

and feeling, in aim and object, these may be found in inspired just as much as in uninspired writings. "A number there are," wrote Hooker, "who think that they cannot admire, as they ought, the power of the word of God, if in things Divine they should attribute any force to man's reason." "A number there are" even now, who seem to "think" that "the word of God" will be robbed of its "power," if in the composition of it "they should attribute any force to man's" tastes and feelings. *"Ἐχομεν δὲ τὸν θησαυρὸν τοῦτον ἐν ὀστρακίοις σκεύεσιν,"* "we have this treasure in earthen vessels." And the more we realize the heavenly nature of the "treasure," the more reverent no doubt, but at the same time the more eagerly interested, will be our scrutiny of the "earthen vessels" in which it has been handed down to us.

CHARLES PLUMMER.

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## THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

### XI. THE TEACHER'S CHARITY (CHAP. VI. 9-20).

At this point the writer suddenly and decidedly changes his tone. He will not let his last word be one of complaint and despondency. He refuses to believe that the apostate's doom is in store for the Hebrew Christians. Therefore he hastens to assure them that he cherishes hopeful thoughts of their present and future state, calling them, in this solitary instance, "beloved," as if to make amends for the severity of his rebuke, and declaring that he expects to see realized in their experience the better alternative of the foregoing contrast—fruitfulness connected with, nigh to salvation—instead of the cursing and perdition appointed for the land that bears only thorns and thistles.

So the teacher's complaining gives place to the charity

that believeth all things and hopeth all things. It is the way of all New Testament writers, eminently of Paul. How he labours to persuade himself of the better things in regard to unbelieving Israel in that section of his Epistle to the Romans in which he deals with the hard problem, how to reconcile Israel's position as God's elect people with her attitude towards the gospel! Having faced first the dark alternative, that the facts meant the cancelling of the election, and shown that in that case no one was to blame but Israel herself, he boldly declares his belief that the state of matters is not so serious. "I say then, Hath God cast away His people? God forbid." The recurrent phrases, "I say then" and "God forbid," show how hard he finds it to make good this position. But the ingenuity of love discovers a ground of hope even in the very terms in which rejection was threatened, "I will provoke you to jealousy by a no-people"; whence the apostle extracts the theory, that God has temporarily cast away Israel, and called the Gentiles to make the former jealous, and so lead her to value privileges hitherto despised. It is only a new, round-about method of working for Israel's good.

Such was Paul's ground of hope for Hebrew unbelievers. And what is the ground of the hope the writer of our epistle cherishes for Hebrew Christians? It is their Christian work, and more especially the love they have shown to the name of God, and of His Son Jesus, by past and present ministries to the necessities of saints. Verily a good, solid foundation for a judgment of charity and hope! And in adducing it for that purpose, the writer shows himself to be a man thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Christ's teaching. He evidently knows what value the great Master set upon even a cup of cold water given to a disciple in the name of a disciple, and how in the representation of the last judgment He made charity the great, decisive test of character. He hopes that it is well with

these poor Hebrew Christians, in spite of their vacillations in opinion and their hankering after old religious customs, because they have manifested, and are still manifesting, love to the name of Christ by deeds of kindness to Christians afflicted with the common ills of life, or exposed to persecution for the gospel's sake. In cherishing such a hope on such a ground he acted on a sound instinct. Men were still a long way from crucifying Christ afresh who continued to show kind feelings towards His followers. Their hearts were right, though their heads might be confused, and their minds in a state of painful oscillation between the old and the new religions, between the traditions of the synagogue and the simple, spiritual, free, revolutionary principles of the gospel, as preached first by the Lord Jesus and then by His apostles. Had these Hebrews really been apostates, or on the point of becoming such, they would have hated, not loved, their former brethren; they would have addicted themselves to the bad work of persecuting believers in Jesus, rather than to the blessed work of ministering to the necessities of the saints. Renegades are ever the most ruthless persecutors; witness James Sharp, Archbishop of St. Andrews in the reign of Charles II., formerly a Covenanting Presbyterian minister, whose cold-blooded cruelty towards his old fellow religionists horrified even his unscrupulous associates in the bad work of persecution, and brought at length its own penalty in the murder of the apostate by a band of daring men whom his iniquity had driven mad.

Recalling the kindly deeds of his slow-minded pupils, the teacher almost repents of the alarming tone in which he has addressed them, and becomes apologetic, saying in effect: "I do not think so badly of you as to believe that the fearful doom I have depicted will befall you, but I have thought it right to put the dark picture before your eyes, that you might look at it; for I wish to rouse you out of

your torpor, and stir you up to diligence to make your calling and election sure, that your salvation may be a matter of certainty, and not merely of charitable hope" (vers. 11, 12).

Noteworthy in these verses is the individualizing character of the pious solicitude of this man of God for the spiritual wellbeing of the Hebrews. *Every one of you.* The good shepherd goeth after even one straying sheep. The expression may signify that while there was no reason to take a despairing view of the Hebrew Church as a whole, there were some of its members in imminent danger of apostasy.

The teacher desires to see faith and hope in as lively exercise as charity in the characters of these Hebrews. With their love it appears he had no fault to find, but their faith was weak and their hope was dim. Even at the worst, even if they should suffer shipwreck of faith, he trusts that men so kindly affectioned towards Christ's people would get safe to heaven's shore, "some on boards, some on broken pieces of the ship"; but he is not content that they should be saved in this precarious manner. He would have them go into the haven with ship intact, with the rudder of faith in good working condition, and with sails filled with the favouring breeze of the hope of glory.

He further expresses his desire that the Hebrews should become imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. He has in view doubtless the roll of heroes who have made their lives sublime, and who receive honourable mention in the eleventh chapter. The reference is not merely to the patriarchs, though the mention of Abraham in the next verse might lead us to suppose that they are specially intended, but to all in all ages, living or dead, present or past, who by steadfast faith and firm endurance do make sure the inheritance, and do in a sense possess it even before life's close. What is wished for the Hebrews therefore is, that they may have a faith so clear

that it shall be the substance of things hoped for, the future inheritance in present possession; and that by a great-souled, indomitable patience, proof against all temptation, they may persevere in the faith even to the end, and so obtain the promise, not merely by way of earnest, but in full fruition.

This expression of his *pium desiderium* the writer follows up by a reference to Abraham, as the most signal example of patient, magnanimous faith, and as one whose history served to show how reliable are the promises of God (vers. 13-17). All New Testament writers, Paul, James, our author, utilize the story of the great patriarch of the Jewish race for the purpose of establishing a doctrine or enforcing a moral lesson. Nothing was more likely to touch the Hebrew heart. The part of Abraham's history alluded to is that in which the pathos of his life reaches its climax, the words quoted being those spoken to him by God after his sublime manifestation of implicit obedience and trust in offering up for sacrifice his only son. What God said is not quoted in full, only the kernel of the promise being given, and the Divine eulogy on Abraham's magnanimity being passed over in silence. The point on which stress is laid is the oath accompanying the promise; for the writer's purpose is to make prominent the trustworthiness of the promises, as amply justifying the desiderated "full assurances of hope," not to pass an encomium on Abraham. He does not indeed lose sight of the latter object entirely. The patriarch's patient faith gets honourable mention in ver. 15, where it is said in effect that, having received the *word* of promise, confirmed by an oath, Abraham persevered in faith, and persevering at length obtained the fulfilment of the promise. Even here, it is to be observed, the leading thought is not Abraham's patience, but the certainty of the promise. The patriarch's patience is referred to only in a participial clause (*οὕτως μακροθυμίας*); that he obtained

the promise is the main affirmation. And the purpose of that affirmation again is not to assert that Abraham personally entered into full possession of the thing promised. This was that his seed should be multiplied as the stars of heaven, and as the sand of the seashore, and that in his seed all the nations of the earth should eventually be blessed. It was in truth *the* promise of the great Messianic salvation, the object of hope for humanity at large, and for the Hebrew Christians in particular. That promise of course was not fulfilled exhaustively and comprehensively in Abraham's lifetime. Of Abraham, as of all the patriarchs, it was true that he died in faith, not having received the promises, but having only seen them afar off. This is our author's own reflection (xi. 13), and he does not mean to say anything inconsistent therewith here. His aim in the two places is not the same. In the eleventh chapter his object is to extol the faith of the patriarchs; here it is chiefly to extol the reliableness of God's promises, that it may appear that a fully assured hope is justifiable and attainable. Viewed in the light of this purpose, what he says is in effect this: the promise made to Abraham, extravagant as its terms may seem, and however unlikely to be fulfilled, regarded before the event, shall be fulfilled to the letter. Important instalments of fulfilment lie behind us in the history of Israel; there was even an initial fulfilment in Abraham's own lifetime, in the giving back to him of his son Isaac from the dead, in the marriage of Isaac to Rebekah, and in the birth of grand-children through their marriage.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In what sense the statement that Abraham received the promise is to be understood, is a point on which interpreters are not agreed. Bleek understands it as meaning that he obtained the promise itself, but not the thing promised; or the latter only *de jure* (Grotius), not *de facto*. In support of this view he adverts to the fact that the word used to express the idea of obtaining in chap. vi. 15 (*ἐπέτυχεν*) is not the same as in chap. xi. 13, 39 (*προσδεξάμενοι, ἐκομισάμενοι*). Similarly, among recent interpreters, Rendall. The great majority of commentators have found in the words a reference to fulfilment; and it does seem as if the scope of the argument required this. There would not be much

The writer's purpose being to insist on the trustworthiness of God's promises for the strengthening of hope in dejected hearts, he naturally makes the oath accompanying the promise to Abraham the subject of some reflections designed to bring out its significance, proceeding on the assumption that the oath, like the promise, concerned not Abraham only, but all his spiritual seed. That oath is indeed remarkable in many ways, and in a high degree provocative of thought. It is the first instance in Scripture in which God is represented as binding Himself by an oath to the keeping of His word. It is further remarkable as an expression of admiration awakened in the Divine bosom by the spectacle of self-sacrifice presented by the patriarch in offering up his only son Isaac. Looking down thereon God exclaims: "As I live, this is a great, heroic deed; it shall not go unrewarded; out of the son with whom this man is willing to part at the call of duty shall spring a seed multitudinous as the stars or the sand of the seashore, and destined to be a channel of grace and mercy to all the peoples that dwell on the face of the earth."

But it is not in either of these senses that our author wishes to fix the attention of his readers on the oath, but in a third respect; *viz.* as a reliable guarantee of the absolute certainty of the promise to which the oath was attached. To commend it in this view, he enlarges on the oath, exhibiting it particularly on two sides: (1) as a manifestation of *Divine condescension*, in gracious solicitude for man's good, therefore a *moral* argument for the truth of the promise; and (2) as pledging the *Divine nature*, and therefore a *metaphysical* argument for the truth of the promise. The former aspect is suggested by the words, "because He could swear by no greater, He sware by Himself" (ver. 13). That is as much as to say, that if it had been possible for

encouragement to hope in the mere fact of believing men getting promises, if there were not at least partial fulfilments to point to.

God to find any being greater than Himself, of whom He stood in awe, as men stand in awe of Him, He would have been glad to swear by that being, to show to the heirs of the promise the immutability of His counsel, for their encouragement and confirmation. But the Divine condescension is still more strikingly exhibited in the words *ἐμεσίτευσεν ὄρκῳ* (ver. 17), weakly rendered in the Authorized Version "confirmed it by an oath," but which literally signify, "interposed Himself as a middle party or mediator by an oath." The idea is a very bold, but also a very grand one: that God, in taking an oath, made Himself a third party intermediate between God and Abraham. Men, as is remarked in ver. 16, swear by the greater, and so in a sense did God. God swearing became inferior in His condescension to God sworn by: "descended as it were" (to quote Delitzsch) "from His own absolute exaltation, in order, so to speak, to look up to Himself after the manner of men, and take Himself to witness; and so by a gracious condescension confirm the promise for the sake of its inheritors." Thus God, in taking an oath, does a thing analogous to God becoming man. The acts are kindred, being both acts of condescension and love. In these two acts and in covenant-making God stoops down from His majesty to the weakness and want and low estate of man. In taking an oath, He submits to indignity, imposed by man's distrust, and, instead of standing on his character for truthfulness, puts Himself under oath, that there may be an end of gainsaying (*ἀντιλογίας*, ver. 16). In becoming man, God condescends to man's sin, submits to the lot of a sinner, that man may be delivered from the power of evil. In making a covenant, He makes Himself a debtor to His creatures, and gives them a right to claim what is in reality a matter of grace, and not of debt.

The other aspect of the oath is presented in ver. 18. The point here is the utter impossibility of God perjuring



Himself. Apart altogether from God's *love*, it is simply impossible for the Divine Being to make a promise on oath which He does not mean to keep. But it may be asked, What are the two unchangeable (*ἀμεταθέτων*) things? God's oath is one of the things of course, but what is the other? It is the bare *word* of promise without the oath. It is right to count the *word* separately among the immutabilities. By so doing our author does not weaken the argument drawn from the oath, but rather strengthens it. The very stress he lays on the oath requires him to attach not less value to the bare word of God. For if God's word were not immutable, His oath would not be immutable either. Unless His word were as good as an oath, His oath would be worthless. For He has nothing to fear as the penalty of perjury. Men have something to fear, but not God; the only influence that can affect Him is reverence for Himself, and that will influence Him not less when He simply pledges His word than when He seals His word with the solemnity of an oath.

The fitness of God's word, backed by His oath, to encourage even the weakest faith, is strongly asserted by implication in the description of those for whose benefit the whole argument is intended, as persons who have fled as for refuge to lay hold upon the forelying hope. The words suggest the idea of a person fleeing to a sanctuary, and laying hold of the horns of the altar. Or perhaps, as the image of an anchor occurs in the next verse, the writer had in his mind the case of a sailor running his vessel into the most convenient harbour of refuge, to escape the fury of the storm and the danger of shipwreck.

In addition to all that has been said on the oath, it may be remarked that, without doubt, the writer made it the subject of the foregoing reflections, because they well served the purpose of preparing his readers for attaching importance to another oath of God, that sworn in announcing

the introduction of a new order of priesthood. He wished to suggest the thought, that it is always an important occasion when God swears an oath. An oath reveals a great tide of emotion in the Divine heart, which nothing short of an epoch-making event in the history of the world can give rise to. Note well the crises when God plays the part of mediator between Himself and men by oath-taking, and mark their profound significance. In the case of Abraham, the oath expressed the Divine delight in self-sacrifice, and the certainty of ultimate renown and bliss for all who rise to the heroic pitch in faith and patience. They shall be the founders of enduring races, the originators of great beneficent movements for the good of mankind, and their memory shall live while the world lasts. In the case of the Melchisedec priesthood, the oath meant the Divine weariness of a rude Levitical ritual, and the inbringing of a new order that should perfectly realize the ideal, and therefore be eternal. The two events, the giving of the promise to Abraham, and the institution of the Melchisedec priesthood, had, it thus appears, this much in common, that they were both occasions sufficiently important to be worthy of a Divine oath. Had they no other connexion? Was it a mere accident that God took an oath in these two cases, and so tied together by a slight string events otherwise unrelated? This is not the view of the writer of our epistle. The promise to Abraham and his seed—the object of the Christian hope—and the Melchisedec priesthood are in his mind closely related. In referring to the oath sworn to Abraham, he gives a premonitory hint of the intimate connexion between the two things, which is plainly declared in the closing verses of the chapter (19, 20).

These beautiful words form the happy, cheering conclusion of a passage, which as a whole, and especially at its commencement, is of a very stern and sombre character. Here the frown passes away from the teacher's face, and

is replaced by a benignant smile, and his style of writing relaxes from prophetic severity to evangelic geniality and tenderness. While in the early part of this section we were conducted to the edge of a precipice, and bid look down and behold the appalling fate of apostates, or carried away back to the plain of Sodom, and shown there a land rendered sterile for ever by fire and brimstone for the sins of its inhabitants, we are here privileged to witness the pleasing sight of a ship riding safely at anchor, an emblem of the security of a Christian who cherishes the hope of eternal life, and is thereby enabled to hold fast his profession of faith in spite of all the stormy tribulations of time. Then how fitted to reassure the Christian pilgrim on his heavenward way, that view of Jesus gone within the veil as our Forerunner, reminding us of His own words to His disciples on the eve of His passion: "In My Father's house are many mansions; . . . I go to prepare a place for you. And . . . I shall come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also"!

*Which (hope) we have as an anchor of the soul, secure and firm, and entering into the place within the veil.*

The two epithets (*ἀσφαλῆ τε καὶ βεβαίαν*) describe the qualities of a good anchor. Being connected by *τε καὶ* they may be regarded as expressing only a single idea. But we may refer the first epithet to the anchoring ground, as good for anchorage, and the second to the anchor, as one which will keep its hold.

The comparison of hope to an anchor is apt in respect both to its use and to the way in which it is used. The use of an anchor is to keep a ship fixed to one spot, and prevent it from drifting before wind and tide; and it is made available for this purpose by being thrown out of the ship into the sea, that it may sink to the bottom and lay hold of the unseen ground. Even so the function of hope is to keep the soul in peace and safety amid trouble, and it

does this by entering into the unseen future, and laying hold of good not now enjoyed. This is true of hope in general. The peculiarity of Christian hope is, that it finds its anchorage, not in the nearer future lying between the present moment and death, but in the remote future beyond the tomb. Its anchoring ground lies deep beneath the dark waters of time, invisible to sense, existing only for faith.

Assuming that the former of the two epithets by which the anchor is described refers to the anchoring ground, it amounts to a testimony that the Christian hope is objectively true. If it be asked, What is the evidence for such an assertion? to find the answer of the writer we must fall back on the "two immutable things." God's promises and His oaths, and His covenant with men, and the whole history of His dealings with men in the execution of a redemptive purpose, as recorded in the Scriptures—these are the guarantees that we strike the anchor of our eternal hope into a firm, unyielding bottom. If we are to doubt the reality of the thing hoped for, then we must give up the idea of a revelation and all that it implies; for it is not credible that God would act towards men as the Bible represents, if human existence was limited to threescore years and ten. If man's destiny be to "be blown about in desert dust, or sealed within the iron hills," not only is man "a monster then, a dream, a discord," but the faith which revelation inspires, that "God was love indeed, and love creation's final law," is a delusion.

The image of the anchor is in itself very appropriate and pathetic, but the conception of it as entering into the place within the veil, *i.e.* the holy of holies, strikes one at first as artificial and frigid. It seems incongruous to speak of an anchor in connexion with the inner shrine of the tabernacle. Some seek escape from the incongruity by taking the "entering" (*εἰσερχομένην*) as referring, not to the anchor, but to the hope, the figure being dropped at this point.

The truth appears to be, that we have here a combination of two metaphors, with the connecting link suppressed. The full thought is this: Hope is an anchor entering into the eternal, invisible world, like the anchor of a ship entering into the waters, and laying hold of the bottom of the sea; and that eternal world whereof hope lays hold may in turn be likened unto the place within the veil, because it is hid from view, as by a veil suspended before our eyes, to be drawn asunder at the hour of our decease.

The allusion to the holy of holies as an emblem of the eternal world is made, it seems to me, with the purpose of bringing the train of thought back to the old theme. In the long digression into which he has been drawn, the writer has, to use a familiar phrase, gone off the rails, and he employs this expression as a switch to bring the train back to the main line. It is another example of the rhetorical tact by which the whole epistle is so notably distinguished. But the expression is more than a switch: it contributes to the argument, and serves to justify the representation of the anchor of Christian hope as one sure and steadfast. This appears when we reflect what is "the place within the veil." It is the place where are the ark of the covenant, and the mercy-seat, and the cherubim with outstretched wings—which were just Israel's grounds of hope that God would fulfil His promise, and keep His covenant with His people, maintaining them in peace and prosperity in the Promised Land. This the Hebrews well knew, and their friend would have them understand that the new covenant of grace, and the gospel of mercy, and the outstretched wings of redeeming love, in the New Testament holy of holies, are not less reliable grounds of hope for believers in Christ with respect to the "world to come" than was the furniture of the inner shrine of the tabernacle for the people of Israel, with respect to the temporal blessings God had promised them.

And now we come to the crowning thought: *Where, as Forerunner for us, entered Jesus, become, after the order of Melchisedec, our High Priest for ever* (ver. 20). The word *πρόδρομος* is, as Bengel remarks, *verbum valde significans*, though in common with nearly all commentators he fails to perceive, or at least to express in any adequate manner, its significance. It lies really in this, that it expresses an idea entirely new, lying altogether outside the Levitical system. The high priest of Israel did not go into the most holy place as forerunner, but only as the representative of the people. He went into a place whither none might follow him, entering once a year, in the people's stead, not as their pioneer. The glory and privilege of the new Christian era, the peculiar excellence of the perfect religion, is, that Christ, as the High Priest of humanity, goes nowhere where His people cannot follow Him. He is our pioneer, clearing our way. There is no longer any envious veil screening off some specially holy place, and shutting it against us. The veil was the sure sign that the Levitical religion was not the absolute religion, not the *summum bonum*, but only a shadow of good things to come. The absolute religion demands an unrestricted fellowship of the human spirit with a Divine Father, who is not merely in a place technically holy, but wherever there is a contrite, humble, devout worshipper; a Father who dwells in heaven, doubtless, but not in a heaven which He keeps to Himself, but rather in a heaven into which He means to gather together all His children. Not till such unrestricted fellowship has been established has the perfect, perennial religion come. That it has been established, is what the writer of our epistle means to suggest by the use of the term *πρόδρομος* in reference to Jesus as our great High Priest entering into the place within the veil. He means to point out a contrast between the two religions, saying in effect: That which was lacking in the old religion is at length come. Where the

High Priest goeth we may also go, instead of, as of old, standing without, waiting anxiously for the exit of the high priest from that inaccessible, dark, awful, perilous, most holy place beyond the veil. The great thought forms a worthy close to a discourse designed to revive hope in drooping hearts.

To what extent it served this purpose we know not; possibly the Hebrew Christians failed to perceive the point, and so lost the intended benefit. This certainly has been the case with most commentators; why, I find it hard to understand. How completely the authors of the old English version missed the sense appears from their rendering "whither *the* Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus," as if the idea of a high priest being a Forerunner were a perfectly familiar one, instead of being a startling, beneficent originality. Familiar to us of course it is, but we must consider what it was to the first readers of the epistle. Some of the most recent commentators fail not less completely, by connecting the idea of forerunner, not with Christ's high-priestly office, but with His function as the Captain of salvation, leading God's people into the Promised Land. Jesus is our Forerunner, not as the Aaron, but as the Joshua of the new era.<sup>1</sup> Thus what the author, as I believe, intended to be a striking contrast becomes a parallel between the two dispensations. Without doubt, the main cause of all this miscarriage is failure to grasp firmly the apologetic character of the epistle, as intended to show the superiority of the Christian religion over the Levitical, and never losing an opportunity of promoting that end. Here surely was an excellent opportunity, a glaring contrast between the two religions offering itself for remark, a contrast in which the advantage was altogether and manifestly on the side of Christianity: the high priest of Israel going within the

<sup>1</sup> So Dr. Edwards and Mr. Rendall.

veil as a substitute, the High Priest of humanity going within the veil as a forerunner. A competent writer of an apologetic work, such as I take the Epistle to the Hebrews to be, could not omit this thought; and if it is to be found anywhere in the epistle, it is here.

Probably a subsidiary misleading influence, preventing expositors from finding the thought referred to in this text, has been the notion that Christ's priestly office did not begin till He entered the heavenly sanctuary. If Jesus became our High Priest only after He had reached the place within the veil, then His function as Forerunner must not be connected with that office, but is to be accounted for in some other way. But are we really required to date the commencement of His priesthood so rigidly from His arrival in heaven? Not certainly by the closing words of the text now under consideration: *having become, or becoming, after the order of Melchisedec, a High Priest for ever*. We may think of Jesus as becoming a High Priest in the very act of entering, becoming Priest by doing a priestly act. On this principle of becoming by doing, we must go back further still for the commencement of His priesthood, and include His death among His priestly functions. He dies as Priest, He enters the heavenly sanctuary as Priest, He takes His seat on the throne as Priest. He does not become a High Priest after His entrance. He only becomes a High Priest *for ever* then. His likeness to Melchisedec lies, not in His being a High Priest, but in the eternal endurance of His priestly office, the imperishable value of His priestly work, whereof His session on the throne is the symbol and evidence.

While the idea of Jesus as Forerunner serves to bring into strong relief the superiority of the Christian religion over the Levitical, yet it does not give adequate expression to the worth of the religion of free access. It makes salvation a thing of the future, an object of hope, the point of view



from which it is regarded in this whole section. This conception of salvation as future is not the exclusive, though it is the predominant view-point of the epistle. In some places the *summum bonum* appears as a present good. The way into the most holy place is already consecrated, and we may boldly come even now into the very presence of God (x. 19-22). We are come unto Mount Zion (xii. 22). The same truth is implied in the exhortation in chap. iv. 16 to come with boldness unto the throne of grace. The Christian faith not only has a promise of lordship in the world to come, but possesses that world now. Christianity, in fact, is the future world. This paradox, as Pfeiderer has remarked,<sup>1</sup> expresses in the most pregnant form the peculiar point of view of the epistle, and gives to its teaching a place intermediate between the Jewish-Christian conception, according to which salvation was purely future, and the Johannine, according to which it is, as an ideally perfect thing, present: eternal life, not merely in prospect, but now enjoyed to the full by believers.

A. B. BRUCE.

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## ST. PAUL AND THE GALATIAN JUDAIZERS.

### I.

THE Epistle to the Galatians is the most thoroughly controversial in the New Testament. For it was written at a critical moment with a distinct purpose; and this purpose is apparent throughout the epistle. A current of Jewish prejudice against the Apostle and his teaching was sweeping over the Galatian Churches; and a special effort was required to stem the tide. No means exist outside the epistle for dating this reaction, or discovering any special

<sup>1</sup> *Paulinismus*, pp. 329, 330.