potential benefit of Christ’s death extends)  
**by fear of death were through all their  
lifetime subjects of** (not merely ‘subject  
to,’ so that they might or might not be involved in it, but their actual implication is inferred) **bondage** (Calvin’s note is well  
worth transcribing: “This place admirably  
expresses how wretched is their life who  
dread death; as all must dread it who  
view it out of Christ; for then there appears in it nothing but a curse. For  
whence comes death except from the wrath  
of God against sin? Hence this bondage through life, i.e. perpetual anxiety,  
constraining their unhappy souls. For  
conscience of sin ever implies dread of  
divine judgment. From this fear Christ  
has liberated us, taken away our curse  
by submitting to it, which was the  
thing formidable in death”).

**16.]** Explanatory of ver. 15, by pointing  
out a fact well Known to us all, that it was  
to help a race subject to death, that Christ  
came. **For, as we well know, it is not  
angels that He helpeth, but it is the  
seed of Abraham that He helpeth** (I have  
rendered thus, to preserve the emphasis on  
the two contrasted words, **angels,** and **the  
seed of Abraham**. The word rendered  
**helpeth** signifies *“takes by the hand,”* in  
order to assist and lead. This help is not  
by Him rendered to *angels:* He is not the  
Captain of their salvation, And herein  
there is no contradiction to Col. i. 20: for  
the reconciliation which Christ has effected  
even for the things in the heavens, is  
not delivering them from fear of death, or  
bringing them through sufferings to glory,  
whatever mystery it may involve beyond  
our power of conception.

**the seed of Abraham** next comes under consideration.  
And we must here as ever, render, and  
understand, according to the simple sense  
of the words used, regarding the circumstances under which they were used. Accordingly, we must not here understand  
*mankind,* as some have done: nor again  
with others, can we suppose the *spiritual*  
seed of Abraham to be meant [Gal. iii. 7,  
29; Rom. iv. 11f., 16],—because, as Bleek  
well remarks, the present context speaks not of that *into which* Christ has *made* those redeemed by Him, but of that *out of which* He has *helped* them. *The seed of Abraham* then means, *the Jewish race*,  
among whom Christ was born in the flesh,  
and whom He did come primarily to help:  
and the peculiarity of the expression must  
be explained, Estius,—“This whole  
epistle prudently dissimulates the calling  
of the Gentiles, either because the mention of them would be unpleasing to the Hebrews, or because that mention was not  
necessary to its design.” I must not omit to mention, that the above manner of interpreting this verse, now generally acquiesced in, was not that of the ancient expositors. By them it was generally supposed that the verb referred to our Lord’s taking upon Him of our nature: and they  
for the most part make it into a past tense,  
and render as A.V.,—*“He took not upon  
Him the nature of angels, but He took upon  
Him the seed of Abraham.”* But independently of other reasons against this,  
arising from the usage of the word, the  
formula ‘to take on him the seed of  
Abraham, or the angels,’ would be a most  
unnatural way of expressing *‘to take the  
nature* of either of these.’ And the ancients  
themselves seem to have felt, that this  
formula of itself could not bear such a  
meaning. They assume accordingly that  
the writer represents man and his nature,  
through sinfulness, alienated and flying  
from God and the divine nature, and the  
Son of God pursuing, overtaking, and  
drawing it into union with Himself. It  
needs little to shew how far-fetched and  
forced this interpretation of the words is, if  
it is intended to give the sense of *assuming  
the nature of man.* See more remarks  
on the meaning in my Greek Test.).

**17.]** Because then He had this work to do  
for the seed of Abraham (sons of men, in  
the wider reference),—viz. to deliver them  
from *fear* of death, He must be made like  
them in all things, that He may be a  
merciful and faithful High Priest. Then  
ver. 18 gives the reason of this necessity.  
**Whence it behoved Him** (not implying  
the eternal purpose of God [Luke xxiv.