of the Messiah”); **without father, with-  
out mother, without genealogy** (it is very  
difficult to assign the true meaning to these  
predicates. The latter of them seems indeed to represent a simple matter of fact: viz. that Melchisedec *has not in Genesis  
any genealogy recorded*, by which his descent is shewn [see below]. But as to the two former, it cannot well be denied that,  
while they also may bear a similar sense,  
viz., that no father and mother of his are  
recorded in the sacred narrative, it is very  
possible on the other hand to feel that the  
Writer would hardly have introduced them  
so solemnly, hardly have followed them  
up by such a clause as *“having neither  
beginning of days nor end of life,”* we  
he had coupled with them far higher  
ideas than the former supposition implies.  
I confess this feeling to be present in  
my own mind:—indeed I feel that such  
solemn words seem to me to decide against  
that other supposition. So far I think  
all is clear: but when we come to inquire *what* high and mysterious eminence is here allotted to Melchisedec, I own  
I have no data whereon to decide: nor,  
I think, is a decision required of us. The Writer assigns to him this mysterious and insulated position, simply as a type of  
Christ: and this type he is merely by virtue of negations, as far as these epithets are concerned: in what he was *not*, he  
surpasses earthly priests, and represents  
Christ: what he *was*, is not in the record.  
I would regard the epithets then as designedly used in this mysterious way, and meant to represent to us, that Melchisedec  
was a person suffering from common men.  
It remains to give a summary of the  
opinions respecting the The circumstance that Melchisedec is here stated  
to be **likened unto the Son of God,** has  
led many of the older expositors to regard  
these epithets as belonging to Melchisedec  
only in so far as he is a type of the Son of  
God, and as properly true of Him alone,  
not of Melchisedec, or only in an improper  
sense, and a subordinate manner. Accordingly, they understand **without father**of Christ in reference to his Humanity; **without mother,** in reference to his Divinity; and so also **without genealogy.**  
But, however the term *“without father”*  
might perhaps be conceded to be not unnaturally applied to Christ in virtue of his Humanity, the words *“without mother”* and *“without genealogy”* lie so  
far off any obvious application to his  
Divinity, that we may safely say this view  
could not well have been in the Writer's  
mind. See further reasons, on the words  
*“likened to the Son of God”* below, for  
applying these epithets to Melchisedec, and  
not to Christ. But *when they are so applied,* we are met by two widely divergent streams of opinion, partly hinted at in  
the explanation of the rendering given  
above. The one of these regards Melchisedec as a superhuman being: the  
other finds nothing in this description  
which need point him out as any thing  
beyond a man. Jerome had received from  
Evagrius au anonymous work, in which  
the “most famous question respecting the  
Priest Melchisedec” was treated, and the  
writer tried to prove him “to have been  
of divine nature, not to be thought of as  
a man: and to have at the end presumed.  
to say that the Holy Spirit met Abraham,  
and was the person who appeared to him  
as a man.” This strange opinion moved  
Jerome “to examine the books of the  
ancients to see what their opinions were.”  
And he found that Origen, in his first  
Homily on Genesis [now lost], maintained  
him to have been *an angel*, as did  
Didymus, the follower of Origen. Then  
he examined Hippolytus, Eusebius of  
Cæsarea, and Eusebius of Emesa, Apollinarius, Eustathius of Antioch, and found that all these held him to have been  
*a man* of Canaan, King of Jerusalem,  
and endeavoured to prove it in different  
ways. He then mentions the opinion of  
the Jews, that Melchisedec was *Shem*,  
the eldest son of Noah; and gives their  
calculation that this may well have been,  
for Shem survived Abraham forty years.  
On this he pronounces no opinion. The  
view, that Melchisedec was the Holy Ghost,  
was also entertained by Hieraeas the Egyptian, and by a branch of the Theodotian heretics, founded by the younger Theodotus,  
and called Melchisedecites: and Marcus  
Eremita [about 400], who wrote a treatise:  
on Melchisedec, mentions heretics who believed him to be “God the Word, before He took flesh, or was born of Mary.” This  
opinion Epiphanius mentions as held by