§1v.] OCCASION, OBJECT OF WRITING, &c. [1xrropuction.   
   
 double danger on the church: on the one hand that of perseeution, on   
 the other that of apos Between these lay another, that of mingling   
 with a certain recognition of Jesus as the Christ, a leaning to Jewish   
 practices and valuing of Jewish ordinances. But this latter does not   
 so much appear in our Epistle, as in those others which were written by   
 St. Paul to mixed churches ; those to the Romans’, the Galatians, the   
 Colossians. The principal peril to which Jewish converts were exposed,   
 especially after they had lost the guidance of the Apostles themselves   
 in their various churches, was, that of falling back from the despised   
 following of Jesus of Nazareth into the more compact and apparently   
 safer system of their childhood, which moreover they saw tolerated as a   
 lawful religion, while their own was outeast and proscribed.   
 2. The object then of this Epistle is, to shew them the superiority   
 of the Gospel to the former covenant: and that mainly by exhibiting,   
 from the Scriptures, and from the nature of the case, the superiority   
 of Jesus Himself to both the messengers and the High Priests of that   
 former covenant. This is the main argument of the Episile, filled out   
 and illustrated by various corollaries springing out of its d ent parts,   
 and expanding in the directions of encouragement, warning, and illus-   
 tration.   
 3. This argument is entered on at once without intreduction in ch. i.,   
 where Christ’s superiority to the angels, the mediators of the old cove-   
 nant, is demonstrated from Scripture. Then, having interposed (ii.   
 1—4) a caution on the greater necessity of taking heed to the things   
 which they had heard, the Writer shews (ii, 5—18) why Ie to whom,   
 and not to the angels, the future world is subjected, yet was made lower   
 than the angels : viz. that He might become our merciful and faithful   
 High Priest, to deliver and to save us, Himself having undergono   
 temptation like ourselves,   
 4. Having mentioned this title of Christ, he goes back, and prepares   
 the way for its fuller treatment, by a comparison of Him with Moses   
 (iii, 1—6), and a shewing that that antitypical rest of God, from which   
 unbelief excludes, was not the rest of the seventh day, nor that of the   
 possession of Canaan, but one yet reserved for the people of God (iii. 7—   
 iv. 10), into which we must all the more strive to enter, because the   
 word of our God is keen and searching in judgment, and nothing hidden   
 from Ilis sight, with whom we have to do (iv. 11—13).   
 5. He now resumes the main consideration of his great subject, the   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
 3 One remarkable trace we have of allusion to this form of error,—in its further   
 development, as appears by the verdict of past experience which is appended, but other-   
 wise singularly resembling a passage in the Epistle to the Romans (xiv. 17), in our   
 ch. xiii. “ For it is good that the heart be established with grace, not with meats, y   
 which they were not profited who walked in them.”   
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