii. 15). And it worketh all the power (performs all the acts of authority) of the first beast in his presence (while the first beast is subsisting and beholding; and as the expression seems to shew, being in a relation to it of serving and upholding), and maketh the earth and those that dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose wound of death was healed (this was formerly, ver. 4, described as the reason why the world wondered after the former beast): and worketh great miracles, so that (it is notorious enough that the great arm of

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

sight of men, <sup>14</sup>and <sup>d</sup>deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, <sup>e</sup>because of the miracles which it was given him to work in the sight of the beast; ordering them that dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast, which hath the wound by the sword, <sup>f</sup>and did live. <sup>15</sup>And it was given him to give breath unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should even speak, <sup>g</sup>and should cause that as many as worship not the image of the beast should be killed. <sup>16</sup>And he causeth all men, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond,

<sup>14</sup>and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. <sup>15</sup>And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. <sup>16</sup>And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and

support of the sacerdotal power, pagan and papal, has ever been the claim to work miracles) it even maketh fire to come down from the heaven to the earth in the sight of men (it is probable that this special miracle is mentioned to recall the spirit and power of Elias, and shew how the false prophet shall counterfeit the true), and deceiveth those who dwell on the earth on account of (the words express not the instrument, but the ground of the deceit: the imposture succeeds, because of . . . ) the miracles which it was given to him to work in the presence of the beast, ordering those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who hath the stroke of the sword, and lived (this part of the prophecy seems to describe the acts of the pagan sacerdotal power then presently to follow. See more below). And it was given to him to give breath (or, spirit; by inference, life) to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should even speak, and should cause that as many as do not worship the image of the beast should be slain. The Seer is now describing facts which history substantiates to us in their literal fulfilment. The image of Caesar was every where that which men were made to worship: it was before this that the Christian martyrs were brought to the test, and put to death if they refused the act of adoration. The words of Pliny's letter to Trajan are express on the point: "When they

called on the gods at my dictation, and offered incense and wine to thine image (which for this purpose I had ordered to be brought with those of the gods), and besides cursed Christ, which it is said that no true Christian can be compelled to do, I thought fit to dismiss them." Above he had said, "those who persevered [in their Christianity] I ordered to be led to execution." And if it be said as an objection to this, that it is not an image of the Emperor but of the beast itself which is spoken of, the answer is very simple, that as the Evangelist himself, in ch. xvii. 11, does not hesitate to identify one of the seven kings with the beast itself, so we may fairly assume that the image of the beast for the time being would be the image of the reigning Emperor.

It is not so easy to assign a meaning to the giving life and speech to the image of the beast. Victorinus gives a curious explanation: "he shall also cause that a golden image to Antichrist shall be erected in the temple at Jerusalem, and a fallen angel shall enter and thence utter voices and give oracles." The allusion probably is to some lying wonders permitted to the Pagan priests to try the faith of God's people. We cannot help, as we read, thinking of the moving images, and winking and speaking pictures, so often employed for purposes of imposture by their far less excusable Papal successors. And he (i. e. the second beast, more naturally than the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: <sup>17</sup> and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. <sup>18</sup> Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is

† <sup>h</sup> to receive a mark on their right hand, or on their forehead: <sup>17</sup> † that no one should be able to buy or sell, save he that hath the mark, † <sup>i</sup> the name of the beast, <sup>k</sup> or the number of his name. <sup>18</sup> <sup>1</sup> Here is wisdom: let him that hath understanding calculate <sup>m</sup> the number of the beast: <sup>n</sup> for it is the number of a man; and

† Literally, that they give to them a mark, &c.: see note.  
 h ch. xiv. 9. & xix. 20. & xx. 4.  
 † and is omitted by two out of our three most ancient MSS.  
 † or is omitted by the Alexandrine MS, the later Vatican, and nearly all the later MSS. The Parisian MS. reads, the mark of the name:  
 i ch. xvii. 9.

the Sinitic, the mark of the beast, or his name.  
 m ch. xv. 2. n ch. xxi. 17.

i ch. xiv. 11.

k ch. xv. 2.

i ch. xvii. 9.

image) maketh all men, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the bond, that they should give them (i. e. stamp on them. The subject to the verb is left uncertain: it will naturally be understood to be, those whose office it is) a mark (such a mark as masters set on their slaves, or monarchs on their soldiers, a brand, stamped or burnt in, see note on Gal. vi. 17. We read in 3 Macc. ii. 29, of Ptolemy Philopater, that he ordered the Jews in Alexandria to be forcibly enrolled, and when enrolled, to be marked with a red-hot brand on their body, with the sign of Bacchus the Ivy-wearer. And Philo mentions idolaters who confessed their idolatry by branding themselves with indelible marks) on their right hand (on which part soldiers were branded), or upon their forehead (i. e. in some conspicuous part of the body, that all may see it: or as Augustine says, "in the forehead for profession: in the hand for operation"), and that no one should be able to buy or to sell, except he who has the mark, the name of the beast, or the number of his name (either in the name stamped in letters, or in the number of the name thus stamped, i. e. the number which those letters make when added together according to their numerical value. The practice of thus calculating the numerical value of the letters in names was widely prevalent: see the instances collected by Mr. Elliott, vol. iii. pp. 220 ff.: and more below.

This particular in the prophetic description seems to point to the commercial and spiritual interdicts which have, both by Pagan and by Papal persecutors, been laid on non-conformity: from even before the interdict of Diocletian, through those of the middle ages [both which ran in nearly these very terms], down to the last re-

maining civil disabilities imposed on non-conformity in modern Papal or Protestant countries. For these last have their share in the enormities of the first and second beasts, in as far as they adopt or continue their practices.

With regard to the circumstance of the imposition of the mark, I conceive that with the latitude here given, viz., that it may be the name or the number, and having regard to the analogy of the mark inscribed on the saints [ch. xiii. 1: compare ch. vii. 1 ff.], we need not be anxious to find other than a general and figurative interpretation. As it is clear that in the case of the servants of God no actual visible mark is intended, so it may well be inferred here that the mark signifies rather conformity and addition to the behests of the beast, than any actual stigma impressed. Certainly we fail to recognize any adequate exposition of such stigma in the sign of the Cross as propounded by Mr. Elliott [iii. 236], or in the monogram on the labarum as succeeded by the Papal cross-keys, of Dr. Wordsworth [Apocalypse, Appendix G]). Here is wisdom (these words serve to direct attention to the challenge which follows: see ver. 10 and ch. xiv. 12, where here is similarly used); let him who hath understanding calculate the number of the beast (the terms of the challenge serve at once to shew that the feat proposed is possible, and that it is difficult. Irenæus's view, that if St. John had meant the number to be known he would have declared it, and that of Andreas, "time shall reveal it," are, it seems to me, excluded by these considerations. The number may be calculated: and is intended to be known): for (gives a reason why the calculation may be made) it is the number of a man (i. e. is counted as men generally

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

his number is Six hundred and  
 † sixty-six.

XIV. <sup>1</sup> And I saw, and behold  
 † <sup>a</sup> the Lamb standing on the mount  
 Sion, and with him <sup>b</sup> an hundred  
 and forty-four thousand, <sup>c</sup> having  
 † his name and his Father's name  
 written on their foreheads. <sup>2</sup> And

† *The Parisian MS. (century V.) reads, six hundred and sixteen. This uncertainty has existed from the earliest times: Irenæus mentions it in the second, or beginning of the third century.*

† *So all our ancient and almost all the other MSS. MSS., versions, and Greek and Latin fathers.*

a ch. v. 6.

b ch. vii. 4.

c ch. vii. 3. & xiii. 16.

† *So all our oldest*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*Six hundred threescore and six.*

*XIV. <sup>1</sup> And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. <sup>2</sup> And I*

count: not, as Bede and others, the number belonging to an individual man), and the number of it (the beast) is six hundred sixty-six (of all the hundreds of attempts which have been made in answer to the challenge, there is but one which seems to approach near enough to an adequate solution to require serious consideration. And that one is the word mentioned, though not adopted, by Irenæus, *lateinos*, the Greek letters of which, by their numerical power, make up the required number. This name describes the common character of the rulers of the former Pagan Roman Empire, for, says Irenæus, "*they are Latins who now rule*," and, which Irenæus could not foresee, unites under itself the character of the latter Papal Roman Empire also, as revived and kept up by the agency of its false prophet the priesthood. The Latin Empire, the Latin Church, Latin Christianity, have ever been its commonly current appellations: its language, civil and ecclesiastical, has ever been Latin: its public services, in defiance of the most obvious requisite for public worship, have ever been throughout the world conducted in Latin: there is no one word which could so completely describe its character, and at the same time unite the ancient and modern attributes of the two beasts, as this. Short of saying absolutely that this *was* the word in St. John's mind, I have the strongest persuasion that no other can be found approaching so near to a complete solution. See however the remarks on this subject in the Introduction, § v. par. 32, where I have after all thought it best to leave the matter in doubt).

CH. XIV. 1—20.] THE CONTRAST: THE BLESSEDNESS, AND THE COUNTER-AGENCY OF THE SAINTS OF GOD. THE HARVEST AND THE VINTAGE OF THE EARTH. This is not entirely another vision,

but an introduction of a new element, one of comfort and joy, upon the scene of the last. And thus it must be viewed: with reference to the persecution by the beast which is alluded to in its course, vv. 9 ff. It is also anticipatory, first containing reference to the mystic Babylon, hereafter to become the subject of prophecy in detail; and to the consummation of punishment and reward, also to be treated in detail hereafter. It is *general* in its character, reaching forward close to the time of the end, treating compendiously of the torment of the apostates and the blessedness of the holy dead, and leading, by its concluding section, which treats of the harvest and the vintage of the earth, to the vision of the seven last vials, now immediately to follow.

It naturally divides itself into three sections: of which the first is, 1—5.] *The Lamb on Mount Sion, and His hundred and forty-four thousand. And I saw, and behold the Lamb (viz., the same which before was seen in the midst of the throne, ch. v. 6 al.) standing upon the mount Sion (as in ch. xi., the holy city is introduced as the seat of God's true church and worship, so by a similar figure [not the same, for thus Mount Sion would be outside the temple proper, and given to the Gentiles] the holy mountain Sion is now chosen for the site of the display of God's chosen ones with Christ, the Son of David, whose city Zion was), and with Him an hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father (observe the tacit assumption that all understand Who is imported by the Lamb) written on their foreheads (first observe the contrast: the nations of the earth, constrained to receive the mark of the beast on their forehead and hand, and the Lamb's elect, marked with His name and that of His Father. The question next meets us, Are these*



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: <sup>3</sup> and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. <sup>4</sup> These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

I heard a voice out of heaven, <sup>d</sup> as <sup>d</sup> ch. i. 15. & xix. 6.  
 a voice of many waters, and as a voice of great thunder: and <sup>†</sup> the <sup>†</sup> So all our oldest authorities.  
 voice which I heard [was] as of <sup>e</sup> harpers harping with their harps: <sup>e</sup> ch. v. 8.  
<sup>3</sup> and <sup>f</sup> they sing as it were a new <sup>f</sup> ch. v. 9. & xv. 3.  
 song before the throne, and before the four living creatures, and the elders: and no one could learn the song <sup>g</sup> but the hundred and forty- <sup>g</sup> ver. 1.  
 four thousand, which have been purchased from the earth. <sup>4</sup> These are they which were not defiled with women; <sup>h</sup> for they are virgins. <sup>h</sup> 2 Cor. xi. 2.

144,000 identical with the same number in ch. vii. 4? The presumption certainly is that the same number occurring here, representing as there the elect and first-fruits of the church, here as there also inscribed on their foreheads with the seal of God in the one case, and His Name in the other, must be descriptive of the same body of persons. And this view, if acquiesced in here, will reflect back considerable light on that former vision of the sealing in ch. vii. Those, as these, will represent the first-fruits or choice ones among God's people, as indeed we have treated them in this commentary, and not the totality of those who shall form the great multitude which no man can number. These, as those, are taken to represent the people of God: their introduction serves to place before us the church on the holy hill of Zion, where God has placed His King, as an introduction to the description of her agency in preaching the everlasting Gospel, and her faithfulness amidst persecutions). And I heard a voice out of heaven, as a voice of many waters (reff.), and as a voice of great thunder (ch. vi. 1): and the voice which I heard [was] as of harpers harping with their harps. And they sing [as it were] a new song (i. e. they sing what sounded like a melody unheard before. The subject to they sing is of course not the 144,000, but the heavenly harpers. On the matter of their song, see below) before the throne, and before the four living-beings, and the elders (the whole heavenly symbolism remaining as before, while the visions

regarding God's temple and Mount Zion and the holy city are going forward. I would call the attention of the reader to the fact, essential to the right understanding of the vision, that the harpers and the song are *in heaven*, the 144,000 *on earth*): and no one was able to learn the song (to apprehend its melody and meaning, so as to accompany it and bear a part in the chorus) except the hundred and forty-four thousand, who were purchased (see ver. 4, and 1 Cor. vi. 20; ch. v. 9) from the earth (the song has regard to matters of trial and triumph, of deep joy and heavenly purity of heart, which none other among men but these pure and holy ones are capable of apprehending. The sweetest and most skilful harmonies convey no pleasure to, nor are they appreciated by an uneducated ear: whereas the experienced musician finds in every chord the most exquisite enjoyment. The unskilled ear, even though naturally distinctive of musical sounds, could not learn nor reproduce them: but both these can be done by those who have ears to hear them. Even so this heavenly song speaks only to the virgin heart, and can be learnt only by those who accompany the Lamb whithersoever He goeth). These are they who were not (the past tense shews that their course is ended and looked back on as a thing past: and serves to confute all interpretations which regard them as representing saints while in the midst of their earthly conflict and trial) defiled with women (see below); for they are (always were and have kept themselves till the time present) virgins (there are two ways



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

<sup>i</sup> ch. iii. 4.  
& vii. 15, 17.  
& xvii. 14.

<sup>k</sup> ch. v. 9.

<sup>l</sup> James i. 18.

<sup>m</sup> Ps. xxxii. 2.  
Zeph. iii. 13.

These are they <sup>i</sup> which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These <sup>k</sup> were purchased from among men <sup>l</sup> as a firstfruit unto God and to the Lamb. <sup>5</sup> And <sup>m</sup> in their mouth was

*which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. <sup>5</sup> And in their*

of understanding these words. Either they may be figurative, merely implying that these pure ones lived in all chastity, whether in single or in married life, and incurred no pollution [2 Cor. xi. 2]: or they may be meant literally, that these purest ones had lived in that state of which St. Paul says, 1 Cor. vii. 1, *it is good for a man*. And as between these two meanings I conceive that the emphatic position of the words **with women** in the original goes some way to decide. It is not the fact of impurity in allowed intercourse, but the fact of commerce with women that is put forward. I would therefore believe that in the description of these who are the first-fruits from the earth, the feature of virginity is to be taken in its literal meaning. Nor need any difficulty be found in this. It is on all hands granted that he who is married in the Lord enters into holy relations of which the single have no experience, and goes through blessed and elevating degrees of self-sacrifice, and loving allowance, and preferring others before himself. And as every step of grace assured is a step of glory secured, there is no doubt that the holy married servants of God shall have a peculiar entrance into the fulness of that future Kingdom's employ, which will not be the lot of the single: seeing that in this matter also, the childhood of this state will be the father of the manhood of that one. But neither on the other hand can it be denied that the state of holy virginity has also its peculiar blessings and exemptions. Of these, the Apostle himself speaks of that absence of distraction from the Lord's work, which is apt to beset the married, busy as they are with the cares of a household and with pleasing one another. And another and primary blessing is, that in them that fountain of carnal desire has never been opened, which is so apt to be a channel for unholy thoughts and an access for the tempter. The virgins may thus have missed the victory over the lusts of the flesh: but they have also in great part escaped the conflict. Theirs is not the triumph of the toil-worn and stained soldier, but the calm and the unspottedness of those who have kept from the strife. *We* are perhaps more like that which the Lord

intended us to be: but they are more like the Lord Himself. And if He is to have round Him a peculiar and closer band, standing with Him on Mount Sion, none will surely grudge this place to those who were not defiled with women. Among these will be not only those who have lived and served Him in holy virginity, but also the dear children whom He has claimed from us for Himself, the youths and maidens who were gathered to His side before the strife began: before their tongues had learned the language of social falsehood, or their good names been tarnished with the breath of inevitable calumny. There is one meaning which these words will not bear, and which it is surprising that any Commentator should ever have attached to them: viz. that **with women** refers to the woman mentioned below, ch. xvii. So Dr. Wordsworth, p. 284: "They have not been defiled with women. What women? It may be asked. If we proceed, we read of the woman seated on the Beast, and of the harlotry of the woman, with whom the Kings of the earth commit fornication. And soon we see her displayed in all her meretricious splendour. There then is the reply." But the whole context here, as well as the language used, is against it: the following words, for they are virgins, carrying its decisive condemnation). These [are] they that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth (the description has very commonly been taken as applying to the entire obedience of the elect, following their Lord to prison and to death, and wherever He may call them: but this exposition is surely out of place here, where not their life of conflict, but their state of glory is described. The words are used of special privilege of nearness to the Person of the Lamb in glory). These were purchased from men as a first-fruit to God and to the Lamb (all have been thus purchased: but these specially, as and for the purpose of being a first-fruit. James i. 18 treats of a different matter, the purchased of all the redeemed as the first-fruits of creation. But these are a first-fruit among the purchased themselves). And in their mouth wa. not

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God. <sup>6</sup> And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, <sup>7</sup> saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. <sup>8</sup> And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. <sup>9</sup> And the

found no falsehood: †<sup>n</sup> they are blameless†. <sup>6</sup> And I saw an † [other] angel ° flying in the midst of heaven, † having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, <sup>a</sup> and to every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and people, <sup>7</sup> saying with a loud voice, † Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: <sup>8</sup> and worship him that made the heaven, and the earth, and sea, and fountains of waters. <sup>8</sup> And another † second angel followed, saying, † Babylon † the great is fallen, is fallen, <sup>u</sup> which hath made all the nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. <sup>9</sup> And † another

† for is omitted by two out of our three oldest MSS. n Eph. v. 27 Jude 24. † before the throne of God, inserted in the ordinary text, is absolutely without any MS. authority. † other is omitted by the Sinaitic, and by most of the later MSS., but is contained in the Alexandrine and Porian. o ch. viii. 13. p Eph. iii. 9—11. Titus i. 2. q ch. xiii. 7. r ch. xi. 18. & xv. 4. s Neh. ix. 6. Ps. xxxiii. 6. & cxxiv. 8. & cxlvi. 5, 6. Acts xiv. 15. & xvii. 24. † Thus, or nearly thus, all our oldest MSS. † Isa. xxi. 9. Jer. ii. 8. ch. xviii. 2. † Thus our ch. xi. 8. & xvi.

oldest MSS. The Sinaitic omits from another, ver. 8, to another, ver. 9. 19. & xvii. 2, 5. & xviii. 3, 10, 18, 21. & xix. 2.

† Thus almost all our MSS. The common text has no MS.

found falsehood: they are blameless (the Apostle has before him the words of Ps. xv. 1 ff., so strikingly similar: "Who shall dwell in thy holy mountain? He that walketh blamelessly . . . speaketh truth in his heart, and hath not deceived with his tongue." These stand on Mount Zion, with Him who eminently fulfilled this character, and being in all things like Him).

6—13.] Three angels appear in mid-heaven, announcing three details of the period of the coming prophecy. A proclamation of the blessedness of the holy dead. These four announcements form the text and the compendium of the rest of the book: see *Introd.*, § v. parr. 57 ff. And I saw an [other] angel (besides those already mentioned) flying in mid-heaven (see ch. viii. 13), having the everlasting gospel (such and no other is the meaning of the words. The epithet everlasting, here only applied to the Gospel, belongs to it as from everlasting to everlasting, like Him whose word it is: in contrast to the enemies of God whose destruction is in view) to preach to (literally, "over," throughout the extent of, "upon") those that sit (literally) upon the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue

and people (compare Matt. xxiv. 14, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world, for a testimony to all nations: and then shall the end come"), saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give Him glory (the message of repentance ever accompanies the hearing of the Gospel among the nations; compare the first preaching of our Lord and of His Forerunner, Matt. iv. 17, iii. 2, and St. Paul's message to the Thessalonians, 1 Thess. i. 9), because the season of His judgment is come (see the citation from Matt. xxiv. above: the time of the end is close at hand when this great era of Christian missions is inaugurated: see below): and worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters (i. e. turning from idols and vanities to serve the living and true God. The division of the waters into the sea and the fountains is one kept up through this prophecy: compare ch. viii. 8—11, xvi. 3, 4). And another second angel followed (it belongs to the solemnity of this series of proclamations that a separate place and marked distinction should dignify each of them), saying, Babylon the great is fallen,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, <sup>x</sup> If any worshippeth the beast and his image, and receiveth the mark on his forehead, or upon his hand, <sup>10</sup> he also <sup>y</sup> shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is <sup>z</sup> poured out without mixture in <sup>a</sup> the cup of his indignation; and <sup>b</sup> he shall be tormented with <sup>c</sup> fire and brimstone in the presence of the <sup>†</sup> [holy] angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: <sup>11</sup> and <sup>d</sup> the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. <sup>12</sup> <sup>e</sup> Here is the

<sup>x</sup> ch. xiii. 14—10.

<sup>y</sup> Ps. lxxv. 8.  
Isa. li. 17.  
Jer. xxv. 15.

<sup>z</sup> ch. xviii. 0.

<sup>a</sup> ch. xvi. 19.

<sup>b</sup> ch. xx. 10.

<sup>c</sup> ch. xix. 20.

<sup>†</sup> *One of our oldest MSS. omits holy.*

<sup>d</sup> Isa. xxxiv. 10.  
ch. xix. 3.

ch. xiii. 10.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, *If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, <sup>10</sup> the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: <sup>11</sup> and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. <sup>12</sup> Here is the pa-*

is fallen, which hath made all the nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication (two things are mingled: 1) the wine of her fornication, of which all nations have drunk, ch. xvii. 2: and 2) the wine of the wrath of God which He shall give her to drink, ver. 10, and ch. xvi. 19. The latter is the retribution for the former: the former turns into the latter: they are treated as one and the same. The whole is from Jer. li. 7, 8, where Babylon is a cup in the Lord's hand of which the nations are made to drink. This is the first mention of Babylon, hereafter to be so much spoken of. I reserve treatment of the interpretation till ch. xvii.: only mentioning by anticipation that Rome, pagan and papal, but principally papal, is intended). And another third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any one worshippeth the beast and his image (see above, ch. xiii. 15), and receiveth the mark on his forehead, or upon his hand (ch. xiii. 16), he also (also either 1] may be almost redundant, introducing the latter portion of the sentence merely as an addition to the former, or 2] may mean, as well as Babylon. The former sense seems to me the more probable) shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mingled (i. e. as A. V. poured into the cup. From the almost universal custom

of mixing wine with water, the common term for preparing wine, putting it into the cup, came to be to *mingle*. Hence the apparent contradiction in terms here [and in the Psalm below]. The figure of the cup of the Lord's wrath is found in Ps. lxxiv. 8, in the Septuagint version, "*In the hand of the Lord is a cup, full of the mixture of pure wine . . . all the sinners of the earth shall drink it,*" from which this is evidently taken) in the cup of His anger, and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the [holy] angels and in the presence of the Lamb (see ch. xx. 10, and Isa. in the refl., from which the imagery comes. The meaning is as in Luke xvi. 23 ff., that the torments are visible to the angels and the Lamb); and the smoke of their torment goeth up to ages of ages (see Isa. in the refl., and Gen. xviii. 28, which doubtless is the fountain-head: also ch. xix. 3): and they have not rest (from torment) day and night who worship the beast and his image; and whoever (from speaking collectively the solemn declaration becomes even more solemn by individualizing) receives the mark of his name. Here (viz. in the inference to be drawn from the certainty of everlasting torment to all who worship the beast or receive his mark:

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

tience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. <sup>13</sup> And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them. <sup>14</sup> And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. <sup>15</sup> And another angel came out of

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

patience of the saints, †<sup>f</sup> which keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. <sup>13</sup> And I heard a voice from heaven saying †, Write, <sup>g</sup> Blessed are the dead <sup>h</sup> which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, <sup>i</sup> that they may rest from their labours; † for their works do follow with them.

<sup>14</sup> And I saw, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sitting <sup>k</sup> like unto the Son of man, <sup>l</sup> having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. <sup>15</sup> And another angel <sup>m</sup> came out of the temple, crying

† So, in sense, all our oldest MSS. f ch. xii. 17.

† unto me is omitted by all our ancient MSS g Eccles. iv. 1, 2. ch. xx. 6. h 1 Cor. xv. 18. i 1 Thess. iv. 16. l 2 Thess. i. 7. Heb. iv. 9, 10. ch. vi. 11. † So all our oldest MSS.

k Ezek. i. 26. Dan. vii. 13. ch. i. 13. l ch. vi. 2.

m ch. xvi. 17.

that all the saints of God must refuse to do either) is the endurance of the saints, who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (the faith, that is, which has Him for its object). And I heard a voice out of heaven (whose, is not told us, and it is in vain to speculate: certainly not, as Hengstenberg, from the spirits of the just themselves. The command, write, would rather point to the angel who reveals the visions to the Evangelist, ch. i. 1, and compare ch. iv. 4), saying, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth (the connexion is not difficult. The mention of the endurance of the saints brings with it the certainty of persecution unto death. The present proclamation declares the blessedness of all who die not only in persecution, but in any manner, in the Lord, in the faith and obedience of Christ. And the special command to write this, conveys special comfort to those in all ages of the church who should read it. But it is not so easy to assign a fit meaning to from henceforth. Being thus joined with the former sentence, it must express some reason why this blessedness is to be more completely realized from this time when it is proclaimed, than it was before. Now this reason will quickly appear, if we consider the particular time, in connexion with which the proclamation is made. The harvest of the earth is about to be reaped; the vintage of the earth to be gathered. At this time it is, that the complete blessedness of the holy dead commences: when

the garner is filled and the chaff cast out. And that not on account of their deliverance from any purgatorial fire, but because of the completion of this number of their brethren, and the full capacities of bliss brought in by the resurrection. Nor can it legitimately be objected to this, that the deaths implied must follow after the proclamation. For no doubt this would be so, the proclamation itself being anticipatory, and the harvest not yet actually come). Yea, saith the Spirit (the utterance of the voice from heaven still continues. The affirmation of the Spirit ratifies the blessedness proclaimed, and assigns a reason for it), that they shall (so literally) rest from their labours: for their works follow with them (for, which has seemed so difficult, and which apparently gave rise to the alteration in the text, is in fact easily explained. They rest from their labours, because the time of working is over, their works accompanying them not in a life of activity, but in blessed memory; wherefore not labour, but rest is their lot).

14—20.] THE VISION OF THE HARVEST AND THE VINTAGE. 14—16.] THE HARVEST. And I saw, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sitting like unto the Son of man (i. e. to Christ, see ch. i. 13 note. This clearly is our Lord Himself, as there), having on his head a golden crown (in token of His victory being finally gained: see ch. xix. 12), and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel (besides the three angels be-



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, <sup>n</sup> Put forth thy sickle, and reap: for the time † to reap is come; for the harvest ° of the earth is † ripe. <sup>16</sup> And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle upon the earth; and the earth was reaped. <sup>17</sup> And another angel came out from the temple which was in heaven, he

<sup>n</sup> Joel iii. 15.  
Matt. xiii. 39.  
Mark iv. 29.  
† for thee is omitted by all our ancient MSS.  
<sup>o</sup> Jer. li. 33.  
ch. xiii. 12.  
† Literally, dried.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. <sup>16</sup> And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle upon the earth; and the earth was reaped. <sup>17</sup> And another angel came out of the tem-*

fore mentioned: no inference can be drawn from this that the Sitter on the cloud is a mere angel) **came out of the temple, crying out in a loud voice to him that sat upon the cloud, Put forth (literally, send: and so in Mark in the ref. De Wette's objection, that the sitter on the cloud cannot be Christ Himself, because He would not be introduced receiving a command from an angel, may be well answered, as Düsterdieck, that the angel is only the messenger of the will of God. And I may add what to me makes this reply undoubtedly valid, that the command is one regarding the times and seasons, which the Father hath kept in his own power) thy sickle (the whole is a remembrance of our Lord's own saying in Mark iv. 29: see below) and reap: because the time to reap is come, because the harvest of the earth is dried (perfectly) ripe, so that the stalk is dry: compare Mark iv. 29: also the fields being "white already to harvest," John iv. 35: which they can only become by losing their moisture). And he that sat upon the cloud thrust in his sickle upon (into, from above) the earth, and the earth was reaped (to what does this harvest refer? Is it the ingathering of the wicked, or of the saints, or of both together? Each of these has examples in Scripture symbolism. The first, in Jer. li. 33, where it is said of Babylon, "It is time to thresh her, yet a little while and the time of her harvest is come:" and as appears, Joel iii. 15, though the reference seems rather there to be to the vintage: the second, in Matt. ix. 39, and parallels; Mark iv. 29; John iv. 35; the third, in Matt. xiii. 30, 39. The verdict of commentators is very much divided. There are circumstances in the context which tell both ways. The parallelism with the vintage, which follows, seems to favour a harvest of the wicked: but then on the other hand, if so, what is the distinction**

between the two ingatherings? and why do we read of the casting into the wine-press of God's wrath in the second case, and of no corresponding feature in the other? Again, why is the agency so different—the Son of man on the white cloud with the golden crown in the one case, the mere angel in the other? Besides, the two gatherings seem quite distinct. The former is over before the other begins. On the whole then, though I would not pronounce decidedly, I much incline to think that the harvest is the ingathering of the saints, God's harvest, reaped from the earth: described here thus generally, before the vintage of wrath which follows. And thus we have at least these two visions in harmony with the character of this section, which contains the mingled agency and fortunes of the Church and of its enemies; thus this harvest answers to the great preaching of the everlasting gospel above, vv. 6, 7, while the following vintage fulfils the denunciations of wrath on those who worship the image or receive the mark of the beast, vv. 8, 11. And thus too we bring this description into harmony with our Lord's important parable in Mark iv. 29, where the very words are used of the agency of Christ Himself when the work of grace is ripe, whether in the individual or in the church. But while thus inclined, I will not deny that the other view, and that which unites both, have very much to be said for them).

**17—20.] The vintage of wrath. And another angel (another may perhaps refer to the three angels who have already appeared in this vision: or, which is more probable, referring to the last-mentioned Agent, may be a general term, not necessarily implying that He was a mere angel) came out from the temple which was in heaven (from which come forth God's judgments: see ch. xi. 19), having himself also (as well as that other: but the**



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

ple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

<sup>18</sup> And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. <sup>19</sup> And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

<sup>20</sup> And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

also having a sharp sickle. <sup>18</sup> And another angel came out from the altar, <sup>p</sup> he that hath power over the fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, <sup>q</sup> Put forth thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. <sup>19</sup> And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast into <sup>r</sup> the great winepress of the wrath of God. <sup>20</sup> And <sup>s</sup> the winepress was trodden <sup>t</sup> outside the city, and blood came forth from the winepress, <sup>u</sup> even unto the bits of the horses, to the distance of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

<sup>p</sup> ch. xvi. 8.

<sup>q</sup> Joel iii. 13.

<sup>r</sup> ch. xix. 15.

<sup>s</sup> Isa. lxiii. 3.

<sup>t</sup> Lam. i. 15.

<sup>u</sup> Heb. xiii. 12.  
ch. xi. 8.

<sup>u</sup> ch. xix. 14.

term rather raises a distinction between the two personages than sets them on an equality: there is some slight degree of strangeness, after what has gone before, in this angel having a sickle) a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar (viz. that elsewhere several times mentioned, ch. vi. 9, viii. 3, xvi. 7, in connexion with the fulfilment of God's judgments in answer to the prayers of His saints), he that hath power over the fire (viz. that on the altar; the same angel who is introduced ch. viii. 3—5 as presenting the prayers of the saints, and casting some of the fire of the altar to the earth as introductory to the judgments of the trumpets), and he cried with a great cry to him that had the sharp sickle (it is to be observed that the whole description of this angel, coming from the altar of vengeance, differs widely from any thing in the former part of the vision, and favours the idea that this vintage is of a different nature from that harvest), saying, Put forth thy sharp sickle, and gather the bunches of the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe. And the angel (no such expression is used above, ver. 16. There it is, "He that sat upon the cloud.") All these signs of difference are worthy of notice) thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and

cast (viz. what he had gathered) into the great winepress of the wrath of God (any thing corresponding to this feature is entirely wanting in the previous description of the harvest. See on it ch. xix. 15, and the prophetic passages in ref. especially Isaiah, from which the symbolism comes). And the winepress was trodden outside the city (see below), and blood (so Isa. lxiii. 3) came forth from the winepress as far as to the bits of the horses, to the distance of a thousand six hundred stadii (it is exceedingly difficult to say what the meaning is, further than that the idea of a tremendous final act of vengeance is denoted. *The city* evidently is the same as the *outer city* of ch. xi. 2 [not that of ib. 8, see note there], viz. *Jerusalem*, where the scene has been tacitly laid, with occasional express allusions such as that in our ver. 1. The blood coming forth from the treading of the winepress is in accordance with the Old Test. prophecy alluded to, Isa. lxiii. 3. It is in the depth, and the distance indicated, that the principal difficulty lies. The number of stadii (or furlongs) is supposed by some to be the length of the Holy Land, as given by Jerome at 160 Roman miles. But the great objection to this is, that 160 miles = 1280, not 1600 stadii. Another view

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

a ch. xii. 1, 3. XV. <sup>1</sup> And <sup>a</sup> I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, b seven angels having seven plagues, which are the last, <sup>c</sup> because in them is filled up the wrath of God. <sup>2</sup> And I saw as it were <sup>d</sup> a sea of glass <sup>e</sup> mingled with fire: and the conquerors of the beast, <sup>f</sup> and of his image, <sup>†</sup> and of the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, <sup>g</sup> having harps of God. <sup>3</sup> And they sing <sup>h</sup> the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb,

b ch. xvi. 1. & xxi. 9.  
c ch. xiv. 10.  
d ch. iv. 6. & xxi. 18.  
e Matt. iii. 11.  
f ch. xiii. 15—17.  
† and of his mark is omitted by all our ancient MSS.  
g ch. v. 8. & xiv. 2.  
h Exod. xv. 1. Deut. xxxi. 30. ch. xiv. 3.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

XV. <sup>1</sup> And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. <sup>2</sup> And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. <sup>3</sup> And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of

has been, that 1600 has been chosen as a square number, =  $40 \times 40$ , or  $4 \times 400$ , or  $4 \times 4 \times 100$ . We may fairly say, either that the number is assigned simply to signify completeness and magnitude [in which case some other apocalyptic numbers which have been much insisted on will fall perhaps under the same canon of interpretation], or else this is one of the riddles of the Apocalypse to which not even a proximate solution has ever yet been given).

CH. XV., XVI. THE SEVEN VIALS. And herein, XV. 1—8.] PREFATORY: *the description of the vision, ver. 1: the song of triumph of the saints victorious over the beast, vv. 2—4: the coming forth of the seven angels and delivering to them of the seven vials, vv. 5—8.*

And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having seven plagues which are the last [plagues], because in them is completed the wrath of God (I have adopted an unusual arrangement to throw the word because into connexion with the last, for which epithet it renders a reason. It is to be observed 1) that this verse is evidently only a compendious description of the following vision: for the angels themselves are not seen till ver. 6, and do not receive the vials containing the plagues till after they are seen: 2) that the whole of God's wrath in final judgment is not exhausted by these vials, but only the whole of His wrath in sending plagues on the earth previous to the judgment. After these there are no more plagues: they are concluded with the destruction of Babylon. Then the Lord

Himself appears, ch. xix. 11 ff.). And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire (see ch. iv. 6 and note: not merely glassy: the as it were indicates the likeness: it was as it were made of glass. The addition mingled with fire is probably made as bringing into the previous celestial imagery an element belonging to this portion of the prophecy, of which judgment is the prevailing complexion. The fact, that the personages of the former heavenly vision are still present, ver. 7, seems to remove all doubt of this being the same sea of glass as that before described ch. iv. 6, in immediate connexion with which the four living-beings were mentioned), and the conquerors of (literally, out of: they have come victorious out of the strife) the beast and of his image and of the number of his name (i. e. of the temptation to worship his image and to receive the mark consisting of the number of his name, ch. xiii. 17, 18), standing on (does this import actually "upon," so that they stood on the surface of the sea, or merely on the shore of? On every account the latter seems the more probable: as better suiting the heavenly imagery of ch. iv., and as according with the situation of the children of Israel when they sung the song to which allusion is presently made) the sea of glass, having harps of God (sacred harps, part of the instruments of heaven used solely for the praise of God. We have had them before mentioned in ch. v. 8, xiv. 2). And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God (i. e. a song similar to that song of triumph which

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. <sup>4</sup> Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest. <sup>5</sup> And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: <sup>6</sup> and the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. <sup>7</sup> And

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

saying, <sup>1</sup> Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; <sup>k</sup> just and true are thy ways, thou King of <sup>†</sup> the nations. <sup>41</sup> Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for <sup>m</sup> all the nations shall come and worship before thee; because thy righteous acts have been made manifest. <sup>5</sup> And after these things I saw, and <sup>†</sup> <sup>n</sup> the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: <sup>6</sup> and the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, <sup>p</sup> clothed in linen pure and shining, and girt about their breasts with golden girdles. <sup>7</sup> <sup>q</sup> And one of the four living crea-

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xxxii. 4.  
Ps. cxi. 2. &  
cxxxix. 11.

<sup>k</sup> Ps. cxlv. 17.  
Hos. xlv. 9.  
ch. xvi. 7.

<sup>†</sup> Thus all our  
ancient MSS.,  
except the  
Paris, which  
reads of the  
ages (see

<sup>1</sup> Tim. i. 17).  
The reading  
of the A. V.  
has no autho-  
rity at all.

<sup>1</sup> Exod. xv. 14  
—16. Jer. x.  
7.

<sup>m</sup> Isa. lxvi. 23.

<sup>†</sup> behold is  
omitted by all  
the MSS.

<sup>n</sup> ch. xi. 19.  
See Numb. i.  
50.

<sup>p</sup> ver. 1.

<sup>q</sup> Exod. xxviii.  
6, 8. Ezek.  
xlv. 17, 18.  
ch. i. 13.

Moses and the children of Israel sung when delivered from the Red Sea and from the Egyptians, Exod. xv. In Exod. xiv. 31, Moses is called, as here, the servant of God [see also Numb. xii. 7; Josh. xxii. 5]; and this song is formed on the model of parts of that one: see below) and the song of the Lamb (it is not meant that there are two distinct songs: the song is one and the same; and the expression which characterizes it betokens, as do so many other notices and symbols in this book, the unity of the Old and New Test. churches. Their songs of triumph have become ours: the song of Moses is the song of the Lamb. In this great victory all the triumphs of God's people are included, and find their fulfilment), saying (the song is a reproduction of several portions of the Old Test. songs of praise), Great and wonderful are thy works (Ps. cxi. 2, cxxxix. 14), Lord God Almighty: just and true are thy ways (Ps. cxlv. 17; Deut. xxxii. 4 in Moses' song), thou King of the nations: who can but fear [Thee] (these two clauses are from Jer. x. 7. The title "King of nations" is especially appropriate, as it is God's judgments on the nations, and their effects on them, which are the theme of the Church's praise) and [who] shall [not] glorify (so literally) thy Name! because Thou only art holy (this first

because grounds the question in the attributes of God): because all the nations shall come and worship before thee (so it is declared in Ps. lxxxvi. 9. This second because grounds the question in matter of fact): because Thy righteous acts (thy judgments: thy deeds of righteousness acted out towards the nations, both in the publication of the Gospel and in the destruction of Thine enemies) have been made manifest (this third because grounds the fact announced in its immediately exciting cause—the manifestation of God's judgments). And after these things I saw, and there was opened the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven (see on ch. xi. 19, xvi. 17. The temple (proper) is the holy place of the tabernacle, to which latter the appellation of the testimony is here peculiarly appropriate, seeing that the witness and covenant of God are about to receive their great fulfilment): and there came forth the seven angels (viz. who were before mentioned: the does not point out any particular seven, such as the archangels) which had (or, "having." This was their office: but they had them not yet) the seven plagues out of the temple (see ch. xiv. 15, 17), clad in linen pure and glistening (the well-known clothing of angels and heavenly beings, see Acts x. 30 (i. 10), ch. xix. 8; Matt. xvii. 2 and parallels, xxviii. 3), and girt

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

tures gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, <sup>r</sup>who liveth for ever and ever. <sup>8</sup> And <sup>s</sup>the temple was filled with smoke <sup>t</sup>from the glory of God, and from his might; and none was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels should be finished.

XVI. <sup>1</sup> And I heard a great voice

<sup>r</sup> 1 Thess. i. 9.  
ch. iv. 9.  
& x. 6.  
<sup>s</sup> Exod. xl. 34.  
1 Kings viii.  
10. 2 Chron.  
v. 14. Isa. vi.  
<sup>t</sup> 12 Thess. i. 9.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. <sup>8</sup> And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.*

*XVI. <sup>1</sup> And I heard a*

round their breasts with golden girdles (being in this like our Lord Himself as seen in vision, ch. i. 13). And one from among the four living-beings (appropriately to the symbolic meaning of these living-creatures as the representatives of creation, see notes on ch. iv. 7, 11, inasmuch as the coming plagues are to be inflicted on the objects of creation) gave to the seven angels seven golden vials (the *phiale* was a shallow bowl or cup, usually without a stand or foot, in which they drew out of the crater or goblet), full of the wrath of God who liveth for ever and ever (this addition serves, as in ch. i. 8, to give solemnity to the fact related). And the temple was filled with smoke from (arising from) the glory of God and from His might (i. e. from His presence, in which His glory and His might were displayed. The description calls to mind similar ones in the Old Test., e. g. Ps. xviii. 8 f.; Isa. lxx. 5. See also below), and no one was able to enter into the temple (compare 1 Kings viii. 10, 11; Exod. xl. 34, 35) until the seven plagues of the seven angels should be finished (the passages above referred to give the reason: because of the unapproachableness of God, when immediately present and working, by any created being. See Exod. xix. 21. When these judgments should be completed, then, the wrathful presence and agency of God being withdrawn, He might again be approached. Many other meanings more or less far-fetched have been given, but where Scripture analogy is so plain, the simplest is the best).

CH. XVI. 1—21.] THE SEVEN VIALS. See the general remarks on ch. viii. 1 for all questions common to the three great series of visions. The following special particulars are here to be noticed: 1) In the description, ch. xvi., which first intro-

duces these plagues, they are plainly called the seven plagues which are the last. There can then be no doubt here, not only that the series reaches on to the time of the end, but that the whole of it is to be placed close to the same time. And this is borne out by the particulars evolved in the course of the visions themselves. For we find that they do not in point of time go back, but at once take up the events of the former visions, and occur during the times of the sounding of the seventh trumpet, when the mystery of God should be finished. 2) As in the seals and in the trumpets, so here again, there is a marked distinction between the first four and the following three. As there, so here, the objects of the first four are the earth, the sea, the springs of waters, and the sun. After this the objects become more particularized: the throne of the beast, the river Euphrates, with the reservation of that peculiar and vague character for the *seventh*, which seems to belong to it in all the three series. 3) As before, so now, there is a compendious and anticipatory character about several of the vials, leading us to believe that those of which this is not so plain, partake of this character also. For example, under the *third* vial we find an acknowledgment of the divine justice in making those drink blood who shed the blood of saints and prophets. This, there can be little doubt, points on to the judgment on Babylon, in whom, ch. xviii. 24, was found the blood of saints and prophets, and of all that had been slain on the earth. Again, under the *sixth* we have the same great gathering to battle which is described in detail, ch. xix. 17—21. And finally, under the *seventh*, we have a compendious anticipatory notice of the judgment of Babylon, hereafter, ch. xvii., xviii., to be described in detail,—and of the great

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. <sup>2</sup> And the first went and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image. <sup>3</sup> And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea. <sup>4</sup> And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and

out of the temple saying <sup>a</sup> to the seven angels, Go and pour out the <sup>†</sup> seven vials <sup>b</sup> of the wrath of God into the earth. <sup>2</sup> And the first departed, and poured out his vial <sup>†</sup> into the earth; <sup>d</sup> and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men <sup>e</sup> which had the mark of the beast, and <sup>f</sup> which worshipped his image. <sup>3</sup> And the second <sup>†</sup> poured out his vial <sup>g</sup> into the sea; and <sup>h</sup> it became blood, as of a dead man: <sup>i</sup> and every living soul died, that were in the sea. <sup>4</sup> And the third <sup>†</sup> poured out his vial <sup>k</sup> into the rivers and the fountains of the waters; <sup>l</sup> and they became blood.

a ch. xv. 1.  
 † So all our ancient MSS.  
 b ch. xiv. 10. & xv. 7.  
 † So all our ancient MSS.  
 c ch. viii. 7.  
 d Exod. ix. 9—11.  
 e ch. xiii. 16, 17.  
 f ch. xiii. 14.  
 † angel is omitted by our oldest MSS.  
 g ch. viii. 8.  
 h Exod. vii. 17, 20.  
 i ch. viii. 9.  
 † angel is omitted by all our ancient MSS.: and so throughout.  
 k ch. viii. 10.  
 l Exod. vii. 20.

day itself in ver. 20, also hereafter [ch. xx. 11—15] to be resumed at more length. 4) As we might expect in the final plagues, we have no longer, as in the trumpets, a portion of each element affected, but the whole. 5) While in the first four vials the main features of the first four trumpets are reproduced, there is one notable distinction in the case of the fourth. While by the plague of the fourth trumpet, the sun, moon, and stars are partially darkened, by that of the fourth vial the power of the sun is increased, and the darkening of the Kingdom of the beast is reserved for the fifth.

The minor special features will be noticed as we proceed. On the whole, the series of the vials seems to bear a less general character than the other two. It takes up a particular point in the prophecy, and deals with symbols and persons previously described. It belongs, by its very conditions, exclusively to the time of, or to days approaching very near to the time of, the end: including in itself the subsequent details as far as the end of ch. xx.: without however noticing most important features and considerable prophetic periods.

1.] *Introductory.* And I heard a great voice out of the temple (from the fact, ch. xv. 8, that the divine Presence is filling the temple, and that none might enter into it, this voice can be no other than the divine voice) saying to the seven angels,

Go and pour out the seven vials of the wrath of God into the earth (so, previous to the series of trumpets, the angel casts the fire from the altar into the earth, ch. viii. 5).

2.] And the first departed (each angel, as his turn comes, leaves the heavenly scene, and from the space between heaven and earth, empties his vial on the appointed object) and poured out his vial into the earth (the earth, which before in ver. 1 was general, is now particular, and correlative with the objects of the other vials, compare vv. 2, 3, "into the sea," "into the waters"); and there came (took place: fell, as A. V.) an evil (in itself) and painful (to the sufferers) sore upon the men that had the mark of the beast and that worshipped his image (see above, ch. xiii. 15—17, xiv. 9, 10. The allegorical and historical interpretations have been very various: see them in Elliott, vol. iv. Notice the parallel with the sixth Egyptian plague, Exod. ix. 8 ff. Compare Deut. xxviii. 27, 35).

3.] And the second poured out his vial into the sea: and it (the sea, compare ch. viii. 8, 11) became blood as of a dead man (blood as when a dead corpse lies in its blood: loathsome and corrupting): and every soul of life (so literally: soul being used in its physical sense of animal soul) died, [all] the things in the sea.

4—7.] And the third poured out his vial into the rivers and the fountains of



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

m ch. xv. 3.

† O Lord is omitted by all ancient, and almost all other MSS. n ch. i. 4, 8. & iv. 8 & xi. 17.

† So, or the holy one, all our ancient MSS. The A. V., and shall be, has absolutely no Greek text whatever corresponding to it, and is a pure invention.

o Matt. xxiii. 34, 35, ch. xiii. 35.

p ch. xi. 18. & xviii. 20.

q Isa. xlix. 26. † for is omitted by all our old MSS.

† another out of is omitted by all ancient MSS., and rests only on the authority of one MS. of the 12th century.

r ch. xv. 3.

s ch. xiii. 10. & xiv. 10.

& xix. 2.

t ch. viii. 12.

u ch. ix. 17, 18.

& xiv. 18.

x ver. 11, 21.

y Dan. v. 22,

23.

ch. ix. 20.

z ch. xi. 13. & xiv. 7.

a ch. xiii. 2.

b ch. ix. 2.

c ch. xi. 10.

5 And I heard the angel of the waters saying, <sup>m</sup> Thou art righteous †, <sup>n</sup> which art, and wast † holy, because thou didst judge thus. 6 For <sup>o</sup> they shed the blood <sup>p</sup> of saints and prophets, <sup>q</sup> and thou hast given them blood to drink; † they are worthy. 7 And I heard † the altar saying, Even so, <sup>r</sup> Lord God Almighty, <sup>s</sup> true and righteous are thy judgments. 8 And the fourth poured out his vial <sup>t</sup> upon the sun; <sup>u</sup> and it was given unto it to scorch men with fire. 9 And men were scorched with great heat, and <sup>x</sup> blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: <sup>y</sup> and they repented not <sup>z</sup> to give him glory. 10 And the fifth poured out his vial <sup>a</sup> upon the throne of the beast; <sup>b</sup> and his kingdom became darkened; <sup>c</sup> and they gnawed

they became blood. 5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. 6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. 7 And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments. 8 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. 9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory. 10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full

the waters: and they became blood (that the fact was so, is testified by what follows, in which it is assumed that the sources of ordinary drink have become blood). And I heard the angel of the waters (i. e. the angel who was set over the waters; see ch. vii. 1, xiv. 18) saying, Thou art righteous who art and wast (as in ch. xi. 2, the "and art to come" is omitted) holy, because Thou didst judge thus (lit., "these things:" viz. the issue mentioned in ver. 4; the turning the drinking-water into blood: "Thou didst inflict this judgment"): because they shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink: they are worthy (these words are made stronger by the absence of any particle to introduce them). And I heard the altar saying (certainly the simplest understanding of these words is, that they involve a personification of the altar. On the altar are the prayers of the saints, offered before God: beneath the altar are the souls of the martyrs crying for vengeance: when therefore the altar

speaks, it is the concentrated testimony of these which speaks by it), Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and just are Thy judgments.

8, 9.] And the fourth poured out his vial upon (no longer into) the sun: and it was given to it (the sun: not "to him," the angel, as, strangely enough, Bengel and Hengstenberg, and Elliott. The angels throughout this vision are simply the pourers out of the vials, not the executors of the plagues. Besides which, the verb to scorch, in a sentence where the sun is mentioned can have but one reference) to scorch men with fire (not, as Hengstenberg, understanding him of the angel, some fire other than the sun: but the glowing increased heat of the sun itself), and men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, who hath power over these plagues, and did not repent to give Him glory.

10, 11.] And the fifth poured out his vial upon the throne of the beast (given to it by the dragon, ch. xiii. 2. That is,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,<sup>11</sup> and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.<sup>12</sup> And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.<sup>13</sup> And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.<sup>14</sup> For they are the spirits of devils, working mira-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

their tongues for pain,<sup>11</sup> and blasphemed the God of heaven<sup>d ver. 9, 21.</sup> because of their pains and<sup>e</sup> their<sup>e ver. 2.</sup> sores,<sup>f</sup> and repented not of their<sup>f ver. 9.</sup> works.<sup>12</sup> And the sixth poured out his vial<sup>g</sup> upon the great river<sup>g ch. ix. 14.</sup> Euphrates; <sup>h</sup> and the water thereof<sup>h See Jer. 1. 38. & ii. 30.</sup> was dried up,<sup>i</sup> that the way of the kings which come from the rising of the sun might be prepared.<sup>13</sup> And I saw [† coming:] out of the mouth<sup>† Not expressed in the original. k ch. xii. 8, 9.</sup> of <sup>k</sup> the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of <sup>l</sup> the false prophet, three unclean <sup>l ch. xix. 20. & xx. 10.</sup> <sup>m</sup> spirits like frogs.<sup>14</sup> <sup>m 1 John iv. 1-3.</sup> For they <sup>n 1 Tim. iv. 1. James iii. 15. o 2 Thess. ii. 9. ch. xiii. 13, 14. & xix. 20.</sup> are spirits of demons,<sup>o</sup> working mira-

on the spot where the power and presence of the beast had its proper residence): and his kingdom (those lands which owned his rule) became darkened (as in the ninth Egyptian plague, Exod. x. 21 ff., the darkness is specially sent over the land, not occasioned by any failure of the lights of heaven). And they (the inhabitants: the subjects of the beast. They are by and by identified with those who had received his mark) chewed their tongues (which, says Andreas, is a sign of excessive and intolerable pain) from their pain (viz. under which they were previously suffering: not, that occasioned by the darkness, which would not of itself occasion pain: see below), and blasphemed the God of heaven (see ch. xi. 13) by reason of their pains and their sores (these words bind on this judgment to that of the first and following vials, and shew that they are cumulative, not simply successive. The sores, and pains before mentioned, are still in force), and repented not of their works.

2) And the sixth poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates: and its water was dried up, that the way of the kings which come from the rising of the sun might be prepared (notice, but not to be blindly led by it, the analogy of the sixth trumpet, also having reference to the river Euphrates. In order to understand what we here read, we must carefully bear in mind the con-

text. From what follows under this same vial, we learn that the kings of the whole earth are about to be gathered together to the great battle against God, in which He shall be victorious, and they shall utterly perish. The time is now come for this gathering: and by the drying up of the Euphrates, the way of those kings who are to come to it from the East is made ready. This is the only understanding of these words which will suit the context, or the requirements of this series of prophecies. For to suppose the conversion of Eastern nations, or the gathering together of Christian princes, to be meant, or to regard the words as relating to any auspicious event, is to introduce a totally incongruous feature into the series of vials, which confessedly represent the "seven last plagues." Andreas explains it as above: and so Bleek, Ewald, De Wette, Düsterd., and others).

13-16.] And I saw out of the mouth of the dragon (who is still in the prophetic scene, giving his power to the beast, ch. xiii. 2) and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet (viz. the second beast of ch. xiii. 11 ff. Compare ch. xix. 20, xx. 10) three unclean spirits like frogs (in shape and character. In the entire absence of Scripture symbolism, — for the only mention of frogs besides this is in, or in regard to, the relation of the plague in Egypt, — we can only explain the similitude from the uncleanness, and

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

cles, which go forth unto the kings of the †<sup>p</sup> whole world, to gather them to <sup>q</sup> the war of the great day of God Almighty. <sup>15</sup> <sup>r</sup> Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, <sup>s</sup> lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. <sup>16</sup> <sup>t</sup> And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew † Harmagedon. <sup>17</sup> And the

*cles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. <sup>15</sup> Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. <sup>16</sup> And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armagedon. <sup>17</sup> And the seventh*

† earth and of the is omitted by all ancient MSS.

<sup>p</sup> Luke ii. 1.  
<sup>q</sup> ch. xvii. 14.  
& xix. 19. & xx. 8.  
<sup>r</sup> Matt. xxiv. 48.

<sup>1</sup> Thess. v. 2.  
<sup>2</sup> Pet. iii. 10.  
ch. iii. 8.  
<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. v. 3.  
ch. iii. 4, 18.  
ch. xix. 19.

† So (with one d) all the early MSS. The H is in the Hebrew name, and in many of our MSS. (the ancient MSS. have no aspirates).

the pertinacious noise, of the frog), for (gives a reason for their being like frogs) they are spirits of demons doing miracles (this is a plain declaration of the interpretation of these three, and by it the limits of interpretation are clearly set, and must not be overpassed. The explanation of these as any men, or sects of men, is therefore clearly wrong) which go forth over the kings of the whole earth (it is the uniform testimony of the prophetic Scriptures, that the antichristian power shall work signs and wonders as means of deceiving mankind: see Matt. xxiv. 24; 2 Thess. ii. 9) to gather them together to the war of that great day of Almighty God (that day viz. which is explained in detail in the subsequent part of the prophecy, ch. xix. 17 ff. This great gathering of the beast and the kings of the earth against God and the Lamb, is the signal for the immediate and glorious appearing of the Lord. And therefore follows an exhortation to be ready, and clad in the garments of righteousness, when He shall come). Behold, I come (the Seer speaks in the name of Christ) as a thief (that personal advent shall happen when many least expect it, when the world is secure in the ungodliness of ages): blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they (men) see his shame (the figure is that of one apprehending the thief's coming, and therefore keeping watch in his clothes, not undressing. In the spiritual sense, the garments are the robe of righteousness put on by faith in Him who is our Righteousness: and the walking naked is that destitution of these garments which will at that day bring shame before assembled men and angels). And they (the unclean spirits, as is evident

from gathered them being merely a recital of the purpose, to gather them, announced in ver. 14: not, the angel of the sixth vial, as Bengel; nor God, as Hengstenberg and Ebrard) collected them together to the place which is called in Hebrew Harmagedon (it is evidently in the meaning of the Hebrew name of this place that its appropriate significance lies. For otherwise why should in Hebrew be prefixed to it? When St. John does this in his Gospel, in the cases of Bethesda, v. 2, Gabbatha, xix. 13, Golgotha, xix. 17, and in this book in the case of Abaddon, ix. 11, it is each time not without such reference: see the notes in those places. But this circumstance does not deprive the name of geographical reality: and it is most probable on every account that such reality exists here. The words the place which is called would surely not be used except of a real place habitually so named, or by a name very like this. Nor need we search far for the place pointed out. Harmagiddo, the 'mountain of Megiddo,' designates at least the neighbourhood where the Canaanitish Kings were overthrown by Barak, Judg. v. 19: an occasion which gave rise to one of the two triumphal songs of Israel recorded in the Old Test., and therefore one well worthy of symbolizing the great final overthrow of the Kings of the Earth leagued against Christ. That the name slightly differs from that given in the Old Test. where it is the plain [2 Chron. xxxv. 22] or the waters [Judges, as above] of Megiddo, is of slight consequence, and may be owing to a reason which I shall dwell on below. The Septuagint in both places adopts the form which we have here, Megiddo or -eddo. Nor must it be forgotten, that Megiddo was connected with

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. <sup>15</sup> And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. <sup>19</sup> And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remem-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

seventh poured out his vial † upon the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple †, from the throne, saying, <sup>u</sup> It is done. <sup>18</sup> And <sup>x</sup> there were † lightnings, and voices, and thunders; <sup>y</sup> and there was a great earthquake, <sup>z</sup> such as was not since † there was a man upon the earth, such an earthquake, so great. <sup>19</sup> And <sup>a</sup> the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and Babylon the great <sup>b</sup> was remembered before

† So all our ancient MSS.

† of heaven is omitted by the Alexandrine MS.; the Sinaitic has of God, shewing that originally there was only as in the text.

<sup>u</sup> ch. xxi. 6.

<sup>x</sup> ch. iv. 5.

& viii. 5. &

xi. 19.

† So the Alexandrine MS.; the Sinaitic has thunders and lightnings and voices and thunders.

<sup>y</sup> ch. xi. 13.

<sup>z</sup> Dan. xii. 1.

† So the Alexandrine MS.

b ch. xviii. 5.

a ch. xiv. 8. & xvii. 18.

another overthrow and slaughter, viz. that of Josiah by Pharaoh-Necho [2 Kings xxiii. 29; 2 Chron. as above], which though not analogous to this predicted battle in its issue, yet served to keep up the character of the place as one of overthrow and calamity: compare also Zech. xii. 11, and the striking description, 2 Chron. xxxv. 25, of the ordinance of lamentation for Josiah. At Megiddo also another Jewish King, Ahaziah, died of the wounds received from Jehu, 2 Kings ix. 27. The prefix Har, signifying "mountain," has its local propriety: see Stanley's description of the plain of Esdraelon in the opening of his Sinai and Palestine, ch. ix. And to the fisherman of the lake of Galilee, who would know Megiddo, as he saw its background of highland lit up by the morning or evening sun across the plain from his native hills, the name would doubtless be a familiar one. Still there may have been a deeper reason which led to, or at all events justified the prefix. As the name now stands, it has a meaning ominous of the great overthrow which is to take place on the spot).

17—21.] And the seventh poured out his vial upon the air (the consequences are presently seen), and there came forth a voice out of the temple from the throne (the voice, as in ver. 1, of God himself. This is rendered even more certain here by the addition of from the throne, saying, It is done (the limitation of the meaning to "that is done which was commanded," viz. the outpouring of the seven vials, is in fact no limitation; for the plagues are the last plagues: if therefore they are done, all is

done. But the declaration is of course made in anticipation, and imports that the outpouring of the seventh vial had done that which should accomplish all and bring in the end. One who had fired a train would say, "It is done," though the explosion had not yet taken place). And there were lightnings and voices and thunders (the usual accompaniments at the close of each series of visions, see ch. viii. 5, xi. 19. But as before remarked, these phenomena occur here in rather a different connexion from that in the other two places. Here, they are more the result of the outpouring of the last vial, and they do not conclude, but only begin its effects, which do not cease until the destruction of Babylon and the great overthrow of the antichristian hosts): and there was a great earthquake (this may perhaps be not without connexion with the pouring out of the vial into the air: in the descriptions of earthquakes we read of the darkened and lurid appearance of the air preceding the shock), such as was not from the time when there was a man (not, "since man was") upon the earth, such an earthquake, so great. And the great city (Rome: compare ch. xi. 8 and note, xiv. 8, xvii. 18, xviii. 10, 16, 18, &c., 21) became into (i. e. was divided or split, viz., by the earthquake, into) three parts (see ch. xi. 13, where a similar judgment takes place at the end of the episode of the two witnesses. The three parts are supposed by Düsterd. to refer to the three arch-enemies just now mentioned. But this is very uncertain: see on the tripartite division at ch. viii. 7), and the cities of the nations fell (not only the greatest city,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

God, <sup>c</sup> to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. <sup>20</sup> And <sup>d</sup> every island fled away, and there were found no mountains. <sup>21</sup> <sup>e</sup> And a great hail, as of a talent in weight, cometh down out of heaven upon men: and <sup>f</sup> men blasphemed God because of <sup>g</sup> the plague of the hail, because exceeding great is the plague thereof.

XVII. <sup>1</sup> And there came <sup>a</sup> one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; <sup>b</sup> I will shew thee the judgment of <sup>c</sup> the great harlot <sup>d</sup> that sitteth upon [the] many waters: <sup>2</sup> <sup>e</sup> with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

brance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. <sup>20</sup> And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. <sup>21</sup> And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

XVII. <sup>1</sup> And there came one of the seven angels, which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: <sup>2</sup> with whom the kings of the earth have committed forni-

but other great capitals of nations fell, from the violence and extent of the earthquake. We have its further consequences presently): and **Babylon the great** (mentioned specially, although really the same [see the places referred to above] with the appellation of *the great city*, because of her special adulterous character to be hereafter described. The destruction of the material city of Rome is but the beginning of the execution of vengeance on the mystic Babylon) was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath (see on the figure of the cup, ch. xiv. 8, note. The sense is, that all these material judgments were but pre-fatory; the divine intent, in the midst of them, being to make Babylon drink the cup of His wrath in her judgment which follows): and every island fled (the effects of the earthquake are resumed, the mention of Babylon coming into remembrance being parenthetical, and suggested by the great city having been split into three parts. On the sense, as belonging to the imagery of the Great Day, see ch. vi. 14), and there were found no mountains (not as A. V., "the mountains were not found." The expression is far stronger than this: amounting to that in ch. vi. 14, that every mountain was removed out of its place and was looked for in vain), and a great hail (see *reff.* Egypt is again in view) as of a

talent in weight (i. e. having each hail-stone of that weight. Diodorus Siculus speaks of hailstones of a *mina* each in weight as being enormous: and the talent contained *sixty* minæ. Josephus speaks of the stones which were thrown from the machines in the siege of Jerusalem as each of a talent weight) descendeth from heaven on men: and men blasphemed God by reason of the plague of the hail, because great is the plague of it exceedingly (i. e. mankind in general,—not those who were struck by the hailstones, who would instantly die,—so far from repenting at this great and final judgment of God, blasphemed him and were impenitent. The issue is different from that in ch. xi. 13, where the remnant feared, and gave glory to God).

CH. XVII., XVIII.] THE JUDGMENT OF BABYLON. And herein, XVII. 1—6.] *The description of Babylon under the figure of a drunken harlot, riding on the beast. And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials (we are not told which of the seven, and it is idle to enquire. The seventh has been conjectured, because under the outpouring of his vial Babylon was remembered) and talked with me saying, Hither, I will shew thee the judgment of the great harlot that sitteth upon [the] many waters, with whom the kings of the earth [have] committed fornication, and they who inhabit the*



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

cation, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. <sup>3</sup> So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>f</sup> the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication. <sup>3</sup> And he carried me away in the spirit <sup>g</sup> into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sitting <sup>h</sup> upon a scarlet coloured wild-beast, <sup>f</sup> Jer. li. 7. ch. xlv. 8. & xviii. 3. <sup>g</sup> ch. xii. 6, 14. <sup>h</sup> ch. xii. 3.

earth have been made drunk from the wine of her fornication (the figure here used, of a harlot who has committed fornication with secular kings and peoples, is frequent in the prophets, and has one principal meaning and application, viz. to God's church and people that had forsaken Him and attached herself to others. In eighteen places out of twenty-one where the figure occurs, such is its import; viz. in Isa. i. 21; Jer. ii. 20, iii. 1, 6, 8; Ezek. xvi. 15, 16, 28, 31, 35, 41, xxiii. 5, 19, 44; Hosea ii. 5, iii. 3, iv. 15 [Micah i. 7]. In three places only is the word applied to heathen cities: viz. in Isa. xxiii. 15, 16 to Tyre, where, ver. 17, it is also said, "she shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth:" and in Nahum iii. 4 to Nineveh, which is called the well-favoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts. And there the threat is pronounced of a very similar ruin to that which befalls Babylon here. So that the Scripture analogy, while it points to unfaithfulness and treachery against God's covenant, also brings to mind extensive empire and wide-spread rule over the kingdoms of the earth. It is true, that as far as *the image itself* is concerned, pagan Rome as well fulfils its requirements as Tyre and Nineveh. It will depend on subsequent features in the description whether we are to bound our view with her history and overthrow. Still, it will not be desirable to wait for the solution of this question till we arrive at the point where those features appear: for by so doing much of our intermediate exegesis will necessarily be obscured. The decisive test then which may at once be applied to solve the question, is derived from the prophecy of the destruction of Babylon in ch. xviii. 2. It is to be laid utterly waste, and to "become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." Now no such destruction as this has yet befallen Rome, unless her transfer from

pagan to papal rule be such a destruction, and the Pope and his ecclesiastics be described in the above terms. In an eloquent passage of Vitranga, he presses Bossuet with this dilemma. Again, it is said of this harlot, "*with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication.*" But we may ask, if this be pagan Rome, who and what are these kings, and what is indicated by her having been the object of their lustful desires? In the days of Imperial Rome, there were no independent kings of the earth except in Parthia and Persia. Rome in her pagan state, as described for the purpose of identification in ver. 18, was not one who intrigued with the kings of the earth, but "*she which hath kingdom over the Kings of the earth:*" she reigned over them with undisputed and crushing sway.

I do not hesitate therefore, induced mainly by these considerations, which will be confirmed as we proceed step by step in the prophecy, to maintain that interpretation which regards papal and not pagan Rome as pointed out by the harlot of this vision.

The "sitting upon many waters" is said of Babylon in Jer. in reff., but has here a symbolical meaning; see below, ver. 15. On the drunkenness see ch. xiv. 8. The same thing is said of Babylon in Jer. l. c. But there she herself is the cup in the Lord's hand). And he (the angel) carried me away to the wilderness (not, as Elliott and others, and even Düsterdieck, "a wilderness." The most natural way of accounting for the Seer being taken into the wilderness here, is that he was to be shewn Babylon, which was in the wilderness, and the overthrow of which, in the prophecy from which come the very words "*Babylon is fallen, is fallen*" [Isa. xxi. 9], is headed "*the vision of the wilderness.*" So that by the analogy of prophecy, the journey to witness the fall of Babylon would be to the wilderness. The question of the identity of this woman with the woman in ch. xii. is not affected by that of the identity of this wilderness with that)

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

i ch. xiii. 1  
k ver. 9.  
l ver. 12.

m ch. xviii. 12,  
16.  
n Dan. xi. 38.

o Jer. li. 7.  
ch. xvii. 6.  
p ch. xiv. 8.

full of<sup>i</sup> names of blasphemy,<sup>k</sup> having seven heads and<sup>l</sup> ten horns. <sup>4</sup> And the woman<sup>m</sup> was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour,<sup>n</sup> and gilded with gold and precious stones and pearls,<sup>o</sup> having a golden cup in her hand<sup>p</sup> full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: <sup>5</sup> and [having]

*beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. <sup>4</sup> And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: <sup>5</sup> and upon her*

in the spirit (see note on ch. i. 10); and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet wild-beast (this beast is introduced as if a new appearance: but its identity with that mentioned before, ch. xiii. 1 ff., is plain as the description goes onward. For not to mention the features which the two have in common, this beast, as soon as described, is ever after mentioned as the beast; and in ch. xix. 19, 20, the identity is expressly established. For there we read, ver. 19, that the beast and the kings of the earth make war against the Lamb, which beast can be no other than this on which the woman rides, cf. our vv. 12—14:—and in the next verse, xix. 20, we read that *the beast was taken, and the false prophet who did miracles before him*, which beast can be no other than that of ch. xiii. See ver. 14 there. The identity of the two is therefore matter not of opinion, but of demonstration. The differences in appearance doubtless are significant. That with which we are now concerned, the scarlet colour, is to be understood as belonging not to a covering on the beast, but to the beast itself. It is akin to the colour of the dragon, but as that is the redness of fire [see however ch. vi. 4], so is this of blood, with which both the beast and its rider are dyed. It was the colour, see Heb. ix. 19, of the wool to be used in sprinkling the blood of sacrifice. There may be an allusion to the Roman imperial purple: for the robe which was put on our Lord in mockery is described by this same word. But this is more probably conveyed by its own proper word in the next verse. By the woman *sitting* on the wild-beast, is signified that superintending and guiding power which the rider possesses over his beast: than which nothing could be chosen more apt to represent the superiority claimed and exercised by the See of Rome over the secular kingdoms of Christendom), full of names of blasphemy (the names of blasphemy, which were found before on the heads of the beast only, have now spread

over its whole surface. As ridden and guided by the harlot, it is tenfold more blasphemous in its titles and assumptions than before. The heathen world has but its *Divi*, i. e. "Gods," in the Cæsars, as in other deified men of note: but Christendom has its "most Christian" and "most faithful" Kings such as Louis XIV. and Philip II.; its "Defenders of the faith" such as Charles II. and James II.; its society of unprincipled intriguers called after the sacred name of our Lord, and working Satan's work "ad majorem Dei gloriam;" its "holy office" of the Inquisition, with its dens of darkest cruelty; finally its "patrimony of St. Peter," and its "holy Roman Empire;" all of them and many more, new names of blasphemy, with which the woman has invested the beast. Go where we will and look where we will in Papal Christendom, names of blasphemy meet us. The taverns, the shops, the titles of men and of places, the very insurance badges on the houses are full of them), having seven heads and ten horns (as in its former appearance, ch. xiii. 1; inherited from the dragon, ch. xii. 3. These are presently interpreted: we now return to the description of the woman herself). And the woman was clothed in purple (St. John's own word, even to its peculiar form, for the mock-imperial robe placed on our Lord: and therefore bearing probably here the same signification; but not in mockery, for the empire is real) and scarlet (see above. This very colour is not without its significance: witness the Cardinals, at the same time the guiding council of the Church and princes of the State), and gilded with gold and with (the word gilded is carried on to other details to which it does not properly belong) precious stones and with pearls (this description needs no illustration for any who have witnessed, or even read of, the pomp of Papal Rome: which, found as it is every where, is concentrated in the city itself), holding a cup of gold in her hand

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

forehead was a name written, **MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.** <sup>6</sup> And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. <sup>7</sup> And the angel said unto me,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

upon her forehead a name written, <sup>q</sup> **MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT,** <sup>r</sup> **THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.** <sup>s</sup> <sup>6</sup> And I saw <sup>t</sup> the woman drunken <sup>u</sup> with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of <sup>x</sup> the witnesses of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered with great wonder. <sup>7</sup> And the angel said unto me,

<sup>q</sup> 2 Thess. ii. 7.  
<sup>r</sup> ch. xi. 8. &  
xiv. 8. & xvi.  
19. & xviii. 2,  
10, 21.  
<sup>s</sup> ch. xviii. 9.  
& xix. 2.

<sup>t</sup> ch. xviii. 24.

<sup>u</sup> ch. xiii. 15.  
& xvi. 6.

<sup>x</sup> ch. vi. 9, 10.  
& xii. 11.

full of abominations and of the impure things of her fornication (this cup is best taken altogether symbolically, and not as the cup in the Mass, which, however degraded by her blasphemous fiction of transubstantiation, could hardly be called by this name, and moreover is *not given*, but *denied* by her to the nations of the earth. That she should have represented herself in her medals as holding forth this cup [with the remarkable inscription, "she sits over the whole earth;" see Elliott, vol. iv. p. 30, plate], is a judicial coincidence rather than a direct fulfilment), and [having] upon her forehead a name written (as was customary with harlots), **Mystery** (is this word part of the name, or not? On the whole it seems more probable that it is. For though no such word would in the nature of things be attached to her forehead as part of her designation, so neither would the description which follows **Babylon the great**, to which the word **mystery** seems partly to refer. But whether part of the name or not, the meaning will be the same: viz. that the title following is to be taken in a spiritual and an enigmatical sense: compare ch. i. 20, and 2 Thess. ii. 7), **Babylon the great, the mother of the harlots and of the abominations of the earth** (i. e. not only first and greatest of these, but herself the progenitress and origin of the rest. All spiritual fornication and corruption are owing to her, and to her example and teaching). **And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus** (as the Seer contemplates the woman, he perceives that she is drunken: and from what is revealed to him, and from her symbolic colour of blood, he assigns the cause of that intoxication). **And I wondered, when I saw her, with great won-**

der (what was the ground of the Seer's astonishment? One doubtless might be assigned, which would at once account for any degree of such emotion. If this woman is *the same as he before saw*, who fled into the wilderness from the face of the dragon, "the faithful city become an harlot" [Isa. i. 21], he might well wonder. And certainly there is much in favour of such a supposition. It has been taken up by some considerable expositors, such as Auberlen [on Daniel], who has argued earnestly but soberly for it. There is one objection to it, which has been made more of in this place than perhaps it deserves. It is, that in the Angel's replication to St. John's wonder, no allusion is made to this circumstance as its principal ground. But, it may well be replied, this would be just what we might expect, if the fact of identity were patent. The Seer, versed in the history of man's weakness and depravity, full of Old Test. prophetic thoughts and sayings, would need no solution of the fact itself: this would lie at the ground of his wonder, and of the angel's explanation of the consequences which were to follow from it. Auberlen very properly lays stress on the fact, that the joint symbolism of the wilderness and the woman could not fail to call up in the mind of the Seer the last occasion when the two occurred together: and insists that this symbol must be continuous throughout. Without going so far as to pronounce the two identical, I think we cannot and ought not to lose sight of the identity of symbolism in the two cases. It is surely meant to lie beneath the surface, and to teach us an instructive lesson. We may see from it two prophetic truths: first, that the church on earth in the main will become apostate and faithless, compare Luke xviii. 8: and secondly, that while

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

Wherefore didst thou wonder? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the wild-beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and the ten horns. <sup>8</sup> The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and <sup>y</sup> shall ascend out of the abyss, and <sup>z</sup> goeth into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth <sup>a</sup> shall wonder, <sup>b</sup> whose names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they see the

y ch. xi. 7.  
& xiii. 1.  
z ch. xiii. 10.  
ver. 11.  
a ch. xiii. 3.  
b ch. xiii. 8.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

*Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. <sup>8</sup> The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold*

this shall be so, the apostasy shall not embrace the whole church, so that the second woman in the apocalyptic vision should be *absolutely* identical with the first. The identity is, in the main, not to be questioned: in formal strictness, not to be pressed. This being so, I should rather regard St. John's astonishment as a compound feeling, occasioned partly by the enormity of the sight revealed to him, partly also by the identity of the symbolism with that which had been the vehicle of a former and altogether different vision).

7—18.] *Explanation by the angel of the mystery of the woman and of the beast.* And first, 7—14] *of the beast.* And the angel said to me, *Wherefore didst thou wonder? I will tell to thee the mystery (which, be it noted, is but one) of the woman and of the wild-beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and the ten horns. The beast which thou sawest, was, and is not, and shall come up out of the abyss, and goeth to perdition* (these words have been a very battle-field for apocalyptic expositors. The principal differing interpretations are far too long to be given at all intelligibly here, but will be seen best in their own works, and compendiously but fairly stated in the notices in Mr. Elliott's fourth volume. What is here required, is that I should give a consistent account of that solution which I have been myself led to adopt. 1) It will not be supposed, with the general view which I have taken of the beast as the secular persecuting power, that I am prepared to accede to that line of interpretation which makes the whole vision merely descriptive of the Seer's own time, and of the Roman em-

perors then past, present, and expected. Against such a view it seems to me the whole imagery and diction of the vision protest: and this it will be my endeavour to shew as each of their details comes under my notice. If, as universally acknowledged, our prophecy be a taking up and continuation of that of Daniel, then we are dealing with larger matters and on a wider scale than such a limited interpretation would imply. 2) Nor again, after the meaning assigned above to the harlot and her title, will it be expected that I should agree with those who take her as, according to the letter of our ver. 18, strictly confined in meaning to the material city of Rome. She is that city: but she is also *mystery*. She is herself a harlot, an apostate and faithless church: but she is also a *mother*: from her spring, of her nature partake, with her shall be destroyed, all the fornications and abominations of the earth, though they be not in Rome, though they be not called by her name, though in outward semblance they quarrel with and oppose her. 3) The above remarks will lead their intelligent reader to expect, that the present words of our text, which are in the main reproductive of the imagery of ch. xiii. 1—4, will be interpreted as those were interpreted, not of mere passing events and persons, but of world-wide and world-long empires and changes. 4) Having thus indicated the line of interpretation which I shall follow, I reserve the details for ver. 10, where they necessarily come before us): *and they shall wonder who dwell upon the earth, of whom the name is not written upon* (so literally, as often in this book) *the book of life from the foundation of the world* (i. e.



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. <sup>9</sup> And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. <sup>10</sup> And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

beast, that he was, and is not, and † shall come again. <sup>9</sup> †<sup>c</sup> Here is † the mind which hath wisdom. <sup>d</sup> The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. <sup>10</sup> And they are seven kings: the five are fallen, the one is, the other is not

† So all our ancient MSS.; some of the later have, and is present; but none read as the A. V.  
† And has no authority whatever.—  
c. ch. xiii. 18.  
d. ch. xiii. 1.

written from that time), seeing the beast that he was and is not and shall come again (see for full explanation, below on vv. 9, 10). Here [is] the mind that hath wisdom (by these words, as in ch. xiii. 18, attention is bespoken, and spiritual discernment challenged, for that which follows). The seven heads are seven mountains, where (so literally) the woman sitteth upon them (by these words, no less plainly than by ver. 18, Rome is pointed out. Propertius, by a remarkable coincidence, unites both descriptions in one line: "The city on seven hills, that ruleth all the world." The Latin poets and prose writers are full of similar descriptions. See my Greek Test. and references there. See also the coin of Vespasian figured in Elliott, vol. iv. p. 30): and they are seven kings (let us weigh well the significance of this indication furnished by the angel. The seven heads have a reference to the woman, who sits upon the beast to whom they belong: and, as far as *this reference* is concerned, they are hills, on which she sits. But they have also another reference—to the beast, of which they are the heads: and as far as *this other reference* is concerned, they are kings. Not, be it noticed, kings over the woman, nor kings of the city symbolized by her: but kings in a totally different relation, viz. that to the beast of which they are heads. So that to interpret these kings as *emperors of Rome*, or as successive forms of government over Rome, is to miss the propriety of the symbolism and to introduce utter confusion. They belong to the *beast*, which is not Rome, nor the Roman Empire, but a general symbol of secular antichristian power. They are in substance the same seven crowned heads which we saw on the dragon in ch. xii. 3: the same which we saw, with names of blasphemy on them, on the beast of ch. xiii. 1, to whom the dragon gave his power and his throne). The five (i.e. the first five out of the seven) fell (in English idiom, "are fallen." Of whom is this word used? Is it one likely to be chosen to de-

scribe the mere passing away of king after king in an empire more or less settled? One appropriate to Augustus and Tiberius, who died in their beds? Or again is it one which could well be predicated of the government by consuls, which had been absorbed into the imperial power, or of that by dictators, which had merely ceased to be temporarily adopted, because it had become perpetual in the person of one man? Had Roman emperors been meant by the seven kings, or successive stages of government over Rome [even supposing these last made out, which they never have been], we should in vain have sought any precedent, or any appropriate meaning, for this term, have fallen: "have passed away" would be its constrained and unexampled sense. But let the analogy of Scripture and of this book itself guide us, and our way will be clear enough. "Is fallen, is fallen," is the cry over Babylon herself. The verb is used in the Septuagint constantly, of the violent fall, the overthrow, either of kings or of kingdoms: it is a word belonging to domination overthrow, to glory ruined, to empire superseded. If I understand these five of individual successive kings, if I understand them of forms of government adopted and laid down on occasion, I can give no account of this verb: but if I understand them of forms of empire, one after another heading the antichristian secular power, one after another violently overthrown and done away, I have this verb in its right place and appropriate sense. *Egypt* is fallen, the first head of the beast that persecuted God's people, Ezek. xxix., xxx.: *Nineveh* is fallen, the bloody city, Nahum iii. 1—19: *Babylon* is fallen, the great enemy of Israel, Isa. xxi. 9; Jer. l., li., al.: *Persia* is fallen, Dan. x. 13, xi. 2: *Græcia* is fallen, Dan. xi. 3, 4. Thus, and as it seems to me thus only, can we do justice to the expression. Nor is any force done thus to the word kings, but on the contrary it is kept to its strict prophetic import, and to the analogy of that portion of prophecy which is here



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. <sup>11</sup> And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, <sup>e</sup> and goeth into perdition, <sup>12</sup> And <sup>f</sup> the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour together with the beast. <sup>13</sup> These have one

e ver. 8.

f Dan. vii. 20,  
Zech. i. 18,  
19, 21.  
ch. xiii. 1.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. <sup>11</sup> And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. <sup>12</sup> And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. <sup>13</sup> These have one

especially in view. For in Dan. vii. 17 we read, that these great beasts which are four are four kings, not *kingdoms*), the one is (the *Roman*), the other (required to complete the seven) is not yet come (I agree with Auberlen, on Daniel, in regarding this seventh as the *Christian empire* beginning with Constantine: during whose time the beast in his proper essence, in his fulness of opposition to God and his saints, ceases to be), and when he shall come he must remain a little time (certainly the impression we derive from these words is not as Dusterdieck, al., that his empire is to be of very short continuance, but the term ["*a season*"], as in 1 Pet. i. 6, v. 10 ["*a while*"], gives the idea of some space not assigned, but vaguely thus stated as "some little time." The idea given is rather that of duration than non-duration. Here, the stress is on **must remain**, and not on "*a short space*:" on the fact of *some* endurance, not on its being but short). **And the beast which was and is not** (as in ver. 8, whose peculiar power and essence seem suspended while the empire is Christian by profession. But observe, this seventh is for all that a veritable head, and like the others carries names of blasphemy. The beast is not actually put out of existence, but has only received a deadly wound which is again healed, see ch. xiii. 3, notes), **he himself also is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth unto perdition** (this eighth, the last and worst phase of the beast, is not represented as any one of his heads, but as being *the beast himself* in actual embodiment. He is of the seven,—not "*one of the seven*," but the successor and result of the seven, following and springing out of them. **And he goeth into perdition**—does not *fall* like the others, but goes on and meets his own destruction at the hand of the Lord Himself. There

can be little doubt in the mind of the student of prophecy, *who* is thus described: that it is the ultimate antichristian power, prefigured by the little horn in Daniel, and expressly announced by St. Paul, 2 Thess. ii. 3 ff., as "the son of perdition,"—as "the lawless one, whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of His mouth, and destroy with the appearance of His coming"). **And the ten horns which thou sawest, are ten kings** (not necessarily personal kings: see on ver. 10 above: but kingdoms, regarded as summed up in their kings) **which** (kings of that kind who) **have not yet received a kingdom, but receive power as kings** (the term, as kings, is somewhat enigmatical. Auberlen suggests, whether the kingly power itself may not have passed away from these realms in the days of antichristian misrule, and thus their power be only **as kings**. But this seems inconsistent with their being *called* kings. Rather I would say the **as** represents the reservation of their kingly rights in their alliance with the beast) **one hour** (i. e. during the space of one hour: just as the corresponding term in ch. viii. 1 means, during the space of half an hour. Some, e. g. Vitringa and Elliott, have upheld the meaning of "at one and the same time with." But I venture to say that but for a preconceived opinion, no one would ever have thought of any other meaning for these words than the ordinary one, "for the space of one hour." And thus accordingly we will take them, as signifying some definite space, unknown to us, thus designated: analogous in position to the term "*a short space*" above) **together with** (i. e. in conjunction with, allied with: their power will be associated with his power) **the beast** (who are these? The answer seems to be furnished us in Dan. vii. 23 ff. They are ten kingdoms which shall arise out of the fourth great kingdom

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. <sup>14</sup> These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. <sup>15</sup> And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. <sup>16</sup> And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

mind, and † give their might and power unto the beast. <sup>14</sup> ‡ These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, <sup>h</sup> because he is Lord of lords, and King of kings, <sup>i</sup> and they that are with him, called, and chosen, and faithful. <sup>15</sup> And he saith unto me, <sup>k</sup> The waters which thou sawest, where the harlot sitteth, <sup>l</sup> are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. <sup>16</sup> And the ten horns which thou sawest, † and the beast, <sup>m</sup> these shall hate the harlot, and shall make her deserted <sup>n</sup> and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and <sup>o</sup> shall burn her with fire.

† So all our ancient MSS.  
g ch. xvi. 14. & xix. 10.

h Deut. x. 17.  
1 Tim. vi. 15.  
ch. xix. 16.

i Jer. l. 44, 45.  
ch. xiv. 4.

k Isa. viii. 7.  
ver. 1.

l ch. xiii. 7.

† So all our ancient MSS.  
m Jer. l. 41, 42.  
ch. xvi. 12.

n Ezek. xvi.  
37—44.  
ch. xviii. 16.  
o ch. xviii. 8.

there: ten European powers, which in the last time, in concert with and subjection to the antichristian power, shall make war against Christ. In the precise number and form here indicated they have not yet arisen. It would not be difficult to point out the elements and already consolidating shapes of most of them: but in precise number we have them not as yet. What changes in Europe may bring them into the required tale and form, it is not for us to say. These have (the present is used in describing them, though they have not yet arisen) one mind (one and the same view and intent and consent), and give their might and power to the beast (becoming his allies and moving at his beck). These shall war with the Lamb (in concert with the beast, ch. xix. 19), and the Lamb shall conquer them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and they who are with Him (shall conquer them also: the verb is implied above) called and chosen (all the called are not chosen, Matt. [xx. 16], xxii. 14: but all that are chosen are first called, 2 Pet. i. 10) and faithful (this way of taking this clause is far better than with Bengel and the A. V., to make the last words into predicate, "and they that are with him are called and chosen and faithful." For 1) it can clearly be no co-ordinate reason with the other assigned for the Lamb's victory, that *His followers are*, &c., and 2) the

arrangement of the sentence in the original [see my Greek Test.] seems against this view).

15—18.] *Explanation of various particulars regarding the harlot, and of the harlot herself.* And he saith to me, The waters which thou sawest, where (i. e. on which) the harlot sitteth, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages (so in Isa. viii. 7, the king of Assyria and his invading people are compared to the waters of the river, strong and many. There is also doubtless an impious parody intended in the position of the harlot to that of Him who sitteth above the water-flood, and remaineth King for ever, Ps. xxix. 10). And the ten horns which thou sawest, and the beast (viz. in that compact and alliance just now mentioned), these shall hate the harlot (we now enter upon prophetic particulars other than those revealed in the vision, where the harlot was sitting on the beast. Previous to these things coming to pass, she must be cast down from her proud position), and shall make her deserted and naked (contrast to ver. 4. Her former lovers shall no longer frequent her nor answer to her call: her rich adornments shall be stripped off. She shall lose, at the hands of those whom she formerly seduced with her cup of fornication, both her spiritual power over them, and her temporal power to adorn herself), and shall eat her flesh (batten upon her spoils;

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

p<sup>2</sup> Theoc. ii. 11. 17 <sup>p</sup> For God put in their hearts to fulfil his will, † [and to agree,] and to give their kingdom unto the beast, <sup>q</sup> until the words of God shall be fulfilled. <sup>18</sup> And the woman which thou sawest <sup>r</sup> is the great city, <sup>s</sup> which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

† and is omitted by all our ancient MSS. XVIII. <sup>1</sup> † <sup>a</sup> After these things I saw another angel coming down out

a ch. xvii. 1.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

fire. <sup>17</sup> For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. <sup>18</sup> And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

XVIII. <sup>1</sup> And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven,

confiscate her possessions: or perhaps, as the same expression, Ps. xxvii. 2; Micah iii. 2 ff., where it is used to indicate the extreme vengeance of keen hostility), and shall consume her with (in) fire (Düsterdieck remarks that in the former clause the figure of a woman is kept: in this latter the thing signified, a city. But this need not absolutely be: the woman may be here also intended: and all the more probably, because the very words shall consume her with fire are quoted from the legal formula of the condemnation of those who had committed abominable fornications: see Levit. xx. 14, xxi. 9. The burning of the city would be a signal fulfilment: but we cannot positively say that that, and nothing else is intended). For God put it (anticipatory past tense) into their hearts to do His mind, and to make one mind, and to give their kingdom (i. e., as above, the authority of their respective kingdoms) unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled (the prophetic words or discourses, respecting the destruction of Babylon). And the woman whom thou sawest, is the great city, which hath kingdom over the kings of the earth (every thing here is plain. The "city on seven hills which rules the world," can be but one, and that one ROME. The present tense, which hath, points to the time when the words were uttered, and to the dominion then subsisting. It has already been seen, that the prophecy regards Rome pagan and papal, but, from the figure of an harlot and the very nature of the predictions themselves, more the latter than the former. I may observe in passing, that the view maintained recently by Düsterdieck, after many others, that the whole of these prophecies regard pagan Rome only, receives no countenance from the words of this verse, which this school of

Commentators are fond of appealing to as decisive for them. Rather may we say that this verse, taken in connexion with what has gone before, stultifies their view entirely. If the woman, as these Commentators insist, represents merely the stone-walls and houses of the city, what need is there for mystery on her brow,—what appropriateness in the use of all the Scripture imagery, long familiar to God's people, of spiritual fornication? And if this were so, where is the contest with the Lamb,—where the fulfilment of any the least portion of the prophecy? If we understand it thus, nothing is left us but to say, as indeed some of this school are not afraid to say, that only the Seer's wish dictated his words, and that history has not verified them. So that this view has one merit: it brings us at once face to face with the dilemma of accepting or rejecting the book: and thereby, for us, who accept it as the word of God, becomes impossible. For us, who believe the prophecy is to be fulfilled, what was Rome then, is Rome now. Her fornications and abominations, as well as her power and pride, are matter of history and of present fact: and we look for her destruction to come, as we believe it is rapidly coming, by the means and in the manner here foretold).

CH. XVIII. 1—XIX. 10.] THE DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON. Add herein, XVIII. 1—3.] *Announcement of the destruction.* The Seer does not see the act of destruction: it is prophesied to him in ch. xvii., and now announced, as indeed it had been by anticipation before, ch. xiv. 8, as having taken place. After these things I saw another angel (another besides the one who shewed him the vision in the last chapter: or, perhaps, as it is natural to join the epithet in some measure with the participle following,—another besides the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. <sup>2</sup> And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. <sup>3</sup> For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. <sup>4</sup> And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her

last who came down from heaven, ch. x. 1) coming down out of heaven (the Secr is still on the earth) having great power (possibly as Elliott suggests, as the executor of the judgment that he announced. If so, the announcement is still anticipatory, see ver. 21), and the earth was lighted up by (literally, out of, as the source of the brightness) his glory: and he cried in a mighty voice saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become an habitation of demons (see especially the Septuagint version of Isa. xxxiv. 14 ff., where, instead of *wild-beasts*, as in A. V., we have *demons*), and an hold (a place of detention: as it were an appointed prison) of every unclean spirit, and an hold of every unclean and hated bird (see the prophecy respecting Babylon, Jer. i. 39): because of the wrath of her fornication all the nations have drunk (see on ch. xiv. 8. The use of the word *wrath* is even more remarkable here: of that wine of her fornication which has turned into wrath to herself), and the kings of the earth committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth became rich out of the quantity of her luxury (the word used here, — see note on 1 Tim. v. 11, seems properly to mean the exuberance of strength, the flower of pride).

4—20.] *Warning to God's people to leave her, on account of the greatness of her crimes and coming judgments (4—8):*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

of heaven, having great power; <sup>b</sup> and the earth was lightened with his glory. <sup>2</sup> And he cried † with a strong voice, saying, <sup>c</sup> Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and <sup>d</sup> is become an habitation of demons, and an hold of every unclean spirit, and <sup>e</sup> an hold of every unclean and hateful bird. <sup>3</sup> For all the nations have <sup>f</sup> drunk of † the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth committed fornication with her, <sup>g</sup> and the merchants of the earth waxed rich through the abundance of her luxury. <sup>4</sup> And I heard another voice out of heaven, saying, <sup>h</sup> Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers in her sins, and

<sup>b</sup> Ezek. xlii. 2.

† mightily is omitted by all MSS. what-ever.

<sup>c</sup> Isa. xlii. 10.

& xxi. 9.

Jer. li. 8.

ch. xiv. 8.

<sup>d</sup> Isa. xlii. 21.

& xxi. 8. &

xxxiv. 14.

Jer. i. 39. &

ii. 37.

<sup>e</sup> Isa. xiv. 23.

& xxxiv. 11.

Mark v. 2, 3.

<sup>f</sup> ch. xiv. 8.

& xvii. 2.

† the wine of

is omitted by

all our most

ancient MSS.

<sup>g</sup> ver. 11, 15.

Isa. xlvii. 15.

<sup>h</sup> Isa. xlviii. 20.

& Hi. 11.

Jer. i. 8. &

ii. 6, 45.

2 Cor. vi. 17.

*lamentations over her on the part of those who were enriched by her (9—20). And I heard another voice out of heaven (not that of the Father, nor of Christ, for in such a case, as has been well observed, the long poetical lamentation would be hardly according to prophetic decorum; but that of an angel speaking in the name of God, as we have my used in ch. xi. 3 also) saying, Come out of her, my people (in the prophetic references in Isaiah, the circumstances differed, in that being a joyful exodus, this a cautionary one: and thus the warning is brought nearer to that one which our Lord commands in Matt. xxiv. 16, and the cognate warnings in the Old Test., viz. that of Lot to come out of Sodom, Gen. xix. 15—22, when her destruction impended, and that of the people of Israel to get them up from the tents of Dathan and Abiram, Num. xvi. 23—26. In Jeremiah, we have the same circumstance of Babylon's impending destruction combined with the warning: and from those places probably, especially Jeremiah li. 45, the words here are taken. The inference has been justly made from them [Elliott iv. p. 40], that there shall be, even to the last, saints of God in the midst of Rome: and that there will be danger of their being, through a lingering fondness for her, partakers in her coming judgments), that ye partake not in her sins,*



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

that ye receive not of her plagues ;  
<sup>i</sup> because her sins have reached  
 unto heaven, and <sup>k</sup> God hath re-  
 membered her iniquities. <sup>6</sup> <sup>l</sup> Repay  
 to her even as she repaid †, and  
 double [† unto her] double accord-  
 ing to her works: <sup>m</sup> in the cup  
 which she mixed, <sup>n</sup> mix for her  
 double. <sup>7</sup> <sup>o</sup> As much as she glori-  
 fied herself, and lived in luxury,  
 so much torment and sorrow give  
 her: for she saith in her heart, I sit  
 a <sup>p</sup> queen, and am not a widow, and  
 shall never see mourning. <sup>8</sup> There-  
 fore <sup>q</sup> in one day shall her plagues  
 come, death, and mourning, and  
 famine; and <sup>r</sup> she shall be utterly  
 burned with fire: <sup>s</sup> because strong is  
 the Lord God who hath judged her.

sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. <sup>5</sup> For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. <sup>6</sup> Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. <sup>7</sup> How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. <sup>8</sup> Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God

and that ye receive not of her plagues (the fear, in case of God's servants remaining in her, would be twofold: 1) lest by over-persuasion or guilty conformity they should become accomplices in any of her crimes: 2) lest by being in and of her, they should, though the former may not have been the case [and even more if it have], share in her punishment. It was through lingering fondness that Lot's wife became a sharer in the destruction of Sodom): because her sins (not as De Wette, the cry of her sins: but the idea is of a heap: see below) have reached as far as heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Repay to her (the words are now addressed to the executioners of judgment) as she also repaid (see the reference to Jeremiah, "As she hath done, do unto her." The latter repaid is used, not in its strict propriety, but as corresponding to the other.—Hers was a giving, this is a giving back: we have exactly the same construction, which was probably in mind here, used also of Babylon, in the Septuagint version of Ps. cxxxvii. 8, "Happy is he that shall repay to thee thy repayment, which thou didst repay to us"), and double [the] double according to her works (so in Isa. xl. 2, and Jer. xvi. 18. See also Zech. ix. 12). In the

cup (see above, ch. xvii. 4, and xiv. 8, xviii. 3) which she mixed, mix for her double (see ch. xiv. 10: a double portion of the deadly wine of God's wrath): in proportion as (literally, in as many things as) she glorified herself, and luxuriated (see above, ver. 3, and 1 Tim. v. 11, note), so much torment and grief give to her. Because in her heart she saith [that] I sit a queen (see ref. Isa., from which the sense and even the single words come, being there also said of Babylon. Similarly also Ezek. xxvii. 1 ff., of Tyre), and am not a widow (see as above), and shall never see mourning ("neither shall I know the loss of children," Isa.). For this cause in one day shall come her plagues, death and mourning and famine (from Isa. xlvii. 9, where however we have "loss of children and widowhood." The judgments here are more fearful: death, for her scorn of the prospect of widowhood; mourning, for her inordinate revelling; famine, for her abundance): and with fire shall she be burnt (the punishment of the fornicatress; see ch. xvii. 16 note. Whether this is to be understood of the literal destruction of the city of Rome by fire, is surely doubtful, considering the mystical character of the whole prophecy): because strong is [the Lord] God who hath

<sup>i</sup> Gen. xviii. 20,  
21. Jer. li. 9.  
Jonah i. 2.  
<sup>k</sup> ch. xvi. 19.

<sup>l</sup> Ps. cxxxvii. 8.  
Jer. i. 15, 20.  
& li. 24, 40.  
<sup>m</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 14.  
ch. xiii. 10.

† you is omitted  
by all our  
ancient MSS.

† Not expressed  
in the origi-  
nal.

<sup>n</sup> ch. xiv. 10.  
<sup>o</sup> ch. xvi. 19.  
<sup>o</sup> Ezek. xxviii.  
2, &c.

<sup>p</sup> Isa. xlvii. 7.  
<sup>q</sup> Zeph. ii.  
15.

<sup>q</sup> Isa. xlvii. 9.  
ver. 10.

<sup>r</sup> ch. xvii. 16.

<sup>s</sup> Jer. i. 54.  
ch. xi. 17.



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

who judgeth her. <sup>9</sup> And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, <sup>10</sup> standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. <sup>11</sup> And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: <sup>12</sup> the merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

<sup>9</sup> And <sup>t</sup> there shall weep and mourn <sup>t</sup> Jer. i. 40. over her <sup>u</sup> the kings of the earth, <sup>u</sup> Ezek. xxvi. 15, 17. ch. xvii. 2. ver. 3. who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her, <sup>x</sup> when <sup>x</sup> ver. 18. ch. xix. 3. they see the smoke of her burning, <sup>10</sup> standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, <sup>y</sup> Alas, alas <sup>y</sup> Isa. xxi. 9. ch. xiv. 8. the great city, Babylon the strong city! <sup>z</sup> for in one hour is thy judgment come. <sup>11</sup> And <sup>a</sup> the merchants <sup>a</sup> Ezek. xxvii. 27—36. ver. 3. of the earth weep and mourn over her; for none buyeth their merchandise any more: <sup>12</sup> <sup>b</sup> merchandise <sup>b</sup> ch. xvii. 4. of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all citron wood, and every

judged her (a warrant for the severity of the judgment which shall befall her).

9—20.] *The mourning over her:* and first, 9, 10, by the kings of the earth. And there shall weep and mourn over her the kings of the earth, who committed fornication and luxuriated (see above, ver. 7) with her, when they see the smoke of her burning (see ch. i. 15), standing afar off on account of their fear of her torment (this feature in the prophecy is an objection to the literal understanding of its details. It can hardly be imagined that the kings should bodily stand and look as described, seeing that no combination of events contemplated in the prophecy has brought them together as yet), saying, Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon the strong city, because in one hour has come thy judgment.

11—16.] *Lamentation of the merchants.* And the merchants of the earth weep and lament (the construction passes into the graphic present, but resumes the future again below, ver. 15, in speaking of the same thing) over her, because no one any longer buys their cargo (the description which follows is perhaps drawn, in its poetic and descriptive features, from the relation of Rome to the world which then was, rather than from its relation at the future time de-

icted in the prophecy. But it must not for a moment be denied, that the character of this lamentation throws a shade of obscurity over the interpretation, otherwise so plain from the explanation given in ch. xvii. 18. The difficulty is however not confined to the application of the prophecy to Rome papal, but extends over the application of it to Rome at all, which last is determined for us by the solution given ch. xvi. 18. For Rome never has been, and from its very position never could be, a great commercial city. I leave this difficulty unsolved, merely requesting the student to bear in mind its true limits and not to charge it exclusively on that interpretation which only shares it with any other possible one. The main features of the description are taken from that of the destruction of and lamentation over Tyre in Ezek. xxvii., to which city they were strictly applicable. And possibly it may be said that they are also applicable to the church which has wedded herself to the pride of the earth and its luxuries. But certainly, as has been observed, the details of this mercantile lamentation far more nearly suit London, than Rome at any assignable period of her history), a cargo of gold, and of silver, and of precious stone, and of pearls, and of fine linen manufacture, and of purple, and of silken

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

article of ivory, and every article of most precious wood, and of brass, and of iron, and of marble,<sup>13</sup> and cinnamon, and † amomum, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and cattle, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and <sup>c</sup> persons of men.<sup>14</sup> And thy harvest of the desire of thy soul is departed from thee, and all thy fat things and thy splendid things are † perished from thee, and † men shall find them no more at all.<sup>15</sup> <sup>d</sup> The merchants of these

† So our most ancient MSS.

c Ezek. xxvii. 13.

† So all our ancient MSS.

† So [they shall find them] our most ancient MSS. d ver. 3, 11.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,<sup>13</sup> and cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.<sup>14</sup> And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.<sup>15</sup> The merchants of these

stuff, and of scarlet stuff, and all citron wood (the wood of the *thyon* tree, the citrus of the Romans, probably the *cupressus thyioides* or the *thuia articulata*. It was used for costly doors, with fittings of ivory, and for tables. It had a sweet smell), and every article of ivory, and every article of most costly wood, and of brass, and of iron, and of marble; and cinnamon (it is not certain, whether the *cinnamomum* of the ancients was the same as our cinnamon. Various accounts are given of its origin, but Herodotus, who ascribes it to the country where Dionysus [Bacchus] was born, i. e. to India, seems to give the right statement, if at least it is the modern cinnamon, which comes from Ceylon. In Exod. xiii. 23, it is an ingredient in the holy oil for anointing: in Prov. vii. 17 it is one of the perfumes of the bed of the adulteress: in Cant. iv. 14 it is one of the plants growing in the garden of the beloved), and amomum (a precious ointment made from an Asiatic shrub, and used for the hair), and odours (for incense), and ointment, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine meal (*semidalis*, the *simila* or *similago* of the Latins, the finest wheaten meal: the name has been revived in our time as *semolina*), and wheat, and cattle and sheep, and of horses and of chariots, and of bodies (i. e. slaves),—and persons (lit. souls) of men (so the A. V. for the corresponding Hebrew expression, Ezek. xxvii. 13, which the Septuagint render as here, *souls* of

men. It seems vain to attempt to draw a distinction between the bodies before mentioned and these souls or persons of men. If any is to be sought, the most obvious is that pointed out by Bengel, and adopted by Ewald, Hengstenberg, and Düsterdieck, that bodies expresses such slaves as belong to the horses and chariots, and persons of men slaves in general).

14.] This verse takes the form of a direct address, and then in the next the merchants are taken up again. From this some have thought that it is not in its right place: e. g. Beza and Vitrina fancied it should be inserted after ver. 23: others, as Ewald, that it was originally a marginal addition by the Writer. But irregular as is the insertion, it need not occasion any real difficulty. It takes up the "weep and mourn" of ver. 11, as if "them" after those verbs had been "us," which is not unnatural in a rhapsodical passage. And "these things," ver. 15, refers very naturally back to the "fat things and splendid things" mentioned in this verse. And thy harvest of the desire of thy soul (i. e. the ingathering of the dainties and luxuries which thy soul lusted after) has departed from thee, and all [thy] fat things and [thy] splendid things have perished from thee, and they (men) shall never more at all find them.

The next two verses describe, in strict analogy with vv. 9, 10, the attitude and the lamentation of these merchants. The

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, <sup>16</sup> and saying, *Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!* <sup>17</sup> for in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, <sup>18</sup> and cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, *What city is like unto this great city!* <sup>19</sup> And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, *Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.* <sup>20</sup> Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. <sup>21</sup> And a mighty angel took up a

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, <sup>16</sup> saying, *Alas, alas the great city,* <sup>e</sup> that was clothed in fine linen, <sup>e</sup> ch. xvii. and purple, and scarlet, and gilded with gold, and precious stones, and pearls; <sup>17</sup> <sup>f</sup> for in one hour all that wealth is made desolate. And <sup>g</sup> every pilot, and <sup>†</sup> every one who saileth any whither, and shipmen, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, <sup>18</sup> <sup>h</sup> and cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, <sup>i</sup> Who is like unto the great city? <sup>19</sup> And <sup>k</sup> they cast earth on their heads, and cried, weeping and mourning, saying, *Alas, alas the great city, whereby all that have ships in the sea were made rich out of her costliness:* <sup>1</sup> for in one hour is she made desolate. <sup>20</sup> <sup>m</sup> Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye <sup>†</sup> saints, and ye apostles and ye prophets; for <sup>n</sup> God hath judged your judgment upon her. <sup>21</sup> And one strong angel took

e ch. xvii.

f ver. 10.

g Isa. xxiii. 14.  
Ezek. xxvii. 29.

† So all our most ancient MSS., the more recent ones being very variously corrected.

h Ezek. xxvii. 30, 31. ver. 9.  
i ch. xiii. 4.k Josh. vii. 6.  
1 Sam. iv. 12.  
Job ii. 12.  
Ezek. xxvii. 30.

1 ver. 9.

m Isa. xlv. 23.  
& xlix. 13.  
Jer. ii. 48.† So most of our ancient MSS.  
n Luke xi. 40.  
60. ch. xix. 2.

merchants of these things (viz. of all those mentioned in vv. 12, 13, which have been just summed up as "*fat things and splendid things*") who gained wealth from her, shall stand afar off by reason of their fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, saying, *Woe, woe, the great city, which was clothed in stuff of fine linen and of purple and of scarlet, and gilded in golden ornament and precious stone and pearl: because (gives a reason for the Woe, woe) in one hour hath been desolated all that wealth.*

17—19.] *The lamentation of the shipmasters, &c.* And every pilot and every one who saileth any whither (all sailors from place to place), and sailors and as many as make traffic of the sea, stood afar off, and cried out when they saw the place of her burning, saying, *Who*

is like to the great city? And they cast earth upon their heads (see besides ref. Ezek. xxvii. 30: also 1 Sam. iv. 12; 2 Sam. i. 2, xiii. 19, xv. 32; Job ii. 12; Lam. ii. 10), and cried out weeping and mourning, saying, *Woe, woe, the great city in which all who have their ships in the sea became rich out of her costliness) her costly treasures: concrete meaning for the abstract term): for in one hour she hath been laid waste.*

20.] *The angel concludes with calling on the heavens and God's holy ones to rejoice at her fall.* Rejoice at her, thou heaven, and ye saints and ye apostles and ye prophets, for God hath judged your judgment upon her (hath exacted from her that judgment of vengeance which is due to you).

21—23.] *Symbolic proclamation by an*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

up a stone, great as a millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, ° Thus with violence shall be thrown down the great city Babylon, and p shall be found no more at all. 22 q And the sound of harpers, and musicians, and of flute-players, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of the millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; 23 r and the light of a lamp shall shine no more at all in thee; s and the voice of the bridegroom and the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for t thy merchants were the great men of the earth; u for with thy sorceries were all the nations deceived. 24 And x in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that y have been slain upon the earth.

*stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. 22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; 23 and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. 24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.*

XIX. 1 † After these things a I

*XIX. 1 And after these things I heard a great*

† and is omitted by all our ancient MSS.

*angel of Babylon's ruin. And one strong angel took up a stone great as a millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with a rush shall be thrown down Babylon the great city, and shall never be found any more (see Jer. li. 63, 64). And the sound of harpers and musicians and flute-players and trumpeters shall never be heard in thee any more, and every artisan of every art shall never be found in thee any more, and the sound of the millstone (see Jer. xxv. 10) shall never be heard in thee any more, and the light of a lamp shall never shine in thee any more (still from Jer. xxv. 10), and the voice of the bridegroom and the bride shall never be heard in thee any more: because thy merchants were the great men of the earth, because in thy sorcery all the nations were deceived (see Isa. xlvi. 9—12). And in her (the angel drops the address to the fallen city, and speaks out this last great cause*

*of her overthrow as a fact respecting her) the blood of prophets and of saints was found and of all who have been slain on the earth (i. e. naturally, of all slain for Christ's sake and His word. Compare the declaration of our Lord respecting Jerusalem, Matt. xxiii. 35).*

*CH. XIX. 1—8:] The Church's song of praise at the destruction of Babylon. As each of the great events and judgments in this book is celebrated by its song of praise in heaven, so this also: but more solemnly and formally than the others, seeing that this is the great accomplishment of God's judgment on the enemy of His Church. Compare ch. iv. 8 ff., introducing the whole heavenly scenery: v. 9 ff., celebrating the worthiness of the Lamb to open the book: vii. 10 ff.: xi. 15 ff., on the close fulfilment of God's judgments at the sounding of the seventh trumpet: xv. 3, on the introduction of the series of the vials: xvi. 5, on the*

AUTHORIZED VERSION.

voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: <sup>2</sup>for true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. <sup>3</sup>And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. <sup>4</sup>And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. <sup>5</sup>And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. <sup>6</sup>And I heard as

h Ps. cxxxiv. 1 & cxxxv. 1.

AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

heard † as it were a loud voice of a † great multitude in heaven, saying, Hallelujah; the <sup>b</sup>salvation and the glory † † belong unto our God: <sup>2</sup>for <sup>c</sup>true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great harlot, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath <sup>d</sup>avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. <sup>3</sup>And again they said, Hallelujah. And <sup>e</sup>her smoke goeth up for ever and ever. <sup>4</sup>And <sup>f</sup>the four and twenty elders and the four living-creatures fell down and worshipped God that sitteth on the throne, saying, <sup>g</sup>Amen; Hallelujah. <sup>5</sup>And a voice came forth † from the throne, saying, <sup>h</sup>Praise our God, all ye his servants, [and] ye that fear him, <sup>i</sup>both small and great. <sup>6</sup>k And

i ch. xi. 18. & xx. 12.

k Ezek. i. 24. & xliii. 2. ch. xiv. 2.

† So all our ancient MSS.

b ch. iv. 11. & vii. 10, 12. & xii. 10. and honour is omitted by all our ancient MSS. The Sinaitic MS. omits and the glory also.

† So all our ancient MSS. c ch. xv. 3. & xvi. 7.

d Deut. xxiii. 48. ch. vi. 10. & xviii. 20.

e Isa. xxxiv. 10. ch. xiv. 11. & xviii. 9, 18. f ch. iv. 4, 6, 10. & v. 14.

g 1 Chron. xvi. 36. Neh. v. 13. & viii. 6. ch. v. 14.

† So two of our three oldest MSS.: the Sinaitic reading, voices came out of, &c.

retributive justice shewn in the pouring out of the third vial.

After these things I heard as it were a great voice of much multitude in heaven, of people saying Hallelujah (the word so often found in the Psalter, 'Praise ye Jah,' i. e. Jehovah. Perhaps it is hardly justifiable to lay, as Elliott has done, a stress on this Hebrew formula of praise being now first used, and to infer thence that the Jews are indicated as bearing a prominent part in the following song. The formula must have passed, with the Psalter, into the Christian Church, being continually found in the Septuagint: and its use first here may be quite accounted for by the greatness and finality of this triumph. The form Alleluia, adopted by the Greeks and Latins from inability to express the Hebrew spelling, ought not to be retained in English, as it disguises the sacred name, and thus obliterates the meaning of the word), the salvation and the glory and the might belong to our God: because true and just are His judgments: because He judged (the past tenses are ar ticipatory. In this case they can be rendered by the simple past in English) the great harlot, which cor-

rupted (whose habit it was to corrupt) the earth in (of the element of the corruption) her fornication; and He exacted in vengeance the blood of His servants from her hand (so almost verbatim in 2 Kings ix. 7, of the vengeance to be taken on Jezebel. The vengeance is considered as a penalty exacted, forced, out of the reluctant hand: see also Gen. ix. 5; Ezek. xxxiii. 6). And a second time they said Hallelujah; and her smoke (of her burning, ch. xviii. 9) goeth up to the ages of the ages (this addition gives a reason for the praise, parallel with those introduced by because before). And the twenty-four elders and the four living-beings fell down and worshipped God who sitteth upon the throne, saying Amen; Hallelujah (thereby confirming the general song of praise of the great multitude). And a voice came forth from the throne (from perhaps gives more the direction than the actual source of the voice. It is useless to conjecture whose voice it is; but we may say that [on account of the expression our God] it is not that of the Lamb. Our Lord never spoke thus: compare John xx. 17, note) saying, Give praise to our God, all His



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as it were the voice of many waters, and as it were the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Hallelujah: for <sup>1</sup> the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. <sup>7</sup> Let us rejoice and exult, and give honour to him: for <sup>m</sup> the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. <sup>8</sup> And it was given <sup>n</sup> to her that she should be arrayed in fine linen, bright and pure: <sup>o</sup> for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. <sup>9</sup> And

*it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. <sup>7</sup> Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. <sup>8</sup> And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. <sup>9</sup> And he saith unto me,*

servants (see Ps. cxxxiv. 1), and ye that fear Him, the small and the great (see Ps. cxv. 13). And I heard as it were the voice of much multitude (see ver. 1), and as it were the voice of many waters, and as it were the voice of strong thunders, saying, Hallelujah, because the Lord God Almighty reigneth. Let us rejoice and exult, and we will give the glory to Him; because the marriage of the Lamb is come (these words introduce to us transitionally a new series of visions respecting the final consummation of the union between Christ and His Church, which brings about the end, ch. xxi. 1 ff.: the solemn opening of which now immediately follows in vv. 11 ff. This series, properly speaking, includes in itself the overthrow of the kings of the earth, the binding of Satan, the thousand years' reign, the loosing of Satan, the final overthrow of the enemy, and the general judgment: but is not consummated except in the entire union of Christ and His with which the book concludes. So that the past tenses are in a measure anticipatory.

This figure, of a marriage between the Lord and His people, is too frequent and familiar to need explanation. Compare in the Old Test. Isa. liv. 1—8; Ezek. xvi. 7 ff.; Hos. ii. 19 f.: and in the New Test., Matt. ix. 15 and note, xxii. 2 ff., xxv. 1 ff.; John iii. 29; Eph. v. 25. Indeed it penetrates almost every where the thoughts and language used respecting Christ and the Church), and His wife hath made herself ready (is complete in her adornment, as in next ver.). And it was given to her (have we in these

words still the voice of the celestial chorus, or are they merely narrative, written in the person of the Seer himself? It seems to me that the latter alternative is rendered necessary by the fact of the explanation, "*for the fine linen,*" &c., being subjoined. Moreover the words "*to her it was given*" are the regular narrative formula of the book) that (a construction of St. John's: so in John xvii. 4, "*which Thou gavest me that I should do it;*" ch. vi. 4, "*given to him that he should take;*" viii. 3.) she should be clothed in fine linen raiment, bright and pure (Grotius remarks that this is the grave adornment of a matron, not the ostentatious decking out of a harlot as before described), for the fine linen garment is (imports, see Matt. xxvi. 26) the righteousness of the saints (i.e. their pure and holy state, attained, as in the parallel description ch. vii. 14, is declared by the elder, by their having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. The plural, *righteousnesses*, is probably distributive, implying not many to each one, as if they were merely good deeds, but one righteousness to each of the saints, enveloping him as in a pure white robe of righteousness. Observe that here and every where, the white robe is not Christ's righteousness imputed or put on, but the saints' righteousness, by virtue of being washed in His blood. It is *their own*; inherent, not imputed; but their own by their part in and union to Him).

9, 10.] The Bride in this blessed marriage being in fact the *sum of the guests* at its celebration, the discourse passes to

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. <sup>10</sup> And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. <sup>11</sup> And I saw heaven

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

he saith unto me, Write, <sup>p</sup> Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, <sup>q</sup> These are the true sayings of God. <sup>10</sup> And <sup>r</sup> I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, <sup>s</sup> See thou do it not: I am a fellow-servant of thine, and of thy brethren <sup>t</sup> that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. <sup>11</sup> <sup>u</sup> And I saw heaven

<sup>p</sup> Matt. xxii. 2.  
<sup>s</sup> Luke xiv. 15, 16.

<sup>q</sup> ch. xxi. 5. &  
xxii. 6.  
<sup>r</sup> ch. xxii. 8.

<sup>s</sup> Acts x. 26. &  
xv. 14, 15.  
ch. xxii. 8.

<sup>t</sup> 1 John v. 10.  
ch. xii. 17.

<sup>u</sup> ch. xv. 5.

their blessedness, and an assurance of the certainty of that which has been foretold respecting them. The Apostle, moved by these declarations, falls down to worship the angel, but is forbidden.—And he saith (who? the only answer ready to our hand is, the angel of ch. xvii. 1. Some, as Ewald and Ebrard, suppose some one angel to have been constantly with St. John throughout the visions: but there seems no reason for this) unto me, Write (see ch. xiv. 13) Blessed are they who are bidden (bear in mind, throughout, our Lord's parables on this matter: Matt. xxii. 1 ff., xxv. 1 ff. Our ch. iii. 20 furnishes us with a link binding on the spiritual import to the figure) to the supper of the marriage of the Lamb. And he saith to me (the solemn repetition of this formula shews that what follows it is a new and important declaration), These [sayings] (see ch. xvii. 17. If we understand that the speaker is the angel of ch. xvii. 1, then these sayings will most naturally include the prophecies and revelations since then) are the true [sayings] of God (are the very truth of God, and shall veritably come to pass). And I fell down before his feet to worship him (out of an overweening reverence for one who had imparted to him such great things: see also ch. xxii. 8, where the same again takes place at the end of the whole revelation, and after a similar assurance. The angel who had thus guaranteed to him, in the name of God, the certainty of these great revelations, seems to him worthy of some of that reverence which belongs to God Himself. The reason given by Düsterdieck, that in both cases John imagined the Lord Himself to be speaking to him, is sufficiently contra-

dicted by the plain assertion, here in ch. xvii. 1, and there in ch. xxii. 8 itself, that it was not a divine Person, but simply an angel): and he saith to me, Take heed not (to do it): I am a fellow-servant of thine, and [a fellow-servant] of thy brethren who have the testimony of Jesus (as in ch. i. 2, xii. 17: on the former of which see note): worship God (the stress is on both words: let worship be reserved for *Him*), for (these words following are those of the angel, not of the Apostle, as Düsterdieck: ver. 8, and ch. v. 8, where the Apostle gives explanations, are no rule for this place, where the explanation of necessity comes from the speaker, whose reason for prohibiting the offered homage it renders) the testimony of Jesus (the genitive of Jesus is, as before, objective: the testimony borne to Jesus by these fellow-servants, men and angels) is the spirit of prophecy (there is no real difficulty in this saying: no reason for destroying its force by making "*of Jesus*" subjective, and "*the testimony of Jesus*" to mean "the witness which proceeds from Jesus." What the angel says is this: Thou and I and our brethren are all "*those who have the testimony of Jesus,*" i. e. are witnesses to Jesus; and the way in which we bear this witness, the substance and essence of this testimony, is the spirit of prophecy; "*we have all been made to drink into one Spirit.*" This Spirit, given to me in that I shew thee these things, given to thee in that thou seest and art to write them, is the token that we are fellow-servants and brethren. It does not follow that every one of those "*who have the testimony of Jesus*" has, in the same distinguished degree, the Spirit of prophecy: but every such one

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

x ch. vi. 2. opened, and behold <sup>x</sup> a white horse; and he that sitteth upon him [is] [† called] <sup>y</sup> Faithful and True, and <sup>z</sup> in righteousness he doth judge and make war. <sup>12 a</sup> His eyes [were as] a flame of fire, <sup>b</sup> and on his head were many diadems; <sup>c</sup> having [† names written, and] a name written, that no man knoweth, but he himself: <sup>13 d</sup> and clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called <sup>e</sup> The Word of God. <sup>14</sup> And <sup>f</sup> the armies which are in heaven followed

† Omitted in the *Alexandrine MS.*  
y ch. iii. 14.  
z Isa. xi. 4.  
a ch. i. 14. & ii. 18.  
b ch. vi. 2.  
c ch. ii. 17. ver. 16.  
† These words are omitted by some of our most ancient MSS.  
d Isa. lxxiii. 2, 3.

e John i. 1.  
1 John v. 7.  
f ch. xiv. 20.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. <sup>12</sup> His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. <sup>13</sup> And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. <sup>14</sup> And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white

has the same Spirit, and that one Spirit, and no other, is the Spirit of prophecy).

11—XXII. 5.] THE END: beginning with the triumphal coming forth of the Lord and His saints to victory (vv. 11—16), then proceeding with the great defeat and destruction of the beast and false prophet and kings of the earth (vv. 17—21), the binding of Satan and the millennial reign (ch. xx. 1—6), the unbinding of Satan and his destruction and that of the deceived nations (xx. 7—10), the great general judgment (xx. 11—15), and terminating with the vision of the new heavens and earth, and the glories of the new Jerusalem (xxi. 1—xxii. 5).

11—16.] The triumphal coming forth of the Lord and His hosts to victory. And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse (the same words, including the five following, as in ch. vi. 2. It is wonderful that this striking identity, in a book where symbolism is so constant to itself, has not prevented the mistakes which have been made in interpreting that place. This horse and Rider are the same as there: the “conquering and to conquer” is on the point of its completion: the other horses and their riders, dark forms in His great world-long procession to victory, will now for ever vanish, and war and famine and pestilence be known no more), and He that sitteth upon him [called] faithful and true (see ch. iii. 14), and in righteousness He judgeth and warreth (both those acts being his concern in his present triumphant progress). His eyes [were as] a flame of fire (ch. i. 14 verbatim, again beyond question identifying Him), and upon His head many diadems (probably

as He is King of Kings. Certainly these are not the crowns of the ten kings, as some say, for they are yet to be overthrown, ver. 19 ff. The crown of ch. vi. 2 has become multiplied in the course of the subjection of the world to Him): having [names written (if these words are genuine, probably the meaning is that the names were inscribed on the diadems, signifying the import of each), and] a name written (where, is not said. From this portion of the description regarding His Head, probably on the Brow) which none knoweth except Himself (what name is indicated? Certainly not that given below, ver. 13; nor can these words mean that He Himself alone knows the mystery latent in that name. Nor again can we say that it is any of the names by which our blessed Lord is known to us already. But it is “my new name” of ch. iii. 12: some new and glorious name, indicative, as appears from the context there, of the completed union between Him and His people, and of His final triumph. This name the Apostle saw written, but knew not its import: that, like the contents of the sealed book, being reserved for the day when He shall reveal it): and clothed in a vesture dipped in blood (see Isa. lxxiii. 2, 3: which is clearly in contemplation here, from our ver. 15 b. This being so, it is better perhaps to avoid the idea of His own blood being in view): and His name is called, The Word of God (this title forms so plain a link between the Apocalypse and St. John’s writings, where only it occurs, that various attempts have been made by those who reject his authorship, to deprive it of that significance. I have discussed these

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. <sup>15</sup> And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. <sup>16</sup> And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. <sup>17</sup> And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; <sup>18</sup> that ye may eat the flesh of kings,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

him upon white horses, <sup>g</sup> clothed in fine linen, white and pure. <sup>15</sup> And <sup>h</sup> out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he may smite the nations: and <sup>i</sup> he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and <sup>k</sup> he himself treadeth the winepress of the fierceness <sup>†</sup> of the wrath of Almighty God. <sup>16</sup> And <sup>l</sup> he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, <sup>m</sup> KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

<sup>17</sup> And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying <sup>n</sup> to all the fowls that fly in mid-heaven, <sup>o</sup> Come, gather yourselves together unto the <sup>†</sup> great banquet of God: <sup>18</sup> <sup>p</sup> that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and

in the Introduction, § i. parr. 110, 111). And the armies which are in heaven (not the holy angels only, but the glorified saints: "they that are with Him" of ch. xvii. 14, who are spoken of in reference to this very triumph, and are said to be "called and chosen and faithful") followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen [raiment], white, pure (this clothing also speaks for the saints being included in the triumphal procession: see ver. 8, and ch. vi. 11). And out of His mouth goeth forth a sharp sword (see ch. i. 16, ii. 12, 16), that with (as invested in or with) it He may smite the nations; and He (there is an emphasis in this and the following clause on the word He, which however would be too strongly rendered by "himself") shall rule (see ch. ii. 27, xii. 5, and note) them (their component members) with a rod of iron: and He (and none other, as we know from Isa. lxiii. 3) treadeth (it is His office to tread) the winepress of the wine of the fierceness of the wrath (of the outbreaking of the anger: see on ch. xvi. 19) of Almighty God. And He hath upon His vesture and upon His thigh a name written (i. e. most naturally, written at length, partly on the vesture, partly on the thigh itself; at the part where, in an equestrian figure, the robe drops from the

thigh. The usual way of taking the words is to suppose the and explanatory or definitive of the former words, "on His vesture," and that on the part of it covering His thigh. Others imagine a sword, on the hilt of which the name is inscribed. But there is no trace of this in the text. Cicero describes "a beautiful figure of Apollo, on whose thigh was inscribed in small silver letters the name of the artist, Myro:" and Pausanias speaks of the dedicatory inscription of a statue being engraved on its thigh, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords (ch. xvii. 14).

17—21.] *Defeat and destruction of the beast and the false prophet and the kings of the earth:* preceded by (17, 18) an *angelic proclamation*, indicating the vastness of the slaughter.

And I saw an (literally, one) angel standing in the sun (not only as the place of brightness and glory becoming the herald of so great a victory, but also as the central station in mid-heaven for those to whom the call was to be made); and he cried with a great voice, saying to all the birds which fly in mid-heaven, Come, be gathered together (see, on the whole of this proclamation, Ezek. xxxix. 17 ff., of which it is a close reproduction: also Matt. xxiv. 28) to the great banquet of God, that ye may eat the

<sup>g</sup> Matt. xxviii. 3. ch. iv. 4. & vii. 9.

<sup>h</sup> Isa. xl. 4. <sup>i</sup> Thes. ii. 8. ch. i. 16. ver. 21.

<sup>j</sup> Ps. ii. 9. ch. ii. 27. & xii. 5. <sup>k</sup> Isa. lxiii. 3. ch. xiv. 19, 20.

<sup>†</sup> So all our ancient MSS. 1 ver. 12.

<sup>m</sup> Dan. ii. 47. 1 Tim. vi. 15. ch. xvii. 14.

<sup>n</sup> ver. 21.

<sup>o</sup> Ezek. xxxix. 17.

<sup>†</sup> So all our ancient MSS. <sup>p</sup> Ezek. xxxix. 18, 20.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

the flesh of captains of thousands, and the flesh of strong men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. <sup>19</sup> <sup>q</sup> And I saw the wild-beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make their war against him that sitteth on the horse, and against his army. <sup>20</sup> <sup>r</sup> And the beast was taken, and <sup>†</sup> those that were with him, the false prophet that wrought the miracles in his presence, with which he deceived them that received the mark of the beast, and <sup>s</sup> them that worshipped his image: <sup>†</sup> these two were cast alive into the lake of fire which <sup>u</sup> burneth with brimstone. <sup>21</sup> And the rest <sup>x</sup> were slain with the sword of him that sitteth upon the horse, the sword which proceedeth out of his mouth: <sup>y</sup> and all

<sup>q</sup> ch. xvi. 16. & xvii. 13, 14.

<sup>r</sup> ch. xiii. 13, 14.

<sup>†</sup> So the Alexandrine MS. (the Parisian is here deficient). In the others, the reading is very various.

<sup>s</sup> ch. xiii. 12, 15.

<sup>t</sup> ch. xx. 10. See Dan. vii. 11.

<sup>u</sup> ch. xlv. 10. & xxi. 8.

<sup>x</sup> ver. 15.

<sup>y</sup> ver. 17, 18.

and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. <sup>19</sup> And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. <sup>20</sup> And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. <sup>21</sup> And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth:

flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains of thousands, and the flesh of strong men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all, free as well as bond, both small and great (this proclamation is evidently not to be pressed into a place in the prophecy, nor are its details to be sought in the interpretation, as has been done by Andreas and Primasius, who held the birds to be angels, and Brightmann, who holds them to be nations and churches. The insertion is made, as above, to shew the greatness and universality of the coming slaughter). And I saw the wild-beast (ch. xiii. 1), and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together (as above under the sixth vial, ch. xvi. 12 ff., on the field of Harnagedon) to make their war (viz. that predicted above, ch. xvi. 14, xvii. 14) with Him that sitteth upon the horse and with his army (singular, probably as being *one*, and having one Head, whereas *they* are many, and under various leaders). And the beast was taken, and

those with him (to wit, the *false prophet*, and the *rest*, ver. 21),—the false prophet who wrought the miracles in his presence (compare ch. xiii. 11—17, by which it clearly appears that this false prophet is identical with that second beast), with which he deceived those who received (not necessarily nor probably, who had received, as A. V.) the mark of the beast and those who worshipped his image (compare ch. xiii. 14, 16): the two were cast alive into the lake of fire which burneth with brimstone (viz. into Gehenna, or hell properly so called, Matt. v. 22; Luke vi. 23; where also, after the millennium, Satan himself is cast, ch. xx. 10, and, when their work is finally accomplished, Death and Hadés, ib. 14 a. This lake of fire constitutes the second death, ib. 14 b, xxi. 8. These only, and not the Lord's human enemies yet, are cast into eternal punishment. The latter await the final judgment, ch. xx. 11 ff.). And the rest (the *kings* and their *armies*) were slain with the sword of Him that



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

XX. <sup>1</sup> And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. <sup>2</sup> And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, <sup>3</sup> and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. <sup>4</sup> And I saw

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

the fowls <sup>z</sup> were filled with their flesh. z ch. xvii. 16.

XX. <sup>1</sup> And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, <sup>a</sup> having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. <sup>2</sup> And he laid hold on <sup>b</sup> the dragon, the old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, <sup>3</sup> and cast him into the abyss, and shut, and <sup>c</sup> sealed over him, <sup>d</sup> that he deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years shall be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. <sup>4</sup> And I saw <sup>e</sup> thrones, and

a ch. i. 18. & ix. 1.  
b ch. xii. 9. See 2 Pet. ii. 4. Jude 6.  
c Dan. vi. 17.  
d ch. xvi. 14. 10. ver. 8.  
e Dan. vii. 9, 22, 27.  
Matt. xix. 28. Luke xxii. 30.

sitteth on the horse, which (sword) goeth forth out of His mouth (see Isa. xi. 4; 2 Thess. ii. 8. De Wette remarks, that it is a hint of the spiritual nature of this victory, that no battle seems actually to take place, but the Lord Himself, as in 2 Thess., destroys the adversaries with the sword out of His own mouth. But clearly *all* must not be thus spiritualized. For if so, what is this gathering? what is indicated by the coming forth of the Lord in glory and majesty? Why is His personal presence wanted for the victory?); and all the birds were satiated with their flesh.

CH. XX. 1—10.] THE VICTORY OVER SATAN. The next enemy now remaining is the Arch-fiend himself, who had given his might and his throne and great power (ch. xiii. 2) to the beast: whose instruments the other enemies were. The blow given to him by their overthrow is followed by his binding and incarceration for 1000 years (vv. 1—3): during which period the Saints live and reign with Christ, and judge the world, and the first resurrection takes place (vv. 4—6). But his malice and his power are not yet at an end. One final effort is permitted him at the end of that time (ver. 7), and he once more succeeds in deceiving the nations (ver. 8), who come up against the camp of the saints, and are destroyed by fire from heaven (ver. 9). He is then cast into the lake of fire with the beast and false prophet, there to be tormented for ever (ver. 10).

And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven (not Christ himself, as many suppose, nor the Holy Spirit, as others: but a veritable angel, as always before in this book) having the key of the abyss (of hell, the abode of the devil and his angels: see ch. ix. 1. *For this abyss* apparently is distinct from the lake of fire, a further and more dreadful place of punishment: see on ver. 10.

This key had been for the purposes of God's judgments given to Satan (Abaddon, Apollyon), and by him the locusts were let forth, ch. ix. 1—11. Now it is entrusted to other hands, and for another purpose), and a great chain in (so in English: in the Greek, *resting on, hanging upon*, as a chain naturally would be) his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon (already well known from ch. xii. 3 ff., 9; xiii. 2, 4; xvi. 13), the ancient serpent (see ch. xii. 9), who is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the abyss, and shut and sealed over him (shut the door or cover at the top, and sealed it down. Notice, that the same absolute use of the verb "to seal" in the active is found in John iii. 33, and apparently there only), that he deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years shall be accomplished: after that he must (according to the necessity of God's purposes) be loosed for a little time (see below, ver. 7).

4—6.] *The Millennial reign.* And I saw thrones (combine Dan. vii. 9, and

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

f 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. they sat upon them, and <sup>f</sup> judgment was given unto them: and I saw  
 g ch. vi. 9. <sup>g</sup> the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and  
 h ch. xiii. 12. for the word of God, and <sup>h</sup> which did not worship the beast, <sup>i</sup> neither  
 i ch. xiii. 15, 16. his image, neither received his mark upon their forehead and on their hand; and they lived and <sup>k</sup> reigned with Christ a thousand years. <sup>5</sup> But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. <sup>6</sup> Blessed and holy is he that

*thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. <sup>5</sup> But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. <sup>6</sup> Blessed*

Matt. xix. 28), and they sat upon them (who? the Apostles, as in Matt. xix. 28: the Saints, as in 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3; notice well, that there is nothing to hinder this in the souls of the saints not being seen till the next clause: for there is no mark of temporal sequence connecting the two verses: nay, such an idea is precluded by the specification at the end of ver. 4, that those very souls of the saints are they who reigned with Christ, and were His assessors in reigning and judging, during this time), and judgment (the act and decision of judgment) was given to them (so in Dan. vii. 22, "Until the ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High." That is, they were constituted judges). And I saw the souls of them who had been beheaded (literally, smitten with the axe) on account of the testimony of Jesus and on account of the word of God (see ch. i. 9), and (of those) the which did not worship (during life) the beast nor yet his image, and did not receive the mark (mentioned ch. xiii. 16) on their forehead and upon their hand: and they lived (i. e. "lived again;," and, as the act is presently described as the first *resurrection*, with their bodies, perfect and complete) and reigned with Christ (took part in His Kingdom: see ch. i. 6; 2 Tim. ii. 12: also 1 Cor. iv. 8 and note) a thousand years (it would certainly appear that this reigning includes the office of judgment. Many interpreters suppose that these saints are the judged: but there is nothing in the context, nor in other parts of Scripture, to favour this

idea. Nay, it is expressly negated by our Lord's saying in John v. 24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, That he who heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed from death unto life"). The rest of the dead lived not (again, as above) until the thousand years be completed, This is the first resurrection (remarks on the interpretation of this passage will be found in the Introduction, § v. par. 33. It will have been long ago anticipated by the readers of this Commentary, that I cannot consent to distort its words from their plain sense and chronological place in the prophecy, on account of any considerations of difficulty, or any risk of abuses which the doctrine of the millennium may bring with it. Those who lived next to the Apostles, and the whole Church for 300 years, understood them in the plain literal sense: and it is a strange sight in these days to see expositors who are among the first in reverence of antiquity, complacently casting aside the most cogent instance of unanimity which primitive antiquity presents. As regards the text itself, no legitimate treatment of it will extort what is known as the spiritual interpretation now in fashion. If, in a passage where two *resurrections* are mentioned, where certain souls lived at the first, and the rest of the dead lived only at the end of a specified period after that first,—if in such a passage the first resurrection may be understood to mean *spiritual* rising with Christ, while the second means *literal*

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. <sup>7</sup> And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, <sup>8</sup> and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. <sup>9</sup> And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

hath part in the first resurrection: on such <sup>1</sup> the second death hath no power, but they shall be <sup>m</sup> priests of God and of Christ, <sup>n</sup> and shall reign with him a thousand years. <sup>7</sup> And when the thousand years are expired, <sup>o</sup> Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, <sup>8</sup> and shall go forth <sup>p</sup> to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, <sup>q</sup> Gog and Magog, <sup>r</sup> to gather them together to the war: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. <sup>9</sup> <sup>s</sup> And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city:

<sup>i</sup> ch. ii. 11.  
& xxi. 8.  
<sup>m</sup> Isa. lxi. 6.  
<sup>n</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 9.  
ch. i. 6. &  
v. 10.  
<sup>n</sup> ver. 4.

<sup>o</sup> ver. 2.

<sup>p</sup> ver. 8, 10.

<sup>q</sup> Ezek. xxxviii.  
2. & xxxix. 1.  
<sup>r</sup> ch. xvi. 14.

<sup>s</sup> Isa. viii. 8.  
Ezek.  
xxxviii. 9, 16,  
22. & xxxix.  
6.

rising from the grave;—then there is an end of all significance in language, and Scripture is wiped out as a definite testimony to any thing. If the first resurrection is spiritual, then so is the second, which I suppose none will be hardy enough to maintain: but if the second is literal, then so is the first, which in common with the whole primitive Church and many of the best modern expositors, I do maintain, and receive as an article of faith and hope). Blessed (see ch. xiv. 13, xix. 9) and holy is he that hath part in (the expression is peculiar to St. John) the first resurrection: over such persons the second death (ch. ii. 11, xxi. 8: and bear in mind what is said of our Lord Himself, Rom. vi. 9) hath not power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and they [shall] reign with Him (Christ) <sup>a</sup> (or, the) thousand years.

7—10.] *Loosing of Satan at the end of the millennium: gathering together and destruction of the nations: final condemnation of Satan.*

And when the thousand years are completed, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison (see ver. 3. The prophetic future is here used: but in ver. 9 the historic form with past tenses is resumed), and shall go forth to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth (there will be nations on earth besides the saints reigning with Christ, who during the binding of Satan have been quiet and willing subjects

of the Kingdom, but who on his being let loose are again subjected to his temptations, which stir them into rebellion against God), Gog and Magog (compare Ezek. xxxviii. and xxxix. throughout. This which is here prophesied is the great final fulfilment of those chapters. And the names Gog and Magog, taken from those, had been used in the rabbinical books to signify the nations which should in the latter days come up to Jerusalem against the Messiah. So the Jerusalem Targum on Num. xi. 27, "At the end of the last days, Gog and Magog and their armies shall go up to Jerusalem, and shall fall by the hands of Messiah the king, &c." This name Magog occurs Gen. x. 2, as that of a son of Japhet, in company with brethren whose names mostly belong to northern and north-eastern nations: Gomer (Kimmerians), Madai (Medians), Meshech (Muscovites), &c. With these however are joined in Ezek. xxxviii. 5, Persians, Ethiopians, Libyans. Josephus renders the word *Scythians*, and so Jerome: Suidas, "Persians." It seems to be a general name for the northern nations, and Gog, if at least we may follow the analogy of Ezekiel, xxxviii. 2, is their prince) to gather them together to the (well-known) war: of whom the number [of them] is as the sand of the sea. And they went up (the historical past tense is here resumed) upon the breadth of the earth (i. e. entirely overspread it) and encompassed the camp of the saints, and

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

† from God is omitted by the Alexandrine MS., and variously inserted by those later MSS. which read it. The Sinaitic MS. omits from fire here to fire in the next verse.  
t ver. 8.  
u ch. xix. 20.  
x ch. xiv. 10, 11.

and fire came down † out of heaven, and devoured them. <sup>10</sup> † And the devil their deceiver was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, <sup>u</sup> where also are the wild-beast and the false prophet. And they <sup>x</sup> shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

*beloved city: and fire came down from God out of the heaven, and devoured them.*  
<sup>10</sup> *And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*  
<sup>11</sup> *And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.* <sup>12</sup> *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were*

y 2 Pet. iii. 7, 10, 11.  
z Dan. ii. 35.

<sup>11</sup> And I saw a great white throne, and him that sitteth on it, from whose face <sup>v</sup> the earth and the heaven fled away; <sup>z</sup> and there was found no place for them. <sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, † the <sup>a</sup> great and the small, standing before † the throne; <sup>b</sup> and books were opened: and another <sup>c</sup> book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead

† So our two oldest MSS. ch. xix. 5.  
† So the Alexandrine, and almost all other MSS. The Sinaitic reads, upon the throne.  
b Dan. vii. 10.  
c Ps. lxxix. 28.  
Dan. xii. 1. Phil. iv. 3. ch. iii. 5. & xiii. 8. & xxi. 27.

the beloved city (by these two is probably meant one and the same thing, the and being explanatory; or at all events the camp must be conceived as surrounding and defending the city. The beloved city is Jerusalem [see Ps. lxxviii. 68; lxxvii. 2]: not the new Jerusalem, but the earthly city of that name, which is destined to play so glorious a part in the latter days). And there came down fire out of heaven) (so in Ezek. in ref.), and devoured them: and the devil that deceiveth them (the present participle merely designates: the devil their deceiver) was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where also are the beast and the false prophet (ch. xix. 20). And they shall be tormented by day and by night to the ages of the ages.

11—15.] *The general judgment.* And I saw a great white throne (great, in distinction from the thrones before mentioned, ver. 4: white, as seen in purest light, and symbolizing the most blameless justice), and Him that sitteth on it (viz. God: the Father: see ch. iv. 3, xxi. 5. It is necessary to keep to the well-known formula of the book in interpreting Him that sitteth on it, even though some expressions and sayings seem better to belong to the Son. Be it also remembered that it is the Father who giveth all

judgment to the Son: and though He Himself judgeth no man, yet He is ever described as present in the judgment, and mankind as judged before Him. We need not find in this view any difficulty, or discrepancy with such passages as Matt. xxv. 31, seeing that our Lord himself says in ch. iii. 21, "I . . . sat down with my Father on His throne." Nor need we be surprised at the sayings of our Lord, such as that in ch. xxi. 6 b, being uttered by him that sitteth on the throne. That throne is now the throne of God and of the Lamb, ch. xxii. 1. Compare also ch. xxi. 22), from whose face the earth and the heaven fled, and place was not found for them (these words again seem to indicate the presence of One who has not hitherto appeared: whereas Christ in glory has been long present on earth. This fleeing away of heaven and earth is elsewhere described as their consumption by fire, 2 Pet. iii. 10—12. Both descriptions indicate the passing away of their present corruptible state and change to a state glorious and incorruptible). And I saw the dead (viz. the "rest of the dead" of ver. 5: those who rose as described below, ver. 13), the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened (see Dan. vii. 10), and another book was opened which is [the book] of

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. <sup>13</sup> And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

<sup>14</sup> And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. <sup>15</sup> And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

XXI. <sup>1</sup> And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. <sup>2</sup> And I John

life (Düsterdieck remarks that the order of proceedings indicated seems to be that the contents of the books in which were written the works of men indicated whether they were to be found in the book of life. But this could hardly be: for in that case, what need for the book of life at all? Rather should we say that those books and the book of life bore independent witness to the fact of men being or not being among the saved: the one by inference from the works recorded: the other by inscription or non-inscription of the name in the list. So the 'books' would be as it were the vouchers for the book of life): and the dead were judged out of the things written in the books according to their works (reff.: and 2 Cor. v. 10). And the sea gave forth the dead that were in her, and Death and Hades (see ch. i. 18, vi. 8) gave forth the dead which were in them (i. e. all the dead, buried and unburied, rose again), and they were judged each according to their (his) works. And Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire (Death and Hadés are regarded as two demons, enemies of God. So in 1 Cor. xv. 26. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death:" and in Isa. xxv. 8: Heb. and A. V., "He will swallow up death in victory," compare 1 Cor. xv. 54. Hadés,

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

were judged out of those things which were written in the books,

<sup>d</sup> according to their works. <sup>13</sup> And

the sea gave up the dead which were in it; <sup>e</sup> and death and Hadés

delivered up the dead which were in them: <sup>f</sup> and they were judged

each according to their works. <sup>14</sup> And

<sup>g</sup> death and Hadés were east into the lake of fire. <sup>h</sup> This is the second

death, [† even] the lake of fire. <sup>15</sup> And

whosoever was not found written in the book of life <sup>i</sup> was cast into the lake of fire.

XXI. <sup>1</sup> And <sup>a</sup> I saw a new heaven and a new earth: <sup>b</sup> for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and the sea is no more.

<sup>2</sup> And I † saw <sup>c</sup> the holy city, new

<sup>d</sup> Jer. xvii. 10. & xxxii. 19. Matt. xvi. 27 Rom. ii. 6. ch. ii. 23. & xiii. 12. ver. 13. <sup>e</sup> ch. vi. 8.

<sup>f</sup> ver. 12.

<sup>g</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 26, 54, 55.

<sup>h</sup> ver. 6. ch. xxi. 8.

† So all our ancient MSS.

<sup>i</sup> ch. xix. 20.

<sup>a</sup> Isa. lxxv. 17. & lxxvi. 22. <sup>b</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 13. ch. xx. 11.

MSS. whatever.

<sup>c</sup> Isa. lii. 1. Gal. iv. 26. Heb. xi. 10. & xii. 22. & xiii. 14. ch. iii. 12.

as in ch. vi. 8, is Death's follower and the receiver of his prey. The punishment of sin is inflicted on both, because both are the offspring of, and bound up with sin). This is the second death, the lake of fire (thus then our Lord's saying, ch. ii. 11, and that of the Apostle in our ver. 6, are explained. As there is a second and higher life, so there is also a second and deeper death. And as after that life there is no more death [ch. xxi. 4], so after that death there is no more life, ver. 10; Matt. xxv. 41). And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire (there was no intermediate state).

CII. XXI. 1—XXII. 5.] *The new heavens and new earth: the glories of the heavenly Jerusalem.* The whole of the things described in the remaining portion of the book are subsequent to the general judgment, and descriptive of the consummation of the triumph and bliss of Christ's people with Him in the eternal kingdom of God. This eternal kingdom is situated on the purified and renewed earth, become the blessed habitation of God with his glorified people. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were departed: and the sea exists no longer (see on the whole, Isa.

† John is omitted by all



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

d Isa. liv. 5.  
& lxi. 10.  
2 Cor. xi. 2.

† *So our oldest MSS.*

e Lev. xxvi. 11,  
12. Ezek.  
xliii. 7.  
2 Cor. vi. 16.  
ch. vii. 15.

† *The Sinaitic MS. has he dwelt.*

f Isa. xxv. 5.  
ch. vii. 17.

† *God is omitted by the Sinaitic and many later MSS.*

g 1 Cor. xv. 26,  
54. ch. xx.  
14.

h Isa. xxxv. 10.  
& lxi. 3. &  
lxv. 19.

i ch. iv. 2, 9, &  
v. 1. & xx. 11.

k Isa. xliii. 19.  
2 Cor. v. 17.

† *unto me is omitted by the Alexandrine and many later MSS.*

Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared <sup>d</sup> as a bride adorned for her husband.

<sup>3</sup> And I heard a great voice out of † the throne saying, Behold, <sup>e</sup> the tabernacle of God is with men, and he † will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and he shall be God with them, their God. <sup>4 f</sup> And † [God] shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and <sup>g</sup> there shall be no more death, <sup>h</sup> neither sorrow, nor crying, nor pain: for the former things are passed away. <sup>5</sup> And <sup>h</sup> he

that sitteth upon the throne said, <sup>k</sup> Behold, I make all things new. And he saith †, Write: for <sup>1</sup> these

1 ch. xix. 9.

*saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

<sup>3</sup> *And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. <sup>4</sup> And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. <sup>5</sup> And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said*

lxv. 17. The vision does not necessarily suppose the annihilation of the whole creation, but only its passing away as to its outward and recognizable form, and renewal to a fresh and more glorious one. And though not here stated on the surface, it is evident that the method of renewal is that described in 2 Pet. iii. 10 ff.; viz. a renovation by *fire*. This alone will account for the unexpected and interesting feature here introduced, viz. that the sea exists no longer. For this the words mean [see ver. 4], and not as Düsterdieck, that the [former] sea, as well as the former heaven and earth, had passed away). **And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem** (see especially Gal. iv. 26, and note), **coming down out of heaven from God** (Schöttgen quotes from the remarkable Jewish book Sohar, "Rabbi Jeremias said, The Holy Blessed God shall renew the world, and shall build Jerusalem, so as to make it come down from heaven into the midst of the world, so that it even shall be destroyed"), **prepared as a bride adorned for her husband** (as in our common discourse, so here with the Evangelist, the name of the material city stands for the community formed by its inhabitants. But it does not follow in his case, any more than in ours, that both material city and inhabitants have not a veritable existence: nor can we say that

the glorious description of *it*, presently to follow, applies only to *them*. On the figure, see Isa. lxi. 10—lxii. 5). **And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle** (i. e. dwelling; the allusion being to the tabernacle in the wilderness, in which God dwelt in symbol only) **of God is with men, and He shall dwell (tabernacle) with them, and they shall be his people** (literally, peoples, plural: because, as in ch. xxi. 24, many nations shall now partake in the blessed fulfilment of the promise), **and He shall be God with them** (the name Emmanuel, God with us, first then being realized in its full significance, their God (so the ancient promises are fulfilled, Exod. xxix. 45; Lev. xxvi. 11; Ezek. xxxvii. 27). **And [God] shall wipe away every tear from their eyes** (reff.): **and death shall exist no longer** (ch. xx. 14), and (Gr. nor) **mourning** (Isa. lxv. 19) and (nor) **crying and (nor) pain shall exist no longer**: because the first (former state of) things are passed away. **And He that sitteth on the throne** (see note ch. xx. 11) **said, Behold, I make all things new**. And he (probably the angel, or voice from heaven, that gave the Seer similar commands before, xiv. 13, xix. 9. This seems probable on account of the change to the formula *he saith*, as well as from the nature of the

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

unto me, *Write: for these words are true and faithful.* <sup>6</sup> And he said unto me, *It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.* <sup>7</sup> He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. <sup>8</sup> But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. <sup>9</sup> And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, *Come hither, I will shew thee the bride,*

words are faithful and true. <sup>6</sup> And he said unto me, † <sup>m</sup> They are fulfilled. <sup>n</sup> I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. <sup>o</sup> I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. <sup>7</sup> He that overcometh shall inherit † these things; and <sup>p</sup> I will be to him a God, and he shall be to me a son. <sup>8</sup> <sup>q</sup> But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the polluted with abominations, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in <sup>r</sup> the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. <sup>9</sup> And there came unto me one of <sup>s</sup> the seven angels which had the seven vials and were full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will

† *So the Alexandrine MS. The Sinaitic and many later MSS. read merely, I am become the Alpha, &c.*  
 m ch. xvi. 17.  
 n ch. i. 8, & xxii. 13.  
 o Isa. xii. 3. & lv. 1.  
 John iv. 10, 14. & vii. 37. ch. xxii. 17.  
 2 Kings vii. 11.  
 † *So all our ancient MSS. p Zech. viii. 8. Heb. viii. 10. q 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Gal. v. 19—21. Eph. v. 5. 1 Tim. i. 9. Heb. xii. 14. ch. xxii. 15.*

r ch. xx. 14, 15.

s ch. xv. 1, 6, 7

command: for we have "said to me" resumed immediately with the I, leaving no doubt Who speaks) saith, Write: because these words are faithful and true. And He said to me (viz. He that sitteth upon the throne), They are fulfilled (viz. these sayings: or, but I prefer the other, all things). I am (or, I have become the Alpha, &c.: see margin) the Alpha and the Omega (see above, ch. i. 8), the beginning and the end ("the Unchangeable and Everlasting One, by Whom the old was and the new shall be, by Whom the old is fulfilled in the new, and with it all hope and all promise." De Wette). To him that thirsteth I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely (compare ch. vii. 17, and reff. Isa. and John: compare also Matt. v. 6). He that conquereth shall inherit these things (the glories to be shewn in the heavenly Jerusalem), and I will be to him [a] God, and he shall be to me a son (this will be the full performance to the sons of God of the promise in 2 Kings vii. 14: which being first made to Solomon, received its chief fulfilment in

the great Son of David and of God [Heb. i. 5], and now in Him to them that are His). But to the cowardly (the contrast to them that conquer: the "drawers back" of Heb. x. 38: those who shrink timidly from the conflict), and the unbelievers, and the polluted with abominations (those who have partaken of the abominations in ch. xvii. 4,—of idolatries, &c.), and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all the false (i. e. all liars), their part [shall be] in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death (see the reff.).

9—XXII. 5.] *More particular description of the heavenly Jerusalem.* And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, who (viz. the angels, however strange it may seem: but thus it necessarily is in the ancient original text) were full of the seven last plagues (one of these angels had before shewn the Apostle the great harlot, ch. xvii. 1. The contrast to that vision is maintained throughout these opening verses), and he talked with

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

t ch. xix. 7.  
ver. 2.

u ch. i. 10.  
& xvii. 3.

† So all our  
ancient MSS.  
x Ezek. xlviii.  
ver. 2.

y ch. xxii. 5.  
ver. 23.

z Ezek. xlviil.  
31—34.

a Ezek. xlviii.  
31—34.

shew thee <sup>t</sup> the bride, the wife of the Lamb. <sup>10</sup> And he carried me away <sup>u</sup> in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me <sup>†x</sup> the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, <sup>11y</sup> having the glory of God: and her brightness was like unto a stone most precious, as it were to a jasper stone clear as crystal; <sup>12</sup> having a wall great and high, having <sup>z</sup> twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel: <sup>13a</sup> on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. <sup>14</sup> And

*the Lamb's wife.* <sup>10</sup> *And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,* <sup>11</sup> *having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;* <sup>12</sup> *and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:* <sup>13</sup> *on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.* <sup>14</sup> *And the*

me, saying, Hither, I will shew thee (hitherto verbatim as in ch. xvii. 1) the bride, the wife of the Lamb (here likewise note the contrast to the succeeding context in ch. xvii. 1,—in the faithfulness and purity implied in these words). And he carried me away in the spirit (ch. xvii. 3) to (as they say in some parts of England, *on to*, combining motion towards and position upon) a mountain great and high (so likewise when the vision of the heavenly city is vouchsafed to Ezekiel, Ezek. xl. 1, 2), and shewed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God (this vision had begun in ver. 2, but the Apostle is now carried to this “specular mount” to have a nearer and fuller view of it. The city must not be conceived of as *on* or covering the mountain, but as seen descending to a spot close by it: so in Ezek. xl. 2, whether we read “by” or “upon” as in our margin), having the glory of God (i. e. not merely brightness of a divine and celestial kind, but the glorious presence of God Himself, the Shechinah, abiding in her: see ver. 23; also ch. xv. 8): her brightness (the brightness, from ver. 23, is the effect of the divine glory shining in her) [was] like to a stone: most precious, as it were to a jasper stone, crystal-clear (see this “crystallizing” jasper discussed in note on ch. iv. 3.

Ebrard thinks it is the diamond): having a wall great and high, having [also] twelve gates (see Ezek. xlviil. 30 ff., where the same features are found in the description), and at the gates twelve angels and names inscribed (contrast to the names of blasphemy, ch. xvii. 3), which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel (it does not follow from this description either, 1. that the angels must necessarily be guardians, seeing that no foes remain to be guarded against: they are for the completeness and adornment of the city after the idea of a beautiful fortress, adopted to set it forth:—or, 2. that, as in the Jewish books, each gate is to be imagined as used by each tribe: the twelve tribes of Israel represent the whole people of God, and the city the encampment of Israel: see below). From (on the side entering from) the sun-rising three gates (Joseph, Benjamin, Dan, in Ezek. xlviil. 32. In ch. vii. 6, Manasseh is substituted for Dan, which is omitted. See there), from the north three gates (Reuben, Judah, Levi), from the south three gates (Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun), from the sun-setting three gates (Gad, Asher, Naphtali: Ezek. *ibid.* In Numbers ii., the order of encampment is thus set down: *East*,—Judah, Issachar, Zebulun: *South*,—Reuben, Simeon, Gad: *West*,—Ephraim, Ma-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. <sup>15</sup> And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. <sup>16</sup> And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. <sup>17</sup> And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. <sup>18</sup> And the building of the wall of it

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

the wall of the city had twelve foundation-stones, and <sup>b</sup> upon them the † twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. <sup>15</sup> And he that talked with me <sup>c</sup> had † for a measure a golden reed, to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. <sup>16</sup> And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as great as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. <sup>17</sup> And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty-four cubits, the measure of a man, which is, that of an angel. <sup>18</sup> And the masonry

<sup>b</sup> Matt. xvi. 18.  
Gal. ii. 9.  
Eph. ii. 20.  
† So all our  
ancient MSS.

<sup>c</sup> Ezek. xl. 3.  
Zech. ii. 1.  
ch. xl. 1.  
† So all our  
ancient MSS.

nasseh, Benjamin: North,—Dan, Asher, Naphtali). And the wall of the city (the wall surrounding the city) having (had) twelve foundation-stones (i. e. probably, each portion of the wall joining two gates had a conspicuous basement, of one vast stone. Four of these, as Düsterdieck observes, would be corner-stones, joining the third gate on one side to the first gate on the next), and upon them (over them, perhaps extending all their length) twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (see Eph. ii. 20, where however the ruling idea is a different one, see the interpretation in the note. No inference can be drawn, as has been drawn by some from this, that the Writer was not himself an Apostle). <sup>15—17.</sup> *Its measurement:* compare Ezek. xl. 3—5. And he that spoke with me had as a measure a golden reed, that he might measure the city, and her gates and her wall. And the city lieth foursquare (so A. V. well: is in shape tetragonal), and her length is as great as her breadth (see below). And he measured the city with the reed to the length of stadii of the amount of twelve thousands (the 12,000 stadii are in all probability the whole circumference, 1000 to each space between the gates); the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal (the supposition of many expositors, that the city thus formed a

monstrous cube, 3000 stadii in length, in breadth, and in height, really does not appear to be necessarily included in these words. Nay, it seems to be precluded by what next follows, where the angel *measures the height* of the wall. For Düsterdieck's idea that the *houses* were 3000 stadii in height, while the wall was only 144 cubits, is too absurd to come at all into question. The words are open, this last consideration being taken into account, to two interpretations: 1) that the city, including the hill or rock on which it was placed, and which may be imagined as descending with it, formed such a cube as seems here described: or 2) that there is some looseness of use in the word *equal*, and that we must understand that the length and breadth were equal to each other and the height equal all round. Of these two I prefer the former, as doing no violence to the words, and as recalling somewhat the form of the earthly Jerusalem on its escarpment above the valley of the Kedron. Some such idea seems also to be pointed at in the rabbinical books, which describe the future Jerusalem as twelve miles high. See extracts in my Greek Test.). And he measured the wall of it (i. e. the *height* of the wall of it), of an hundred and forty-four cubits, the measure of a man, which is that of an angel (meaning that in this matter of

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

of the wall of it was jasper: and the city, pure gold, like unto clear glass.

*was of jasper: and the city was of pure gold, like unto clear glass.* <sup>19</sup> *And*

<sup>d</sup> Isa. liv. 11.

<sup>19</sup> <sup>d</sup> And the foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every precious stone. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; <sup>20</sup> the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolith; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprasus; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. <sup>21</sup> And the

*the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; <sup>20</sup> the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.*

<sup>e</sup> ch xxii. 2.

every several gate was of one pearl: <sup>e</sup> and the street of the city was pure

*And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of*

measure, men and angels use the same.

As to the height thus given, it may be observed that the height of Solomon's porch, the highest part of his temple, was 120 cubits, 2 Chron. iii. 4, and the general height of his temple, 30 cubits, 1 Kings vi. 2).

18—27.] *Material*, and further description of the city. **And the building-work of the wall of it [was] jasper** (ch. iv. 3, note), **and the city [was] pure gold like to pure glass** (i. e. ideal gold, transparent, such as no gold is here, but surpassing it in splendour). **The foundation-stones of the wall of the city** (see above, ver. 14) [were] adorned with every precious stone (not that the stones were merely set on the foundations, but that the foundations themselves consisted of them: see below, and compare Isa. liv. 12): **the first foundation-stone [was] jasper** (the material of the upper building of the wall, ver. 18), **the second, sapphire** (the stone described under this name by Pliny seems to be our lapis lazuli. But the sapphire of the Scriptures seems more like the present hard sky-blue stone known by that name: see Ezek. i. 26), **the third, chalcedony** (this name is unknown: corresponding perhaps to Exod. xxviii. 19, xxxix. 12, "agate." There seems to have been an agate brought from Chalcedon. It is described as semi-opaque, sky-blue, with stripes of other colours: "like trees in autumn," Pliny), **the fourth, emerald** (note, ch. iv. 3), **the fifth, sar-**

**donyx** (Exod. xxxix. 11; Ezek. xxviii. 13; perhaps garnet. Pliny describes it as "of the colour of the flesh under a fingernail." The ancient versions and Josephus call it onyx), **the sixth, sardius** (ch. iv. 3, note), **the seventh, chrysolith** (Ezek. xxviii. 13, where Josephus thus renders the word which in A. V. is "beryl." The stone at present so called is pale green, transparent, and crystallized, with shifting colours. But the ancient chrysoliths are described by Pliny as translucent with golden rays, and have been supposed the same as our topaz: or by some, as amber), **the eighth, beryl** (Exod. xxiv. 10, where it is "sapphire" in the A. V. It is said to have been pure sea-green), **the ninth, topaz** (Strabo describes it as transparent, shining with golden light. But Pliny says that it is a beautiful green: whence some have supposed it our chrysolith: see above. Compare Job xxviii. 19), **the tenth, chrysoprasus** (this word is found only in Pliny, who describes it as pale, and of a hue resembling the amethyst), **the eleventh, jacinth** (in Exod. xxviii. 19, called *ligure*. Pliny describes this also as a paler kind of amethyst), **the twelfth, amethyst** (Pliny reckons the amethyst among the purple stones. It seems to be the stone now known by that name). **And the twelve gates, twelve pearls** (Isa. liv. 12, "carbuncles." Wetstein quotes from a Rabbinical work, that God shall place in the gates of the new Jerusalem pearls thirty



## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. <sup>22</sup> And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. <sup>23</sup> And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. <sup>24</sup> And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. <sup>25</sup> And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. <sup>26</sup> And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. <sup>27</sup> And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

gold, as it were transparent glass.

<sup>22</sup> <sup>f</sup> And I saw no temple therein: <sup>f</sup> John iv. 23.

for the Lord God Almighty is the temple thereof, and the Lamb.

<sup>23</sup> <sup>g</sup> And the city hath no need of <sup>g</sup> Isa. xxiv. 23. & lx. 19, 20. ch. xxii. 5. ver. 11.

the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. <sup>24</sup> <sup>h</sup> And the nations

<sup>h</sup> Isa. lx. 3, 5, 11. & lxvi. 12. <sup>†</sup> So, omitting of them that are saved, all our ancient MSS.

† shall walk by means of the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory † into it. <sup>25</sup> <sup>i</sup> And

<sup>i</sup> and honour is omitted by all our ancient MSS. <sup>k</sup> Isa. lx. 11. Zech. xiv. 7. ch. xxii. 5. <sup>l</sup> ver. 24.

the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for <sup>k</sup> there shall be no night there. <sup>26</sup> <sup>l</sup> And they shall

bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. <sup>27</sup> And <sup>m</sup> there shall

<sup>m</sup> Isa. xxxv. 8. & lii. 1. & lx. 21. Joel iii. 17. ch. xxii. 14, 15.

in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, or worketh abomina-

tion or falsehood: but only they which are written in the Lamb's <sup>n</sup> book of life.

<sup>n</sup> Phil. iv. 3. ch. iii. 5. & xiii. 8. & ix. 12.

cubits long and as many broad), each one separately of the gates was [made] out of one pearl. And the street (generic: the street-material, throughout) of the city [was] pure gold like transparent glass (see above on ver. 18). And a temple I saw not in it: for the Lord God Almighty is the temple of it, and the Lamb (i. e. the inhabitants need no place of worship or sacrifice, the object of all worship being present, and the great Sacrifice Himself being there). And the city hath not need of the sun nor yet of the moon, that they should shine on her: for the glory of God (the brightness of His presence, the Shechinah: see above, ver. 11) lightened her, and her lamp was (or is) the Lamb (see Isa. lx. 19, 20. No assignment of the members of the sentence must be thought of, such as that the glory of God is her Sun, and the Lamb her moon, as has been done by some Commentators): and the nations shall walk by means of her light (i. e. she shall be so bright as to serve the light,—

for sun and moon both,—to the world that then is, and her inhabitants. For such inhabitants are clearly supposed; see below, and ch. xxii. 2). And the kings of the earth (no longer hostile to Christ) bring (present tense of habit and certainty, as so often in this prophecy) their (the kings', not the nations', as ver. 26) glory (see Isa. lx. 3: all in which they glory) into her: and her gates shall never be shut by day (i. e. in meaning, shall never be shut, seeing it will always be day: shall never be shut, for if they were, they must be shut by day): for night shall not exist there. And they (men) shall bring the glory and the costliness of the nations into her (Isa. lxvi. 12. Among the mysteries of this new heaven and new earth this is set forth to us: that, besides the glorified church, there shall still be dwelling on the renewed earth nations, organized under kings, and [xxii. 2] saved by means of the influences of the heavenly city). And there shall never enter into her every thing unclean, and working abomi-

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

XXII. <sup>1</sup> And he shewed me <sup>a</sup> a  
<sup>†</sup> river of water of life, bright as  
 crystal, proceeding out of the throne  
 of God and of the Lamb. <sup>2</sup> <sup>b</sup> In  
 the midst of the street of it, and on  
 either side of the river, <sup>c</sup> the tree of  
 life, bearing twelve manner of fruits,  
 and yielding her fruit every month:  
 and the leaves of the tree were <sup>d</sup> for  
 the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup> And  
<sup>e</sup> there shall be no more curse: <sup>f</sup> and  
 the throne of God and of the Lamb  
 shall be in it; and his servants shall  
 serve him: <sup>4</sup> and <sup>g</sup> they shall see his  
 face; and <sup>h</sup> his name shall be in  
 their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> <sup>1</sup> And there shall  
 be no <sup>†</sup> more night; and they need  
 no [light of] lamp neither light [of  
 the sun]; because <sup>k</sup> the Lord God

a Ezek. xlvii.  
 1.  
 Zeck. xlv. 8.  
 † pure is  
 omitted by all  
 our ancient  
 MSS.  
 b Ezek. xlvii.  
 12. ch. xxi.  
 21.

c Gen. ii. 9.  
 ch. ii. 7.

d ch. xxi. 24.

e Ezek. xlv. 11.  
 f Ezek. xlviii.  
 30.

g Matt. v. 8.  
 1 Cor. xiii. 12.  
 1 John iii. 2.  
 h ch. iii. 12.  
 & xiv. 1.  
 i ch. xxi. 23,  
 25.

† No all our  
 ancient MSS.

k Ps. xxxv. 9.  
 & lxxxiv. 11.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

XXII. <sup>1</sup> And he shewed  
 me a pure river of water  
 of life, clear as crystal,  
 proceeding out of the  
 throne of God and of the  
 Lamb. <sup>2</sup> In the midst of  
 the street of it, and on  
 either side of the river,  
 was there the tree of life,  
 which bare twelve manner  
 of fruits, and yielded her  
 fruit every month: and the  
 leaves of the tree were for  
 the healing of the nations.  
<sup>3</sup> And there shall be no  
 more curse: but the throne  
 of God and of the Lamb  
 shall be in it; and his  
 servants shall serve him:  
<sup>4</sup> and they shall see his  
 face; and his name shall  
 be in their foreheads.  
<sup>5</sup> And there shall be no  
 night there; and they need  
 no candle, neither light of  
 the sun; for the Lord God

nation and falsehood, but only (literally, except) they that are written in the book of life of the Lamb (if then the kings of the earth, and the nations, bring their glory and their treasures into her, and if none shall ever enter into her that is not written in the book of life, it follows, that these kings, and these nations, are written in the book of life. And so perhaps some light may be thrown on one of the darkest mysteries of redemption. There may be,—I say it with all diffidence,—those who have been saved by Christ without ever forming a part of his visible organized Church).

CH. XXII. 1—5.] *The end of the description*: the means of healing for the nations (1, 2); the blessedness, and eternal reign of the glorified servants of God (2—5).

And he shewed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, coming forth out of the throne of God and of the Lamb (which throne is one and the same: see ch. iii. 21, and note on ch. xx. 11. The Old Test. passages in view are Gen. ii. 10; Ezek. xlvii. 1 ff.). In the midst of the street of it (the city), and of the river, on one side and on the other (the meaning being that the trees were on each side in the middle of the space between the street

and the river. See Ezek. xlvii. 7), [was] the tree of life (ch. ii. 7; Ezek. as above, and what follows, i. e. *trees* of the kind described: as in Ezek.) producing twelve fruits (kinds of fruit, Ezek. xlvii. 12), according to each month yielding its fruit (Ezek. as above): and the leaves of the tree [are] for healing of the nations (so exactly, Ezek. ver. 12: “and the leaf thereof for medicine.” On the nations *outside*, see above, ch. xxi. end). And every curse (accursed thing, see below) shall exist no longer (compare Zeck. xiv. 11. There shall no more be those accursed things which bar the residence of God among His people; see Josh. vii. 12, which shews that these words are in close connexion with what follows): and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in her, and his servants shall serve Him (in ministrations and holy service, see ch. vii. 15), and they shall see His face (be close to Him, and know Him, even as they are known, Matt. v. 8), and His name [shall be] on their foreheads (see ch. vii. 3). And night shall not be any more (ch. xxi. 25), and they shall have no need of [the light of] a lamp or (and) of [the] light [of the sun] (ch. xxi. 23. The reading is in some doubt, the words in brackets being omitted

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

giveth them light : and they shall reign for ever and ever. <sup>6</sup> And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true : and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. <sup>7</sup> Behold, I come quickly : <sup>8</sup> Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. <sup>9</sup> And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. <sup>10</sup> Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not : for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book : worship God. <sup>11</sup> And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book : for the time is at hand. <sup>12</sup> He that is unjust, let him be

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

shall shine upon them : <sup>1</sup> and they shall reign for ever and ever. <sup>2</sup> And he said unto me, <sup>3</sup> These sayings are faithful and true : and the Lord God of the <sup>4</sup> spirits of the prophets <sup>5</sup> sent his angel to shew unto his servants what things must shortly come to pass. <sup>6</sup> <sup>7</sup> <sup>†</sup> And <sup>8</sup> behold, I come quickly : <sup>9</sup> blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. <sup>10</sup> And I John am he who heard these things, and saw them. And when I heard and when I saw, <sup>11</sup> I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. <sup>12</sup> Then saith he unto me, <sup>13</sup> See thou do it not : for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book : worship God. <sup>14</sup> And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book : <sup>15</sup> for the time is near. <sup>16</sup> He that is unjust, let him be

<sup>1</sup> DAN. vii. 27.  
Rom. v. 17.  
<sup>2</sup> Tim. ii. 12.  
ch. iii. 21.

<sup>3</sup> ch. xix. 9.  
& xxi. 5.

<sup>†</sup> So all our  
ancient MSS.  
<sup>n</sup> ch. i. 1.

<sup>†</sup> So all our  
ancient MSS.  
<sup>o</sup> ch. iii. 11.  
ver. 10, 12,  
20.  
<sup>p</sup> ch. i. 8.

<sup>q</sup> ch. xix. 10.

<sup>r</sup> ch. xix. 10.

<sup>s</sup> DAN. viii. 26.  
& xii. 4, 9.  
ch. x. 4.

<sup>t</sup> ch. i. 8.

<sup>u</sup> EZEK. iii. 27.  
Dan. xii. 10.  
<sup>v</sup> Tim. iii. 13.

by some of our principal MSS.), because the Lord God shall shine (shined light) upon them : and they shall reign (De Wette well remarks, in a higher sense than in ch. xx. 4, 6) to the ages of the ages.

6-21.] CONCLUDING ASSURANCES AND EXHORTATIONS : and herein, 6, 7, assurance by the angel of the truth of what has been said, in the terms of ch. i. 1. And he (the angel) said to me, These sayings, (the whole book, by what follows) are faithful and true : and the Lord (Jehovah) the God of the spirits of the prophets (i. e. of those spirits of theirs, which, informed by the Holy Spirit, have become the vehicles of prophecy) sent His angel to shew to His servants what things must come to pass shortly (on the whole of this, see on ch. i. 1, from which place it is repeated at the close of the book of which that is the opening). And behold, I come quickly (the speech passes into the words of Christ Himself,

reported by the angel : so in ver. 12, and in ch. xi. 3). Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book (the speech is a mixed one : in the words of this book, the Writer has in view the roll of his book now lying all but completed before him : but the words are the saying of the angel : "of this prophecy," would express it formally). And I John [am he] who heard and saw these things : and when I heard and saw, I fell down (as in ch. xix. 10, where see notes) to worship before the feet of the angel who shewed me these things. And he saith to me, Take heed not : I am a fellow-servant of thine, and (a fellow-servant) of thy brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the sayings of this book : worship God (the same feeling again prevailed over the Apostle as before, and is met with a similar rebuke). And he saith to me, Seal not up the sayings of the prophecy of this book

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him † still do righteousness: and he that is holy, let him sanctify himself still. <sup>12</sup> †<sup>x</sup> Behold, I come quickly; and <sup>y</sup> my reward is with me, to <sup>z</sup> give every man according as his work † is. <sup>13</sup> <sup>a</sup> I am the Alpha and the Omega, † first and last, the beginning and the end. <sup>14</sup> <sup>b</sup> Blessed are they that † wash their robes, that they may have power <sup>c</sup> over the tree of life, <sup>d</sup> and may enter in through the gates into the city. <sup>15</sup> <sup>e</sup> Without are the <sup>f</sup> dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and whosoever loveth and doeth falsehood. <sup>16</sup> <sup>g</sup> I Jesus sent mine angel to testify these things unto you in the churches. <sup>h</sup> I am the

† So all our ancient MSS.

† and is omitted by all our ancient MSS.

x ver. 7.

y Isa. xl. 10.

& lxii. 11.

z Rom. ii. 6.

& xiv. 12.

ch. xx. 12.

† So all our ancient MSS.

a Isa. xli. 4.

& xlv. 6.

& xlviii. 12.

ch. i. 8, 11.

& xxi. 6.

† So all our ancient MSS.

b ch. vii. 14, &

1. 6, Isa. i.

18, Zech. iii.

3, & xlii. 1.

Heb. ix. 14.

1 John i. 7.

† So our most ancient MSS.,

the later ones

reading, do

1. is com-

mandments,

as the A. V.

c ver. 2.

ch. ii. 7.

d ch. xxi. 27.

e 1 Cor. vi. 9.

10. Gal. v.

19-21.

Col. iii. 6.

ch. ix. 20, 21.

& xxi. 8.

f Matt. vii. 6.

& xv. 20. Phil. iii. 2.

g ch. i. 1.

h ch. v. 6.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. <sup>12</sup> And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. <sup>13</sup> I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. <sup>14</sup> Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. <sup>15</sup> For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. <sup>16</sup> I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root

(compare ch. x. 4, where the command is otherwise: also Daniel viii. 26): for the time is near (in Dan. viii. 26, the reason for sealing up the vision is that the time shall be for many days). Let him that is unjust commit injustice still: and let the filthy (morally polluted) pollute himself still: and let the righteous do righteousness still, and the holy sanctify himself still (see Ezek. iii. 27: and compare Matt. xxvi. 45, "Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold the hour is at hand:" also Ezek. xx. 39. The saying has solemn irony in it: the time is so short, that there is hardly room for change—the lesson conveyed in its depth is, "Change while there is time"). Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me (Isa. xl. 10) to render to each as his work is (these words sound as if spoken by our Lord himself: perhaps at the conclusion, the Apostle puts together, in prophetic shortness, many divine sayings of warning and consolation, with the replies to them). I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the begin-

ning and the end (these words have hitherto been said by the Father: see above, ch. i. 8, xxi. 6, and notes. And in all probability it is so here likewise, whether we assume the words to be spoken by Christ in God's name, or by the Eternal Father Himself). Blessed are they that wash their robes (see the margin, and ch. vii. 14, where the expression is fuller, "in the blood of the Lamb." The difference in the readings is curious, being in the original that between *poiountes tas entolas autou* and *plunontes tas stolas autou*, either of which might easily be mistaken for the other) that they may have the power (licence) over the tree (to eat of the tree) of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs (impure persons, see reff.), and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one loving and practising falsehood (see on these, ch. xxi. 8).

I Jesus (our Lord now speaks directly in His own person) sent my angel to testify these things to you in the churches. I

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. <sup>17</sup> And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. <sup>18</sup> For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: <sup>19</sup> and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. <sup>20</sup> He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. <sup>21</sup> The grace

root and the offspring of David, <sup>1</sup> the bright morning star. <sup>17</sup> And the Spirit and <sup>k</sup> the bride say, Come: and let him that heareth say, Come: <sup>1</sup> and let him that is athirst come: † whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. <sup>18</sup> † I testify unto every one that heareth the sayings of the prophecy of this book, <sup>m</sup> If any shall add unto † them, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: <sup>19</sup> and if any shall take away from the sayings of the book of this prophecy, <sup>n</sup> God shall take away his part out of the † tree of life, and [† out of] <sup>o</sup> the holy city, † which are written in this book. <sup>20</sup> He which testifieth these things saith, <sup>p</sup> Surely I come quickly. <sup>q</sup> Amen, come, Lord Jesus. <sup>21</sup> † The grace

<sup>1</sup> NUMB. xxiv. 17.  
Zech. vi. 12.  
2 Pet. i. 19.  
ch. ii. 28.  
k ch. xxi. 2, 9.

<sup>1</sup> Isa. lv. 1.  
John vii. 37.  
ch. xxi. 6  
† and is omitted by all our ancient MSS.

† So the Alexandrine and many later MSS. The Sinaitic has, Or I testify. No MSS. have For.  
<sup>m</sup> Deut. iv. 2. & xii. 32.  
Prov. xxx. 6.  
† So most MSS., none reading as the A. V.

<sup>n</sup> Exod. xxxii. 33. Ps. lxxix. 28. ch. iii. 5. & xiii. 8.

† So all our MSS., none reading as the A. V.  
† out of is omitted by the Alexandrine MS., but inserted by the Sinaitic.  
<sup>o</sup> ch. xxi. 2.  
† and from the things is omitted in almost all  
<sup>2</sup> Thess. iii. 18.

MSS.

p ver. 12.

q 2 Tim. iv. 8.

r Rom. xvi. 20, 24.

2 Thess. iii. 18.

am the root and the race (the offspring, as A. V.) of David, the bright morning star (that brings in the everlasting day).

And the Spirit (in the churches, and in the prophets) and the Bride (the Church herself) say Come (see on ch. vi. 1, &c.): and let him that heareth (the cry of the Spirit and Bride) say Come: and let him that thirsteth come: let him that will, take the water of life freely (this verse is best understood as a reply of the Apostle to our Lord's previous words).

18—20.] *Final solemn warning of the Apostle.* I (emphatic) testify to every one (or, "of every one") who heareth the sayings of the prophecy of this book, If any one add (shall have added) to them, God shall add to him (lay upon him, as he has laid his own additions upon them: the verb being from Dent. vii. 15, where the plagues of Egypt are threatened to the Israelites in case of their disobedience) the plagues which are written in

this book: and if any one shall take away from the sayings of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his portion from the tree of life (strike out his portion from the aggregate of those of which the whole participation of that tree is made up), and out of the holy city, which are written in this book (see Deut. as before. The adding and taking away are in the application and reception in the heart: and so it is not a mere formal threat to the copier of the book. All must be received and realized. This is at least an awful warning both to those who despise and neglect this book, and to those who add to it by irrelevant and trifling interpretations).

20, 21.] *FINAL ASSURANCE of the Lord, and REPLY of the Apostle on behalf of the Church: and BENEDICTION.* He who testifieth these things (the Lord Jesus) saith, Yea, I come quickly. Amen (the reply of the Apostle, not the conclusion of our Lord's saying), Come, Lord Jesus.



## AUTHORIZED VERSION REVISED.

† our is omitted  
by almost all  
our MSS.  
† Christ is  
omitted by  
our oldest MSS.  
of † the Lord Jesus † be with † the  
saints. Amen.

† So the Sinaitic MS. The Alexandrine reads, be with all (and no more): the later MSS. read, be with all the saints: but no MS. reads as the A.V.

## AUTHORIZED VERSION.

of our Lord Jesus Christ  
be with you all. Amen.

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with the saints (i. e., with the church of God. This, the reading of the Sinaitic MS., is nowhere else found as a parting formula).

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# INDEX

	PAGE		PAGE
ADAMS (W.), Holy Week, . . . . .	4	EATON (J. R. T.), Bampton Lectures, . . . . .	11
A Kempis, Imitation of Christ, . . . . .	26	Edward VI., First Book of Common Prayer of, . . . . .	2
Alford (Henry), Life of, . . . . .	23	FIELD (Walter), Stones of the Temple, . . . . .	12
————— Greek Testament, . . . . .	23	Fosbery (T. V.), Hymns and Poems, &c., . . . . .	10
————— New Testament for English Readers, . . . . .	23	————— Voices of Comfort, . . . . .	10
Andrews (Bishop Lancelot), Manual for the Sick, . . . . .	21	GEDGE (J. W.), Young Churchman's Companion to the Prayer Book, . . . . .	5
Annotated Prayer Book, By J. H. Blunt, . . . . .	16	Glossary of Ecclesiastical Terms, by Orby Shipley, . . . . .	30
Annual Register, . . . . .	14	Goulburn (Dean), Manual of Confirmation, . . . . .	9
Arnold (T. K.), First Hebrew Book, . . . . .	30	————— Family Prayers, . . . . .	9
Avancini, Vita et Doctrina Jesu Christi, . . . . .	2	————— Pursuit of Holiness, . . . . .	9
BARRETT (W. A.), Chorister's Guide, . . . . .	11	————— Thoughts on Personal Religion, . . . . .	9
————— Flowers and Festivals, . . . . .	11	————— Holy Catholic Church, . . . . .	1
Bickersteth (E. H.), Two Brothers, . . . . .	10	————— Gospel of the Childhood, . . . . .	1
————— Yesterday, To-Day, etc., . . . . .	10	Gould (S. B.), Curious Myths, &c., . . . . .	22
Blunt (J. H.) Directorium Pastorale, . . . . .	18	————— Religious Belief, . . . . .	30
————— Household Theology, . . . . .	17	Graty (Père) Henri Perreyve, . . . . .	7
————— Key to Bible, . . . . .	24	————— Last Days of, . . . . .	7
————— Key to Church Catechism, . . . . .	24	Greek Testament, by Dean Alford, . . . . .	23
————— Key to Church History (Ancient), . . . . .	24	Guide to Heaven, . . . . .	3
————— Key to Church History (Modern), . . . . .	25	HADDAN (A. W.), Apostolic Succession, . . . . .	21
————— Key to Common Prayer, . . . . .	24	Hallett (G. L.), Samaritans, and other Sermons, . . . . .	2
————— and Norris (J. P.), Keys to Christian Knowledge, . . . . .	24, 25	Help and Comfort for the Sick Poor, . . . . .	21
————— and Phillimore (W. G. F.), Book of Church Law, . . . . .	9	Herbert (George), Poems and Proverbs, . . . . .	27
Body (George), Life of Justification, . . . . .	13	Heygate (W. E.), Allegories and Tales, . . . . .	11
————— Life of Temptation, . . . . .	13	Hidden Life of the Soul, . . . . .	6
Book of, The, of Church Law, . . . . .	9	Hodgson (Chris.), Instructions for the Clergy, . . . . .	23
Bright (A. W.), and Medd (P. G.), Liber Precum Publicarum, . . . . .	17	Hook (W. F.), Family Prayers, . . . . .	5
Bruton (E. G.), Ecclesiastical Dilapidations, . . . . .	30	Hoole (Chas. H.), Shepherd of Hermas, . . . . .	18
CAMPION (W. M.) and Beaumont (W. J.), Prayer Book Interleaved, . . . . .	14	Hour of Prayer, . . . . .	2
Chilcot (William), Evil Thoughts, . . . . .	27	Hymns and Poems, by T. V. Fosbery, . . . . .	10
Christian Year, The . . . . .	27	IMITATION OF CHRIST, . . . . .	26
Common Prayer and Ordinal, 1549, . . . . .	2	JANUS, Pope and Council, . . . . .	22
Companion to Old Testament, . . . . .	18	Jelf (R. W.), Thirty-nine Articles, . . . . .	5
Consolatio, by C. E. Kennaway, . . . . .	8	Jones (Harry), Life in the World, . . . . .	30
Crake (A. D.), Church History, . . . . .	16	————— Perfect Man, . . . . .	30
DALE (T. P.), Ecclesiastes, . . . . .	5	KAY (W.) on the Psalms, . . . . .	17
Dictionary of Theology, . . . . .	28	Keble (John), Christian Year, . . . . .	27
Döllinger (John J. Ign. Von.), Fables respecting the Popes, &c., . . . . .	18	Keys to Christian Knowledge, . . . . .	24, 25
————— Lectures on Reunion, . . . . .	4	Kennaway (C. E.), Consolatio, . . . . .	8
————— Prophecies and the Prophetic Spirit, . . . . .	18	LETTERS from Rome on the Council, by Quirinus, . . . . .	22
Dominican Artist (A), . . . . .	6	Liber Precum Publicarum, . . . . .	17
		Liddon (H. P.), Bampton Lectures, . . . . .	17

	PAGE		PAGE
Liddon (H. P.), Elements of Religion, . . .	17	REVIVAL of Priestly Life in France, . . .	8
University Sermons, . . .	17	Ridley (W. H.), Bible Readings, . . .	15
Louise, Life of Madame, de France, . . .	6	Rivington's Devotional Series, . . .	26, 27
Lyte (Henry F.), Poems, . . .	15	Romanoff (H. C.), Rites and Customs of the Greco-Russian Church, . . .	30
MANT (Richard), Ancient Hymns, . . .	10	S. John Chrysostom's Liturgy, . . .	30
Happiness of the Blessed, . . .	15	Rossetti (Maria F.), Shadow of Dante, . . .	12
Melville (Henry), Sermons, . . .	19	SALES (S. Francis de), Devout Life, . . .	27
Latter Sermons, . . .	19	Letters, . . .	8
Sermons on Less Promi- nent Facts, . . .	19	Life, . . .	7
Mercier (Anne), Our Mother Church, . . .	16	Spirit, . . .	7
Moberly (George), Brighstone Sermons, . . .	5	Scudamore (W. E.), Manual of Prayers, . . .	2
Great Forty Days, . . .	4	Self-Renunciation, . . .	4
Monsell (John S. B.), Parish Musings, . . .	12	Shepherd of Hermas, . . .	18
Moore (Daniel), Aids to Prayer, . . .	17	Shipleigh (Orby), Glossary of Ecclesiastical Terms, . . .	30
Sermons, . . .	5	Spiritual Guidance, . . .	4
Mozley's (J. B.) Lectures on the Miracles, . . .	14	Stainer (John), Theory of Harmony, . . .	15
NEALE (J. M.), History of Holy Eastern Church, . . .	9	Star of Childhood, . . .	3
Newman (J. H.), Sermons, . . .	8	Stone (S. J.), Poems, . . .	13
Sermons, Oxford Uni- versity, . . .	8	TAYLOR (Jeremy), Holy Dying, . . .	26
Sermons, Subjects of the Day, . . .	8	Holy Living, . . .	26
New Testament by Henry Alford, . . .	23	Treasury of Devotion, . . .	3
Norris (J. B.), Key to the Acts, . . .	25	VINCENT (S. de Paul), Life of, . . .	16
Key to the Four Gospels, . . .	25	WALTON (H. B.), and Medd (P. G.), Common Prayer and Ordinal, 1549, . . .	2
OXENHAM (F. N.), Soul in its Probation, . . .	2	Way of Life, . . .	3
PATH of Holiness, . . .	3	Williams (Isaac), Devotional Commentary, . . .	20
Perraud (Père A.), Last Days of Père Gratry, . . .	7	Female Scripture Char- acters, . . .	21
Perreyve (Henri), Life of, . . .	7	Old Testament Char- acters, . . .	21
Pope, The, and the Council, by Janus, . . .	22	Apocalypse, . . .	21
Prayer Book Interleaved, . . .	14	Wilson (Bishop), Lord's Supper, . . .	26
Prayers and Meditations for Holy Com- munion, . . .	14	Wilson (R. F.), Life of S. Vincent de Paul Wordsworth (Charles), Catechesis, . . .	16
QUIRINUS, Letters from Rome, . . .	22	Wordsworth (Chris.), Twelve Visitation Addresses, . . .	5









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