the inference from their own confession)  
**they who say such things make manifest  
that they seek after a home** (our English  
word ‘country,’ without some possessive  
pronoun, does not give the idea strongly  
enough).

**15.**] **And if indeed they  
were mindful of that** (home) **from which  
they went out, they would continually be  
having opportunity to return**.

**16.**] **But now** (as the case now is: the logical  
“*now:*” see 1 Cor. xiii. 13 note, and our  
ch. viii. 6) **they desire a better** (home),  
**that is, a heavenly one** (the justification  
of this assertion, which seems to ascribe  
New Test. ideas to the Old Test. fathers,  
must be found in such sayings as that of  
the dying Jacob, Gen. xlix. 18, which only  
represent a wide class of their faithful  
thoughts): **wherefore God is not ashamed  
of them to be called their God** (from the  
present tense, is not ashamed, and especially   
from the clause which follows, it is  
probable, as Bleek has well remarked, that  
the Writer intends not merely to adduce  
that God did once call Himself their God,  
but that he is *now* not ashamed to be so  
called, they enduring and abiding with  
Him where He is: in the same sense in  
which our Lord adduces the same circumstance,  
Matt. xxii. 31 ff. See below): **for  
He prepared for them a city** (permanent  
and eternal, in contrast to the tents in  
which they wandered. There are two ways  
of understanding this clause: 1) to take  
the verb asa pluperfect, “for God had prepared   
for them a city:” 2) God is not  
ashamed of them, nor to be called their  
God: and we find proof of this not only in  
His thus naming Himself, but in His *preparing*   
for them a city: the home for which  
they yearned: He did not deceive their  
hopes, but acted as their God by verifying  
those hopes. Thus, and thus only, does  
the *preparing* keep its proper emphasis,  
and the past tense its proper time: *they  
looked for a city:* and God refused not to  
be called their God, for *He prepared* for  
them that city, verified those their hopes.  
And if we ask for the *interpretation* of  
this *preparing*, I answer, in the preparation   
of the way of Christ, and bringing in  
salvation by Him, of which salvation they  
in their anticipation of faith were partakers  
John viii. 56).

**17-31.**] Having  
spoken thus generally of the faith of the  
patriarchs, he returns to *individual instances*,   
and begins again with Abraham,  
recounting the severest test to which his  
faith was put. Chrysostom remarks, that  
he here proceeds to a far greater triumph  
of faith, in a matter in which God seemed  
to contradict Himself, and faith contended  
with faith, and command with promise.  
Compare Ecclus. xliv. 20; Wisd. x. 5; 1  
Macc. ii. 52; James ii. 21. **By faith  
Abraham hath offered** (perfect tense, as if  
the work and its praise were yet enduring)  
**Isaac when tempted: and** (the **and** rises  
into climax: not only Abraham offered  
Isaac, but &c.) **he that had accepted the  
promises** (more than “*had* the promises,”  
ch. vii. 6; he had as it were with open  
arms accepted and taken to himself each  
and all of the promises, the possession of  
Canaan, the multiplication of his seed,  
the blessing of all nations in his seed) **was  
offering** (now the Writer transforms the  
time into the purely temporal and strict  
one—he was in the act of offering—the  
work was begun) **his only begotten, he to**