

HEBREWS

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

That this epistle was written very early appears from hence, that it was imitated by Clement of Rome, in his epistle to the Corinthians, who took whole sentences out of it; and therefore it could not be a new work, as Eusebius ^{f1} observes: it has been denied to be authentic by some heretics, as the Marcionites and Arians, but has been generally received as such by the orthodox: some indeed doubted of it, because it was not received by the Roman church, as an epistle of the Apostle Paul ^{f2}; though others, who have thought it was not his, as Origen, yet looked upon it as genuine ^{f3}. It has been ascribed to different persons, as to Barnabas, to Apollos, to Luke the Evangelist, and to Clement of Rome, but without any just reason. Clement of Alexandria, a very ancient writer, asserts it to be the Apostle Paul's ^{f4}; and his name stands in the title of it, in all R. Stephens's exemplars, and in all Beza's copies, excepting one, and so it does in the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions; and that it is his, is highly probable from the agreement there is between this, and other epistles of his; compare (~~3002~~ Hebrews 1:2,3) with (~~5015~~ Colossians 1:15,16) and (~~3512~~ Hebrews 5:12-14) with (~~4401~~ 1 Corinthians 3:1,2) and (~~8201~~ Hebrews 12:1) with (~~4192~~ 1 Corinthians 9:24) and (~~3837~~ Hebrews 13:7,17) with (~~5151~~ 1 Thessalonians 5:11,12), and (~~3830~~ Hebrews 13:9) with (~~6044~~ Ephesians 4:14) and (~~3838~~ Hebrews 13:18) with (~~4012~~ 2 Corinthians 1:12) and (~~3833~~ Hebrews 13:20) with (~~5153~~ Romans 15:13 16:20 ~~5073~~ 1 Thessalonians 5:23) and many other places; and also from the order and method of it, first treating of doctrines, and then proceeding to practical exhortations, which is the common form of Paul's epistles: to which may be added various circumstances; as that it was written from Italy, where Paul was a prisoner; and the mention the author of it makes of his bonds, and of Timothy, as well known unto him, who was Paul's companion; besides, the token of his epistles appears in this, namely, his usual salutation to the churches; (see ~~3823~~ Hebrews 13:23-25). But above all, the testimony of the Apostle Peter is greatly in favour of its being his, (~~6015~~ 2 Peter 3:15,16) from whence it clearly appears, that the Apostle Paul did write an epistle to the Hebrews; for to them Peter wrote; (see ~~6100~~ 1 Peter 1:1 ~~6001~~ 2 Peter 3:1) and what

epistle could it be but this? and what Peter refers to is to be found in it; (see ^{<3015>}Hebrews 10:25,36,37) and which is written with great wisdom; in none of Paul's epistles is there a greater discovery of his knowledge of divine mysteries than in this; and in it also are things hard to be understood, (^{<3515>}Hebrews 5:11). The common objections to its being his are, its not bearing his name, the diversity of its style, and the author of it seeming to be not an apostle, but a disciple of the apostle's: as to his not setting his name to it, the reasons might be, because he was the apostle of the Gentiles, and not so much of the Jews; and because of the prejudice of the Jews against him, both believers, and unbelievers; wherefore had his name been to it, it might have prevented the usefulness of it to the one, and have stirred up the rage of the other: as to the difference of style, different subjects require a different style; and yet in many things there is a likeness, as before observed: and as to the author's not being an apostle, which is concluded from (^{<3015>}Hebrews 2:3) the word "us" there is to be understood of the believing Hebrews, the disciples of the apostle, and not inclusive of the author, by a figurative way of speaking often used by Paul; and besides, the apostle received a confirmation of the Gospel from Ananias, who might have been an hearer of Christ, though he was at first taught it by Christ himself; add to this, that whoever was the writer of it, it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, and when several of the apostles were living, and therefore he could never design by those words to put himself in a succeeding generation. The persons to whom this epistle was written were Hebrews, or Jews; so called, as some think, from the name of Abraham, the father of them; or, as others, from his passing over the river Euphrates, when he came out of Chaldea into Palestine. So Abram the Hebrew, in (^{<0143>}Genesis 14:13) is by the Septuagint rendered, **περατης**, "one that passes over", taking it to come from the word **rb** [, which signifies to "pass over"; with this compare (^{<0343>}Joshua 24:3) and this is the opinion of some of the Jewish Rabbins ^{f5}; though it seems rather that they were called so from Heber, who lived at the time of the confusion of languages; (see ^{<0121>}Genesis 10:21 ^{<0224>}Numbers 24:24). And this is the sense of many Jewish writers, ancient and modern, of Josephus ^{f6}, of Jonathan ben Uzziel ^{f7}, of R. Nehemiah ^{f8}, of Aben Ezra ^{f9}, and Kimchi ^{f10}, and others; (see Gill on "^{<4712>}2 Corinthians 11:22"). And these were the Hebrews that dwelt in the land of Judea, and particularly at Jerusalem; nor were they the unbelieving inhabitants of those parts, but believers in Christ, who were embodied in a Gospel church state, It was a tradition of the ancients ^{f11}, that this epistle was written originally in Hebrew, and was translated into

Greek, either by Luke the Evangelist, or by Clement of Rome. But for this there is no foundation; no Hebrew copy can be produced; Munster's edition of it in Hebrew is a translation from the Greek, in which it was, no doubt, originally written, that being the common language, and well known to the Jews; and which appears from the citations in it out of the Old Testament, which are made, not from the Hebrew text, but from the Greek version; and besides, had it been written in Hebrew, the writer would not have interpreted the Hebrew words, Melchizedek and Salem, as he does, in (~~scrib~~ Hebrews 7:1,2). The time of its writing was before the destruction of Jerusalem, which in this book is signified by the coming of the Lord, and the day approaching; and after Timothy was released from prison, and some time within the two years of his own imprisonment at Rome; when he hoped for a release, as his epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon show. Dr. Lightfoot places it in the year 62, and in the eighth of Nero. And the occasion and design of it is, to set forth the superior excellency of Christ to angels and men, to Moses, to Joshua, to Aaron, and his sons, and the preferableness of his priesthood and sacrifice to the Levitical priesthood and its sacrifices; to teach the Hebrews the true knowledge of the mysteries of their law; to point out to them the design, use, and abrogation of its ceremonies; and to prepare them for what afflictions and persecutions they would be called to endure for Christ; and to exhort them to perseverance, and to strengthen them against apostasy, as well as to instruct them in the various duties of religion.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 1

The intention of this epistle being to demonstrate the superior excellency of the Gospel revelation to the legal one, the apostle begins with the divine author of it, in which they both agree, and observes that in other things they differ. The revelation under the law was made in times past, the Gospel revelation in these last days; the former was made to the Jewish fathers that were of old, the latter to the then present apostles; the one was made at sundry times, and in divers manners, the other was made at once, and in one way; the one was made by the prophets of the Lord, the other by his own son, (^{<3000>}Hebrews 1:1,2) and therefore the latter must be the more excellent; in proof of which the author enlarges on the character of the Son of God, with respect to his person, office, and glory; showing that he is heir of all things, the Maker of the worlds, of the same nature and glory with his Father; is omnipotent, and upholds all things by the word of his power; is the High Priest of his people, who has made satisfaction for their sins, and purged them from them, and is now at the right hand of God, (^{<3000>}Hebrews 1:2,3) He goes on to prove that he is more excellent than the angels, by a variety of arguments, and these supported by testimonies from the Scriptures; as that he has a more excellent name than any of them, being called the Son of God, (^{<3004>}Hebrews 1:4,5) which is proved from (^{<1907>}Psalm 2:7 ^{<1072>}2 Samuel 7:12-16) that he is the object of the worship of angels, (^{<3006>}Hebrews 1:6) which is required of them, (^{<1970>}Psalm 97:7) that he is their Maker and Creator, (^{<3007>}Hebrews 1:7) which appears from (^{<1944>}Psalm 104:4) that he has an everlasting kingdom, is a righteous King, and is richly anointed above his fellows, (^{<3008>}Hebrews 1:8,9) which is the sense of some passages in (^{<19816>}Psalm 45:6,7) and that he is the founder and former of the heavens, and of the earth, and will endure when they shall not, (^{<3010>}Hebrews 1:10-12) which is confirmed by testimonies out of (^{<19A25>}Psalm 102:25-27) that he sits at the right hand of God, where none of the angels were ever admitted, (^{<3013>}Hebrews 1:13) as is clear from (^{<1901>}Psalm 110:1-7) and besides, the angels, as they are ministers made by him, they are sent out from him to wait on his people,

the heirs of salvation, and minister to them, and therefore he must be greater than they, (^{<3014>}Hebrews 1:14).

Ver. 1. *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners*, etc..] The apostle begins the epistle with an account of the revelation God has made of his mind and will in former times: the author of this revelation is God, not essentially, but personally considered, even God the Father, as distinguished from his Son in the next verse; for the revelation under the Old Testament is divine, as well as that under the New; in this they both agree, in whatsoever else they differ: and this revelation was made at several times, at different seasons, and to different persons; and consisted of a variety of things relating to doctrine and worship, and concerning the Messiah, his person and office; of whom, at different times, there were gradual discoveries made, both before and after the giving of the law, from the beginning of the world, or the giving forth of the first promise, and in the times of the patriarchs, of: Moses, David, Isaiah, and other prophets: and this was delivered in various manners; sometimes by angels; sometimes in a dream; at other times by a vision; and sometimes by Urim and Thummim: and this he

spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets; by Moses, and other succeeding prophets, as David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, Zechariah, Malachi, and others; who were sent to the Jewish fathers, the ancestors of the people of the Jews, to whom they prophesied and declared the will of God, as they were moved and inspired by the Holy Ghost: and the apostle suggests, by this way of speaking, that it was a long time since God spake to this people; for prophecy had ceased ever since the times of Malachi, for the space of three hundred years; and this time past includes the whole Old Testament dispensation, from the beginning to the end of it, or of prophecy in it.

Ver. 2. *Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son*, etc..] This is the Gospel revelation, or the revelation in the Gospel dispensation; which though it comes from the same author the other does, yet in many things differs from it, and is preferable to it; and indeed the general design of this epistle is to show the superior excellency of the one to the other; the former was delivered out in time past, but this “in these last days”; the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, and several other copies, read, “in the last of these days”: perfectly agreeable to the phrase μυμϋη τυρϋ ab, used in (^{<0491>}Genesis 49:1 ^{<0244>}Numbers 24:14 ^{<2102>}Isaiah 2:2) to

which the apostle refers, and in which places the days of the Messiah are intended; and it is a rule with the Jews^{f12}, that wherever the phrase, “the last days”, is mentioned, the days of the Messiah are designed: and they are to be understood not of the last days of the natural world, but of, the Jewish world and state; indeed the times of the Messiah, or Gospel dispensation, may be called the last days of the natural world, according to the tradition of the house of Elias; which teaches, that the duration of the world will be six thousand years, and divides it into three parts, the last of which is assigned to the Messiah, thus; two thousand years void, (or without the law,) two thousand years the law, and two thousand years the days of the Messiah^{f13}: but it is best to understand this of the last days of the Mosaic economy, or Jewish dispensation; for the Messiah was to come before the Jewish civil and church states were dissolved; before the sceptre departed from Judah, and before the second temple was destroyed; and he was to come at the end, or toward the close of both these states; and which is called the end, or ends of the world, (~~311B~~ Habakkuk 2:3 ~~312B~~ Hebrews 9:26 ~~601~~ 1 Corinthians 10:11) and quickly after Jesus, the true Messiah was come, an end was put to both these: from whence it may be observed, that the Messiah must be come; that the Mosaic economy, and Jewish worship, will never be restored again; that the Gospel revelation being made in the last days, ought to be regarded the more, it being the last revelation God will ever make. Moreover, this differs from the former in this respect, that was made to the fathers, this “to us”; meaning either the apostles in particular, or the Jews in general, to whom the apostle is writing: this shows that the Gospel revelation was first made to the Jews; and it being made to them personally, they were under great obligation to regard it; and that God had not cast off his people; and that though he had greatly indulged their fathers, he had showed greater favour to them, having provided some better thing for them: and there is a difference between these two revelations in the manner in which they were made; the former was at sundry times, and in divers manners, the latter was made at once, and in one way; that was delivered out in parts, and by piece meal, this the whole together; the whole mind and will of God, all his counsel, all that Christ heard of the Father; it is the faith that was once, and at once, delivered to the saints; and it has been given out in one way, by the preaching of the word: to which may be added, that formerly God spoke by many persons, by the prophets, but now by one only, “by his Son”; who is so not by creation, nor by adoption, nor by office, but by nature; being his own Son, his proper Son, begotten of him, of the same nature with him,

and equal to him; and so infinitely preferable to the prophets: he is a Son, and not a servant, in whom the Father is, and he in the Father, and in whom the Spirit is without measure; and God is said to speak by him, or in him, because he was now incarnate; and what he says from God should be attended to, both on account of the dignity of his person, as the Son of God, and because of the authority he came with as Mediator: whom he hath appointed heir of all things; which must be understood of him not as God, and Creator; for as such he has a right to all things; all that the Father has are his; the kingdom of nature and providence belongs to him, he being the Former and Maker of all things; but as Mediator, who has all things committed to him, to subserve the ends of his office; and has a kingdom appointed him, and which he will deliver up again the word all may refer either to persons or things; to persons, not angels, good or bad, though both are subject to him, yet neither are called his inheritance; but elect men, who are his portion, and the lot of his inheritance; and to things relating to these persons, and for their use and service, in time, and to all eternity; as all temporal things, and all spiritual ones, the blessings and promises of the covenant of grace, the gifts and graces of the Spirit, and eternal glory and happiness, the saints' inheritance, who are joint heirs with Christ.

By whom also he made the worlds; this is said in agreement with the notions of the Jews, and their way of speaking, who make mention of three worlds, which they call, the upper world (the habitation of God), the middle world (the air), and the lower world ^{f14} (the earth); and sometimes they call them the world of angels (where they dwell), the world of orbs (where the sun, moon, and stars are), and the world below ^{f15} (on which we live); and it is frequent in their writings, and prayer books ^{f16}, to call God $\mu\text{yml w[h l k } \hat{\text{w}}\text{br}$, “Lord of all worlds”; (see Gill on “~~SUB~~ Hebrews 11:3”), these God made by his Son, not as an instrument, but as an efficient cause with him; for by him were all things made, whether visible or invisible; and the preposition “by” does not always denote instrumentality, but sometimes efficiency; and is used of God the Father himself, and in this epistle, (~~SUB~~ Hebrews 2:10).

Ver. 3. *Who being the brightness of his glory*, etc.] Or “of glory”; of God the Father, the God of glory, and who is glory itself; so called on account of his glorious nature and perfections and because of the glorious manifestations of them in his works of creation and providence, and in the various dispensations of his grace, and especially in his Son; and because he is the author of all glory, in the creatures, in the whole world, in Christ

as man and Mediator, and in his own people. Now Christ is the “brightness” of this, as he is God; he has the same glorious nature and perfections, and the same glorious names, as Jehovah, the Lord of glory, etc.. and the same glory, homage, and worship given him: the allusion is to the sun, and its beam or ray: so some render it “the ray of his glory”; and may lead us to observe, that the Father and the Son are of the same nature, as the sun and its ray; and that the one is not before the other, and yet distinct from each other, and cannot be divided or separated one from another: so the phrase **hyrqy ^yz**, “the brightness of his glory”, is used of the divine Being, in the Chaldee paraphrases ^{f17}; see the Apocrypha.

“For she is the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness.”
(Wisdom 7:26)

And the express image of his person; this intends much the same as the other phrase; namely, equality and sameness of nature, and distinction of persons; for if the Father is God, Christ must be so too; and if he is a person, his Son must be so likewise, or he cannot be the express image and character of him; (see Gill on “⁵⁰¹⁵Colossians 1:15”).

And upholding all things by the word of his power; the Syriac version renders it, “by the power of his word”, to the same sense, only inverting the words. The Targumist on (⁴⁴⁰⁶2 Chronicles 2:6) uses a phrase very much like this, of God, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain; because, adds he, **hytrwbq [rdb al k l ybs**, “he bears”, or “sustains all things by the arm of his power”; and the words are to be understood not of the Father, upholding all things by his essential and powerful Word, his Son; but of the Son himself, who upholds all creatures he has made; bears up the pillars of the universe; preserves every creature in its being, and supports it, and supplies it with the necessaries of life; rules and governs all, and providentially orders and disposes of all things in the world, and that by his all powerful will; which makes it manifest, that he is truly and properly God, and a very fit person to be a priest, as follows:

when he had by himself purged our sins; the Arabic and Ethiopic versions seem to refer this to God the Father, as if he, by Christ, made the expiation of sin, and then caused him to sit down at his right hand; but it belongs to the Son himself, who of himself, and by himself alone, and by the sacrifice of himself, made atonement for the sins of his people; which is meant by

the purgation of them: he took their sins upon himself, and bore them, and removed them far away, and utterly abolished them, which the priests under the law could not do: and when he had so done,

he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; by “Majesty” is meant God the Father, to whom majesty belongs; who is clothed with it, and which is before him: and his “right hand” designs his power, greatness, and glory, and is expressive of the high honour Christ, as man, is possessed of; for his sitting here denotes the glorious exaltation of him in human nature, after his sufferings, and death, and resurrection from the dead; and shows that he had done his work, and was accepted, and was now enjoying rest and ease, honour and glory, in which he will continue; and the place of his session, as well as of the habitation of God, at whose right hand he sits, is on high, in the highest heavens.

Ver. 4. *Being made so much better than the angels*, etc..] Christ is so much better than the angels, as the Creator, than the creature; as an independent being, than a dependent one; as he that blesses, than he that is blessed; as he that is worshipped, than he that worships: as a king, than his subjects; as a master, than his servants; and as he that sends, than he that is sent: and Christ may be said to be “made so”, when he was manifested and declared to be so; and he was actually preferred to them, and exalted above them in human nature, after he had expiated the sins of his people, and when he was set down at the right hand of God, as in the latter part of the preceding verse, with which these words stand connected; for in his state of humiliation, and through his sufferings and death, he was made lower than they; but when he was risen from the dead, and ascended to heaven, he was placed at the right hand of God, where none of them ever was, or ever will be: besides, the phrase, “being made”, signifies no more than that “he was”; and so the Syriac version renders it, “and he was so much better than the angels”; and so the Ethiopic version, “he is so much better”: and this is observed, to prove him to be more excellent than any creature, since he is preferred to the most excellent of creatures; and to show, that the Gospel dispensation is superior to the legal dispensation, which was introduced by the ministration of angels; and to take off the Jews from the worship of angels, to which they were prone: and this doctrine of his could not be well denied by them, since it was the faith of the Jewish church, that the Messiah should be preferred to the angels: for in their ancient writings they say of him, he shall be exalted above Abraham, he shall be lifted up

above Moses, and be higher than the ministering angels ^{f18}; and that he is above them, appears from what follows,

as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they; which is that of the Son of God, a name peculiar to him; and which belongs to him in such a sense as it does not to angels, as is evident from the following verse: and though this name is not founded on his office, as Mediator, but arises from his nature and relation to God; yet he was declared to be the Son of God, and it was made manifest, that this name of right belonged to him, upon the discharge of his office, at his resurrection and ascension to heaven; and therefore he is said to obtain it by inheritance; or he appeared to inherit it of right, and that it was his possession for evermore.

Ver. 5. *For unto which of the angels said he at any time,* etc..] That is, he never said to any of the angels what he has said to Christ; namely, what follows,

thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee for though angels are called the sons of God, (^{<3006>}Job 1:6 2:1 38:7) yet are never said to be begotten by him; or, with this clause annexed to it, “this day have I begotten thee”; nor are they ever so called in a proper sense, or in such sense as Christ is: this is said to Christ, and of him, in (^{<3007>}Psalm 2:7) and that agreeably to the sense of the Jewish church at this time, or the apostle would never have produced it to the Hebrews in such a manner; and not only the whole psalm in general, but this verse in particular, is owned by Jewish writers ^{f19}, both ancient and modern, to belong to the Messiah. Christ is the Son of God, not by Creation, nor by adoption, nor by office, but by nature; he is the true, proper, natural, and eternal Son of God; and as such is owned and declared by Jehovah the Father, in these words; the foundation of which relation lies in the begetting of him; which refers not to his nature, either divine or human: not to his divine nature, which is common with the Father and Spirit; wherefore if his was begotten, theirs must be also, being the same undivided nature, common to all three; much less to his human nature, in which he is never said to be begotten, but always to be made, and with respect to which he is without Father; nor to his office, as Mediator, in which he is not a Son, but a servant; besides, he was a Son, previous to his being a prophet, priest, and King; and his office is not the foundation of his sonship, but his sonship is the foundation of his office; or by which that is supported, and which fits him for the performance of it:

but it has respect to his divine person; for as, in human generation, person begets person, and like begets like, so it is in divine generation; though care must be taken to remove all imperfection from it, as divisibility and multiplication of essence, priority and posteriority, dependence, and the like; nor can the modus, or manner of it, be conceived, or explained by us: the date of it, today, designs eternity, as in (^{<23613>}Isaiah 43:13), which is one continued day, an everlasting now; and this may be applied to any time and case, in which Christ is declared to be the Son of God; as at his incarnation, his baptism, his transfiguration on the Mount, and his resurrection from the dead, as in (^{<4133>}Acts 13:33 ^{<6104>}Romans 1:4) and at his ascension to heaven, when he was made Lord and Christ, and his divine sonship more manifestly appeared; which seems to be the time, and case, more especially referred to here. And again, I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a Son: which words are taken from (^{<1074>}2 Samuel 7:14) and the sense is, not that he should be his son by adoption; or that he would be instead of a father to him; or that he should be as dear to him as a son is to a father; but that he was really and properly so; and he would make it manifest, and own him as such, as he did at Jordan's river, upon the Mount, and at his resurrection and ascension; though the words are spoken of Solomon, as a type of Christ, they properly belong to the antitype, who is greater than Solomon.

Ver. 6. *And again, when he bringeth the first begotten into the world;* etc..] By “the first begotten” is meant Christ. This is a name given him in the Old Testament, and is what the Hebrews were acquainted with, and therefore the apostle uses it; it is in (^{<1827>}Psalm 89:27) from whence it seems to be taken here, and which the ancient Jews ^{f20} acknowledge is to be understood of the Messiah; who, as the Son of God, is the only begotten of the Father, and was begotten from eternity, as before declared, and before any creature had a being, and therefore called the firstborn of every creature, (^{<5015>}Colossians 1:15) and is sometimes styled the first begotten from the dead; he rose the first in time, and is the first in causality and dignity: and he may be called the firstborn, with respect to the saints, who are of the same nature with him, and are partakers of the divine nature, and are adopted into the family of God, though they are not in the same class of sonship with him; and the bringing of him into the world may refer to his second coming, for this seems agreeable from the natural order of the words, which may be rendered, “when he shall bring again”, etc.. that is, a second time, and from (^{<1971>}Psalm 97:1-12) from whence the following

words are cited; and from the glory he shall then have from the angels, who will come with him, and minister to him; and not to his resurrection from the dead, when he was exalted above angels, principalities, and powers; though, as we read the words, they seem to regard his first coming in to this habitable world, at his incarnation and birth, when he was attended with angels, and worshipped by them, according to the order of God the Father, as follows:

he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him; these words are cited from (^{כִּתְּוִבֵּ} Psalm 97:7) where the angels are called Elohim, gods. So Aben Ezra on the place observes, that there are some (meaning their doctors) who say, that “all the gods are the angels”; and Kimchi says, that the words are not imperative, but are in the past tense, instead of the future,

all the angels have worshipped him; that is, they shall worship him; as they have done, so they will do. According to our version, they are called upon to worship God's firstborn, his only begotten Son, with a religious worship and adoration, even all of them, not one excepted; which shows, that Christ, as the first begotten, is the Lord God, for he only is to be served and worshipped; and that if angels are to worship him, men ought; and that angels are not to be worshipped, and that Christ is preferable to them; and the whole sets forth the excellency and dignity of his person. Philo the Jew ^{f21} often calls the Logos, or Word of God, his first begotten.

Ver. 7 *And of the angels he saith*, etc..] Or “to the angels”, as in the following verse, “to the Son”, which stands opposed to this; and the words said to them, or of them, are found in (^{כִּתְּוִבֵּ} Psalm 104:4)

who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire: this cannot be understood of the wind and lightning, and of God's making these his messengers and ministers to do his will; for such a sense is not suitable to the scope of the psalm, from whence they are taken, nor to the order of the words in which they stand; for it is not said he makes spirits, or winds, his angels, and flaming fire his ministers, but the reverse; and is contrary to the design of the apostle in citing them, which is to show the superiority of Christ to angels, of whom it is said, that they are made spirits: they are “spirits”, created ones, and so differ from God the Creator: they are incorporeal ones, and so differ from men; they are immaterial, and so die not; they are spiritual substances subsisting in themselves: and they are “made” such by God the Father, and by the Son the Lord Jesus Christ, within the six days of the creation, and all at once; for it is not to be

supposed that the Lord is daily making them; and this proves the Son to be God, as well as more excellent than the angels; unless this is to be understood of the daily disposal of them in providence, in causing winds, thunder, lightning, and the like. Some choose to supply the word with “as”, and read, who maketh his angels as winds; for invisibility, velocity, power, and penetration: “and his ministers as a flame of fire”; and these are the same with the angels, for they are ministers to God; they attend his presence; are ready to perform any service for him; they sing his praise, and are his chariots in which he rides: and they are ministers to Christ; they attended at his incarnation: were solicitous for his preservation, ministered to him in distress, assisted at his resurrection, and accompanied him in his ascension, and will be with him at his second coming: and they are as a flame of fire, so called from their great power, force, and swiftness; and from their burning love, and flaming zeal, hence named seraphim; and because they are sometimes the executioners of God's wrath, and will descend in flaming fire, when Christ shall be revealed from heaven: angels sometimes appear in fiery forms; the chariots and horses of fire, by which Elijah was carried up to heaven, were no other than angels, in such forms: so the Jews ^{f22} say of the angels,

“all the angels, their horses are horses of fire, and their chariots fire, and their bows fire, and their spears fire, and all their instruments of war fire.”

And they have a notion, that an angel is half water, and half fire ^{f23}.

Ver. 8. *But unto the Son, he saith*, etc..] What he does not to angels, and which sets him infinitely above them; which shows him to be a Prince and King, and not a servant, or minister; and which even ascribes deity to him:

thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: this, with what follows in this verse, and the next, is taken out of (⁻³⁹¹⁶Psalm 45:6,7) which psalm is not spoken of Solomon, to whom many things in it will not agree; he was not fairer than other men; nor was he a warrior; nor was his throne for ever and ever; and much less a divine person, and the object of worship; but the Messiah, and so the ancient Jews understand it: the Targum applies it to him, and mentions him by name in (⁻³⁹⁰²Hebrews 1:2) and some of their modern writers ^{f24} affirm it is said of the Messiah; though Aben Ezra seems doubtful about it, saying, it is spoken concerning David, or Messiah his Son, whose name is so, (⁻³³⁷⁵Ezekiel 37:25). Deity is here ascribed to the Son of God; he is expressly called God; for the words will not bear to be

rendered, “thy throne is the throne of God, or thy throne is God”; or be supplied thus, “God shall establish thy throne”: nor are the words an apostrophe to the father, but are spoken to the king, the subject of the psalm, who is distinguished from God the Father, being blessed and anointed by him; and this is put out of all doubt by the apostle, who says they are addressed “to the Son”, who is not a created God, nor God by office, but by nature; for though the word “Elohim” is sometimes used of those who are not gods by nature; yet being here used absolutely, and the attributes of eternity, and most perfect righteousness, being ascribed to the person so called, prove him to be the true God; and this is the reason why his throne is everlasting, and his sceptre righteous, and why he should be worshipped, served, and obeyed. Dominion and duration of it are given to him; his throne denotes his kingly power, and government; which is general, over angels, good and bad; over men, righteous and wicked, even the greatest among them, the kings and princes of the earth: and special, over his church and people; and which is administered by his Spirit and grace in the hearts of his saints; and by his word and ordinances in his churches; and by his powerful protection of them from their enemies; and will be in a glorious manner in the latter day, and in heaven to all eternity; for his throne is for ever, and on it he will sit for ever: his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; he will have no successor in it, nor can his government be subverted; and though he will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, it will not cease.

A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom; the sceptre is an ensign of royalty; and a sceptre of righteousness, or rightness, is expressive of the justice of government; the Syriac version renders it, “a sceptre stretched out”; which is a sceptre of mercy, as the instance of Ahasuerus stretching out his sceptre to Esther shows; and such is the Gospel of Christ, which holds forth and declares the mercy, grace, and love of God to men through Christ; and which may be called a sceptre of righteousness, since it reveals and directs to the righteousness of Christ, and encourages to works of righteousness; but here it designs the righteous administration of Christ's kingly office; for just and true are, have been, and ever will be his ways, as King of saints.

Ver. 9. *Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity*, etc..] Christ loves righteous persons and righteous works, faithfulness and integrity, and a just administration of government, everything that is holy, just, and good; which has appeared in the whole course of his life on earth, in working out

a righteousness for his people, and in encouraging righteousness in them, which he leads them in the way of; and his love of justice will still more appear at the last day, when he will judge the world in righteousness, and give the crown of righteousness to proper persons: and he hates iniquity; or “unrighteousness”, as the Alexandrian copy and another read; as being contrary to his nature, both as God and man, and to the righteous law of God; which has appeared by his inveighing against it, and dehorting from it; by his severity exercised towards delinquents; by his suffering for it, and abolishing of it; and by chastising his own people on account of it; and his abhorrence of it will still more appear at the day of judgment, when all workers of iniquity, professors and profane, will be bid to depart from him:

therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows: the anointer is the God of Christ; that is, God the Father, who is the God of Christ, as man; and is so called, because he prepared and formed the human nature of Christ, and supported it under all its sufferings, and has glorified it; and as such Christ prayed unto him, believed in him, loved him, and obeyed him: the anointed is the Son of God, the Son spoken to, and is called God in the preceding verse; though he is not anointed as God, but as Mediator, to be prophet, and priest, and King: what he is anointed with is not material oil, but spiritual, the Holy Ghost, as it is explained in (~~410B~~ Acts 10:38) called the oil of gladness, in allusion to the use of oil at feasts and weddings, for the delight and refreshment of the guests; and because of the spiritual effects of joy and gladness, both on Christ, as man, and on his people. Now Christ was anointed as Mediator from all eternity; that is, he was invested with his office as such; and at his conception and birth he was filled with the Holy Ghost; who also descended on him at his baptism, after which he went about doing good, and healing diseases; but here it seems to refer to the time of his ascension, when he was declared to be Lord and Christ, the anointed one; and received gifts for men, the fulness of the Spirit without measure, and with which he was anointed above his “fellows”; by whom are meant, not the angels, nor the kings and princes of the earth; but the saints, who are so called, because they are of the same nature, and are of the same family, and are partakers of the same spirit, and grace; and having received the unction from him, are also kings, priests, and prophets, and will be companions with him to all eternity. Now the reason of his being anointed, or exalted, and made Lord and Christ, is, because he loves righteousness; (see ~~310D~~ Philippians 2:7,8) or rather, because he is anointed

with the Holy Spirit without measure, therefore he loves righteousness; for the words may be rendered, “thou lovest righteousness — because God, thy God, hath anointed thee”.

Ver. 10. *And thou Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth*, etc..] The person here addressed, as the Lord or Jehovah, and as the Maker of the heavens and the earth, is the same with the Son spoken to, and of, before; for the words are a continuation of the speech to him, though they are taken from another psalm, from (^{<9A25>}Psalm 102:25-27). The phrase, “thou, Lord” is taken from (^{<9A21>}Psalm 102:12) and is the same with, “O my God”, (^{<9A21>}Psalm 102:24) and whereas it is there said, “of old”, and here, in the beginning, the sense is the same; and agreeably to the Septuagint, and the apostle, Jarchi interprets it by **h l y j t m**, “at”, or “from the beginning”; and so the Targum paraphrases it, **z y w r ç ^ m**, “from the beginning”, that the creatures were created, etc.. that in the beginning of the creation, which is the apostle's meaning; and shows the eternity of Christ, the Lord, the Creator of the earth, who must exist before the foundation of the world; and confutes the notion of the eternity of the world: and the rounding of it shows that the earth is the lower part of the creation; and denotes the stability of it; and points out the wisdom of the Creator in laying such a foundation; and proves the deity of Christ, by whom that, and all things in it, were made:

the heavens are the works of thine hands: there are more heavens than one; there are the airy heaven, and the starry heaven, and the heaven of heavens, the third heaven; and they were created the beginning, as the earth was, (^{<0001>}Genesis 1:1) and are the immediate work of Christ; they were made by himself, not by the means of angels, who were not in being till these were made; nor by any intermediate help, which he could not have, and which he did not need: the phrase is expressive of the power of Christ in making the upper parts of the creation, and of his wisdom in garnishing them, in which there is a wonderful display of his glory; and the whole serves to set forth the dignity and excellency of his person.

Ver. 11. *They shall perish*, etc..] That is, the heavens and the earth; not as to the substance of them, but as to the quality of them; the present form and fashion of them shall pass away; the curse will be removed from them, and they will be renewed and purified, but the substance of them will continue; otherwise there would be no place, either for the righteous or the wicked,

But thou remainest; without any change or alteration, neither in his natures, divine or human, as God or man, nor in his office as Mediator; as a priest, he has an unchangeable priesthood, and ever lives to make intercession; as a King, his kingdom is an everlasting one, and of it there will be no end; and as a prophet, he will be the everlasting light, of his people.

They all shall wax old as doth a garment; garments in time wax old, and lose their beauty and usefulness, unless when a miracle is wrought, as in the case of the children of Israel in the wilderness. Now the heavens, and the light thereof, are as a garment and a curtain, (^{<B442>}Psalm 104:2) and these, together with the earth, will in time come to their end of usefulness, in the present form of them; (see ^{<2506>}Isaiah 51:6).

Ver. 12. *And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up*, etc..] In order to lay them aside, and make no use of them in the manner they now are; just as clothes, when they are grown old, or out of fashion, are folded up, and laid aside from use at present, or are put into another form. In the Hebrew text it is, “as a vesture shalt thou change them”; but the sense is the same, for a garment is changed by folding it, or turning it; agreeably to which Jarchi interprets the Hebrew phrase thus, “as a man turns his garment to put it off;”

the Vulgate Latin version reads as the Hebrew does, and one of the manuscripts of New College, Oxford.

And they shall be changed; as to their form and use, not as to their being; for a change, and an annihilation, are two things:

but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail; which is expressive of the immutability of Christ, in his nature and perfections, in his person, and offices, in the virtue of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; and of his duration or continuance, in opposition to the fading and transitory nature of the heavens and earth, and of all outward enjoyments: and this may serve to take off the heart from the one, and set it upon the other; and to strengthen our faith in Christ, and encourage us to expect a continuance of blessings from him; all supplies of grace now, and eternal glory hereafter.

Ver. 13. *But to which of the angels said he at any time*, etc..] That is, he never said to any of them in his council, or covenant; he never designed to give them any such honour, as hereafter expressed; he never promised it to

them, or bestowed it on them; he never called up any of them to so high a place, or to such a dignity:

sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool; yet this he said to his Son, (³⁸⁰Psalm 110:1) for to him, the Messiah, are they spoken, and have had their fulfilment in him: (see Gill on "⁴¹²⁴Matthew 22:44"); and therefore he must be greater than the angels.

Ver. 14. *Are they not all ministering spirits*, etc..] Servants to God, to Christ, and to his people, and therefore must be inferior to the Son of God. The phrase is Rabbinical; frequent mention is made in Jewish writings^{f25} of *trçh ykal m*, "the angels of ministry", or "the ministering angels"; this is their common appellation with the Jews; and the apostle writing to such, uses a like phrase, well known to them, and appeals to them, if the angels were not such spirits.

Sent forth to minister for them who shall be the heirs of salvation? the persons they minister to, and for, are those, who shall be the heirs of salvation; that is, of eternal glory, which will be possessed by the saints, as an inheritance: hence it belongs to children, being bequeathed to them by their Father, and comes to them through the death of Christ, of which the Spirit is the earnest; and this shows that it is not of works, and that it is of an eternal duration, and takes in all kind of happiness: and of this the saints are heirs now; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "who are heirs of salvation"; nor should it be rendered, "who shall be heirs", but rather, "who shall inherit salvation"; for this character respects not their heirship, but their actual inheriting of salvation: and the ministry of angels to, and for them, lies in things temporal and spiritual, or what concern both their bodies and their souls; in things temporal, in which they have often been assisting, as in providing food for their bodies, in curing their diseases, in directing and preserving them in journeys, in saving and delivering them from outward calamities, in restraining things hurtful from hurting them, and in destroying their enemies; in things spiritual, as in making known the mind and will of God to them, in comforting them, and suggesting good things to them, and in helping and assisting them against Satan's temptations; and they are present with their departing souls at death, and carry them to heaven, and will gather the elect together at the last day. And they are "sent forth" to minister to them in such a way; they are sent forth by Christ, the Lord and Creator of them, who therefore must be superior to them; they do not take this office upon themselves, though, being put into

they faithfully and diligently execute it, according to the will of Christ: and this shows the care of Christ over his people, and his kindness to them, and the great honour he puts upon them, to appoint such to minister to them; and since they are of so much use and service, they ought to be respected and esteemed, though not worshipped.