23; xii. 8. But here it is rather perhaps  
anticipatory, looking on to the fulfilment  
of the condition to be stated) **partakers of  
Christ** (some take these words to signify  
*‘fellow-partakers with Christ;’* but improperly), **if, that is, we hold fast** (see on ver. 6) **the beginning of our confidence**(some render this, *“the beginning of the  
subsistence of Christ in us.”* But there  
can be little doubt that the text is right.

It is, however, somewhat doubtful,  
whether by the expression is to be understood our incipient confidence, which has not yet reached its perfection,—or, “our  
*former* confidence,” see 1 Tim. v. 12; Rev. ii. 4, 5. This latter is taken by very many; but the other is far better, inasmuch as it  
keeps the contrast between *beginning* and  
*end:* “if we hold fast this *beginning* of  
our confidence firm until the *end*.” Otherwise, by making the *beginning* *of* merely mean *the former*, the contrast vanishes)  
**firm unto the end** (the *end* thought of  
is, not the death of each individual, but  
the coming of the Lord, which is constantly called by this name).

**15.]** The whole connexion and construction of this verse is very difficult. I have discussed them in full in my Greek Test.;  
and have concluded that the words are to  
be taken as a proof that we must hold fast  
&c, in order to be *partakers of Christ.*  
I would render then, *“since it is said,”* or  
in more idiomatic English, **for it is said,  
To-day if ye hear His voice, harden not  
your hearts, as in the provocation.** Thus  
the context goes on smoothly, and the purpose of the whole is to shew, as is summed up in ver. 12, that (ver. 12) it is the  
wicked heart of *unbelief* which they have  
above all things to avoid. This argument  
is now carried forward by taking up the  
word *provocation*, and asking, in a double  
question, who they were that provoked,  
and with whom it was that He was offended.

**16.]** The A. V. renders, as indeed the original will very well bear, *“For some, when they had heard, did  
provoke; howbeit not all that came out of  
Egypt by Moses:”*—the exceptions being,  
Caleb and Joshua, and all under twenty  
years old, and the women and Levites,  
But if we come to examine, (a) what contextual sense such a sentence can bear, or even (b) how our Writer would probably  
have expressed such a meaning, we shall  
find reason at once to reject the interpretation. For (a), the purpose here is clearly not to bring out the *exceptions* to  
those who were included in this saying, a  
process which would have quite defeated  
the purpose of the exhortation, seeing that  
the rebellious would be designated merely  
by *some*, and the exceptions would appear  
to be by far the greater number: and so  
every reader might shelter himself under  
the reflection that he was one of the  
faithful many, not one of the rebellions  
*“some.”* Nor again (b) would this, as  
mere matter of fact, have been thus expressed by the Writer. For it obviously  
was not so. The *“some”* were the faithful  
few, not the rebellious many: *“but with  
the greater part of them* God was not well  
pleased,” 1 Cor. x. 5. As regards the context, the course of thought is in fact just contrary to what this construction would  
require. The faithful exceptions are overlooked, and the whole of Israel is included in the *provocation*, to make the exhortation fall more forcibly on the readers.

**For** (“you need indeed to be careful against unbelief:—*for* on account  
of this very unbelief all our fathers were  
excluded”) WHO, **when they had heard**  
(in immediate reference to *“if ye hear,”*  
ver.7), **provoked** (viz. God)? **Nay, was it  
not all who** (as above noticed, the exceptions are put out of sight, and that which was true of *almost all*, asserted generally)  
**came out from Egypt by means of  
Moses? And** (literally, **but;** it simply  
brings out the very slight contrast of a  
second and new particular, and therefore