

trifle with Christians by putting in their hands a dumb show of Christ's death, a pictorial representation of it by means of symbols, and little more. It takes up this view but adds to it. It presents to them a transaction pregnant with spiritual life, actually communicating the advantages of Christ's death. But it does not undermine virtue or the spirituality of religion. It requires the free, spiritual activity of man, and does not hold the blessing in outward union with the elements, to be received by any who partake of them, but in receiving them with a spirit in inward union with the Spirit of Christ. It exalts the divine, but does not foster superstition, and an outward observance of the rite, and a false confidence in its mechanical efficacy. It exalts the human, but does not detract from the efficacy or worth of the sacrament. It exalts the human and the divine, the divine and the human, in living and inseparable union, and thus honors morals while it promotes religion.

ARTICLE III.

THE ETERNAL LIFE AND PRIESTHOOD OF MELCHISEDEK.¹

[Condensed from the German of Auberlen.]

BY REV. HENRY A. SAWTELLE, M. A., LIMERICK, ME.

Introduction; Historical Notice of Opinions.

The declarations concerning Melchisedek, in the seventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, have afforded interpreters much difficulty. Particularly has this been the case with the third and eighth verses. The peculiarity in the latter verse is, that the Priest-king of Salem, in the char-

¹ The original Article may be found in the *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* for 1857, pp. 453—504. Its author is Carl August Auberlen, Dr. Phil., Licentiate and Professor *Extraordinarius* of Theology in Basil.

acter of one who lives, is opposed to the Levitical priests who die,—a contrast unwarranted unless Melchisedek have a being superior to the ordinary existence of man. And this supposition is favored, if not in fact demanded, by the former verse, in which arises the new difficulty of a mysterious man possessing an eternal priesthood opposed to the Levitical, and like that of Christ.

In this matter even our better expositors have resorted to strange assumptions and expedients. There are two classes of the older opinions,—the one assuming for Melchisedek a nature in some way supernatural, the other escaping this by exegetical evasions. In the former class, Ambrose and others, held Melchisedek to be a manifestation of the Logos; Hierax, and others, of the Holy Spirit; while Origen supposed him to be an angel. If he were a man, still something supernatural must belong to him. Hulsius thought him the returning Enoch, and Kloppenburg considered him a man immediately created by God. He has been identified with some better known personage. Thus Jurieu hits upon Ham; while the Rabbinical opinion that it was Shem is favored even by Luther, Melancthon, and others, and is not yet entirely discarded by Stier.

Among the exegetical evasions or shifts resorted to, is that of Storr and others, who assume that in v. 8 Christ is the one who *lives*; they supply in v. 3, before *abides*, a subject relating to Christ, and thus escape the difficulty of the only reasonable reference to Melchisedek. The view of L. Bos belongs here, namely, that the word “forever” expresses only the unbroken continuance of Melchisedek’s priesthood until his death; in which case he would be like others. But more than a mere evasion is the explanation of Theophylact, Oecumenius, Calvin, Bengel, and others, who say that the expression that Melchisedek lives, and the one about his being priest forever, both relate to the silence of scripture respecting his death, the end of his priesthood, his successor and the like. This accounts for the negative predicates (v. 3). But the positive expressions plainly refer to something about which scripture is not silent, but entirely ex-

PLICIT; for the words "abides a priest forever," are taken nearly word for word from Ps. 110, and in fact the "witness" in v. 8 is this same psalm. Nor less inadmissible is the view of others, that the priesthood of Melchisedek continues on in Christ, as the type is carried on in the anti-type. Bleek's remark is good against this, that in that case Melchisedek would not have directly and independently the very peculiarity on account of which he may be a type of Christ.

The later exegesis does not exceed the old. Bleek, whose commentary is unsurpassed in our exegetical literature, in point of profoundness and thoroughness of verbal explanation, says that, according to the writer to the Hebrews, "Melchisedek had in fact no human parents, or predecessor, but by immediate Omnipotence was placed on the earth, and afterward borne away, as an incarnation of the divine Spirit, or, at least, of a celestial existence." But could our inspired author seriously have thought of a celestial being as king on earth, and as such remaining so wholly unknown as only once opportunely to emerge from his obscurity? Such a mythical representation would depreciate the canonical value of our epistle.

Stier,¹ DeWette, Tholuck, and Ebrard, take Melchisedek to be simply a historical person. Tholuck brings into connection with his view the explanation of the Peschito, namely, that the priesthood of Melchisedek is made perpetual by passing upon Christ. Stier and DeWette express themselves in harmony with Theophylact, by understanding that Melchisedek represented an eternal priest simply by virtue of what the scripture says, or rather does not say, of him. Similar is the view of Ebrard, who formerly advanced hopefully towards a deeper apprehension of Melchisedek's relation both to the Levitical priests and to Christ. He observes that the person of Melchisedek, and not the office,

¹ Stier's thirty-six meditations on the epistle to the Hebrews occupy a prominent place among his exegetical works; and, besides being characterized by the author's well-known mental depth and fulness of thought, evince a validity of representation formerly unusual with this interpreter.

but yet the conception of that person as formed in the Psalmist's mind, and not the real individual, was the type of the Messiah. To this *conception* of Melchisedek is ascribed an eternal priesthood, because mention is nowhere made of a successor in the priestly office; and eternal life is ascribed, because his death is not related. But, were this the proper view, Melchisedek could be termed only a single, abiding priest, not an eternal one. Ebrard would derive the eternity from the singleness; but the epistle (v. 23, 24) plainly derives the singleness from the eternity, and so makes a contrast with the plurality of the Levitical priests. Furthermore, it is impossible for the person to be sundered from the actual individual, and fade away into a mere conception. It is equally impossible, as Ebrard justly confesses, that the priesthood of Melchisedek be superior to the Levitical, simply on account of not resting on mere descent and legal order. Ebrard is right in giving prominence to the view that the *person* must be concerned in exalting the priesthood. But he should have gone more deeply from this point. There is something in the actual person of Melchisedek fully explaining the difficult expressions which concern his actual life and priesthood.

In proceeding with our investigation we begin outside and come in narrowing circles to the very passages in dispute. We shall offer, first, some remarks on the general character of our epistle, and the course of thought as a whole, in order to learn what place in the general organism our particular expressions hold. Secondly, we shall present an analysis of the particular section bearing on Melchisedek's priesthood. Thirdly, we will explain the disputed passages themselves, together with their nearest connection. Finally, we shall add a division respecting the advantage our view holds over other explanations.

§ 1. *General View of the Epistle to the Hebrews.*

Every one knows the depth and energy of thought peculiar to our epistle. If the thought is shaped in a way that

is unusual with Paul, it is yet unmistakable that the author, whoever he is, is penetrated with that apostle's deepest ideas; and the ancient view, which has recently attracted so many friends, namely, that Paul must have shared in the composition of the letter, will ever obtrude itself afresh. The emancipation of the new covenant from the old, which was the great life-task of the apostle, forms also the theme of the epistle to the Hebrews; and we shall see that the section to be treated derives its chief light from a comparison of Pauline passages. Our epistle is also Pauline in aiming to prove the abrogation of the old covenant through Christ, substantially from the Old Testament itself. Possibly in this respect it goes beyond the apostle. Hebrew readers are argued with from the old scripture ground. The reader is overcome with his own weapons; as it was when our Lord said to the Jew, "If ye believe Moses, then believe also me, for he wrote of me," — a passage which would afford an excellent motto for the section referring to Melchisedek. It is remarkable that those writers who represent the O. T. law as carnal, and the old sanctuary as earthly, bowed implicitly before the O. T. as the word of God, thus imitating the course of our Saviour. Our author, in particular, follows closely in the O. T. track. He either speaks fully in the O. T. language, or else takes an O. T. passage for his text and theme, and then presents it on all its sides. Scripture is for him God's truth, the Spirit's word descended from the celestial height. The passage in Genesis relating to Melchisedek comes to him in this light; and the brief language in Psalm 100, in which he finds an actual Messianic prophecy, is for him strong and full enough to embrace in its bosom an entirely new order of things. Having made his quotation, he goes round it on all sides, and while he does not weary in repeating it, he is all the time giving something new upon it. He does not force it, he lays nought in it; he only spreads it before us, and discloses its spiritual depths. For a sentence from God embraces much, and inspiration doth not consist in being able simply to make, but also to read, a holy writing.

The author proceeds with the greatest logical precision as to the whole and as to parts. Of all the books in the New Testament, the epistle to the Hebrews is most systematic. His way of taking a text and theme and developing it, reminds one of the preacher's habit. Some may miss of discovering the clear arrangement, but the fault is not the author's. His habit of nicely connecting things together follows him, as we shall see, into the finest veins of detail.

The letter to the Hebrews, like that to the Romans, and like others, falls into two divisions, one dogmatical and the other hortatory; though confessedly hortatory portions appear distinctly in the course of the former division. The dogmatic division, with which alone we have here to do, reaches on to 10: 18, and itself falls into two parts; the first of which (1: 1 to 4: 13) we call the common, and the second (4: 14 to 10: 18), the special.

The contents of an epistle are determined by its object. As to the object of our epistle there is now very general agreement. It is designed to warn Jewish Christians in Palestine against relapse into Judaism. They had become inclined to this, as circumstances tended to shut them out from the society of Israel, the national sanctuary and temple-worship; which caused them to fear lest the promises made by God to his people should be forfeited.¹ Against this apprehension the author shows that participation in the blessing of the promises is conditioned above all on a faith in what is promised; and, moreover, he furnishes the proof that it is not allowable to yield up the new on account of the old, but rather the old for the sake of the new.

He proceeds with great wisdom and caution, letting his points develop with gradually increasing force. At first, merely the superiority of the new to the old is brought to view; but, as he proceeds, the old begins to look obsolete, and is finally broken up and altogether displaced by the

¹ On the historical occasion and position of our epistle, compare the fine observations of Thiersch (*Church in Apos. Age*, p. 188 seq.); in regard to whose correctness our confidence is not shaken by the opposite remarks of Köstlin (*Theol. Annual of Baur and Zeller*, 1854, p. 375 seq.).

new.¹ And so the dogmatic division is able to close with that simple but deeply-stirring language: "There is needed now no more offering for sin." For the sake of affording a deep view of the majestic incoming period, the author shows, first, simply the elevation of the Messiah above angels; and thus the author's aim is not perceived till in 2: 1 a key to it is laid in the reader's hand. See similar course of Paul in Rom 2: 1 seq., as compared with Rom. 2: 17 seq.

The first part of the dogmatic division shows that the Messiah, who bears the N. T. revelation, is higher than both instruments of the O. T. revelation, whether (spiritual) angels, or (earthly) Moses, in virtue of being Son of Jehovah, and so Jehovah himself manifest on earth. From both these considerations are derived hortatory remarks. As it regards the superiority of Christ to angels, it is in particular shown that no doubt should be reflected on it by his fleshly humiliation, or the offence of the cross. This point had special pertinence to the Hebrews (1 Cor. 1: 23).

The second part takes up the subject of immediate practical importance to the readers, namely, the Levitical worship and the nature of priest and offering. The author, bringing into a nutshell what was earlier said by way of preparation, and carrying it over to introduce a new section, lays down as his theme: Jesus is our High Priest, exalted as he is compassionate. Through his mediation, and by no other (as afterwards appears), we are able to approach the throne of grace with confidence.

In order to prove Jesus now the true High Priest, first his likeness to the O. T. high priest must be shown, and then his superiority to the same; just as in another connection his likeness and his superiority to Moses are both shown. Accordingly he appears, first as Priest after the manner of Aaron, and then after the manner of Melchisedek; and he founds also the new covenant by the offering of himself. By the one comparison he appears humiliated and therefore compassionate; by the other he appears the exalted, eternal, and heavenly High Priest.

¹ Auberlen's references here are very ample and interesting, but, as often in other connections, are necessarily omitted. — TR.

Thus the comparison of Christ with Moses (chs. iv. and v.) is happily succeeded (ch. v.) by his comparison with Aaron. It was necessary, first of all, to prove him a real, legitimate priest, according to the order of the O. T. itself. Two qualifications for this are named, which, if not associated and expressed in so many words in the O. T., are by no means arbitrarily adduced, but rest directly on the nature of the subject, and the relation of men to God. First, a high-priest must be a real representative of men, familiarly acquainted with their burden of sin for which he is to atone. Secondly, he must be acceptable to God, and set apart by Him, for his offering to be acceptable. Thus are expressed both relations which the priest has to represent. It is then shown, in the inverse order (5:5-10), that Christ was truly fitted for both relations.

It being shown that Christ may be priest after the O. T. order, we are next led to see how his priesthood surpasses the Levitical, and even sets it aside. Here the author aims his chief blow against the Judaistic prepossessions and scruples of his readers. Here he lays the axe to the root of the tree. Hence he prepares the way beforehand by an earnest and confident exhortation (5:11 to 6:20). Nor is this drawn from what goes before, as with the other hortatory portions, but beats the track for what comes after. The author's succeeding treatment, also, falls into two sections, distinguished by having two different portions of the O. T. for text and subject. Interpreters have overlooked this. Ps. 110:4 governs 7:1 to 8:6. Then enters a new passage, Jer. 31:31-34, which is not simply a citation for confirming 8:6, but governs what succeeds to 10:18. The subject of the first of these sections is the priesthood of Christ as typified by Melchisedek. Of the second section the new covenant is the subject, which is as clearly adduced in 8:6 as the first subject was in 6:20. The former verse (8:6) bears a striking similarity to 1:4 in point both of language and position. In both instances a new thought, answering to what has gone before, is stated as the theme for the succeeding treatment. It being clear that the idea of the covenant takes the

lead of ch. ix., we may learn why the closing sentences of the entire section, compacting and confirming all at once, refer to the passages in Jeremiah. It is plain that nothing could so make clear the abrogation of the old covenant, as a proper notion of the new; and hence no passage could so well serve our author, in closing up his dogmatical division, as this very Messianic prophecy in Jeremiah.

We do not have to deal with the second of the sections now distinguished, but with the first (7:1 to 8:6), to a closer analysis of which we now turn.

§ 2. *Analysis of the Portion regarding Melchisedek.*

In showing that, as high-priest, Christ is raised far above Aaron and the Levites, whose priesthood was abolished, the author takes a course similar to that of Paul in his letter to the Galatians. The occasions of the two epistles are very similar, and hence the doctrinal development in each seems kindred. The Galatians had allowed circumcision and the law to assume prominence; the Hebrews were returning exclusively to the temple-service of the O. T., and were thus, in effect, denying Christ. It is shown, in both cases, that the older institution had only a passing significance, and was abrogated by the new covenant. In both epistles the author goes back of the law to Abraham's time, and there raises an element superior to the law. In the former epistle, he recalls the promise to Abraham, which pointed away, over the law, to Christ. The basis, back of the old covenant, would be connected with the new, as promise and fulfilment; and the law would come temporarily between. The latter epistle goes a step further back to the lofty, mysterious form of Melchisedek, who, as not belonging to the covenant people, stands out in the Abrahamic history like a higher manifestation from the enigmatic world of revelation. Abraham appears before Melchisedek as father of the stock of Levi, and thus represents the legal order of the Israelites. Melchisedek stands just as high above Abraham and the Levitical priesthood, as the promise appears above the law. The

promise and the typical Melchisedek are alike answered in Christ.

The fact that in *Hebrews* as in *Galatians*, Abraham represents also another idea, will not mislead us. There are points where he occupies the very same position which Melchisedek does in contrast with him in our section. Now he represents the system of grace; and again, the legal ordinance. He can be identified with the patriarchs of faith; or the Israel of law. Melchisedek and Levi are the opposites, and Abraham takes alternate sides. In our section, the latter represents the law, but in another place in the same epistle (6:13 sq.), he represents the side of promise, grace. Both his fleshly and his spiritual attitude are thus recognized.

We see how capable our author is of leading us into the deepest ideas concerning Abraham, and into the very kernel of ancient redemptive history. Nor is it otherwise in what he says of Melchisedek. But it is clear that he follows no rigid typical idea of that priest, wonderful as he is. What he follows is, for the most part, given in the Psalm, which Stier well calls the most mysterious and deep-meaning of all the Messianic psalms. Christ is here, by God's oath, designated as "priest forever after the order of Melchisedek." And this is the passage which is, more than once, repeated as the theme of our section. Assisted by the original passage in Genesis, the author presents it in all its aspects and relations.

The section now to be analyzed has three parts, as follows: 7:1—10; 7:11—22; 7:23 to 8:6. In the course of thought there is a beautiful progress, a steady swell through the three stages from the primitive type to the majestic Anti-type. Over the first part we might write, "Melchisedek;" over the second, "Melchisedek and Christ;" and over the third, "Christ." The first part, by aid of Genesis, describes the priest-king of Salem and his relation to Abraham; the second, by aid of the Psalm, points out the parallel between Melchisedek and Christ; the third, after the full N. T. manner, presents Christ as the eternal, holy, heavenly High Priest,

set free from the type. The peculiar import of the Psalm-passage in the middle part, sends its light back to the first part (see vv. 3, 8), and furnishes likewise the ground tone of the third part. It thus works, as does the idea of the contrast of the Levitical priesthood, in all three parts.

The first part is divided into two unequal portions; of which the first (1-3) describes Melchisedek as an ever-abiding priest; the second (4-10), his relation to Abraham, and through him to Levi. The first portion consists of a single period, whose subject, after being defined by a series of appositional phrases, takes at the close a verb and predicate supplied from the Psalm. The appositional words fall into three groups. (1) Those derived from Genesis: (a) belonging to Melchisedek's double office, and (b) relating to his singular meeting with Abraham, at which he blesses the latter on his return from conquest and receives back the patriarch's tribute. (2) Explanations and observations concerning the type: (a) positive, relating to Melchisedek's official position, as king of righteousness and peace, and (b) negative, relating to his person, as being of unknown origin and end. (3) The Psalmist's witness to the high dignity of Melchisedek, as being like the Son of God. The third group emphasizes what is barely suggested in the second.

The second *portion* gives evidence of the priest's greatness in the fact that the illustrious patriarch should give him the tenth. From this fact are derived three points wherein Melchisedek excelled the Levitical priests (vv. 5, 8, 9). Characteristic of the author, these points form a climax by which the subordination of Levi to the priest of God appears greater and greater. The author touches, first, the point in respect to which the Levitical priests and Melchisedek stand on a level. They receive, alike with him, a tenth. On a level with their brethren in point of fleshly descent, they yet, above them, receive a tenth solely on account of their office. At this very point the superiority of Melchisedek is also shown; since the prerogative of the Levitical priests rested on descent from Levi as a legal ordinance, while that of Melchisedek was had in virtue of his inner, personal worth,

his true priestly appearance in himself, without any legal advantage whatever. In the latter case, the right is grounded in the free, living, spiritual nature. And, in fact, the prerogative of Melchisedek is exercised in behalf of Abraham himself and not his descendants. It is a great thing that the Levitical priests should be allowed to take a tenth from Abraham's seed; it is far greater that one should be allowed to take the same from the patriarch himself. The superior estate of the priest-king is seen, further, in his blessing Abraham who was already the object of promise, and, by eminence, the blessed of God as well as the bearer of the blessing to all generations. Thus, while the author recognizes the full greatness of Abraham, Melchisedek is still greater. For he is able to *bless*; he has in keeping, and is able to impart, the divine gifts first promised to Abraham.¹

If such a difference already appears in what is common to Melchisedek and the Levitical priests, that difference is much increased when we turn from what is received by both to the recipients themselves. In one case, we have dying men; in the other, one who lives, in the full sense. This point will, however, be more carefully considered below.

The great subordination of the Levitical priests is seen still more clearly in another point of view. They indeed received a tenth; but they themselves, it may be said, give a tenth to Melchisedek, and thus testify to their own inferiority. For if Abraham was inferior to Melchisedek, then all in him, his future descendants, including Levi and his priests, were inferior. If the head bowed itself, then also the members. The old covenant of the carnal law, in its first representative, deferred to that which was free and spiritual in the relation of God and men which Melchisedek represented. Thus at the first, in the singular meeting of the patriarch and priest, it might be known that the entire legal order was something mediate and temporary. At the last, also, the final representative of the old covenant, John the Baptist, bowed before Christ, as Abraham before Melchisedek.

¹ On the full idea of the Blessing, see Stier on the passage. Compare also Hoffmann, *Prophecy and Fulfilment*, I. p. 101 seq.

The author now proceeds, in the second part (11—22), to the comparison of Melchisedek and Christ; or, in other words, to a careful view of the passage from the Psalm. He considers the passage in its several elements, but in the reversed order; thus, (1) "after the order of Melchisedek," (2) "a priest forever," (3) "the Lord hath sworn and will not repent." The author takes this course to secure a more natural connection with the preceding part of his subject. After describing Melchisedek, he must first apply what is said of him to Christ; which leads him to show what there is embraced in the words that Christ is priest after the order of Melchisedek. Thus indicating a general parallel between Christ and the priest-king, he passes to the main point in the comparison, namely, the eternity of their priesthood. Finally, the mode of promising a priesthood like Melchisedek's to Christ, namely, by the powerful oath of God, furnishes proof of the excellence of that priesthood above the Levitical. Taking a minuter view, we find then the following argument:

1. The simple fact that another priest is appointed, after the order of Melchisedek and not Aaron, suggests the insufficiency of the Levitical priesthood. We thus go beyond what is said in 5:1-10. The entire law is thus changed, so far as it presupposes a priesthood of Levi. For he to whom a priesthood like Melchisedek's is promised, is descended, not from Levi, but from the unpriestly stock of Judah (11—14).

2. This priest is priest forever. He exercises his priesthood, not by carnal commandment, but by virtue of an indissoluble life in his person. The carnal commandment, unable to give a word concerning eternal life, and in its entire fleshly nature weak, and so useless, is not simply changed, but entirely set aside (15—19).

Taking this view of the course of thought, we call *περισσότερον*, in v. 15, an adjective, thus: "And, further, still more is clear, when," etc.; i. e. something much more important follows evidently from another priest being established after the similitude of Melchisedek. The author says here, "after the similitude," instead of the usual, "after the order," in order thereby, as also by the position of the words

(see the Greek), to mark more strongly the likeness with Melchisedek. What this similitude consists of, viz. his eternal life, suggested in v. 8, is now expressly stated in v. 16, and confirmed in v. 17 by the oft-cited words of the Psalm. Thus the emphasis at this point lies on the word "forever." It appears in vv. 18, 19 in what the *περισσότερον* consists, and for what these verses are joined with the foregoing by the causal particle, namely, that the Psalmist's words involve not merely a change of the law (v. 12), but the entire abrogation of it. On account of this is inferred the introduction of a better covenant, as a third point (20—22). Hence appears a climax in the three points of the argument, which is indicated by *περισσότερον*, if our understanding of the word be correct.

The progress from the first to the second point, or from the change to the abrogation of the law, is nearly as follows: The fact that one of the stock of Judah is priest, like Melchisedek, and not Aaron, points to a change in the law as being involved in Messiah's coming. Now if this might happen in regard to him without abandoning the carnal foundation of the law, then Messiah would be merely a Reformer of the law. Christianity would be an improved outgrowth of Judaism. But the priesthood of Messiah, like Melchisedek's, carries us exceedingly far beyond (*περισσότερον*). He is priest forever. This view takes us above the law, which acts with reference to the dying flesh, into the bright region of spirit and imperishable life. For only at this height can be justified the deep reference of "forever." Some compare 9 : 12—15, where the new covenant contemplates participation in the eternal inheritance discovered through Jesus Christ, and hence may be called "eternal." By the word "forever," the entire province of the carnal commandment is superseded. We may remark that the deep meaning of the author's language throws much light on the Messianic prophecies generally, with many points of which the language has an intimate connection.

In the word "forever" (v. 17), lies the disannulling of "an earlier commandment," just so far as the idea of eternity

is opposed to that of perishableness. And here the "earlier commandment" may have its most extensive reference, as applying to written statutes and flesh. With Paul the "spirit" has a twofold antithesis: (a) the objective and divine (the revealed letter), and (b) the subjective and human (the flesh); so that the flesh and the statutes of the law belong to the same general class. On this view is founded the idea that the same carnal commandment embraces both the statutes and the flesh. But the spirit is life, eternal and continuous, consisting not in outward prescriptions but in power. Nothing could be more interesting than to pursue the antithesis of "law" and "power," in v. 16, in connection with the Pauline doctrine.¹ The passage was, with good reason, the key-text of *Ætlinger's Life-theology*.

From what has been said, it seems that the second point in the comparison of Christ and Melchisedek corresponds with the second in the preceding part. Both turn on the

¹ Auberlen here makes the following in valuable note, which, so far from being foreign to the investigation before us, actually throws light upon it: The divine revelation has two elements, separated by sin but united again in Christ, viz. communication and requirement, grace and law (righteousness). In Christ grace rules in the midst of righteousness. In him grace and truth become one (Rom. 3: 24, 5; 21. John 1: 14, 17). But in the old covenant they come in succession, as promise and law, law and prophets. The matter of grace is chiefly future, as the very idea of promise and of prophecy shows. Law prevails, in the Old Testament, though grace is, however, by no means wanting. This view is implied in Heb. vii.—x. Gal. 4: 24 seq. 2 Cor. 3: 6 seq. John 1: 17. The revelation of God by nature and conscience has the same two elements. In nature power reveals itself (Rom. 1: 20), in conscience the law of God (Rom. 2: 14). Physical life implies continual giving of power by him who clothes the lilies, who bestows upon this sphere life and breath, as upon the regenerate, life and spirit. After the fall, in the moral province there are no divine powers apart from redemption, only there is requirement, law witnessed by conscience. Conscience is a point of connection for the revelation of redemption, and that is all. Scripture knows nought of laws of nature, but only of divine powers, life-principles in nature. Hence its view of the world allows of miracles. Again, the scripture knows nothing of a spiritual power in man as he is, by which he may do good of himself and work out his own salvation. It knows simply a law in the conscience which we must obey, while unable to fulfil it. Hence the scripture not only allows, but requires miracles. For only by a redemption coming from without, can one reach the bound written in his conscience (Rom. 7: 24 seq.). Therefore, that theory which drives nature into simple laws, and ascribes spiritual powers to the natural man, is a plain subversion of the truth.

word "forever," in the Psalm ; both are founded in the idea of eternal life. Also the first points, in each part, correspond. Both treat of one having an un-Levitical origin, and form the lowest steps in the ascending development. The developments in the two parts regularly correspond, till, in the last verse of the second, the correspondence is exceeded, and there strikingly appears, for the first time, the positive idea of a new and better covenant between God and man.

3. In vv. 20—22 the author, for the first and only time, takes up the clause, "The Lord hath sworn," etc. The institution of the Levitical priesthood was not confirmed by an oath of God, but Christ's priesthood is thus confirmed; hence he is the surety of a better covenant. Man's oath is given on the weightiest occasions; much more the oath of God. His oath lends peculiar force to all its sanctions. God confirmed his Messianic promises with an oath (6:13), because they had an abiding part in his kingdom, unlike temporary legal ordinances. Accordingly, the oath-clause, in v. 28, stands over against the law, as the promise does in other cases.

In v. 22 we come to the theme of the following section (8:6 to 10:18); just as, in 5:10, was found the theme of our present section. As, in the latter case, a hortatory address came in before the expansion of the theme, so now some freer remarks on the subject in hand, come in to prepare for what comes after. * The theme is then (8:6) discussed.

The word "Jesus," in v. 22, furnishes the point of transition to the third part (7:23 to 8:6). The author omits it in the chapter until now, to show that now he has arrived on N. T. historical ground and abandoned the typical Melchisedek, whose name is, before this, mentioned for the last time. The writer can then speak of Christ's superior priesthood in a freer way. While, as he proceeds, he may lean towards the Psalm, he yet adduces points wherein the Prototype transcends the type. Hence the first point, in the second part, of itself falls out of view, while the other two become the subject of renewed remark (23—25, 26—28). A new third point, that of Christ sitting at God's right hand, is super-

added (8:1-6) from the Psalm, so making three points also for our third part. Christ is presented as the eternal, holy, heavenly high-priest.

Here we present barely the course of thought. The O. T. priests are many, since they continually pass away by death; but Christ has an unending priesthood, by which he is able, as an ever-living advocate, to save unto the uttermost, and bless, those who accept him as a Mediator. For we should have a priest complete, sinless, and exalted above all. The law made weak men priests, who needed continually new offerings for themselves; but the word of oath and promise made priest of one perfected, in eternity, as God's Son. (In 1:2, 5 Christ is opposed to the prophets, as here to the priests.) But that, in which all these excellences are included, is this: We have a high-priest who sits at God's right hand, performing his office in the true heavenly, and not typical earthly, sanctuary. And because he has entered into the full presence of God, and substantially participated in the divine life, above earthly nature and its shadow-work, he is able to represent, in the perfect way, the entire relation of God to man.¹

§ 3. *Explanation of what is said of Melchisedek.*

After our necessary survey to ascertain our position, we come now to consider the particular expressions concerning Melchisedek. In order to understand the difficult verses (3, 8) in the seventh chapter, an entire picture of the man is requisite; and hence we shall consider certain expressions in the opening verses of the chapter, more extensively than we otherwise should.

Melchisedek is called, first, "king of Salem." That Je-

¹ Auberlen here devotes a couple of pages to an exposition of 8:3, which must be omitted entirely. It is a fine sample of exegesis, of itself fully justifying a critic's remark concerning the entire essay, that it seems to "furnish an example of a more profound method of interpretation than we often meet with among the exegetes of the modern school, superadding to philological knowledge and critical sagacity a profounder philosophy, and especially a deeper insight into the relation of the Old Testament to the New." — Tr.

rusalem is here to be understood by Salem, even Kurtz¹ now argues. The appearance of Adonizedek, in Josh. 10:1, as king of Jerusalem, points loudly to this. Melchisedek and Adonizedek were alike common names of the kings of Jerusalem, as Pharaoh of the Egyptian kings, and Abimelech of the Philistine kings. Stier well shows how this circumstance makes the comparison of the Messiah with Melchisedek so much the clearer in a Psalm of David. David had conquered Jerusalem, and had put here the sanctuary of the most high God, and also the throne of Israel in the same neighborhood. Thus was he another Melchisedek, and Christ is Antitype at the same time. These three kings, Melchisedek, David, Christ, appear in Jerusalem a thousand years apart. The Spirit of God, with whom a thousand years are as a day, sees and embraces them all together.

Again, Melchisedek is called "priest of the most high God." The Greek expression for "most high" here, is a Hebraism, and is not to be understood as a superlative. The expression means "priest of God in the high place," i. e. God in the heaven (comp. Matt. 6:9; Lu. 2:4), and so, in fact, the true God, as opposed to the gods of earth and nature; just as in Dan. 2:28, 45; Neh. 2:4, the expression, "God of heaven," is used in contrast with the heathen gods. The meaning of "God," here, differs from the Israelitish sense of "Jehovah." Melchisedek nearly defines it when he blesses Abraham in the name of "the most high God, Possessor of heaven and earth." It is not the covenant God of peculiar O. T. revelation, but the God of universal natural revelation, whom Melchisedek serves. Hence, in blessing Abraham, he tenders him bread and wine, the simple gifts of nature. His priesthood is the original one of creation and nature, before heathenism entirely defaced them. Melchisedek's history is opposed to any perversion of nature-revelation into nature-worship. Hence, not without design, does our author quote the words: "who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings," from Genesis, where they

¹ *Hist. O. Covenant*, I. (2nd ed.), p. 172 seq. Melchisedek's history is here clearly given.

stand as spoken of the king of Sodom. This king, beside the luminous form of Melchisedek, is like a dark leaf from the black realm of heathendom. Salem and Sodom are opposites, like Babel and the later Jerusalem. The king of Sodom would give to Abraham the goods of his city, now recaptured. But Abraham gave back all, declaring that he would not take a thread even to a shoe-latchet, which belonged to the heathen king. But gladly he consents to be refreshed by Melchisedek's bread and wine, and receives his blessing. Abraham's different course, in the two cases, reveals his relation to Melchisedek. Taking nothing from one king, he takes bodily and spiritual gifts from the other. And how different is the paying of tithe to one, from the course toward the other. The patriarch refuses all connection with the profane king, but even subordinates himself to the holy priest-king.

Of the old simple account, the author, in v. 2 seq., gives the spiritual meaning and application. He does not proceed in an arbitrary, trifling, Rabbinical way; but the Spirit, in him, shows what is the mind of the Spirit in the Mosaic account. We have here one of those numerous cases where the O. T. history becomes, as it were, transparent to the N. T. writers, so that they see the deeper divine thought pervading it. From this truly spiritual apprehension of the sacred record, there is indeed for us, uninspired men, but a step to ingenious trifling. Witness the Epistle of Barnabas.

Melchisedek is now first called "king of righteousness." The old names of scripture are full of meaning. When first given, they corresponded with some real fact. The name of Melchisedek answered to such a fact in the case of the kings of Jerusalem. With our priest-king it had its full inner meaning. It proves that, while, all around, heathenism spread out its darkness and horror, there was still the light of God's pure service at Jerusalem. The name consists with the fact of his being priest of God. For the righteousness attributed to the king must be that of God. Pious antiquity knows of no other. A true priest of God, he ruled with a righteous sceptre, and diffused righteousness among his people.

But righteousness prevailing among a people, there is the attendant blessing of peace. For "the work of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness rest and security forever" (Isaiah). Therefore the kings gave the name of "peace," or Salem, to their city, thus indicating the peaceful prosperity which should attend their righteousness from God. This is the first Jerusalem, of which we know nothing except from its king. But knowing the little we do, we are able the better to comprehend how David, inspired with this picture of righteousness and peace, should feel compelled to compare Messiah with Melchisedek. Already in the primitive time, before Abraham was called, there was a Jerusalem, where the true God was purely served, where righteousness and peace kissed each other. The same which became the centre of other revelation, was also the last bright spot under the primitive revelation. Jerusalem was an oasis in the waste of heathendom. It resembled the garden of tradition, found on some bald, desolate, snow-decked mountain. Though its light comes to us as it were through the merest fissure, yet Abraham must have known of the character of city and king, else he would not have bowed so profoundly and with so little ado, before Melchisedek. The king of righteousness and his city of peace represent, thus, the primitive religion, and the original close relation of God and man, before it was wholly spoiled by heathenism. Abel, Enoch, Noah, and Shem represent the same. They were instances of the original child-relation of man to God, which bears, in itself, security of eternal life. And he who is priest in this condition of union with God, is priest forever. The Jerusalem of Melchisedek is not the later one, bowed under the yoke of the law, gendered unto bondage, but one altogether free and in the filial relation to God. Hence it pointed away to the upper Jerusalem, just as the promise, founded on filial belief, pointed beyond the law to the gospel fulfilment. In this way is Melchisedek a type of Christ. True, the king of Salem, notwithstanding his piety, was unable to stay the tide of heathenish apostasy; and hence God chose Abraham and brought in the

legal scheme, so as afterwards to offer the world the privilege of sons. But the way of the law was on account of the hardness of the heart, for from the beginning it was not so; and, before this way, the believing fathers entered into a better relation to God than could possibly have come by the laborious process of the law. From this, we proceed to find a definite meaning for the negative expressions in the third verse.

Both old and new interpreters are generally agreed respecting the explanation of the words: "without father, without mother, without genealogy." The last adjunct, which mentions that scripture gives no genealogy of the descent of Melchisedek, explains the two first. The author would not say that the priest had no parents, but only that scripture does not name them; and this silence is significant. "The holy scripture would mean something by its very silence" (Stier). It is not the objective fact, which the author uses, but the peculiar account of the O. T. This he takes in the sense in which the Hebrews themselves, in their inclination to the Levitical worship, would treat it, and confutes them by it. Here, as in the whole epistle, he keeps close in the track of scripture. What Genesis does not say, and the Psalm says, decides his course in the present instance; which gives us a key to the definition of his expressions. According to our author, then, we have before us one whom the O. T. names "priest," to whom the name is first applied, who does not belong to the stock of Levi, upon whose origin, in fact, the scripture lays so little stress as not to give it at all. But with priests under the law, so important was the matter of descent, that under Nehemiah, such as found not their register, were debarred from the priesthood. The O. T. itself thus recognizes a priesthood before and superior to the law, not grounded in fleshly ordinance, but resting in the free person and on his spiritual belief. How like a flash of lightning must this fact break in upon the Judaistic views of his readers! We are reminded of Jesus, in the parable, placing the Samaritan above the priests and Levites, and of Paul, in *Romans*, grounding the filial relation to God in the

spiritual nature of the promise of grace and faith, and not in any fleshly descent from Abraham. Compare also Matt. 3: 9; Jno. 8: 39. The same kind of weapons are borne against the Hebrews now falling away from faith, as had everywhere been used against faithless Judaism. Against those who might again boast, "We have Abraham for our father," the *ἀπάτωρ* would hold, the one without father, whom the O. T. itself had praised and placed above Abraham in a parallel with Messiah.

The next expression, "having neither beginning of days nor end of life," is another negative one and is explained also, like the preceding, from the silence of scripture, the unrecorded genealogy. The priest-king is not only outside of the holy seed of Abraham and Levi, but scripture reckons him not even in the series of the earlier patriarchs whose birth and death are given on account of being in the Messianic line of descent. Melchisedek belonged, indeed, to the *Coryphei* of the primitive revelation; but while they and the Israelitish patriarchs had their birth and death scrupulously given as having significance in the unfolding of God's kingdom, while in the case of most, nothing else is noted but this, in our priest's case there is not a word of this, and stress is laid alone on his spirit and relation to God. Thus is he like Christ; to whom Paul has applied the words: "We know not Christ after the flesh; and we know, in fact, no one any longer after the flesh."

We pass to the next clause. Its logical relation to what precedes, may be thus indicated: Melchisedek possesses none of the advantages of fleshly descent, etc.; *and yet* he is on this very account put, or placed, like the Son of God. We say "put like," and embrace two meanings. (1) "like," or "made like," and (2) "likened," or "compared." It has, by all means, the first sense. Melchisedek is so put down in the Mosaic account, that one sees that God would here bring forward one like his Son, and pointing typically to him. The sacred account so speaks of him, or is in such a way silent concerning him, as to make him like the Son of God. As the latter came forth from the hidden depths of

eternity and returns thither in a most mysterious way (1 Tim. 3:16), so does Melchisedek come forth from his concealment and fall back again, leaving his origin and end a mystery. — But the verb does not mean simply “made like,” in point of fact, but also recognized to be such in the view of another, hence “likened.” Melchisedek is made like Christ by the facts of history, and is likened to him by the declaration of God’s word. He is compared with Christ in the Psalm. That our author thinks partly of the declaration in the Psalm, is shown by the closing words of the verse. In the Psalm, Melchisedek and Christ are mutually compared; but the author thinks only of the comparison of the former to the latter. This need not lead us to suppose, with Bengel, Bleek, and Stier, that the writer to the Hebrews carries his mind back to the eternal Logos, who as Archetype is older than Melchisedek. For with the eternal Logos, as such, Melchisedek has nothing in common; but rather with the incarnate Logos. And, besides, the “Son of God,” in our passage and the entire epistle, is not the ante-temporal Logos, but the eternal Son in his historical manifestation as Messiah. He is here purposely named God’s Son, and not Christ or Jesus, because, while his fleshly nature is recognized, he is regarded more on the side of his divine dignity, in the light of being, after all, superior to flesh; as, in the case of Melchisedek, his earthly condition, though real, does not come so much into view as his relation to God, his righteousness, his peace, and his royal priesthood.

The predicate, “abideth a priest continually,” finally follows. The words are taken from the Psalm; only *εἰς τὸ διηνεκές*, “continually,” is put in place of *εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*, “forever” (5:6; 6:20). But it is entirely synonymous with the other, as the reference in 10:12, 14 shows, and the verb “abideth” requires. The epistle refers directly to Melchisedek what the Psalm predicated of Messiah; but this is on account of the words, “after the order of Melchisedek,” appended in the Psalm. It is most natural to find, in the comparison, not only the priesthood of each compared, but also the eternity of that priesthood. Christ is not only priest,

but priest forever, after the order of Melchisedek. Thus it is that, in some sense, an eternal priesthood is ascribed to the king of Salem. How can this be, is the difficult question, to which we are expected to reply. We have already indicated our view in what has been said; but a consideration of v. 8 will make the answer plainer.

In this verse Melchisedek is, in a striking manner, set over against the Levitical priests. They are "dying men;" he "lives." But he has also died; for the word "lives" can no more exclude him from death, than the words "endless life," in v. 16, do Christ. How then can he be opposed to the legal priests? Let us see. The Levitical priests are appointed only in accordance with the prescription of a carnal commandment, which does not reach beyond the region of temporal death. Their priesthood depends on descent, not on serving the living God in spirit and in truth. They are carnal, and not in living and life-giving fellowship of God. At least, this latter is unessential. The law does not and cannot require it. On the other hand, we know that Melchisedek was priest in living power, by the very nature of his holy, spiritual character. According to Genesis, all the stress falls on his spiritual and not on his natural life. The carnal life perishes, but the spirit is life because of righteousness. He stood in the living, filial relation to God, similar to believers under the new covenant. It is the same with him as with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in Matt. 22 : 31, 32, who are "living," because God calls himself their God. He who serves the living God in truth, is in a fellowship delivering him from death. Thus in Rom. 2 : 7, 10, eternal glory is given to those who do good in believing patience. So in Heb. ch. xi., it is amply shown that the ante-Christian believers were strangers and foreigners in this life, and in their true nature belonged to the heavenly fatherland, where he who is not ashamed to call them their God, hath prepared them a city with foundations and hence eternal. Thus the difference between the dying Levites and the living Melchisedek is the same as that between "dead works," under the law, and the "service (9 : 14) of the living God," under grace.

Hence we get an understanding of Melchisedek's eternal priesthood. He is priest by virtue of his relation to God, his life in God, and his service of God. But this relation, life, and service are eternal. Hence he is an eternal priest. For his priesthood is inseparable from, and rests entirely in his spiritual service. He belongs to those "kings and priests" who are before the throne of God, and serve him night and day in his temple; so that the designation "kings and priests," found in Revelation, can be explained by our passage in Hebrews, just as well as by the references in Ex. 19:6 and 1 Pet. 2:9. Hence we discover one of the many points of contact between our Epistle and the Apocalypse. The designation seems transferable from type to Antitype, and so to all believers under the new covenant. The idea of expiating sin belongs as little to the heavenly priesthood as to the universal priesthood so familiar to us. It is the priesthood consisting of the holy, free approach of the soul to God, of the service of God in the evangelical sense.¹ The same is implied in the representation, everywhere, concerning Melchisedek. There is not a word said, anywhere, of an atonement by this priest; and a glance at the parallel between Christ and Melchisedek, in Heb. 7:11—22, will show that it has respect to their personal character, and not at all to a work of expiation, which first comes into notice in succeeding chapters. "Aaron, with all his shedding of blood, typifies the atoning Saviour, while Melchisedek typifies Christ's life and power in God and what is thereby wrought out in his eternal priesthood and kingly office" (Steinhofer).

Melchisedek is thus eternal priest in no other sense than are all glorified spirits. That this view is not foreign to our epistle, although naturally not developed in our chapter, is easily shown, as already suggested. Compare 9:14; 10:19; 12:28; 13:15. See, too, 8:5; 9:6. But the evan-

¹ Compare remarks in Auberlen's work on the Prophet Daniel and the Revelation of John, German edition, p. 338 seq. A translation of the work is published by Warren F. Draper, Andover, and favorably noticed in Bib. Sac., Vol. XII. p. 643.

gical priesthood is eternal in itself; its representatives partake of an eternal inheritance in the city of God. So Melchisedek exercises eternally his priesthood in the heavenly, archetypal Jerusalem, of whose freeness and peace his earthly Salem was so happy a type.

§ 4. *On the Special Advantage of this Explanation.*

An instance of our view we find in the writings of Marcus Eremita, an Egyptian monk, who lived about A. D. 400. He suggests that the words "abideth continually," or "forever," are uttered in the same sense concerning Melchisedek as they might be in the case of all the holy ones, as Isaiah and the apostles. These not only abide continually in the silence of scripture, but they remain forever in the presence of God (Bleek I. p. 139; II. 2, p. 321).

Since the time of this monk, this view appears to have found no other friends. The succeeding exegetes fall into the two classes above indicated. Now what is the position our view holds to the explanations of these two classes? What is the advantage of our own explanation? We remark that it obviates those insurmountable difficulties which appear not only in the nature of the case itself, but in the records concerned, as soon as Bleek's view, that Melchisedek was a supernatural being, is for once entertained. It agrees with the commonly received opinion from Theophylact to Ebrard, in the chief point, that Melchisedek was a holy man like those noted in the 11th of Hebrews, and also in explaining the negative attributes given to the priest-king by silence of scripture. But it diverges from the prevalent interpretation in seeking to explain the ascription of eternal life and priesthood from an altogether different point of view. To explain this also from the silence of Genesis would not only seem artificial and forced, but would not allow of such a direct reference to the Psalm as the disputed passages plainly have. We would refer back to Genesis and the Psalm each their own. We recognize what is real as well as what is merely represented. Heartily agreeing

with Bleek, that the prevailing exposition goes over the difficulties without really solving them, we at the same time do not seek to mend the matter by a most impracticable assumption of a miraculous existence, but by taking a deep spiritual view of the character of Melchisedek in harmony with the circle of ideas peculiar to the N. T., to Paul, and to our epistle.

It is in favor of our view that it provides a connecting link between the negative predicates drawn from Genesis, and the positive ones drawn from the Psalm. One might say that the expression "having neither beginning of days nor end of life," is so like the one "it being witnessed that he lives," that we are not allowed to explain them from different points of scripture. In reply we submit that, according to the obvious circumstances of the case, denied by no one, the first expression is made from regard to the silence of Genesis, while the latter, with its word "witnessed," points back just as plainly to the word "forever" in the Psalm. So at all events the sources of the two expressions are different. As it regards their meaning, we do not deny the likeness. We have recognized it in our view. But Genesis does not lay all stress upon the earthly life of the priest, but more especially upon his spiritual life; and so the Psalm may point to him as one who lives eternally. Thus we allow the natural reference of the predicates, while at the same time we find the bond of connection between them. The only question which can be raised is, whether our epistle does not then put too much into the Psalm. In reply, we have only to unfold and sum up some points already indicated. It was remarked that it is grammatically most natural to refer the word "forever" in the Psalm to Melchisedek; so that David would regard him as an eternal priest. But how came he to this?

The 110th Psalm is the fruit of one of the most consecrated hours of David's life. Never did he speak more truly in the Spirit. Never did he take a deeper look into the nature and course, past and future, of the kingdom of God. He beheld his great Successor as about to sit

upon the divine throne of Israel in such a manner as to fill up all the deficiencies which had pertained to himself or his rule. In him the kingdom of Israel would find its consummation. This could not be in the case of David, as he himself confesses. Dwelling in fact in the neighborhood of God's house, he yet could not enter as priest into the holy place. If he, so his people, would be excluded. And, besides, the tumults of his reign must have sorely reminded him that the people were far from being a kingdom of priests, a holy people, willing to yield to Jehovah and his Anointed. But if the king could become priest in the deep sense suggested to David's mind by the Spirit (Ps. 40: 7—10; Heb. 10: 5—10), then the people also would become a priestly people, a willing offering in holy ornaments. In Messiah's reign both things are realized, the holy willingness of the people, and the confirming of one, otherwise called King, as Priest of Jehovah. Then comes a victory over all enemies. When the perfect Priest-king once begins his authority on earth, all the enemies of God's kingdom must become humbled. Compare course of thought throughout the Psalm.

Then with the Priest-king's advent should be inaugurated a new order of things. What was impossible under the old covenant, the king's and priest's offices would now be united in one person. But this union would not be merely outward; it answers to something deep in the inner nature. David by the Spirit saw all this. He saw the character in which Messiah would appear; that he would not be like the O. T. bearers of office, but one in whom all which was separated under the old order would be inwardly associated. There could be no other priesthood and kingship, and so no more Messiahs. What Christ is, he is absolutely, for every and all time. Complete as an advocate of men before God, and as a representative of God in humanity, he is the eternal Priest-king, in whose exalted person the entire operation of God in the world finds its fulfilment.

Now this discovery of such a glorious character to come, was made all the clearer to David by the Holy Spirit's bringing before his vision a representation from the past,

which in its mysterious exaltation was adapted, as no other was, to shadow forth the Messiah. As the O. T. order, with its divided and ever-changing offices, was to yield before the coming King and Priest in Zion, so already had the same order bowed to Melchisedek, in the person of Abraham. Precisely the fact that the friend of God, the possessor of the promise, the father of a holy people, of his own accord humbled himself before Melchisedek, lends the latter peculiar excellence in the eyes of all the enlightened and pious. For how would the patriarch, having a glimpse of faith and the Spirit, allow himself to be blessed by a man, give him the tithe, and recognize him in this twofold way as priest of God, unless he were such in very truth. Outward authority the priest-king possessed in no respect above Abraham. Of no patriarchal race, without qualification for the theocratic offices, his authority rests on the eternity-stamp in his appearance, on his holy, majestic personality. Thus he stands there, great and sublime. He spreads out his hands over Abraham, blessing him and the future Israel, while the patriarch *willingly* gives back the tenth. So one day would Messiah bless his people, while they would become a free will-offering in the beauty of holiness. Melchisedek towers above Abraham, and Messiah above Israel, by virtue of his own holy Person. These truths the Holy Spirit would excite in David's mind, as there came before his eye the wonderful picture of the past, so astonishingly rich even in its minor features.

And now we will wonder no more that the singer of Israel saw Melchisedek as an eternal priest. The priestly dignity was grounded entirely in the personal. Office and person stood in harmonious unity, such as spiritual life ever insures, whether in Christ or all true men. One was but the outflow and expression of the other. And so should it be, since the priestly office concerns the deepest relations of man to his God. To whatever extent Melchisedek should cease to *live*, he would cease to be *priest*. True priesthood is life, and true life is priesthood. This is not a perversion of the idea of priest, but only applying it in its deepest

sense, as the Spirit of God gives it. David is assured of himself even, that, because God is with him, death has no power over him, and his way leads to fulness of joy and eternal pleasures before the face of God. From the same consciousness of life, flowing from fellowship with God, and pervading his whole being and thought, Abraham also believed in an awakening from the dead, while in the same manner the O. T. believers generally hoped for eternal reward in the heavenly city of the living God.

Thus are we well assured that the author of the epistle to the Hebrews does no violence to the sense of the Old Testament; but only unfolds it to us for the first time in its full depth, with that apostolic exegesis which Paul characterizes in 1 Cor. 2: 13—16, which, if it shall often seem to us like a hard saying, will be better and better appreciated by our theology.

ARTICLE IV.

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE AND OPINIONS OF JOHN MILTON.

BY REV. A. D. BARBER, WILLISTON, VT.

MORE biographies have been written of John Milton than of any other man that has lived in modern times; more perhaps than of any other man that has ever lived. Mr. Reed, in 1841, enumerated no less than twenty-five. Three are known to the author to have appeared since. These biographies are tinged with every variety and shade of opinion, poetical, political, moral, and theological. They have, as Mr. Reed says, "issued from the pens of poets, of antiquaries, of divines, of scholars, of painters, from Churchmen and Dissenters, from Infidels, from the heightened Aristocrat, the Whig, and the Chartist."

Besides the biographers there have been hosts of critics