

passages, to show that these couples are not in line with the others, but are mere passing illustrations, they are punctuated off, in the one case from the preceding, in the other from the following clause, by the use of  $\tau\epsilon$  rather than  $\kappa\alpha\iota$ .

In Heb. vi. 4, 5, we read (R.V.), "For as touching those who were once enlightened, and ( $\tau\epsilon$ ) tasted of the heavenly gift, and ( $\kappa\alpha\iota$ ) were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and ( $\kappa\alpha\iota$ ) tasted the good word of God, and ( $\tau\epsilon$ ) the powers of the age to come, and ( $\kappa\alpha\iota$ ) fell away." It is difficult to see the *rationale* of the use of  $\kappa\alpha\iota$  and  $\tau\epsilon$  in the above sentence. According to the analogy of the two previous passages, we should have expected to find "the word of God" and "the powers of the age to come" connected by  $\kappa\alpha\iota$ . And it is hard to explain why the first two particulars here enumerated should be united by  $\tau\epsilon$ , and all the others by  $\kappa\alpha\iota$ , when they manifestly stand on the same plane, as things which appear to imply salvation, but which are yet compatible with final apostasy. This would seem to indicate that the writer is not always punctiliously consistent in the use of these particles. So much the better for the rendering advocated in this paper, which rests not on such grammatical niceties, but on broad general grounds.

R. G. BALFOUR.

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### THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

#### V. THE CAPTAIN OF SALVATION (CHAP. II. 10).

IN this verse the writer goes on to state that the career of suffering to which Christ was subjected in this world was worthy of God. The affirmation is made to justify the bold assertion of the previous sentence, that the appointment of Jesus to taste death for others was a manifestation of grace

or favour on God's part towards His well-beloved Son. "By the grace of God I have said, and I said so deliberately; for it became Him who is the first and final cause of all to accomplish this great end, the salvation of men, in a way which involved suffering to the Saviour,"—such is the connexion of thought. The author feels that this is a position which must be made good in order to reconcile his readers to the humiliation and sufferings which Christ underwent. This he virtually acknowledges by the periphrastic manner in which he names God. If God be the last end of all, and the first cause of all, He must be the first and final cause of Christ's sufferings among other things; and unless it can be maintained that the end for which Christ suffered was worthy of Him who is the great end of the universe, and that the means employed for the attainment of that end were worthy of Him who is the first cause of everything that happens, the defence of the Christian faith is a failure. Knowing perfectly well what is at stake, the writer, having full confidence in the goodness of his cause, fearlessly maintains that everything relating to the matter of salvation, means not less than end, is worthy of the Maker and Lord of all. "It became Him." The point of view is peculiar. In one respect it goes beyond the usual biblical manner of regarding Divine action, the Bible writers ordinarily being content to rest in God's good pleasure. In another it is defective, as compared, for example, with Paul's way of treating the death of Christ as necessitated by the righteousness of God. The apologetic aim explains both features. The writer is dealing with men to whom Christ's sufferings are a stumblingblock, to whom therefore it will not suffice to say, "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him." On the other hand, he is glad to be able to show them the fitness of Christ's sufferings from any point of view, even though his statement should come far short of presenting a complete theory. The statements of apologists are apt

to appear defective from a dogmatic point of view, as they sometimes learn to their cost. At the same time it must be remarked that the statement of this inspired apologist is not so defective as has sometimes been represented, as when it is said that the reason for the death of Christ here given is related to the Pauline as the Scotist theory to the Anselmian, or the Socinian to the Lutheran.<sup>1</sup> It points to a congruity between the experience of Christ and the moral nature of God. It is in the same line with the Pauline doctrine, only it is less definite and more general.

The sentence in which the Godworthiness of the method of salvation is asserted is so constructed as to be in a manner self-evidencing. The writer, as he proceeds, uses words charged with persuasive virtue, so that by the time we arrive at the end of the verse we are disposed to give a cordial assent to the doctrine enunciated. Not that the whole evidence is either stated or even suggested in this single sentence; for all that remains of the second chapter may be regarded as an expression and elucidation of the thought contained therein. But the words are so fitly chosen, and the clauses so skilfully arranged, as to win our sympathy in behalf of the truth stated, and to dispose us to lend a favourable ear to what may be further advanced in its illustration and defence. This will appear, as we consider in detail the separate members of the sentence.

First comes the clause in which God's end in the mission of Christ is set forth: πολλοὺς υἱοὺς εἰς δόξαν ἀγαγόντα: "in bringing many sons unto glory." The words certainly refer to God, not to Christ, the change of case from the dative (αὐτῷ) to the accusative (ἀγαγόντα) notwithstanding. The aim of the whole sentence puts this beyond doubt. The intention is to ascribe to God, in connexion with the sufferings of Christ, an end undoubtedly worthy of Him who is the final end of all things. True, the Godworthiness

<sup>1</sup> So Pfeiderer: *Paulinismus*, p. 342.

of that end is not directly asserted, the whole stress of the difficulty lying, not on the end, but on the means. But though not expressly asserted, it is plainly implied. The end is alluded to for the purpose of suggesting that thought as a help to the understanding of the more difficult one. And skill in the art of persuasion is exhibited in placing it in the forefront. For who could doubt the Godworthiness of the end, proposed: the salvation of man? It might be presumptuous to say that God was bound to become a Saviour, but it may confidently be asserted that to save becomes Him. The work He undertook was congruous to His position and character. It was worthy of God the Creator, by whom all things were made at the first, that He should not allow His workmanship in man to be utterly marred and frustrated by sin. The irretrievable ruin of man would have seriously compromised the Creator's honour and glory. It would have made it possible to charge the Divine Being with failure, to represent Him as over-reached by the tempter of man, to suspect Him of want of power or of will to remedy the mischief done by the fall. On this subject Athanasius, in his discourse on the incarnation of the Word, well remarks: "It would have been an indecency if those who had been once created rational had been allowed to perish through corruption. For that would have been unworthy of the goodness of God, if the beings He had Himself created had been allowed to perish through the fraud of the devil against man. Nay, it would have been most indecent that the skill of God displayed in man should be destroyed either through their carelessness or through the devil's craftiness."

The Godworthiness of the end becomes still more apparent when the subjects of the Divine operation are thought of as, what they are here called, *sons*. What more worthy of God than to lead His own sons to the glory for which man was originally fitted and destined, when he was

made in God's image, and set at the head of the creation? The title "sons" was possibly suggested by the creation story, but it arises immediately out of the nature of salvation as indicated in the quotation from the eighth Psalm,—lordship in the world to be. This high destiny places man alongside of *the* Son whom God "appointed heir of all things." "If sons, then heirs," reasoned Paul; "if heirs, then sons," argues inversely the author of our epistle. Both reason legitimately, for sonship and heirship imply each other. Those who are appointed to lordship in the new world of redemption are sons of God, for what higher privilege or glory can God bestow on His sons? And on those who stand in a filial relation to God He may worthily bestow so great a boon. To lead His sons to their glorious inheritance is the appropriate thing for God to do.

We have next to notice the title given to Him who for men tasted death. He is designated τὸν ἀρχηγὸν τῆς σωτηρίας: the Captain or Leader of salvation. I decidedly prefer the old rendering of the Authorized Version to that of the Revised Version, which, in common with many recent interpreters, substitutes for the definite term "captain" the vague, weak term "author." The only objection to the rendering "captain" is the predominantly military suggestion it contains, on which account the alternative term "leader" is to be preferred. The idea of leadership serves admirably the apologetic purpose, and is therefore by all means to be retained. There is no good reason for excluding it. It is confessedly in harmony with the general thought of the epistle, and even the most cautious among recent expositors goes the length of admitting that "the idea that the Son goes before the saved in the same path ought perhaps to be retained."<sup>1</sup> The idea fits in to the view of salvation hitherto suggested, lord-

<sup>1</sup> Davidson: *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 65. Dr. W. Robertson Smith, while acknowledging that the idea of leadership is suitable enough to the

ship in the world-to-come. The lordship is not yet realized; the world-to-come is a promised land into which the redeemed have to march. And as the Israelites had their leader, under whose guidance they marched from Egypt to Canaan, so the subjects of the greater salvation have their Leader, who conducts them to their glorious inheritance. There can be little doubt that this parallelism was present to the mind of the writer.<sup>1</sup> He speaks of Moses and Joshua, in different senses leaders of Israel, farther on, and it is not a violent supposition that he has them in view even at this early stage. Then we have already found reason for thinking that the expression "crowned with glory and honour," was thus filled up in his mind: "with the glory of a Moses, with the honour of an Aaron." We expect to find him in the immediate sequel applying epithets to Christ descriptive of the respective offices of the two brothers, as both united in Him. And this is what we do find. Here he calls Christ the *archegos*, answering to Moses; a little farther on we find him calling Him the *archiereus*, answering to Aaron. Finally it is to be noted that Christ as *archegos* is said to be perfected by *sufferings* (*παθημάτων*), not by the one suffering of death. The use of the plural is not accidental, it is intended to convey the idea of all sorts of suffering. But the experience of sufferings of all kinds fits into the idea of leader better than that of priest, in which the suffering of death is the thing to be emphasised. The writer, indeed, knows how to adapt a wide experience of suffering to the priestly aspect of Christ's work, through the medium of a sympathy acquired by such experience, in virtue of which He becomes a trusty High Priest. But the connexion between the experience and the office is not immediately obvious in the case of the priestly thought of the epistle, remarks that the phrase, "Leader in their salvation," is "awkward" (THE EXPOSITOR, Second Series, vol. ii., p. 422).

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Edward, imitating the caution of Dr. Davidson, says, "Perhaps the verse contains an allusion to Moses or Joshua."

office ; on the other hand, it is immediately obvious in the case of the office of leader.

Adopting, then, the rendering "Leader of salvation," let us consider the apologetic value of the title.

It implies a particular method of saving men, and readily suggests certain things likely to be involved in the adoption of that method.

As to the method of salvation, the title teaches that while God is the supreme Saviour of men, He performs the office through a Mediator. He might conceivably have saved men by a direct act of sovereign power and mercy. But He chose to save by mediation. And this method, if not the only possible one, is at least fitting. It became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, to bring His sons to glory in this way. First, because He was thereby following the analogy of providence, doing this work of deliverance in the manner in which we see Him performing all works of deliverance recorded in history: *e.g.* the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, which was, as we have seen, most probably in the writer's thoughts as the great historical type of the work of redemption. How did God deliver Israel? The poetical account of the transaction is: "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him." In a high, ideal sense it is as true as well as a beautiful representation. Nevertheless the sole leadership, while excluding all strange gods, did not exclude the subordinate leadership of men. God led His ancient people from Egypt to Canaan, like a flock, "by the hand of Moses and Aaron."

The method involves that salvation is a gradual process. It is a march under the guidance of a Leader to the promised land. With this view the aorist participle in the clause preceding, ἀγαγόντα, is not incompatible. This aorist has puzzled interpreters. Many render it "who had

led," understanding the reference to be to Old Testament saints.<sup>1</sup> Others, sensible of the inadmissibility of this interpretation, take the participle as expressing an action synchronous with *τελειῶσαι*, and as implying that when Christ was perfected salvation was accomplished, and God's sons already brought to glory.<sup>2</sup> I prefer, with Bleek, to take the aorist here as in effect a future, and as expressive of intention. In any case, while it is true that in principle salvation was once for all achieved by the perfecting of Christ, it is not less true that the latter was but the initiation of a process which remains to be worked out in detail. The sons of God are led to glory step by step.<sup>3</sup> The new heavens and the new earth are not brought in *per saltum*, but as the result of a development during which the word and history and passion of Christ work as a leaven. Redemption has a history alike in the Leader and in the led. Redemption after this fashion became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, better than an instantaneous deliverance. The latter might reveal Divine omnipotence, but the former affords scope for the display of all Divine attributes: power, wisdom, patience, faithfulness, unwearied loving care.

The method of salvation by a Leader involves certain things with reference to the Leader Himself.

First, He must, of course, be a Man visible to men, whom He has to lead; so that they can look unto Him as the Leader and Perfecter of faith, and, inspired by His example, follow Him on the path which leads to glory.

Out of this primary requirement naturally springs another. He who in person is to lead the people out of the house of

<sup>1</sup> So the Vulgate, which translates, "Qui multos filios in gloriam adduxerat."

<sup>2</sup> So Dr. W. R. Smith.

<sup>3</sup> So in effect Meyer. He remarks: "The participle is justified thereby, that, from the moment Christ appeared on earth and found faith, God led those who believed on Him to glory; that is, made them walk on the way to glory. For only expectancy, not possession, is expressed."



bondage into the promised land must, in the discharge of his duty, encounter hardship and suffering. He must share the lot of those whom he has to deliver. He not only ought, he must; it arises inevitably out of the nature of the task. Whether we take the word ἀρχηγός as signifying a leader like Moses, or a military captain like Joshua, the truth of this statement is apparent. Neither Moses nor Joshua had an easy time of it. The leadership of Israel was for neither a dilettante business, but a sore, perilous, often thankless toil and warfare. And there never was any real leader or captain of men whose life was anything else than a yoke of care, and a burden of toil and sorrow. They have all had to suffer with those they led, and more than any of the led. What wonder then if the Captain or Leader of the great salvation was acquainted with suffering? Must He be the solitary exception to the rule which connects leadership with suffering? Ought we not rather to expect that He, being the ideally perfect Captain given by God to be a leader and commander to the people whom He purposes to lead to glory, will likewise be more than any other experienced in suffering? If out of regard to His dignity as the Son He must be exempted from suffering, then for the same reason He must forfeit the position of leader. To exempt from suffering is to disable for leadership. Companionship in suffering is one of the links that connect a leader with those he leads and gives him power over them. For the led, especially those who are being led to "glory," have their troubles too, and no leader can win their hearts who does not share these. For one thing they have all to die, therefore their Leader also must "taste death" for their encouragement. Therefore it certainly became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in leading many sons to glory through tribulation, to make the Captain of salvation a participant in tribulation. He was thereby only fitting Him to be the better Captain.

This brings us to a third implicate of the method of salvation by a captain for the Captain Himself. It is, that experience of suffering is not merely inseparable from His office as the Captain of salvation, but useful to Him in that capacity. *It perfects Him as Captain.* Here at length we reach the climax of the apologetic argument; the final truth in which, when understood, the mind finds perfect rest. If this be indeed true, then beyond all doubt it became God to subject His Son to a varied experience of suffering. To proclaim its truth is the real aim of the writer. For though his direct affirmation is that it *became* God to perfect His Son by suffering, the really important thing is the indirect affirmation that the Son *was* perfected by suffering. It is one of the great thoughts of the epistle, to be written, so to speak, in large capitals.

How then are we to understand the doctrine? On this question, unhappily, interpreters are much divided in opinion. The term *τελειῶσαι* has been variously rendered. Some take it in a ceremonial sense, and give as the meaning that Christ was by His death consecrated to the high-priestly office which He exercises in heaven. Others regard it as equivalent to "glorify," and find in the text the truth which Jesus taught the two disciples who journeyed to Emmaus: that it behoved Christ to enter into the glory and felicity of heaven through suffering. For those who take this view, the "perfecting" of verse 10 is synonymous with the "crowning with glory and honour" of verse 9, understood as referring to the state of exaltation. A third class of interpreters associate with the word the idea of fitting for office. The perfecting of Christ on this view will mean making Him a perfect Captain of salvation. A fourth class have a strong bias in favour of an ethical interpretation, according to which the doctrine of the passage becomes that, through His curriculum of suffering, Christ was perfected in moral character by learning certain virtues, such

as sympathy, patience, obedience, faith. Briefly put, the four views may be distinctly represented by the words *consecration, beatification, complete equipment, perfected moral development*.

The diverse interpretations are not so far apart as they seem : they shade into each other ; and that is the cause of so much diversity of opinion prevailing among competent expositors. The truth appears to be, that the writer of the epistle does not in his use of the word bind himself down rigidly to one precise technical sense, but uses it with a certain prophetic freedom. He employs it with reference to Christ in various connexions of thought ; now apparently in relation to office, at another time in relation to character, a third time in relation to state or condition. He uses it also in reference to men in an entirely different way, as when he speaks of worshippers being perfected as pertaining to the conscience : where to perfect seems to be equivalent to "justify" in Pauline phraseology. With this variety of usage however it is quite compatible that there should be one radical general sense throughout. That radical sense is to bring to the end. The specific senses will vary according to the nature of the end. If the end be to become a leader, the specific sense will be to become a perfect leader, a thoroughly efficient, capable Captain ; if it be to get into a right relation to God as a pardoned man, the specific sense will be to justify.<sup>1</sup>

Other opportunities will occur for considering more fully the various uses of the word and their affinities. Meantime what we have to do with is the specific sense in which *τελειῶσαι* is used in the present passage. I have no hesitation in understanding it in the third of the four senses above enumerated. The writer means to say that Christ was perfected by suffering, in the sense that He was thereby

<sup>1</sup> For some excellent remarks on the meanings, of *τελειῶω*, see Davidson, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp. 65 and 207.

made a perfect leader. The perfecting of Christ was a process resulting in His becoming a consummate Captain of salvation. It was a process carried on *through* sufferings, taking place contemporaneously with these. It was a process begun on earth, carried on throughout Christ's whole earthly life, reaching its goal in heaven; just as the crowning with glory and honour began on earth and was completed in heaven. The crowning was the appointment of Jesus to the vocation of Saviour, the perfecting was the process through which He became skilled in the art of saving. The theatre or school of His training was His human history, and the training consisted in His acquiring, or having opportunity of exercising, the qualities and virtues which go to make a good leader of salvation. Foremost among these are sympathy, patience, obedience, faith, all of which are mentioned in the course of the epistle. Whether we should say of Christ that He acquired these virtues and became more and more expert in them, or merely that He had an opportunity in His earthly life, with its experiences of temptation and suffering, of displaying them, is a question of dogmatic theology rather than of exegesis. Our author declares in another place that Christ *learned obedience*. We know what that would mean as applied to an ordinary man. It would imply growth, development in moral character. Whether such can be predicated of Christ without prejudice to His sinlessness is a question for dogmatic theology to settle. If it were, we should then be entitled to include in the official perfecting of Christ a personal ethical element, that it might be as real, full of contents, and significant as possible. The official perfecting of every ordinary man includes an ethical element. An apprentice during the course of his apprenticeship, not only goes through all the departments of his craft and acquires gradually skill in each branch, but all along undergoes a discipline of character, which tends to make him a better man, as well as a good tradesman.

In any case, whatever view we take on the question as to Christ's personal growth in virtue, the point of importance is, that the process of His official perfecting took place *within the ethical sphere*. The supreme qualification for a leader of salvation is the possession and exercise of high heroic virtues, such as those already enumerated. He leads by inspiring admiration and trust; that is, by being a moral hero. But a moral hero means one whose life is hard, tragic. Heroes are produced by passing through a severe, protracted curriculum of trial. They are perfected by sufferings—sufferings of all sorts, the more numerous, varied, and severe the better; the more complete the training, the more perfect the result, when the discipline has been successfully passed through. Hence the fitness, nay, the necessity, that one having Christ's vocation should live such a life as the gospels depict; full of temptations, privations, contradictions of unbelief, ending with death on the cross; calling into play to the uttermost the virtue of fortitude, affording ample scope for the display at all costs of fidelity to duty and obedience to God, and in the most desperate situations of implicit filial trust in a heavenly Father; and through all these combined furnishing most satisfactory guarantees for the possession of unlimited capacity to sympathise with all exposed to the temptations and tribulations of this world. How can any son of God who is being led through fire and blood to his inheritance doubt the value of a Leader so trained and equipped? I know not whether those commentators be right who say that *διὰ παθημάτων*, in the intention of the writer, applies to the "many sons" who are being led to glory, as well as to their Leader;<sup>1</sup> but I am quite sure that he regarded their experience of suffering as an aid to the understanding of the doctrine of Christ's perfecting not less than as an occasion for administering the comfort of it.

<sup>1</sup> So Grotius, and likewise Pfeleiderer; *vide* his *Paulinismus*, p. 344.

From the foregoing exposition it will be apparent what apologetic force resides in this skilfully worded and constructed sentence. Its teaching, direct or implied, may thus be summed up :

1. The end proposed—the leading of many sons to glory—is manifestly Godworthy.

2. The carrying out of this end naturally demands a human Leader.

3. Leadership inevitably involves arduous experiences common to Leader and led, but falling with heavier force on Him than on them.

4. These experiences fit the Leader for His work, establishing comradeship between Him and the led, and inspiring in them admiration and confidence.

On the other hand, it is evident that a firm grasp of the apologetic aim is the key to the interpretation. Lose sight of it, or faintly recognise it as a bare possibility, then the idea of leadership also sinks into a mere “perhaps,” or is merged in the vague general idea of authorship, and it is no longer apparent how sufferings should be an indispensable part of Christ’s experience. A self-evidencing proposition becomes a comparatively obscure assertion.

It may be objected, that what we gain apologetically by adopting the rendering “Leader” for the title given to Christ we lose dogmatically. Leader signifies little more than example. The death of Christ, on this view of His function, has no special significance ; it simply takes its place among His sufferings, the last and severest of His many sorrowful experiences. He died for every one, not in the sense of dying in their stead, but in the sense that He makes death another thing for all who look to Him as their Captain :

“The Saviour hath passed through its portal before thee,  
And the lamp of His love is thy guide through the gloom.”

Now it is quite true that the *rationale* of Christ’s suffer-

ings offered to us by the author of our epistle, *so far as we have yet gone*, is, theologically, very meagre. But the view given is true so far as it goes; it is one side of a many-sided doctrine, which embraces all the fragments of truth that form the basis of the various theories concerning the meaning of Christ's passion. The writer of our epistle was not a onesided theorist, but a man of prophetic insight, looking at truth with spiritual versatility, from diverse points of view, and knowing how to use them all in turn. And he was thankful, to begin with, to be able to exhibit the fitness and necessity of Christ's sufferings from any point of view which had a chance of commending itself to the minds of his Hebrew readers. If it was true, important, useful, and above all obvious, it was enough. It was a point gained to have lodged in their minds the one thought: the sufferings of Christ a useful discipline for Him in sympathy with men and in obedience to God, and therefore a good training for being the Leader of salvation. It may seem incredible that at that time of day, after many years of Christian profession, they should need to be taught truths which are but the alphabet of the doctrine concerning Christ's death. But we have the writer's own word for it that such was the fact. And if we wish to understand the epistle, we must keep the fact steadily in mind, and beware of falling into the error of supposing that the writer and his readers stood, in religious thought and belief, pretty much on a level. The error may be applied in either of two ways: by lifting the readers up to the writer's level, or by degrading him down to theirs. Both mistakes are alike fatal to successful exposition. In the one case we shall find in the book a collection of lifeless theological commonplaces; in the other we shall find in it a conception of Christianity which has not surmounted Judaism.

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