*Abraham, the first inheritor of the promise.*

**13.] For** “in these words he does not render a reason why we should  
imitate those just mentioned, but a reason,  
why he mentions them. A man might ask  
whether there are any such, and who they  
are? So in these words he introduces  
Abraham, the father of all the faithful,  
who was most enduring in his faith, and  
reaped most fruit from it.” Schlichting)  
**God when He promised** (Bleek well remarks, that **promised** is to be taken not  
only as “made a promise,” but in the Messianic sense, *“gave the promise,”* as *“the promises”* above, and vv. 15, 17, ch. vii. 6;  
Rom. ix. 4; Gal. iii, 16) **to Abraham, since  
He could swear by none** (no *person*)  
**greater, swore by Himself, saying, Surely  
blessing I will bless** (at first the participle,  
on, seems to have had a certain emphasis: but afterwards this was lost,  
and the expression became a mere formula)  
**thee, and multiplying I will multiply  
thee. And thus** (i.e. *when he had received this promise*,—being in this state  
of dependence on the divine promise), **having endured with patience** (viz. in  
his waiting so long for God’s promise to be fulfilled—in having, when it was partially fulfilled, again shewn noble  
endurance in the will of God by offering  
up Isaac), **he obtained the promise** (i.e. not as Bleek, he had made to him the  
promise above related: this would merely  
stultify the sentence, which proceeds on  
the faithfulness of God, confirming his  
promise with an oath by Himself, and the  
faith and endurance of Abraham, waiting  
for that promise to be fulfilled: but as  
Lünemann, he *obtained*, *got fulfilled to  
him*, the promise, the thing promised, to  
wit, the birth of Isaac, as the commencement of the fulfilment—as much of it  
as he could see. And thus Abraham became inheritor of the promises. That  
there is here no inconsistency with ch. xi. 39, see shewn there).

**16–20.]** *Security of this promise*, as being part  
of God’s great promise, which He has  
fulfiled in Christ. These verses are transitional, and lead us to the consideration of the Melchisedec Priesthood of  
our Lord in the next chapter.

**16.] For** [**indeed**] **men** (emphatic) **swear**  
**by the greater** [one] (undoubtedly masculine: it could not be predicated of any thing neuter, that it was *greater than the  
men* who swear, And by the expression  
here, generally taken, must be meant God  
Himself: that greater One, who is above  
all men): **and an oath is to them an end**(see reff. and more examples in Bleek) **of  
all gainsaying** (A. V. with very many   
other versions, *“strife,”* which is a legitimate meaning, but not borne out here by the context, seeing that there is no  
allusion, in the application of the example, to any instance in which *God* and  
*men* were at strife. And besides, in the  
only places where the word occurs in the  
New Test. it has the meaning *“gainsaying:”* e.g. ch. vii. 7, without possibility of *gainsaying*. So that it is best to take  
this meaning here, and understand that an  
oath puts an end to all gainsaying by confirming the matter *one way*, in which all parties consent) **for confirmation** (the A.V.  
ungrammatically joins these words with *an  
oath,—“an oath for confirmation.”* They  
can only be joined, and that closely, with  
*an end.* Calvin’s remark on this verse is  
pertinent: “This passage teaches us that  
there is among Christians a lawful use of  
an oath, and this is to be noticed as against  
fanatics, who of their own fancy want to  
abrogate the rule of reverent swearing  
which God has prescribed in His law.  
For the Apostle beyond doubt here treats  
of the manner of swearing as of a pious  
practice and one sanctioned by God: inasmuch