

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 1

In this chapter the apostle, from the superior excellency of Christ, by whom the Gospel revelation is come, discoursed of in the preceding, urges the believers he writes to, to a more diligent attention to the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; to which he adds another motive inducing thereunto, lest those things should be let slip, and be lost, (~~scrib~~ Hebrews 2:1) and then, by another argument from the less to the greater, that if the law, which was given by angels, could not be broken with impunity, then how should such escape divine punishment that neglected and despised the Gospel, which is a doctrine of salvation, was delivered by the Lord himself, and confirmed by various testimonies and miracles, (~~scrib~~ Hebrews 2:2-4). And besides the Gospel dispensation is not put into the hands of angels, but into the hands of Christ, to whom all things are subject, which is proved out of (~~scrib~~ Psalm 8:4-6) and which proof shows, that though Christ, on account of his sufferings and death, was for a while made lower than the angels, yet being now crowned with glory and honour, he is above them, and they are subject to him, since all things are, (~~scrib~~ Hebrews 2:5-9). And this anticipates an objection that might be taken from hence against what the apostle had asserted in the foregoing chapter, concerning the superiority of Christ to angels; and this leads him on to observe the reason of the sufferings and death of Christ, and also of his incarnation; that the moving cause of Christ's sufferings and death was the grace and good will of God; that he did not suffer for himself, but for others, for everyone of those described in the context; that inasmuch as he was the surety of those persons, it was agreeable to the justice of God, and it could not be otherwise, but he must be made perfect through suffering; and this was the way to bring many sons to glory, (~~scrib~~ Hebrews 2:9,10) and as for his incarnation, or his becoming man, that was necessary, that the sanctifier and the sanctified might be of the same nature, that he might be able to call them brethren and children, (~~scrib~~ Hebrews 2:11-13) as he does, for which are cited (~~scrib~~ Psalm 22:22 18:2 ~~scrib~~ Isaiah 8:18) and because the children he engaged to glory were partakers of flesh and blood; and also that he might be capable of dying, and by dying destroy the devil, and deliver

his timorous people, who, through fear of death, lived in a continual state of bondage, (^{<38214>}Hebrews 2:14,15) for which reason he did not take upon him the nature of angels, but of the seed of Abraham, (^{<38216>}Hebrews 2:16) And besides, it was necessary he should be in all things like unto his brethren, that he might be merciful to them, and faithful to God, and be in a state and condition capable of sympathizing with them, and succouring them under their temptations, which he was able to do by suffering through temptation himself, (^{<38217>}Hebrews 2:17,18).

Ver. 1. *Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed*, etc..] This is an inference from the apostle's discourse in the preceding chapter; since he, by whom God has spoke in these last days, is his Son, who is infinitely above the angels, they being his creatures, and worshippers of him, and ministers to him, and his; therefore the greater regard should be had to the Gospel spoken by him: even to the things which we have heard; which are no other than the truths of the Gospel, which had been preached unto them, and which were heard by the apostles, who had preached them to them; and they had heard them from them, or from Christ himself, and were what their forefathers had desired to hear, and which the carnal ear has not heard; for there is an internal and an external hearing of the Gospel. Now it becomes the hearers of it to give heed, or attend unto it, to beware of that which is pernicious and hurtful, and to regard that which is good and profitable; and this giving heed takes in a close consideration of Gospel truths, a diligent inquiry into them, a valuable esteem of them, a strict adherence to them, and a watchfulness to retain what is heard, and to conform unto it: and this was to be done “more earnestly” than their forefathers had, or than they themselves had; or this may be put for the superlative degree, and signify, that they should give the most earnest heed; for they had the most abundant reason to give heed, since what they heard was not from Moses, and the prophets, to whom they did well to take heed, but from Christ the Son of God, who was greater than they: “lest at any time we should let them slip”: and this either respects persons; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “lest we should run out”; and the Syriac version, “lest we should fall”; and the Arabic version, “lest we should fall from honesty”: which may intend partial slips and falls, to which the people of God are subject; and which are oftentimes owing to inadvertency to the word; for the Gospel, duly attended to, is a preservative from falling: or it may respect things, even the doctrines of the Gospel, lest we should let them slip out of us, through us, or besides us:

the metaphor seems to be taken either from leaking vessels, which let out what is put into them; or to strainers, which let the liquor through, and it falls on the ground, and cannot be gathered up, and so becomes useless; and which is expressive of unprofitable hearing of the word, through inattention, negligence, and forgetfulness, and the irrecoverableness of it, when it is gone: the Gospel may be lost to some that hear it, as to any real benefit and advantage by it; and some who hear the Gospel may be lost and perish; but the grace of the Gospel can never be lost.

Ver. 2. *For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast,* etc..] This is a description of the law, from whence the apostle argues to a stricter regard to the Gospel, as from the lesser to the greater: this is called “the word”, and a terrible one it was; it was a voice of words, which they that heard entreated they might hear no more; it was the word “spoken” with an articulate voice, and was heard by the Israelites, and it was spoken “by angels”. Jehovah the Father's voice was never heard; when he came to give the law, ten thousand angels came along with him; and the ministry of these he used in the delivery of the law; by them he spoke it; they formed in the air the voices heard; it was ordained by them, and given by the disposition of them; (see ^{<407>}Acts 7:53 ^{<408>}Galatians 3:19). To which agree those words of Herod, spoken to the Jews, recorded by Josephus ^{f26}; that we learn of God, *δι' αγγελων*, “by angels”, the best of doctrines, and the most holy things in the law. And this was “steadfast”; firm, and sure, being the word of God, which cannot pass away, until it be fulfilled: it was confirmed by terrible signs attending it, and by the people's assent unto it; the penalty of it is sure and certain, in case of disobedience; and as to the form and ministration of it, it remained until Christ, the end of it, came; and as to the matter of it, so far as of a moral nature, it still remains: the judicial and ceremonial parts of it are abrogated; and the whole of it is abolished, as in the hands of Moses, and as a covenant of works, and as to the curse and condemnation of it, and with respect to justification by it; but it still continues as a cursing law to all that are under it; and as a means of conviction to sinners in the hands of the Spirit; and as a rule of walk and conversation to saints, as in the hands of Christ:

and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; every precept of the law had a penalty annexed to it; and every breach of it was punished as that penalty required; and that according to the strict justice of God, and the just demerit of sin; and none escaped, but

suffered the punishment due to the violation of the precept either in themselves, or in their surety; so steadfast and immovable was this law.

Ver. 3. *How shall we escape*, etc..] The righteous judgment of God, and eternal punishment:

if we neglect so great salvation? as the Gospel is, which is called salvation; in opposition to the law, which is the ministration of condemnation; and because it is a declaration of salvation by Christ; and is the means of bringing it near, and of the application of it in conversion, and so is the power of God unto it: and it is a “great” salvation; the Gospel which reveals it is great, for the author of it is Christ; it has been confirmed by miracles, and attended with great success; and has in it great things, great mysteries, and exceeding great and precious promises: and the salvation which it declares is great; it is the produce of great wisdom; it is wrought by a great person, by a Saviour, and a great one, and who is the great God, and our Saviour; it has been procured at great charge and expense, even at the expense of the blood and life of the Son of God; and has been obtained through great difficulties; and is the salvation of the soul, the more noble part of man; and it is a complete and everlasting one: to “neglect” this, is to be careless of it; to condemn it, and to despise the ministers of it; and to make anything else but Christ the way of salvation: and the danger such are in is very great; it is not possible that they should escape divine vengeance, since their sin is so great, and attended with such aggravating circumstances; for it is a contempt of the grace and wisdom of God in providing such a Saviour, and a trampling under foot the Son of God, and a counting his blood as a common thing; and besides, there is no more sacrifice for sin, they can have nothing to atone for it; and that God, whom they offend hereby, is both omniscient and omnipotent, and there will be no escaping out of his hands: to which must be added, that this Gospel of salvation is that

which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord; by the Lord Jesus Christ himself; the Gospel was preached by him, and he was extraordinarily qualified for it; and he spake it as never man did: it was preached by John indeed, and by all the prophets before him, and to the Israelites in the wilderness, and to Abraham before them, and even to Adam in Eden's garden, which was the first time it was spoken; but then it was spoken to him by the Lord; by the Word of the Lord, the essential Word, the Son of God, as the ancient Chaldee paraphrases, which express the sense of the

old Jewish church, show^{f27}: besides, it began most fully and clearly to be preached by him in the days of his flesh, so as it never was preached before, nor since; grace and truth, the doctrines of grace and truth came by him, in all their fulness and glory: and

was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; the Gospel is in itself firm and stable; nor did the words of Christ need any confirmation, who is truth itself, the “Amen”, and faithful witness; but in condescension to human weakness, and by reason that Christ, as man, was not everywhere, and that by the mouth of more witnesses it should be established, he sent forth his apostles to preach it; who heard it from him, and they published it to the Jews first, as these were to whom the apostle writes, and then to the Gentiles. And though the apostle had it first by revelation from Christ himself, (<8011>Galatians 1:11,12) it was confirmed to him by Ananias.

Ver. 4. *God also bearing them witness*, etc..] The apostles of Christ; God testifying to their mission and commission, and the truth of the doctrine they preached:

both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles; such as taking up serpents without hurt, healing the sick, causing the lame to walk, and raising the dead, and casting out devils, and the like; all which were for the confirmation of the Gospel preached by them: a sign, wonder, or miracle, for these signify the same thing, is a marvellous work done before men, by the power of God, to confirm a divine truth; God is the sole author of miracles; and they were done in the first ages of Christianity, when they were necessary, to give evidence of the truth of it, and to establish men in it; and these were various, as before observed: and gifts of the Holy Ghost; such as besides gifts of healing and working miracles, gifts of foretelling things to come, discerning of spirits, speaking with divers kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues, (<4218>1 Corinthians 12:8,9,10) according to his own will; either according to the will of God, who bore testimony by these miracles and gifts; or according to the will of the Holy Spirit, who distributed them to men severally as he pleased, (<4211>1 Corinthians 12:11).

Ver. 5. *For unto the angels*, etc..] Though angels were concerned in the giving of the law, and were frequently employed under the former dispensation, in messages to men, and in making revelations of God's mind and will to them, yet to them

hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak: by which is meant, not the future state of eternal glory and happiness in heaven, as opposed to this world, and the present state of things; though there may be much truth in this sense, as that the present world is in subjection to angels, and the world to come is not; the present world is much in subjection, though it is not put into subjection, to evil angels, who usurp a power over it, hence Satan is called the god and prince of this world; and it is in some sense in subjection to good angels, as they are used by God in the execution of his providential care and government, in influencing and assisting at the councils of princes, in inflicting God's judgments on kingdoms and nations, and in the special care of his own people: but the world to come, as opposed to this, is not at all subject to them; they are employed in carrying the souls of departed saints thither, and shall be with them there, and join with them in their service; but they will not be as kings, nor even as children, but as servants; much less is heaven at their dispose to give to whomsoever they please; it is only in this sense in subjection to Christ, the Prince of life, who has power to give eternal life to as many as the Father has given to him: but it is not of this world the apostle is speaking; he is speaking of something now, which bears this name, and in proof of it cites a passage out of (~~9001~~ Psalm 8:1-9) where mention is made of sheep, and other things, which cannot refer to the world of glory: rather it designs the new heavens and new earth at the resurrection, and day of judgment, for these will not be put in subjection to angels; though of these the apostle is not speaking in the context: it seems therefore to intend the Gospel, and the Gospel dispensation and church state, in opposition to the Jewish state, and legal dispensation, which was called a world, and had in it a worldly sanctuary, and worldly ordinances, which is now at an end; and at the end of which Christ came, and then another world took place, here called “the world to come”, as the times of the Messiah are frequently called by the Jews **abh μl w[**, “the world to come”, the Gospel dispensation, the apostle was treating of in the preceding verses, in distinction from the law, the word spoken by angels; for the Gospel was not spoken by them, but by the Lord: the Gospel state is very properly the world to come, with respect to the Old Testament saints, who were looking for it, and in which old things are past away, and all things are become new; angels desire to look into the mysteries of it, and learn from the church the manifold wisdom of God; but not they, but men, are the dispensers of the doctrines of it; and Christ, he is the Head, King, Governor, and Father of this new world: so instead of “everlasting

Father”, the Septuagint render the clause **πατηρ του μελλοντος αιωνος**, in (^{<2306>}Isaiah 9:6) “the Father of the age”, or “world to come”; and hence mention is made in the Jewish writings of **aj ycmd yvad aml [**, “the world to come of the Messiah” ^{f28}.

Ver. 6. *But one in a certain place testified*, etc..] That is, David, for he is the penman of the psalm, out of which the following words are taken; and though his name is not mentioned by the apostle, nor the particular place, or the psalm pointed at, as in (^{<4133>}Acts 13:33,35) yet this was not through ignorance of either, nor out of disrespect to the penman; but because the apostle is writing to Jews, who were conversant with the Scriptures, and knew full well who said the words, and where they were: and it is usual with the Jews to cite passages in this manner; and the form by which the passage is introduced, by the word testified, is quite agreeable to their way of citing Scripture, of which there is another instance in (^{<3877>}Hebrews 7:17) and I think that this form is only used in this epistle to the Hebrews, with which they were acquainted: it is common with them to say, **hdy[h hrwth**, “the law testified” ^{f29}, as it is said in such or such a place; and here the apostle produces a passage, as a witness and testimony of the truth of what he had said, that the Gospel dispensation is not put in subjection to angels, but to the Messiah: the passage stands in (^{<3034>}Psalms 8:4) which psalm belongs to the times of the Messiah, as appears from the non-application of it to others; and from the application of a passage in it to the children in his time, (^{<4216>}Matthew 21:16) by Christ himself, and of the passage here by the apostle; nor in any other time was the name of the Lord excellent in all the earth, with which the psalm begins and concludes:

Saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? this is not to be understood of mankind in general: not of man in a state of innocence; there were no babes nor sucklings in paradise, nor enemies to restrain; “Enosh”, the word for man, signifies a frail mortal man, which Adam then was not; nor could he be called the son of man; nor can it so well suit with him, to be said to be made a little lower than the angels, and then crowned with glory and honour: nor of man as fallen, for all things are not subjected unto him; but of Christ, with whom everything agrees, as the name by which he is called, “Enosh”, a frail man; for he was a man encompassed with infirmities; of no note and esteem among men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs; was subject to death, and did die; and is often called the son of man: what is said of him suits with him,

as that God was “mindful of him”; which may be expressive of his love and delight in, and choice of his human nature, to be taken into union with his divine person; and of his counsel and covenant in preparing it for him; and of his uniting it to his person; and of his providential care of it, and great affection for it; of his unction of it, and of his great regard to it in its sufferings, by supporting it, and in raising it from the dead: and also that he “visited” him; not in a way of wrath, but of favour, with his presence, with the gifts and graces of his Spirit, with divine supports, and spiritual peace and joy; all which in itself it was not deserving of, nor could it claim; and therefore these things are spoken of as favours, and in a way of admiration.

Ver. 7. *Thou madest him a little lower than the angels*, etc..] In the Hebrew text it is, “than Elohim”, which some render, “than God”; but it is rightly rendered by the apostle, “than angels”; and so the Targum, Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, interpret it. Christ was made a little lower than the angels, through the assumption of the human nature, which is inferior to angels, especially the corporeal part of it, and in this Kimchi makes the lessening to be; and more especially as that was assumed by Christ, with the infirmities of it; and by reason of the straits and indigencies he was brought into in it; besides, he was in it made under the law, which was given by angels, and to some parts of which they are not subject; and sometimes he stood in need of the ministry and support of angels, and had it; particularly he was made lower than they, when he was deprived of the gracious presence of God, and in the time of his sufferings and death; and which seem chiefly to be respected, as appears from (^{<3810>}Hebrews 2:9) and the word “little” may not so much intend the degree of his humiliation, as the duration of it; for it may be rendered, “a little while”; in which sense it is used in (^{<4153>}Acts 5:34) as the Hebrew word **j** [**m** is in (^{<3970>}Psalm 37:10) and so may respect the time of his suffering death; and at most the time from his incarnation to his resurrection; for he could not continue long in this low estate, which is matter of joy to us; he could not be held by the cords of death, but must rise, and be exalted above angels, as he is: and he was made so low by God, Jehovah the Father, whose name is excellent in all the earth, (^{<4011>}Psalm 8:1) he preordained him to this low estate; he prepared a body for him, and had a very great hand in his sufferings and death; though neither of these were contrary to his will:

thou crownest him with glory and honour; with that glory he had with the Father before the world was, and which followed upon his sufferings and death; for through them he entered into it, and upon his resurrection had it,

and he is ascended on high, where he has the honour to sit at the right hand of God, which none of the angels have; and therefore is now above them, though once for a while below them, and they are now subject to him:

and didst set him over the works of thy hands: over angels, principalities, and powers; over the kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of it, and all things in it, and made him higher than the heavens, and gave him a name above every name.

Ver. 8. *Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet*, etc..] Good angels, men and devils, all things in heaven, earth, and sea; (see ⁴¹⁰²1 Peter 3:22)

for in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him; there is no one person or thing that is not subject to Christ; the subjection is the most universal, either voluntary or involuntary; whether they will or not, they are, and must be subject; God has left nothing but what he has put under his power:

but now we see not yet all things put under him; this seems to be an objection, and even a contradiction to what is before said; which may be removed by observing, that though this general subjection is not seen by us, it does not follow that it is not; and though it is not as yet visible, yet it will be: and besides, the apostle's sense may be, that no such general subjection to any mere man has ever been seen and known; as not to Solomon, nor Ahasuerus, nor Cyrus, nor Alexander the great, nor Julius, nor Augustus Caesar, nor any other; and this he may observe, to show the non-application of this passage to any but to Jesus Christ; and this sense is confirmed by what follows.

Ver. 9. *But we see Jesus*, etc..] Not with bodily eyes, but with the eyes of the mind, and understanding; that he is Jesus, as the Syriac version reads; and that he is designed in the above words; and that he has all things made subject unto him; and that he was humbled, and now exalted, as follows:

who was made a little lower than the angels; in his state of humiliation; (see Gill on "⁸¹⁰⁷Hebrews 2:7")

for the suffering of death: this clause may be considered either as connected with the preceding; and then the sense is, that Jesus became lower than the angels, by, or through suffering death; in that respect he was lower than they, who die not; this proved him to be in a condition below

them, and showed how pertinent the above words were to him, and how they were fulfilled in him: or with the following; and then the meaning is, that because Jesus suffered death in the room and stead of his people; humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross, when he was very low indeed, therefore he is

crowned with glory and honour; (see ^{<5238>}Philippians 2:8,9) and (see Gill on ^{<5017>}Hebrews 2:7”).

that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man; that is, Christ was made a little lower than the angels by becoming man, and assuming a body frail and mortal, that he might die for his church and people: to “taste death”, is a Jewish phrase, often to be met with in Rabbinical writings; (see Gill on ^{<4163>}Matthew 16:28”) and signifies the truth and reality of his death, and the experience he had of the bitterness of it, it being attended with the wrath of God, and curse of the law; though he continued under it but for a little while, it was but a taste; and it includes all kinds of death, he tasted of the death of afflictions, being a man of sorrows all his days, and a corporeal death, and what was equivalent to an eternal one; and so some think the words will bear to be rendered, “that he by the grace of God might taste of every death”; which rendering of the words, if it could be established, as it is agreeable to the context, and to the analogy of faith, would remove all pretence of an argument from this place, in favour of the universal scheme: what moved God to make him lower than the angels, and deliver him up to death, was not any anger towards him, any disregard to him, or because he deserved it, but his “grace”, free favour, and love to men; this moved him to provide him as a ransom; to preordain him to be the Lamb slain; to send him in the fulness of time, and give him up to justice and death: the Syriac version reads, “for God himself through his own grace tasted death for all”; Christ died, not merely as an example, or barely for the good of men, but as a surety, in their room and stead, and that not for every individual of mankind; for there are some he knows not; for some he does not pray; and there are some who will not be saved: the word “man” is not in the original text, it is only *υπερ παντος*, which may be taken either collectively, and be rendered “for the whole”; that is, the whole body, the church for whom Christ gave himself, and is the Saviour of; or distributively, and be translated, “for everyone”; for everyone of the sons God brings to glory, (^{<5210>}Hebrews 2:10) for everyone of the “brethren”, whom Christ sanctifies, and he is not ashamed to own, and to whom he declares the name of God, (^{<5211>}Hebrews 2:11,12) for

everyone of the members of the “church”, in the midst of which he sung praise, (^{<S2P2>}Hebrews 2:12) for every one of the “children” God has given him, and for whose sake he took part of flesh and blood, (^{<S2P3>}Hebrews 2:13,14) and for everyone of the “seed” of Abraham, in a spiritual sense, whose nature he assumed, (^{<S2P6>}Hebrews 2:16).

Ver. 10. *For it became him, for whom are all things*, etc..] This is not a periphrasis of Christ, who died, but of God the Father, who delivered him to death; and who is the final cause of all things, in nature, and in grace, all things being made for his pleasure and for his glory; and he is the efficient cause of all things, as follows:

and by whom are all things; all the works of creation, providence, and grace:

in bringing many sons to glory; not to worldly glory, but to the heavenly glory, which they are undeserving of; and which was long ago prepared for them; is at present hid; is weighty, solid, durable, yea, eternal: the persons whom God, of his rich grace, brings to this, are “sons”; who are predestinated to the adoption of children; are regenerated by the Spirit of God; believe in Christ; and have the spirit of adoption given them, and so being children, are heirs of glory: and these are “many”; for though they are but few, when compared with others, yet they are many, considered by themselves; they are many that God has ordained to eternal life, and given to Christ, and for whom he has given himself a ransom, and whom he justifies; and accordingly there are many mansions of glory provided for them in their Father's house, whose act it is to bring them thither: he has chosen them to this glory, and prepared it for them; he sent his Son to redeem them; he reveals his Son in them, the hope of glory; he calls them to his eternal glory, and makes them meet for it, and gives them an abundant entrance into it: and

him it became — to make the Captain of their salutation perfect through sufferings; Christ is “the Captain of salvation”, and is so called, because he is the author of it; and he is the Prince and Commander of these sons, who are committed to his charge, and are under his care; and is their guide and leader; and who is gone before them to prepare their mansions of glory for them: and he is made “perfect through sufferings”; he suffered all that the law and justice of God could require; and hereby he became perfectly acquainted with the sufferings of his people, and a perfect Saviour of them; and in this way went to glory himself: and it “became” God the Father, the

first cause, and last end of all things, since he had a design to bring all his adopted sons to glory, that his own Son should perfectly suffer for them; this was agreeable to, and becoming the perfections of his nature, his wisdom, his veracity, his justice, grace, and mercy.

Ver. 11. *For both he that sanctifieth*, etc..] Not himself, though this is said of him, (^{<417>}John 17:19) nor his Father, though this also is true of him, (^{<2183>}Isaiah 8:13) but his people, the sons brought to glory, whose salvation he is the Captain of; they are sanctified in him, he being made sanctification to them; and they have their sanctification from him, all their grace and holiness; and they are sanctified by him, both by his blood, which expiates their sins, and removes the guilt of them, and by his Spirit, working internal principles of grace and holiness in them, who are by nature, and in their unregenerate state, guilty and unclean:

and they who are sanctified; the sons brought to glory; they are not naturally holy, nor so of themselves, they are made holy; all that are sons are made holy; whom God adopts into his family, he regenerates: sanctification is absolutely necessary to their being brought to glory; and between the sanctifier and the sanctified there is a likeness, as there ought to be: they are

all of one: they are both of one God and Father, Christ's God is their God, and his Father is their Father; they are of one body, Christ is the head, and they are members; they are of one covenant, Christ is the surety, Mediator, and messenger of it, and they share in all its blessings and promises; they are of one man, Adam, Christ is a Son of Adam, though not by ordinary generation, they descend from him in the common way; they are all of one nature, of one blood; Christ has took part of the same flesh and blood with them:

for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren; Christ, and these sons that are sanctified, stand in the relation of brethren to each other; Christ is the firstborn among many brethren; he is a brother born for the day of adversity, and one that sticks closer than a brother: and this relation is founded both upon the incarnation of Christ, who thereby became his people's "Goel"; or near kinsman, yea, brother, (^{<2180>}Song of Solomon 8:1) and upon their adoption unto his Father's family, which is made manifest by their regeneration, and by their doing his Father's will under the influence of his grace and Spirit, (^{<4124>}Matthew 12:49,50) and this relation Christ owns; he called his disciples brethren, when God had raised him from the

dead, and given him glory; and so he will call all his saints, even the meanest of them, in the great day, (^{<4180>}Matthew 28:10 25:40), and “he is not ashamed” to do it; he does not disdain it, though he is God over all, and the Son of God, and is also in his human nature made higher than the heavens; which shows the wonderful condescension of Christ, and the honour that is put upon the saints; and may teach them not to despise the meanest among them: such a relation the Jews own will be between the Messiah and the Israelites. The Targumist on (^{<2181>}Song of Solomon 8:1) paraphrases the words thus;

“when the King Messiah shall be revealed to the congregation of Israel, the children of Israel shall say unto him, Come, be thou with us, **j al** , for “a brother”, or “be thou our brother”.”

Nor can they say this will reflect any discredit upon Christ, when they make such a relation to be between God and them. The Israelites, they say ^{f30}, are called, **hbqhl μyj a** “the brethren of the holy blessed God”; in proof of which they often produce (^{<4028>}Psalms 122:8) as being the words of God to them; and again, interpreting those words in (^{<402548>}Leviticus 25:48) “one of his brethren may redeem him”, this, say ^{f31} they, is the holy blessed God.

Ver. 12. *Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren*, etc.] These words, with the following clause, are cited from (^{<4022>}Psalms 22:22) as a proof of what the apostle had before asserted; and that this psalm is to be understood, not of the Jewish nation, or people of Israel, nor of Esther, nor of David, but of the Messiah, appears from the title of it, “Aijeleth, Shahar”, which signifies “the morning hind”; from the particular account of Christ's sufferings in it; from his several offices herein pointed to; from the conversion of the Gentiles it prophesies of; and from several passages cited from hence, and applied to Christ; (see ^{<4025>}Matthew 27:35,39,43,46). And these are the words of Christ addressed to his Father; whose name he promises to declare to his brethren; meaning not the Jews, in general, his brethren according to the flesh; but his disciples and followers, particularly the twelve apostles, and the five hundred brethren to whom he appeared after his resurrection; and indeed all the saints and people of God may be included: and by his name he would declare to them, is not meant any particular name of his, as Elohim, El-shaddai, Jehovah, or the like; but rather he himself, and the perfections of his nature, which he, the only begotten Son, lying in his bosom, has declared; though the Gospel seems

chiefly to be designed; (see ^{<5776>}John 17:6,26) and this Christ declared with great exactness and accuracy, with clearness and perspicuity, and with all integrity and fidelity: he spoke it out plainly, and concealed no part of it; as he received it from his Father, he faithfully made it known to his people; this is expressive of Christ's prophetic office, of his preaching of the Gospel, both in his own person, and by his ministers:

in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee; or “a hymn”; this is to be understood not of the church above, but of the church below; and not of the synagogue of the Jews, but of the disciples of Christ, and of his singing an hymn to God, with and among them, as he did at the institution of the supper, (^{<4833>}Matthew 26:30) for though the number of the apostles was but small, yet they made a congregation or church, and which was a pure and glorious one. With the Jews ^{f32}, ten men made a congregation.

Ver. 13. *And again, I will put my trust in him*, etc..] These words are taken not from (^{<2387>}Isaiah 8:17) where, in the Septuagint version, is a like phrase; for they are not the words of the Messiah there, but of the prophet; and besides, the apostle disjoins them from the following words, which stand there, by saying, “and again”; but they are cited from (^{<1982>}Psalms 18:2) in which psalm are many things which have respect to the Messiah, and his times; the person spoken of is said to be made the head of the Heathen, to whom unknown people yield a voluntary submission, and the name of God is praised among the Gentiles, (^{<1983>}Psalms 18:43,49). The Targum upon it makes mention of the Messiah in (^{<1982>}Psalms 18:32) and he is manifestly spoken of under the name of David, in (^{<1981>}Psalms 18:50) and which verse is applied to the Messiah, by the Jews, both ancient and modern ^{f33}: and these words are very applicable to him, for as man he had every grace of the Spirit in him; and this of faith, and also of hope, very early appeared in him; he trusted in God for the daily supplies of life, and that he would help him in, and through the work of man's salvation; (see ^{<4929>}Psalms 22:9,10 ^{<2307>}Isaiah 50:7-9) he committed his Spirit into his hands at death, with confidence, and believed he would raise his body from the dead; and he trusted him with his own glory, and the salvation of his people: and this is a citation pertinent to the purpose, showing that Christ and his people are one, and that they are brethren; for he must be man, since, as God, he could not be said to trust; and he must be a man of sorrows and distress, to stand in need of trusting in God.

And again, behold I and the children which God hath given me; this is a citation from (²³⁸⁸Isaiah 8:18) in which prophecy is a denunciation of God's judgments upon Israel, by the Assyrians, when God's own people among them are comforted with a promise of the Messiah, who is described as the Lord of hosts; who is to be sanctified, and be as a sanctuary to the saints, and as a stone of stumbling to others; and the prophet is ordered to bind and seal up the doctrine among the disciples, at which he seems astonished and concerned, but resolves to wait; upon which Christ, to encourage him, speaks these words; for they are not addressed to God, as the Syriac version renders them, "behold I and the children, whom thou hast given me, O God"; in which may be observed, that the saints are children with respect to God, who has adopted them, and with respect to Christ, who is their everlasting Father; that they were given to Christ as his spiritual seed and offspring, as his portion, and to be his care and charge; and that this is worthy of attention, and calls for admiration, that Christ and his people are one, and that he is not ashamed to own them before God and men.

Ver. 14. *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood,* etc..] By the children are meant, not the children of this world, or the men of it; nor the children of the flesh, or Abraham's natural seed; nor visible professors of religion; nor the apostles of Christ only; but all the children of God, the children given to Christ; all the sons that are brought to glory: these "are partakers of flesh and blood"; of human nature, which is common to them all, and which is subject to infirmity and mortality; and the sense is, that they are frail mortal men: and this being their state and case,

he also himself took part of the same; Christ became man also, or assumed an human nature like theirs; this shows that he existed before his incarnation, who of himself, and by his own voluntary act, assumed an individual of human nature into union with his divine person, which is expressive of wondrous grace and condescension: Christ's participation of human nature, and the children's, in some things agree, in others they differ; they agree in this, that it is real flesh and blood they both partake of; that Christ's body is not spiritual and heavenly, but natural as theirs is; and that it is a complete, perfect, human nature, and subject to mortality and infirmity like theirs: but then Christ took his nature of a virgin, and is without sin; nor has it any distinct personality, but from the moment of its being subsisted in his divine person: and now the true reason of Christ's assuming such a nature was on account of the children, which discovers

great love to them, and shows that it was with a peculiar view to them that he became man; hence they only share the special advantages of his incarnation, sufferings, and death: and his end in doing this was,

that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; the devil is said to have the power of death, not because he can kill and destroy men at pleasure, but because he was the first introducer of sin, which brought death into the world, and so he was a murderer from the beginning; and he still tempts men to sin, and then accuses them of it, and terrifies and affrights them with death; and by divine permission has inflicted it, and will be the executioner of the second death. The apostle here speaks in the language of the Jews, who often call Samael, or Satan, *twmh Æal m*, “the angel of death”, in their Targums ^{f34}, Talmud ^{f35}, and other writings ^{f36}; and say, he was the cause of death to all the world; and ascribe much the same things to him, for which the apostle here so styles him: and they moreover say ^{f37}, that he will cease in the time to come; that is, in the days of the Messiah: and who being come, has destroyed him, not as to his being, but as to his power; he has bruised his head, destroyed his works, disarmed his principalities and powers, and took the captives out of his hands, and saved those he would have devoured: and this he has done by death; “by his own death”, as the Syriac and Arabic versions read; whereby he has abolished death itself, and sin the cause of it, and so Satan, whose empire is supported by it.

Ver. 15. *And deliver them, who through fear of death*, etc..] This is another end of Christ's assuming human nature, and dying in it, and thereby destroying Satan, that he might save some out of his hands:

[who] were all their lifetime subject to bondage; meaning chiefly God's elect among the Jews; for though all men are in a state of bondage to the lusts of the flesh, and are Satan's captives; yet this describes more particularly the state of the Jews, under the law of Moses, which gendered unto bondage; which they being guilty of the breach of, and seeing the danger they were exposed to on that account, were subject, bound, and held fast in and under a spirit of bondage: and that “through fear of death”; through fear of a corporeal death; through fear of chastisements and afflictions, the forerunners of death, and what sometimes bring it on; and through fear of death itself, as a disunion of soul and body, and as a penal evil; and through fear of what follows it, an awful judgment: and this the Jews especially were in fear of, from their frequent violations of the

precepts, both of the moral, and of the ceremonial law, which threatened with death; and this they lived in a continual fear of, because they were daily transgressing, which brought on them a spirit of bondage unto fear: and, as Philo the Jew^{f38} observes, nothing more brings the mind into bondage than the fear of death: and many these, even all the chosen ones among them, Christ delivered, or saved from sin, from Satan, from the law, and its curses, from death corporeal, as a penal evil, and from death eternal; even from all enemies and dangers, and brought them into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Ver. 16. *For verily he took not on him the nature of angels*, etc..] Good angels; for they are all along spoken of in this book; and it would have been impertinent to have said this of evil angels: and this is to be understood not of a denying help and assistance to the angels; for though they have not redemption from Christ, which they needed not, yet have they help from him; they are chosen in him, and are gathered together under him; and he is the head of them, and they are upheld and sustained by him in their being, and well being: but of a non-assumption of their nature; there was no need of it with respect to good angels, and there was no salvation designed for evil ones; and to have assumed the nature of angels, would have been of no service to fallen man; an angelic nature is not capable of death, which was necessary to atone for sin, save men, and destroy Satan: this negative proposition is very strongly put, “he never took”, as the Vulgate Latin version more rightly renders it; at no time, in no place; nor is it said in any place of Scripture that he did; this is a certain truth, and not to be disputed. The Syriac and Arabic versions render it, “he took not of, or from angels”; he took not any individual from among them:

but he took on him the seed of Abraham; not all his posterity, but some individual, as the word seed is sometimes used, (⁽⁰¹⁰²⁵⁾Genesis 4:25 15:3). Christ assumed human nature as derived from Abraham; for the Messiah was to spring from Abraham, and is promised, as that seed of his, in whom all nations should be blessed; and he was particularly promised to the Jews, the seed of Abraham, to whom the apostle was writing; and it was with a view to Abraham's spiritual seed, the children of the promise, that Christ partook of flesh and blood: the word here used signifies to catch hold of anyone ready to perish, or to lay hold on a person running away, and with great vehemence and affection to hold anything fast, that it be not lost, and to help persons, and do good unto them; all which may be observed in this act of Christ's, in assuming an individual of human nature, in Abraham's

line, into union with his divine person; whereby he has saved those that were gone out of the way, and were ready to perish, and done them the greatest good, and shown the strongest affection to them: and from hence may be learned the deity and eternity of Christ, who was before Abraham, as God, though a son of his as man; and his real humanity, and that it was not a person, but a seed, a nature he assumed; and also the union and distinction of natures in him: and Christ's taking human, and not angelic nature, shows the sovereignty of God, and his distinguishing grace and mercy to men.

Ver. 17. *Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren*, etc..] The adopted sons of God, who were brethren before Christ's incarnation, being from all eternity predestinated to the adoption of children: Christ's incarnation was in time, and after that many of the brethren existed; and it was only for their sakes that he assumed human nature; and therefore it was proper he should be like them in that nature, in all things: in all the essentials of it; it was not necessary that he should have it by natural generation; nor that it should have a subsistence in itself as theirs: and in all the properties and affections of it, that are, not sinful; for it did not behove him to be like them in sin, nor in sickness, and in diseases of the body: and in all temptations; though in some things his differ from theirs; none of his arose from within; and those from without could make no impression on him: and in sufferings, that there might be a conformity between the head and members; though there is in some things a difference; his sufferings were by way of punishment, and were attended with wrath, and were meritorious, which cannot be said of theirs; but that he should have an human nature, as to its essence and perfection, like to theirs, was necessary: it was proper he should be truly and really man, as well as truly God,

that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest; he could not be an high priest, offer sacrifice for sin, and make intercession, unless he was man; nor could he be a “merciful” and compassionate one, sympathize with his people in their sorrows, temptations, and sufferings, unless he was like them in these; nor would he be a “faithful”, that is, a true and lawful one otherwise, because every high priest is taken from among men:

in things [pertaining] to God; in things in which God has to do with his people, as to preside in his name over them, to declare his will unto them, and bless them; and in things in which the people have to do with God, to

offer to God a sacrifice for their sins, to present this sacrifice to him, to appear in his presence for them, to carry in their petitions, and plead their cause as their advocate:

to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; of God's covenant people, the people he has chosen for himself, and given to his Son; and whom Christ saves from their sins, by making satisfaction for them, to the law and justice of God, which is here meant by reconciliation: and in order to this, which could not be done without blood, without sufferings and death, it was proper he should be man, and like unto his brethren: the allusion seems to be to the two goats on the day of atonement, one of which was to be slain, and the other let go; which were to be, as the Jews say^{f39}, אֲדָמָה, “alike”, in colour, in stature, and in price; and so were the birds to be alike in the same things, that were used at the cleansing of the leper^{f40}: and the Jews tell us^{f41}, that the high priest was to be greater than his brethren, in beauty, in strength, in wisdom, and in riches; all which is true of Christ.

Ver. 18. *For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted*, etc..] By Satan, at his entrance on his public ministry, and a little before his death; which was done, not by stirring up sin in him, for he had none, nor by putting any into him, which could not be done, nor could Satan get any advantage over him; he solicited him one thing and another, but in vain; though these temptations were very troublesome, and disagreeable, and abhorrent to the pure and holy nature of Christ, and so must be reckoned among his sufferings, or things by which he suffered: and as afflictions are sometimes called temptations, in this sense also Christ suffered, being tempted, with outward poverty and meanness, with slight and neglect from his own relations, and with a general contempt and reproach among men: he was often tempted by the Jews with ensnaring questions; he was deserted by his followers, by his own disciples, yea, by his God and Father; all which were great trials to him, and must be accounted as sufferings: and he also endured great pains of body, and anguish of mind, and at last death itself. And so

he is able to succour them that are tempted; as all the saints, more or less, are, both with Satan's temptations, and with afflictions in the world, which God suffers to befall them, on various accounts; partly on his own account, to show his grace, power, and faithfulness in supporting under them, and in delivering out of them; and partly on his Son's account, that they might be

like unto him, and he may have an opportunity of succouring them, and sympathizing with them; and also on their own account, to humble them, to try their faith, to excite them to prayer and watchfulness, and to keep them dependent on the power and grace of God: and these Christ succours, by having and showing a fellow feeling with them; by praying for them; by supporting them under temptations; by rebuking the tempter, and delivering out of them: and all this he is able to do; he must be able to succour them as he is God; and his conquering Satan is a convincing evidence to the saints of his ability; but here it intends his qualification, and fitness, and readiness to help in such circumstances, from the experience he himself has had of these things.