There is a transition from one image, a  
political and social, to another, a material)  
**upon the foundation of the apostles and  
prophets** (how is this genitive to be understood? Is it a genitive of apposition, so  
that the Apostles and Prophets themselves  
*are* the foundation? This has been supposed by numerous Commentators, from  
Chrysostom to De Wette. But, not to  
mention the very many other objections  
which have been well and often urged  
against this view, this one is to my mind  
decisive, —that it entirely destroys the  
imagery of the passage. The temple, into  
which these Gentiles were built, is the  
mystical body of the Son, in which the  
Father dwells by the Spirit, ver. 22. The  
Apostles and Prophets [see below], yea,  
Jesus Christ Himself, as the great inclusive  
Head Corner Stone (see again below], are  
also built into this temple. [That He includes likewise the *foundation*, and IS the  
foundation, is true, and must be remembered, but is not prominent here.] Clearly  
then the Apostles and Prophets cannot *be*  
the foundation, being here spoken of as  
parts of the upper building, together with  
these Gentiles, and with Jesus Christ Himself. But again, does the genitive mean, the  
foundation which the Apostles and Prophets *have laid*? So also very many  
Commentators. As clearly,—not thus.  
To introduce them here as *agents*, is as inconsistent as the other. No agents are  
here spoken of, but merely the fact of the  
great building in its several parts being  
built up together. The only remaining  
interpretation then is, to regard the genitive as simply possessive: ‘*the foundation  
of the Apostles and Prophets,*’ — ‘*the  
Apostles’ and Prophets’ foundation*’ —  
that upon which they as well as your-  
selves are built. This explanation, which  
I find ascribed to Bucer only, seems to me  
beyond question the right one. See more  
below.—But (2) *who are the* **prophets**?  
They have commonly been taken, without  
enquiry, as the *Old Test. prophets*. And  
certainly, the sense, with some little straining, would admit of this view. They may  
be said to be built upon Christ, as belonging to that widest acceptation of His mystical body, in which it includes all the  
saints, Old as well as New Test. But besides the objections arising from the form  
of the sentence, which the English reader  
cannot appreciate, there is this weighty  
one: the usage of the expression **apostles  
and prophets** in ch. ili. 5. There unquestionably the prophets are New Test.  
**prophets**; and again in ch. iv. 11, And it  
is difficult to conceive that the Apostle  
should have used the two words conjoined  
here, in a different sense. Even stronger  
is the consideration arising from the whole  
sense of the passage. All here is strictly  
Christian, — post-Judaic, — consequent on  
Christ’s death, and triumph, and His  
coming preaching peace by the Spirit to  
the united family of man. So that we  
must decide for these prophets being *New  
Test. prophets*: those who ranked next to  
the Apostles in the government of the  
church: see Acts xi. 27, note. They were  
not in every case distinct from the Apostles:  
the apostleship probably always including  
the gift of *prophecy*: so that all the  
Apostles themselves might likewise have  
been *prophets*), **Christ Jesus Himself** (the  
**Himself** exalts the dignity of the temple,  
in that not only it has among its stones  
Apostles and prophets, but the Lord Himself is built into it) **being the Head corner  
stone** (see, besides reff., Jer. li. 26; Acts  
iv. 11. The reference here is clearly to  
that Headstone of the Corner, which is not  
only the most conspicuous but the most  
important in the building: “which, being  
placed in the corner, joins and rules the  
two walls of the building.” Builders set  
up such a stone, or build such a pillar of  
brick, before getting up their walls, to  
rule and square them by. I must again  
repeat, that the fact of Jesus Christ being  
Himself the *foundation*, however it underlies the whole, is not to be brought in as  
interfering with this portion of the figure);

**21**.] **in whom** (Christ keeps the  
whole together : and not only so, but He is  
in reality the inclusive Head of the building: it all *consists*, is upheld, is squared  
and ruled by its unity to and in Him) **all  
the building being framed exactly together  
is growing** (there seems no reason why