

opponents' position. I believe I am to have an opportunity, in the forthcoming number of the *Contemporary Review*, of doing my own part to shew where the fallacy lies.

In the meantime I will ask the readers of the *Quarterly Review* to suspend their judgment, and not to be carried away by the torrent of desultory reasoning and invective, until they have heard what there is to be said on the other side. They may be assured that there is much in reserve besides what I shall be able to urge.

W. S.

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### CHRIST AND THE ANGELS.

#### III. HEBREWS ii. 10.

IN Chapter ii. Verse 9, the Apostle has overstepped the limits of the thesis that the Mediator of the new dispensation is superior to the angels, and that the new world is freed from angelic rule; for, in speaking of the glorification of Jesus, he has introduced a reference to the specific value of his passion not merely as the antecedent and reason of his glorification ("crowned with glory and honour on account of the suffering of death"), but as the means of salvation to men ("that by the grace of God He should taste death for every man"). Now the ultimate source of all doubt whether the new dispensation is superior to the old is nothing else than want of clear insight into the work of Christ, and especially into the significance of his passion, which, to the Jews, from whom the Hebrew Christians of our Epistle were drawn, was the chief stumbling-block in Christianity. Here, therefore, the Writer has at length got into the heart of his subject; and, leaving the contrast between Christ and the angels, urges the positive doctrine of the identification of Jesus with those that are

his—his brethren, the sons of God whom He sanctifies—as the best key to that connection between the passion and glorification of Christ which forms the cardinal point of New Testament revelation. This, we recollect, is the very topic set forth in Chapter i. Verse 3, as the starting-point of the Epistle. There a reference to the angels was introduced to make the nature of the Son's heavenly dignity quite unmistakeable. Except as a foil to set off the transcendence of Christ and the Christian dispensation, the angels have no value for the Apostle's argument; and it is only as a foil that they are for a moment again alluded to in Chapter ii. Verse 16.

In Chapter ii. Verses 10–18, we have a condensed and pregnant view of the theory of the whole work of Christ, which subsequent chapters develop, elucidate, and justify dialectically, in contrast or comparison with the Old Testament dispensation. In Verse 10 the argument, opened in an oblique manner in Verse 9, is put on an independent footing, and carried back to its absolute starting-point in the moral character and purpose of God. The work of salvation through Christ is a work *befitting God*; “for it befitted him, by reason of whom all things are and through whom all things are, when he led many sons to glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”<sup>1</sup>

The first point in this verse which claims our attention is the expression, unique in the Bible, *ἔπρεπε τῷ Θεῷ*. In the Old Testament we have indeed (Jeremiah x. 7), “who would not fear thee, O king of nations, for to thee doth it appertain” (LXX. *σοὶ γὰρ πρόκειται*); and similar language in Psalms lxxv. 1 (LXX.) and xciii. 5. But in these cases it is some action or attitude on the part of his creatures that

<sup>1</sup>The aorist participle *ἀγαθόντα* expresses an action synchronous with *τελειῶσαι*. The people of Christ are already partakers of the Messianic glory, as they are already citizens of the new world.

“befits God.” Here we have the notion of an inner fitness in God’s own actions; for the expression is not to be explained away as if it meant only that the passion of Christ is a means well fitted to the end, the bringing of many sons to glory. The *πρέπον*, as Aristotle puts it (*Eth. Nic.*, iv. 2, 2), is relative to the person as well as to the circumstances and object, and but for this reference to the moral nature of God Himself as the condition of the fitness of the passion of Christ, there would be nothing to distinguish the “fitness” in the case before us from physical necessity. The stress which the Apostle lays on the idea is plain from the way in which the expression is carried on. It befitted Him *by reason of whom all things are and through whom all things are*. To identify the *δι’ οὗ* here with the *εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα* of Romans xi. 36 is to confound two perfectly distinct conceptions, and to lose the point of this description of God. God is He from whom all things have their reason as well as their realization. He not only works all things (*δι’ οὗ*), but He is the reason of their existence. The whole course of nature and grace must find its explanation in God, and not merely in an abstract Divine *arbitrium*, but in that which befits the Divine nature. This is a conception of fundamental importance for that most fundamental part of Christian theology, the idea of God; for it enables us to think of God as free from the pressure of necessity (fate), and yet to distinguish his freedom from vague arbitrariness. It enables us to ascribe to God a real personal will, and yet to reject the nominalistic notion that his will is purely arbitrary; and it gives a moral quality to that supreme personality which cannot be conceived as acting under a law of duty. The moral law itself is simply the expression, for the guidance of beings created in God’s image, of that which befits Him by reason of whom and through whom all things are.

But if this notion is so fundamental in Christian theology,

why, it may be asked, is the expression of our verse unique in the Bible? Simply because it is a theological notion—a notion which does not rest on direct religious experience, but on subsequent reflection. The directly religious contemplation of God is directed to his moral character as revealed in his dealings with man—his righteousness and love; and, confiding in these, is content to refer God's ways to his good-pleasure (*εὐδοκία, θέλημα*:—"thy will be done." Comp. Matt. xi. 26; xviii. 14; Heb. xiii. 21; Psalm cxv. 3). The very essence of religion is a confidence in God and devotion to his will so absolute as not to suggest any formulation of the principle underlying his purpose, but only to rejoice in its gracious manifestation. Hence, in the Old Testament, the nearest approach to the idea of the seemingly as applied to God's actions is in the agonised cry of Job when his faith is tried to the uttermost—Job. x. 3 (Gen. xviii. 25; Jer. xii. 1). In the theological speculations of the Alexandrian school the expression *πρέπειν τῷ Θεῷ* is not infrequent. Examples from Philo have been collected by J. B. Carpzov in his excellent *Exercitationes*, but the idea, as might be expected from the tendency of Philo's theology, is taken in a somewhat superficial sense. It is worth noting that the chief value of Anselm's view of the Atonement lies in the introduction into theology of the idea of what befits God—the idea, as he puts it, of God's honour. Anselm fails, however, by thinking rather of what God's honour must receive as its due than of what it is seemingly for God in his grace to do, and thus his theory becomes shallow and inadequate.

The purpose of God, accomplished in a manner befitting the Divine Being through the suffering and glorification of Christ, is to bring many sons to glory. Here the sonship of the many sons is plainly correlative to the previously expressed sonship of Jesus; and so too the glory of the many sons is participation in the resurrection glory of Christ

(Comp. 1 Peter v. 1; John xvii. 22, 23). Now the glory of Christ corresponds to his sonship (Chapter i. Verse 4); therefore also it is as sons that the saved are led to glory. We see, then, that the idea of sonship is here introduced to express the likeness between Christ and those to whom He is the Author of salvation. This idea receives further elucidation in the following verses; but, before going on to them, we must look at the clause, "to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings." The word author in the Greek (*ἀρχηγός*) is primarily a leader; then one who takes a foremost part in any matter; and, finally, in a wider sense, becomes almost a synonym of *αἴτιος*, originator, author (Acts iii. 15). It is hardly necessary to put more meaning into the phrase than is contained in the parallel expression of Chapter v. Verse 9, *αἴτιος σωτηρίας αἰωνίου*. The more definite notion expressed in the Authorised Version, that Jesus leads his people to salvation as their Captain, is suitable enough to the thought of the Epistle (forerunner, Chapter vi. Verse 20), but is not naturally expressed by the grammatical construction. Such a phrase as *Ἀρχηγός τῆς ἀποστάσεως* "leader in the revolt," is well enough, but "leader in their salvation" is awkward.

The last notion in the verse, and one which plays a foremost part in the dialectic of the Epistle, is that contained in the word *τελειῶσαι*—"to make perfect." The Greek verb means "to carry to the appointed goal or end," whether the end is conceived as a perfection residing in the thing to be perfected, or as something lying outside of it. Applied to a person, it may be used either (*a*) of internal development to physical or moral maturity; or (*b*) of the attainment by him of some aim or appointed destiny.<sup>1</sup> Now the context, and especially the parallelism with Verse 9, makes it clear that the *τελείωσις* of Christ, corresponds

<sup>1</sup> (*a*) Plato, *Rep.*, vi. § 11, p. 498; § 3, p. 487. *Ibid.*, v. § 14, p. 467 init. Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.*, ii. 1, 3. (*b*) *Herod.* iii. 86.

to his elevation to that glorious dignity which is undoubtedly his proper goal, inasmuch as it agrees with the pre-eminence of the name that He inherits. On the other hand, it is plain that the Author thinks of the "perfecting" of Jesus, not simply as an act, but as a process. It is not a mere synonym with his crowning with glory and honour; for while He is crowned *on account of* his passion, He is perfected *through* sufferings, as the appropriate path in the divine fitness of things to the attainment of a goal which includes not only his own glorification, but the simultaneous glorification of many sons. The goal set before Jesus is a supreme position in the economy of salvation; and the position is not simply conferred upon Him, but is worked out in a divinely appointed course of suffering, which is not only the reason but the means of an exaltation that is at the same time our salvation.

In our ordinary way of thinking of the Atonement, we look mainly at what Jesus, once for all, did for the redeemed. But our Epistle starts rather from the consideration of what Jesus *is* now and evermore for his people—from the unending dignity which He holds as the supreme person in the economy of salvation. Thus the work of redemption is viewed as the means or path towards that resurrection dignity which contains in itself the permanent realization of salvation for those who are brought to glory along with Jesus. Hence the fundamental importance of the *τελείωσις* of Jesus, as the highest and most general point of view from which his earthly course and passion can be contemplated in relation to the Divine plan. The same life and passion which, in relation to us, is the work of redemption, is, in relation to God, through whom are all things, a work of *τελείωσις* accomplished on Jesus Himself.

To understand more precisely our Author's view of the work wrought on and in Christ, we must compare two other passages.

Chapter v. Verses 7-9: "Who in the days of his flesh, when he offered prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard for his pious fear of God" (that is, in Old Testament language, was heard because He was  $\Upsilon\iota\omicron\pi$  or  $\beta\omicron\ \eta\delta\omicron\pi$ , which words are often rendered by  $\epsilon\upsilon\lambda\alpha\beta\eta\varsigma$  or  $\epsilon\upsilon\lambda\alpha\beta\epsilon\iota\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$ ) "though he was a son, he learned obedience by what he suffered; and when he was perfected ( $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota\omega\theta\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ ) became to all that obey him the author of eternal salvation, when he was accosted by God as high priest after the order of Melchisedek."

Chapter vii. Verse 28: "The law appoints as high priests men who have infirmities; but the word of the oath subsequent to the law, appoints a son, perfected for evermore."

The second of these passages, which, as the simpler, may be considered first, confirms what has just been observed as to the fundamental importance in the doctrine of this Epistle of the abiding place of Christ in the economy of salvation. But, also, the everlasting perfection of Christ is contrasted with the infirmity of earthly high priests. From this contrast Riehm argues that here we must understand under  $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma$  mainly moral perfection, excluding all possibility of sin; and, secondarily, also the elevation above all earthly sufferings which belongs to Jesus in his exaltation. For, says he, the weakness of the high priests is their liability to sin, primarily their moral weakness, exposing them to be vanquished by temptation; and in a second degree also the general weakness of humanity, in so far as it also brings with it occasions of sin. In support of this argument he appeals to Verse 27 (comp. Chap. v. Verses 2, 3) which shews that a consequence of the weakness of the Levitical priests is that they have to offer sin offerings for themselves as well as for the people. The conclusion drawn from all this is that Jesus, according to our Epistle, was not absolutely impeccable before his

resurrection; but became so in the process of *τελείωσις*. The argument, however, from which so important an inference is drawn, is surely not valid. It is true that the infirmity of the high priests under the Law was connected with their moral imperfection. But the so-called *sins* for which the high priests had to make special offerings, and which are here contemplated, are not moral offences, but errors in the discharge of priestly functions, or shortcomings in the ordinances of priestly holiness, whether voluntary or involuntary, whether due to something in the priest or to something in his circumstances. All, therefore, that the verse teaches is that, whereas the Aaronic priests were never able to do their work without shortcomings, Christ, in virtue of his *τελείωσις*, is secure against all possible defect in the discharge of his priestly office. I do not see, therefore, that Chapter vii. Verse 28, helps us to any more complete conception of the process of *τελείωσις* than is given in Chapter ii. Verse 10; least of all, that it represents that process as the attainment of impeccability.

The passage in Chapter v. carries us farther, for in it the "through sufferings" of Chapter ii. receives its commentary. Jesus was perfected through sufferings, inasmuch as by his suffering He learned obedience. The obedience here spoken of is not simply conformity to the moral law, but prayerful and believing submission (*εἰσακουθεὶς* implies this) to the sufferings which came upon Him in the discharge of his special vocation as our Saviour. So long as we look on Jesus simply as an isolated moral individual, we cannot speak of his "perfecting" as a moral development, without falling into the notion that, up to a certain stage of the development, He was still peccable. But the Apostle views the *τελείωσις* of the Saviour as practical initiation into his vocation as head of the economy of salvation. Wherever there is a vocation, growth and process are inevitable. Our vocation is a work appointed to us in the kingdom of God,

involving a multiplicity of personal relations within the kingdom. And personal relations are of necessity relations into which one grows; the relation can be fully and practically constituted only in the practical exercise of the calling in which it is involved. So it was with Christ. He had, so to speak, to work Himself into his place in the plan of salvation, to go down among the brethren whom He was to lead to glory and fully to identify Himself with them, not, of course, by sharing their individual vocations, but in the practice of obedience in the far harder vocation given to Himself. This obedience had to be learned, not because his will was not at every moment perfect, not because it required a habit of obedience to free Him from liability to sin, but simply because it was a concrete manysided obedience, the obedience of an actual life becoming ever profounder and more wondrous till it was crowned by endurance of the cross. Such obedience was the only path to the future glory consistent with the divine fitness of things; for it was the only way by which, consistently with the law of moral action and reaction, Jesus could take up towards the many sons the personal relation of their Saviour and Head.<sup>1</sup>

We find, then, that in Verse 10 the connection between the past sufferings of Christ and his present glorious state as our perfected Saviour is elucidated by the idea that his glory is the glory of a moral vocation which He has perfectly realized, but which, like every other position of intrinsic worth in the moral world, is thus perfectly realized only as

<sup>1</sup> In the choice of the expressions *τελείωσις*, etc., the Apostle may probably have been influenced by the Septuagint use of these words of the consecration of the high priest (esp. Lev. xxi. 10); and this liturgical reference may seem to be favoured by the immediate transition in Chapter ii. Verse 11, to the notion of holiness. But as the Epistle nowhere explicitly represents the "perfecting" of Christ as an inauguration parallel to that of the high priest under the Law, it is safer to lay no stress on the analogy. The reference to the Greek mysteries, which has sometimes been sought in the New Testament use of the word *τελειος*, can clearly have no application here, since there is no reference to a knowledge of divine secrets.

the result of a moral process, and even a moral battle. This idea is the key to the sufferings which Christ underwent to bring many sons to glory; and the subsequent verses shew how the key opens the problem by explaining why this moral battle was a battle involving suffering and death. Verses 11-13 shew that the position of Christ as our Saviour is one of brotherhood; and the following verses shew that the vocation of a brother to save his brethren can only be realized when the Saviour, becoming in all things like his brethren, takes upon Him their weaknesses and sufferings.

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### ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

THE Epistle to the Romans is generally, and with justice, regarded as the most comprehensive of St. Paul's Epistles. It is not so much prompted as the others by special interests or occasions. At the time it was written, St. Paul had not yet been to Rome, and except that, no doubt, he kept in view the general character and tone of thought of the Roman Christians, he was rather concerned with the general message of the Gospel than with any particular application of it, such as he had to make in the case of the Galatians or of the Corinthians. Accordingly, he intimates, at the outset, that this general account of the Gospel would be the subject of his letter. "As much as in me is," he says, in the first Chapter, "I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also: for I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek"; and he then enters at once upon his main argument. We may with advantage, therefore, regard the