

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

VII. CHRIST AND MOSES (CHAP. III.).

THE remarkable statement concerning the nature and way of salvation contained in the section which we have been considering in the three last papers supplies ample material for a new exhortation. The writer has shown that the Christian salvation consists in nothing less than lordship in the world to come. He has set forth Christ as the Captain of this salvation, and the High Priest of the new people of God, the Moses and the Aaron of Christendom, and in both capacities as the Sanctifier of the sons of God whom He leads to glory, and, in order to the efficient discharge of that function, one with His brethren in nature and experience. The immense supply of motive power stored up in this densely packed group of thoughts he now brings to bear on the tempted Hebrew Christians as an inducement to steadfastness: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Jesus."

Every word here is an echo of something going before, and is instinct with persuasive virtue. "Brethren" of Him who in a fraternal spirit identified Himself with the unholy, and for their sakes took flesh and tasted death. "Holy," at least in standing, in virtue of the priestly action of the Sanctifier; and because holy in this sense, under obligation to make their consecration to God a reality by living a truly Christian life. "Partakers of a heavenly calling"—thus described, at once with truth and with rhetorical skill, with a backward glance at the greatness of the Chris-

tian's hope as the destined lord of the future world, and with a mental reference to the contrast between that glorious prospect and the present state of believers as partakers of flesh and blood, and subject to death and the fear thereof; reminding them at the same time of the blessed truth that as Christ became partaker of their present lot, so they were destined to be partakers of His glorious inheritance, the unity and fellowship between Him and His people being on both sides perfect and complete. The epithet "heavenly" gracefully varies the point of view from which the inheritance is contemplated. The world to come becomes now a world above, a celestial country. The change in the mode of expression is an oratorical variation, but it is more, even a contribution to the parenetic force of the sentence, for the heavenly in the thought of the writer here and throughout the epistle is the real, the abiding. Heaven is the place of realities, as this material world is the place of shadows. Such is our author's philosophic view-point, if we may ascribe such a thing to him, his way of contemplating the universe, supposed by some to be borrowed from Philo and the Alexandrine school of philosophy; certainly a marked peculiarity, whencesoever derived. With the heavenly world Christianity is identified, and thereby its absolute and abiding nature is strongly asserted, as against Judaism, which as belonging to the visible world is necessarily doomed to pass away. This contrast indeed does not find open expression here, but that it is in the writer's mind the sequel abundantly shows. He uses his philosophy for his apologetic purpose, employing it as a vehicle for expressing and defending the thesis: Judaism transient, Christianity for aye.¹

The titles here ascribed to Jesus also arise out of the previous context, and are full of significance. Specially

¹ On this point *vide* Pfeiderer's *Paulinismus*, p. 326.

noteworthy is the former of the two, "Apostle," here only applied to Christ. The use of this epithet in reference to our Lord is one of many indications of the fresh creative genius of the writer, and of the unconventional nature of his style. When he calls Christ an apostle he is not thinking of the twelve apostles, or of Christ's prophetic office. Christ's claim to attention as one through whom God has spoken His last word to men he has sufficiently recognised and insisted on in the first exhortation (ii. 1-4). He is thinking rather of the apostleship of Moses. The basis for the title is such a text as Exodus iii. 10: "Come now therefore, and I will send thee (*ἀποστείλω*, Sept.) unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth My people the children of Israel out of Egypt." Moses was an apostle, as one sent by God on the important mission of leading the enslaved race of Israel out of Egypt into Canaan. Christ was our Apostle, as one sent by God to be the Leader in the greater salvation. The Apostle of our Christian confession and the "Captain of salvation" are synonymous designations. Something indeed might be said for taking it as a generic title, including all Christ's functions. In that case it might have stood alone, though even then special mention of the priestly office would have been appropriate, as having been previously named, and as a source of peculiar comfort and inspiration, and also because it is in the sequel the subject of a lengthened consideration. As applied to it the exhortation to consider has a somewhat different meaning from that which it bears in reference to the title Apostle. "Consider the Apostle" means, consider for practical purposes a subject already sufficiently understood; "consider the High Priest" means, consider the doctrine of Christ's priesthood, that ye may first understand it, and then prove its practical value.

Christ the Apostle is the immediate subject of contemplation. That aspect is in view throughout the third and

fourth chapters, the priestly aspect being presented at the close of the latter, as an introduction to the long discussion which commences with the fifth chapter and extends to the tenth. "Consider the Apostle of our confession" is the rubric of this new section.

To guide consideration, a point of view is suggested congruous to the practical aim. The aim being to promote steadfastness in the Christian faith and life, the selected point of view is the fidelity of Jesus our Apostle. "Who was faithful to Him that made Him." In other words, "faithful to His vocation." God made Jesus, as in 1 Samuel xii. 6 He is said to have made Moses and Aaron. The underlying idea is, that it is God in His providence who raises up all great actors in human affairs and prepares them for their position as public men. God made Jesus by giving Him His unique place in the world's history, as the chief agent in the work of redemption. And Jesus was faithful to God by discharging faithfully the high duties entrusted to Him. What the Hebrews are invited to do therefore, is to consider Jesus as the faithful Captain of salvation, who never betrayed His trust, shirked His responsibilities, or neglected duty to escape personal suffering, and who at the last great crisis said, "Not My will, but Thine be done." For of course the theatre in which Christ's fidelity was displayed was His earthly life of trial and temptation. True, it is present fidelity that is asserted (*πιστὸν ὄντα*), nevertheless the rendering "who was faithful" is practically correct. What is meant is, that Jesus is one who by His past career has earned the character of the Faithful One; that is the honourable title to which in virtue of a spotless record He is fully entitled. The field of observation is His public ministry on earth, assumed to be familiar to readers of the epistle, either through our written gospels, or through the unwritten evangelical tradition. What end could be served by pointing to a

fidelity displayed in heaven? Fidelity there costs no effort; but fidelity maintained amid constant temptation to unfaithfulness is worth remarking on, and may fitly be commended to the admiring contemplation of the tempted. Then how inappropriate the comparison between Christ and Moses, if the fidelity ascribed to the former were that exercised in the heavenly state! The faithfulness of Moses, which drew forth the Divine commendation, was certainly exercised on earth, and could fitly be compared to that of Jesus only if the virtue were in both cases practised under similar conditions. This then is what the writer holds up to the view of his readers as an example and source of inspiration—the faithfulness of Jesus to God in the fulfilment of His vocation during His earthly life. He has already held up Jesus as Priest, as one who is faithful to the interests of those for whom He transacts before God, and therefore entitled to their confidence. The two views supplement each other, and complete the picture of the Faithful One. Faithful as Priest to men in virtue of sympathies learned on earth, faithful as Apostle to God in the execution of the arduous mission on which He was sent to the world; in the one aspect inspiring trust, in the other exciting admiration and inciting to imitation.

The following comparison between Christ and Moses at once serves the general end of the epistle by contributing to the proof of the superiority of Christianity to Judaism, and the special end of the present exhortation by affording the opportunity of extracting wholesome lessons from the fate of the people whom Moses led out of Egypt. The task of exalting Christ above Moses was a delicate one, requiring careful handling; but the tact of the writer does not desert him here. With rhetorical skill he first places the lesser apostle beside the greater One, as one who like Him had been faithful to his commission. In doing this, he simply does justice to the familiar historical record of the Jewish

hero's life, and to God's own testimony borne on a memorable occasion, the substance of which he repeats in the words, "as also Moses (was faithful) in his house." "My servant Moses, faithful in all My house, he,"¹ God had said emphatically, to silence murmuring against him on the part of his brother Aaron and his sister Miriam. In presence of such strong commendation proceeding from the Divine lips, our author, writing to Hebrews proud of their great legislator, might well have been afraid to say anything which even seemed to disparage him, and one wonders what words he will find wherewith to praise Christ and set Him above Moses, without appearing to set aside the testimony of Jehovah to the worth of His servant. But the gifted Christian doctor knows how to manage this part, as well as all other parts of his argument. He lays hold of the suggestive words "house" and "servant" and turns them to account for his purpose, saying in effect, "Moses was as faithful as any servant in a house can be: still he was only a servant, while He of whom I now speak was not a mere servant in the house, but a son; and that makes all the difference."

Verses 3 to 6a are substantially just the working out of this thought. So much in general is clear; but when we look closely into these sentences, we find them a little hard to interpret, owing to an apparent confusion of thought. There seem to be two builders of the house: Christ (ver. 3), it being natural to assume that he who hath builded the house is the same with him who is said to have more glory than Moses, and God (ver. 4), the builder of all things. Then the same man Moses figures in two characters: first, as the house (ver. 3), then as a servant in the house (ver. 5). The former of these puzzles is disposed of in various ways by the commentators. Some say there are two houses and

¹ Num. xii. 7.

two builders: the Old Testament house, whereof God was builder; and the New Testament house, whereof Christ was the builder. Others say, there is one house and one builder: the one house being God's supremely, Christ's subordinately, and the builder God as the first great cause, using His Son as His agent in building the spiritual house as well as in making the worlds. A third class agreeing that there is but one house and one builder, make the builder Christ, and render the last clause of ver. 4, "He that buildeth all things is Divine," taking *θεός* without the article as a predicate, and finding in it an argument for Christ's divinity. The truth doubtless is, that the house is one, even God's, in which Moses was servant, in which Christ is the Son, that house being the Church essentially one and the same, though varying in form under the earlier and the later dispensations; whereof the builder and maker is He that made all things, building it through His Son. The other difficulty regarding the double character of Moses disappears when it is explained that the word *οἶκος* is used in a comprehensive sense, as signifying not merely the stone and lime, so to speak, or even the furniture, but likewise the household, or establishment of servants. In this sense Moses, being a servant in the house of God, was a part of the house, and therefore inferior to the builder; for if he who builds a house hath more honour than the whole house, *à fortiori* he hath more honour than any part of it.

Jesus is a Son, Moses was a servant; such, apart from all minute questions of interpretation, is the ground on which the greater glory is claimed for the former. But it may be asked, the subject of comparison being the respective fidelities of the two apostles, is not a reference to their positions irrelevant? What does it matter whether Moses was son or servant, if he was faithful in all God's house, in all parts of his work as the leader of Israel? If one were comparing two commanders in respect of bravery and

military genius, would it not be an irrelevance to say of one of them, he was the better man, for he was the king's son? The question is pertinent, but it admits of a satisfactory answer. Reference to the superior dignity of Christ is relevant, if His position as Son tended to enhance His fidelity. That it did the writer doubtless meant to suggest. Farther on we find him saying, "Though He was a Son, yet learned He obedience." Similarly he says here in effect: "Christ, though a Son, was faithful to His vocation amid trial." It is a just thought. Beyond doubt we have in Christ as Son a more sublime moral spectacle of fidelity than in any ordinary man called to play a great and responsible part in history. To the fidelities which He has in common with other men, the Son adds this other: resolute resistance to the temptation to use His sonship as an excuse for declining arduous heroic tasks. "If Thou be the Son of God, use Thy privilege for Thine own advantage," said the tempter in the wilderness, and all through life. "Get thee behind Me, Satan," was the Son's constant reply, giving to His faithfulness to God and duty a unique quality and value.

But there is more than this to be said. The reference to the dignity of Christ looks beyond the immediate parenetic purpose to the ultimate aim of the whole epistle. It is designed to insinuate the great truth that Christianity is the absolute, eternal religion. For there is more in this statement concerning Christ and Moses than meets the ear, thoughts suggested, though not plainly expressed. One great idea never absent from the writer's mind is here quietly insinuated by aptly chosen phrases and pregnant hints—the transient nature of the old dispensation in contrast to the abiding nature of the new. This idea casts its shadow on the page at three different points:

1. In the contrast between Moses and Jesus as respectively servant and Son.

2. In the representation of the ministry of Moses as being for a testimony of things to be spoken afterwards, ver. 5: *εἰς μαρτύριον τῶν λαληθησομένων*.

3. In the representation of Christians as pre-eminently though not exclusively God's, Christ's, house: *οὐ οἶκός ἐσμεν ἡμεῖς*, ver. 6.

In the first, because, as Christ Himself once said, "The servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever." And with the servant the service also must pass away. In the second also, in spite of the difficulties which have been raised by Bleek and others, who hold that the things to be spoken of were the things spoken by Moses himself to the people of Israel, and the idea intended, that the fidelity he had hitherto exhibited ought to secure respect for all he might say in future, and protect him from such assaults as were made upon him by his brother and sister. Bleek thinks that, had a reference to Christ been meant, the writer would have written, "to be spoken in the end of the days," or "by the Son." But over against the verbal difficulty arising out of the use of *λαληθησομένων* without qualifying phrase is to be set the far greater difficulty of believing that the writer meant to utter in such a connexion so paltry a thought as the one above indicated. How much more congenial to the whole style of the epistle to find here a hint of the truth that Moses in his whole ministry was but a testimony to things to be spoken in the future by another greater Apostle!

The transient nature of the Mosaic ministry as subservient to the enduring ministry of the Son is a third time hinted at in the words, *whose house are we*. This is not a claim of monopoly of family privileges for Christians, but it is an assertion that the Christian community is in an emphatic sense the house of God. The assertion manifestly implies the transiency of the Mosaic system. It suggests the thought that the house as it stood in the

times of Moses was but a rude, temporary model of the true, eternal house of God ; good enough to furnish shelter from the elements, so to speak, but unfit to be the everlasting dwelling place of the children of the Most High, therefore destined to be superseded by a more glorious structure, having the Spirit of God for its architect, which should be to the old fabric as was the "magnificent" temple of Solomon to the puny tabernacle in the wilderness.

At ver. 6*b* transition is naturally made from Moses to the lessons of the wilderness life of Israel. The writer is haunted by the fear lest the tragic fate of the generation of the exodus should be repeated in the experience of the Hebrew Christians. He hopes that the powerful motives arising out of the truths he has stated may bring about a better result. But he cannot hide from himself that another issue is possible. For the future fortunes of Christianity he has no anxiety ; he is firmly persuaded that it will prosper, though the Hebrew Church, or even the whole Hebrew nation, should perish. That fatal catastrophe he dreads ; therefore with great solemnity he proceeds to represent retention of their position in the house of God as conditional : *Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the boasting of the hope.* He does not express himself so strongly here as in ver. 14, where the thought is repeated by way of applying the lesson taught in the quotation from the Psalter concerning the conduct of Israel in the wilderness.¹ He is content for the present simply to indicate that there is room for doubt or fear. By the use of the qualifying words *παρρησίαν* and *καύχημα* he teaches by implication that the Christian hope is worth holding fast. It must be a sure and glorious hope which inspires in those who cherish it confidence and exultation.

¹ *εἰς* strengthened by the particle *περ*, which intensifies the doubt, and the words "to the end" (*μέχρι τέλους*) added: "We are made partakers of Christ *if*, that is to say, we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm *to the end.*"

In the sequel the grounds both of the hope and of the fear are set forth. Of the fear first, the material for the demonstration being drawn from the wilderness history of Israel, as referred to in a quotation from the ninety-fifth Psalm. First comes the quotation itself, in vers. 7-11, connected with what goes before by *διό*, and introduced as an utterance of the Holy Spirit. The quotation keeps pretty close to the Septuagint, materially diverging only at ver. 9, where "forty years" is connected with the clause "they saw My works," instead of with "I was grieved with this generation," as in the Hebrew and the Septuagint. This change led to another, the insertion of *διό* at the commencement of ver. 10. This divergence is intentional, as we see from ver. 12, where the writer reverts to the original connexion, which there suits his purpose, asking, "But with whom was He grieved for forty years?" He prefers here to represent the people of Israel as seeing God's works forty years, rather than to speak of God as grieved with them for the same space—both being equally true,—because he is anxious to make the case of the ancient Israel as closely parallel as possible to that of the Hebrew Christians, with a view to enhanced impressiveness. For both parties were very similarly situated in this very respect of seeing God's works for forty years. From the time when Jesus began His public ministry, to the destruction of Jerusalem, an event very nigh at hand when the epistle was written, was, as near as can be calculated, forty years. What a significant, solemn hint to beware is contained for the Christian Hebrews in this statement concerning their forefathers, *And saw My works forty years!*¹ It says more powerfully than express words could: "You too have seen

¹ The liberty taken with the words of the Psalm in altering the connexion might be adduced as a fact helping to fix the date of the epistle. The manipulation of the forty years may reasonably be regarded as evidence that such a period of time had elapsed since the beginning of the Christian Church.

the works of the Lord, greater works than the ancient ones wrought by the hand of Moses, for the very same space of time. Take care that ye see them to better purpose, lest their doom, or a worse, overtake you.”¹

Next follows the application of the quotation to the case of the Hebrew Christians (vers. 12-14). *Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. But exhort each other every day, while the word “to-day” is named, lest any one of you be hardened by the deceit of sin. For we are become partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence firm to the end.* The *διό* of ver. 7 is to be taken along with *βλέπετε*, all that lies between being regarded as a parenthesis. “Wherefore—beware,” the beware being charged with solemn significance by the intervening quotation, conceived by the writer as spoken by the Holy Ghost directly to the Christian Church living in the era of the final revelation. The earnest exhortation follows closely the sense of the passage quoted from the Psalter. First, the brethren are warned against an unbelieving heart revealing its wickedness in apostasy from the living God, in allusion to the hardness of heart charged against Israel, and spoken of as the source of their unbelief and misbehaviour. Then homiletic use is made of the hortatory word: *To-day if ye will hear His voice.* “Exhort each other daily while to-day is named, while there is a to-day to speak of, while

¹ One other point in the quotation may be noticed. The psalmist, in using the wilderness history for the instruction of his own generation, alludes to two instances in which God was tempted; *viz.* at Massah, at the beginning of the forty years, and at Meribah, towards their close. This point is obscure in the Septuagint, which takes the names as abstract nouns, in which it is followed by our author. The psalmist selects the incidents at the beginning and the end of the wilderness history as examples of the conduct of Israel throughout the whole period of the wandering. “From these two learn all,” he would say; the behaviour of Israel being such that God might justly complain, “Forty years was I grieved with this generation,” the very similarity of the events serving to show how incorrigible a generation it was, given to repeating its offences, learning nothing from experience.

the day of grace lasts. Let each cry in the ear of a brother negligent or slothful, To-day, brother, to-day hear His voice, lest your heart become hardened by the deceit of sin, every to-morrow making repentance and faith more difficult." The solemn character of the admonition is excused by the remark, "for we are become partakers of Christ¹ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." This is the sentiment of ver. 6 expanded, with marked emphasis on the words ἀρχή and τέλος. The writer wishes to impress on his readers that it is not enough to have begun, not enough to have once known the confidence and joy of the Christian hope, that all turns on persevering to the end. And he would have them further understand that perseverance is not a matter of course, that there is a real risk of an ill ending where there has been a fair beginning. For this purpose he again falls back on his quotation, to show that a disastrous end after a fair beginning is not an imaginary evil (vers. 15-19).

In ver. 15 we have the formula by which the writer makes reference to the previously given quotation. It is loose and vague, and has given rise to much difference of opinion. Literally rendered it is, "In its being said, To-day if ye will hear His voice harden not your hearts, as in the provocation"; and the question is, What does the phrase "in its being said" mean? My own idea is, that its sole object is to recall attention to the quotation with a view to some further reflections on it intended to substantiate the statement made in ver. 14. The writer, as it were, says to his readers, "Look at that Scripture again, my brethren, and after you have carefully reperused it let me ask you a series of questions on it." He means them to read or recall to mind the whole passage, though he quotes only the first verse; for the questions which follow go over

¹ On the expression μέτοχοι τοῦ Χριστοῦ, *vide* the end of this paper.

the whole ground, and bring to bear the whole teaching of the extract for the purpose he has in view.

The first verse of the quotation having been repeated with an "etc." attached, the series of questions follows, the first, founded on the verse quoted, being put in ver. 16. For it is now universally admitted that this verse in both its members is to be rendered interrogatively, not as in the Authorized English Version, which makes sad havoc of the sense in rendering, "Some when they had heard did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses." In this version our translators were but following the unanimous exegetical tradition of previous ages, and till the time of Bengel it occurred to no one that the *τινες* at the beginning of the verse was the interrogative *τίνες*, not the indefinite pronoun *τινές*. The fact that for ages men could be content with so unmeaning an interpretation as the latter yields is an extreme illustration of the sequacious habits of commentators. It requires courage to forsake fashion in exegesis no less than in other things.

"Who," asks the writer, "having heard provoked? Was it not all they who came out of Egypt by Moses?" Thus rendered, the words manifestly bear very directly on the purpose in hand, which is to impress on the Hebrews that a warning against apostasy is not superfluous or impertinent as addressed to persons who have believed in Jesus. The questions asked remind them that the men who provoked God in the desert were all of them persons that had *started* on the journey from the land of bondage to the land of promise. The second of the two questions, which answers the first, reminds the Hebrews of the notorious fact that the persons who were guilty of the sin of provoking God were so numerous, and the exceptions so few, that they might be represented as co-extensive with the whole generation that came out of Egypt.

The following verse (17) contains a second couple of ques-

tions based on the statement, "Wherefore I was grieved with this generation." "And with whom was He grieved forty years? Was it not with them that sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness?" In other words, the men who grieved God for forty years were men who for their sins were not permitted to enter Canaan, though they left Egypt in that hope and expectation, but were doomed to die in the desert, leaving their flesh to feed the vultures and their bones to bleach on the burning sands. A fact surely full of warning to those who had set out with high hopes on the way to the heavenly country to beware of coming short through unbelief and ungodliness.

Verse 18 contains a third pair of questions based on the last sentence of the quotation: "So I swear in My wrath, They shall not enter into My rest." "And to whom swear He that they should not enter into His rest? Was it not to them that were disobedient?" The aim here is to point out the cause of failure in the case of ancient Israel, *viz.* disobedience, having its root in unbelief, to give weight to the warning addressed to the Hebrew Christians. To make the meaning if possible still more plain and emphatic there is appended to the series of questions the final reflection: "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."

Summing up the import of these questions, the first pair shows that it is not enough to begin the life of faith, that it is necessary to hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end. The second shows that a good beginning does not of itself insure a good ending, that many begin well who end ill. The third points out the cause of such disastrous failures—unbelief in the heart, manifesting itself in disobedience and apostasy in the outward life. The drift of the whole is the same as that of 1 Corinthians x., in which, after reminding the Corinthians how many of the Israelites perished in the wilderness for their sins,

though they had been baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and had eaten of the mystic bread and drunk of the water that sprang out of the smitten rock, the apostle goes on to say, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

I must now go back on an expression occurring in this chapter which has not yet been specially considered: "partakers of Christ" (*μέτοχοι τοῦ Χριστοῦ*), ver. 14. What does this mean? The first idea that suggests itself is that "Christ" stands as a synonym and compendium of salvation, just as "Moses" in the above-quoted words of Paul is a synonym for the redemption he was God's instrument in achieving. An alternative course is open to the interpreter: to render, "partakers *with* Christ," and to find in the words the thought that only such as persevere in faith share in the glory and the joy conferred on Him at the close of His earthly career as God's faithful Apostle. This view however, though true in itself, attains to its full rights only when we adopt a bolder course, and take *μέτοχοι* as meaning here, as in i. 9, "companions" or "fellows." We then get the striking thought that by persistent loyalty to the Christian vocation we become fellows of Jesus. It is intrinsically likely that the passage about the Messiah quoted from the forty-fifth Psalm in the first chapter was present to the writer's mind at this point. It speaks of Messiah as anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows, implying that they too, in their measure, have a full cup of joy. In the present connexion of thought mention is made of a "boasting of hope," a hope rising into exultation, implying a still higher measure of triumphant joy when hope reaches its consummation. The idea, "the faithful the fellows of Christ," is also in full sympathy with the thought

expressed in ver. 6, "whose house are we." The faithful are God's house, at the head of which is Christ, God's Son. They are God's house not, as Moses was, as servants, but as sons, therefore the brethren of Christ. But brotherhood is a thing of degrees. There is an initial brotherhood, in which, as Paul says, a son differs nothing from a servant; and there is a brotherhood, the result of a normal moral development, in which a younger son, at length arrived at maturity, becomes the companion of the elder brother. We are brethren to begin with, but if we are faithful we shall end in becoming fellows. And so our author, having already said of those who persevere that they are the house of God, now takes a step in advance, and in renewing his exhortation to steadfastness says, "The faithful are not only the house of God and the brethren of Christ, they are His fellows, sharing His joy and having perfect communion with Him in spirit."

We now know who are the *μέτροχοι* of Messiah alluded to in i. 9. They are not the angels, as we might have supposed, and as some commentators have said;¹ they are men, men who have passed bravely through the tribulations of life, and been faithful even to death. We have in the text before us a complementary truth to that stated in ii. 16. Christ took not hold of angels, it is said there; Christ's fellows are not angels, but faithful men, it is said here in effect. It is nowise improbable that such a thought should be found in our epistle. It is just such a thought as we should expect to find in a writing from the pen of one who grasped the signification of the great principle—Sanctifier and sanctified of one all. It is but the other side of that grand truth. The first side exhibited is Christ's unity with those He undertakes to sanctify, and His

¹ "If any special force be attached to the expression here, it no doubt means the angels, as dwellers in the city of God, and thus the fellows of the Son" (Davidson, on i. 9).

willing acceptance of all the conditions necessary to His complete identification with them. The other side is the unity of the sanctified with Christ, complete equality with Him in privilege. In crediting the writer with the sentiment, "faithful men the fellows of Christ," we merely assume that he understands his own system of thought; and I may add that he is familiar with the teaching of Christ, and with the conception of the relation between Christ and His people that pervades the entire New Testament. For the sentiment in question is no "fine modern idea," but one which we find again and again stated in bold, inspiring terms. "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me; that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom." "Well done, good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life." "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne." Christ, Paul, James, John, all say the same thing. Is it strange to find a thought common to them, and familiar to the minds of all heroic men in the ages of fiery trial, getting recognition also in this epistle?

On all these grounds I conclude that the true rendering of this text is, "We are become companions, partners, or fellows of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." Its aim is to proclaim the fulness of joy awaiting those who play the hero's part, not to assert the total forfeiture of salvation, of even a minimum share in the blessing of Christ, by those who sink below the heroic level. It presents the motives to steadfastness under

the most attractive and stimulating form; for what can be conceived more desirable than comradeship with the Faithful One in the "land of the leal"?¹

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CHRISTIAN INTERPOLATIONS IN JEWISH WRITINGS.

THE hypothesis of Vischer² in regard to the Apocalypse, for which Harnack became sponsor, has attracted the attention of students of the New Testament. Briefly stated it is this. The kernel of the book of the Revelation is a Jewish Apocalypse. A Christian writer translated this from an Aramaic original, adding a Christian introduction (i.-iii.), and a Christian ending (xxii. 6-21), and interspersing Christian interpolations, notably the passages in which the Lamb is mentioned, interpolations however which can be easily distinguished, and whose removal admits the light into dark places. Thus according to Vischer chapter xii., "the touchstone by which it must be proved of what spirit the seer is," describes the birth and the assumption of a purely Jewish Messiah.

In order to test this method of criticism, which Vischer

¹ Delitzsch, among recent commentators, holds the view advocated above, taking *μέτοχοι* as = *socii*, "partners." So also Rendall, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. The chief argument against this view is drawn from the fact that the noun and the corresponding verb are used in the epistle mainly in reference to things as expressing participation in them (ii. 14, iii. 1, v. 13, vii. 13, xii. 8; the things participated in being "flesh and blood," a "heavenly calling," "milk," "another tribe," "chastisement"). Chap. vi. 4 is hardly an exception, as the "Holy Spirit" is referred to impersonally as an influence. But the fact remains that in iii. 14 we have an exception of the same kind as in i. 9, and referring to the same subject, the Messiah, and it is natural to deal with both in the same way. That i. 9 is a quotation is immaterial, except indeed as creating a desire to know who in the view of the writer the *μέτοχοι* of Messiah referred to in the quotation are.

² *Texte und Untersuchungen*, ii. Band, Heft 3. *Die Offenbarung Johannis eine Jüdische Apocalypse in Christlicher Bearbeitung* von E. Vischer. 1886. The theory was discussed by Mr. Simcox in *THE EXPOSITOR*, 3rd series, vol. v., p. 425 f.