

BIBLICAL EXEGESIS.

THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST NOT A VEIL, BUT A WAY.

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"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh ;

And having a high priest over the house of God ;

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."—*Heb. x. 19-22.*

THESE four verses are very important, because they commence the second and practical part of the great epistle to the Hebrews, and ought to begin a new chapter, and because they summarize the truths of our communion with God ; and yet, in one momentous particular, they are much misunderstood. The chief exegetical difficulty is in the twentieth verse, and, strange to say, in the epexegetis : "that is to say, His flesh." What is it that belongs to "flesh,"—way or veil? Is the flesh of Christ a way, or is it a veil? Does the writer mean "a new and living way, that is, [the way] of His flesh ;" or "a new and living way through the veil, that is, [through the veil] of His flesh?" If the flesh is a veil, then Christ has consecrated a way for us through His own flesh. What could this mean? Here the difficulty lies.

Let us first hear Moses Stuart, in his commentary on the epistle. "Λία του καταπατασματος . . . σαρκος αυτου,—*through the veil, that is, H's flesh.* I translate these words literally, because I am not well satisfied that I understand their meaning. The opinions of all the commentators, it would be tedious, if not useless, to recite. The principal interpretation, in which the most

distinguished of them unite, is that as the veil of the temple must be *removed* in order to enter the inner sanctuary, so the body of Jesus must be removed (by death), that we might have access to the sanctuary above: an exegesis which, while the facts to which it alludes are true, still presents a comparison incongruous at first view, and seemingly requires a distorted imagination, to recognize it with any degree of satisfaction." According to this exegesis the flesh of Christ is a veil.

We may be sure that an interpretation of God's word that cannot be recognized with any degree of satisfaction without a distorted imagination, is not correct; and it is very strange that an expositor of such eminence and excellence as Moses Stuart could substantially abide by it, and still more strange, that in such a stream, the most distinguished commentators should so long have been carried away.

A new printing of the words (as in many other cases) gives a new and true meaning. *Εν ενεκαίνισεν ημιν οδον προσφατον και ζωσαν, (δια του καταπατασματος,) τουτεστι της σαρκος αυτου.* "By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us (through the veil), that is to say, [the way] of His flesh." *σαρκος* (flesh) is in the genitive, and must be governed by *οδον* (way), or by *καταπατασματος* (veil), or by *δια* (through). If *οδον* governs, then the meaning is, "the way of His flesh;" if *δια* governs, the meaning is, "a way through the veil, that is, through His flesh;" if *καταπατασματος*