

THE
PULPIT COMMENTARY,

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WITH
INTRODUCTIONS

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NEW EDITION.

FUNK & WAGNALLS COMPANY
LONDON AND NEW YORK

1907

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

INTRODUCTION.

I. AUTHENTICITY OF THE EPISTLE.

THERE are modern writers who describe the teaching of this Epistle as "an insipid Paulinism." To the believer it is one of the most precious parts of Holy Scripture. It is characterized by a depth of conviction, a vivid realization of the spiritual blessings, the living hope, the abiding joy, which spring from a true faith in Christ; by a firm grasp of the necessity of reality in the Christian life, of resolute self-denial and patient obedience; by a deep and true sympathy with suffering Christians; by a steadfast faith in the Lord's atonement and the power and preciousness of his example; by an earnest presentation of the duties of humility, brotherly love, endurance, trustfulness, perseverance; by a calm and holy wisdom, worthy of the first of the apostles, worthy of him to whom the Lord had given the significant name of Peter, who "seemed to be a pillar" (Gal. ii. 9) of the rising Church.

1. *Internal Evidence.*

The writer describes himself as "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ." The Epistle itself bears witness to the truth of the superscription. He places the great word "elect" in the forefront of his Epistle. St. Peter had heard that word three times from the Lord's lips in the solemn prophecy of coming judgment (Mark xiii. 20, 22, 27). He was present when Christ pronounced his blessing on those who had not seen, but yet had believed (John xx. 29); he almost echoes the Saviour's words in ch. i. 8. The Lord had said, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning;" St. Peter bids us "gird up the loins of your mind" (ch. i. 13). The Lord told his apostles that he came "to give his life a ransom for many;" St. Peter reminds us "that we are redeemed . . . with the precious blood of Christ" (ch. i. 18).

The description of Christ in ch. i. 19 as "a Lamb without blemish and without spot," reminds us that Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, who first brought him to Jesus, was one of those two disciples of John the Baptist who heard their master say, "Behold the Lamb of God!" The words ἀγνάσθης and ἁπαρσίμης in ch. i. 6 and 12 remind us of Matt. v. 12 and Luke xxiv. 12. The Lord had spoken of the kingdom prepared from "the foundation of the world;" he had said, "This is my commandment, that ye love one another;" St. Peter repeats his Master's words in ch. i. 20, 22. The Lord had applied to himself the words of the hundred and eighteenth psalm, the prophecy of the stone which the builders rejected; St. Peter quotes the same psalm in ch. ii. 7, and, as if his thoughts went back to that solemn hour when, immediately after his great confession, he incurred through his mistaken affection the Lord's severe rebuke, he reproduces the word which was then applied to himself, ὀστέον, "an offence" (ch. ii. 8). The Lord had told him that he was Peter, a stone; he had spoken of his Church which he would build upon the rock; St. Peter describes all Christ's faithful people as "living stones, built up a spiritual house" (ch. ii. 5). The Lord had spoken of "the day of visitation" of Jerusalem (Luke xix. 44); St. Peter echoes his words in ch. ii. 12. In Mark i. 25 and iv. 39—the Gospel which was in all probability written under St. Peter's direction—we read the remarkable word φειμὶν (φειμᾶσθαι, πεφίμωσο); the apostle uses the same word in ch. ii. 15. In ch. ii. 19 "this is thankworthy" seems an echo of Luke vi. 32, and "suffering wrongfully" of Matt. v. 39. The Lord had said, "Then are the children free," and yet had consented to pay the half-shekel for the service of the temple, in accordance with St. Peter's promise; the apostle teaches that Christians are free, and yet that they should submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. He had seen the Lord Jesus gird himself with a towel, and wash the apostles' feet; he bids his readers gird themselves with humility, to tie it round them like a close-fitting apron (ch. v. 6). The Lord had said that he had given the apostles an example (John xiii. 15); he had again and again bidden them to come after him, to follow him; St. Peter tells us that Christ left "us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (ch. ii. 21). St. Peter may have seen the mocking and the scourging when the disciple whom Jesus loved took him into the high priest's hall; he speaks of the reviling and the stripes, using a remarkable word (μολαίω), which seems to picture the bloody weals rising under the cruel lash. In ch. ii. 25 he speaks of "sheep going astray," and of "the Shepherd of your souls," and in ch. v. 4 of the chief Shepherd, as if the Lord's words in Matt. ix. 36 and xviii. 12, 13, and the precious allegory of the Good Shepherd recorded afterwards by St. John, were still fresh in his memory. In ch. iii. 9, 14 we seem to see two allusions to the sermon on the mount (comp. Matt. v. 39, 10). The Lord had dwelt on the solemn warnings of the Deluge in Matt. xxiv. 37, 38; St. Peter does the same in ch. iii. 20, where his statement that only "few were saved" seems also a reminiscence of Luke xiii. 23. The words, "as good stewards," in ch. iv. 10,

bring to our thoughts Luke xii. 42. In vers. 11, 12, 14 of the same chapter we again see three allusions to the Lord's great sermon (comp. Matt. v. 16, 12, 10); while in ver. 19, where the apostle bids the suffering Christians to commit (*παρὰ τοῦτον*) the keeping of their souls to God, we seem to hear the Saviour's dying words, "Father, into thy hands I commend (*παρὰ τίθειμι*) my spirit." When in ch. v. 2 St. Peter urged the presbyters to "feed the flock of God," he must have had in his thoughts the solemn words addressed to himself by the risen Lord (John xxi. 16). Ver. 3 of the same chapter, "neither as being lords over God's heritage," reminds us of Matt. xx. 25. And in vers. 7, 8, 9 we seem to see reminiscences of the sermon on the mount (comp. Matt. vi. 25, 28; v. 25; and vii. 25).

These and other similar coincidences with the Lord's words as reported in the Gospels are so simple and unaffected, they seem to come so naturally to the writer's thoughts, that we are led at once to infer that that writer must be one who, like St. John, could declare to others that which he had heard, which he had seen with his eyes. Some of them point in an especial manner to the Apostle St. Peter as the writer of the Epistle. The argument is strengthened by the resemblances which exist between the language and teaching of the Epistle and the speeches of St. Peter recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. The first of those speeches begins with a reference to prophecy (Acts i. 16); the great Pentecostal sermon in Acts ii. is full of prophecy; so is the speech in Solomon's porch, reported in Acts iii.; in Acts x. 43 St. Peter again refers to the witness of the prophets. This constant appeal to prophecy comes naturally from the mouth of the apostle who took the view of Old Testament prophecy which we have in ch. i. 10—12 of our Epistle. In ver. 17 of the same chapter St. Peter warns his readers that God judgeth according to every man's work without respect of persons; he had said long before, when he received Cornelius the centurion into the Christian Church, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons" (Acts x. 34). In ver. 20 the word "foreknown" (*προγνωσμένων*) recalls the expression used by St. Peter on the great Day of Pentecost, "The determinate counsel and foreknowledge (*προγνώσει*) of God" (Acts ii. 23). And in the latter part of the same verse the words, "in these last times," remind us of "the last days," St. Peter's variation of the Prophet Joel's words, in Acts ii. 17. In vers. 8, 21, as also in ch. iii. 21, St. Peter dwells on the resurrection of Christ as he had done in his speeches (Acts ii. 32—36; iii. 15; iv. 10). In ch. ii. 4 he quotes Ps. cxlviii.; he had used the same quotation in his speech before the Sanhedrin (Acts iv. 11). The words, "wherunto also they were appointed," of ch. ii. 8 remind us somewhat of Acts i. 16. The precept, "Honour all men," of ch. ii. 17, finds a parallel in Acts x. 28. The somewhat uncommon word *εὐαλσίς*, used in ch. ii. 18, occurs also in St. Peter's speech (Acts ii. 40). In the same chapter (ver. 24) St. Peter speaks of the cross as the tree (*τὸ ξύλον*); he had done so in two of his speeches (Acts v. 30; x. 39). Ch. iii. 18, where he insists on the righteousness of Christ, brings to our thoughts his words in Acts iii. 14. In

ch. iv. 5 the words, "to judge the quick and the dead," remind us of Acts x. 42. In ch. v. 1 he describes himself as a witness of the life and death of Christ, as he had done in Acts iii. 15 and x. 41. He uses the word κληρος in ch. v. 3 and also in Acts i. 17; viii. 21. The words "exhorting and testifying," in ch. v. 12, remind us of the description of St. Peter's addresses in Acts ii. 40. St. Peter described the Law as a yoke "which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear" (Acts xv. 10); we notice that he never mentions the Law in his Epistles. There is also a general resemblance in style between the speeches and the Epistles.

St. Peter's style is such as we might expect, full of vivacity, testifying to a strong character, warm affections, and a deep assured conviction. But in the Epistle the original impetuosity and self-confidence of the apostle is seen softened by years, by the lessons of experience, by sustained effort to follow the example of the Saviour whom he loved so dearly, by the gracious help of the Holy Spirit, given, as it always is given, in answer to faithful prayer. He speaks with the authority of an apostle, but with the gentleness of one who knew the power of temptation and the difficulty of steadfastness, with the humility of one who well remembered how he himself had fallen. His words are forcible, but simple; he has no trains of reasoning, nothing of the subtle logic of St. Paul, but goes straight to the point. On the other hand, his style is less sententious than that of St. James; his sentences are connected by relatives or particles; in particular the particle ὡς is of very common occurrence; the frequent use of the participle in an imperative sentence should also be noticed (see especially ch. ii. 18; iii. 1, 7, 9, 16; iv. 8). He has a few leading thoughts, which he enforces again and again with intense earnestness. His whole mind is evidently filled with recollections of the Old Testament; he uses its words constantly; often, it seems, almost unconsciously, without marks of quotation—he has by long study so assimilated the sacred words that they have become the natural expression of his thoughts.

2. *External Evidence.*

The external evidence for the authenticity of the Epistle is very strong. The Second Epistle is allowed, even by those who question its Petrine authorship, to be a writing of the second century, and it bears witness to the First.

The earliest Christian writers were not accustomed to quote the books of the New Testament by name, or to reproduce the words with exactness. Hence we do not expect to find formal quotations of our Epistle in the apostolic Fathers. But in Clement of Rome there are more than fifteen references to it; some clear and certain, such as "his marvellous light;" others less marked. In Polycarp's 'Epistle to the Philippians' (and Polycarp was bishop of one of the Churches addressed by St. Peter) there are so many undoubted quotations from this Epistle that the modern assailants of its authenticity have no resource but to attack (without any sufficient

grounds) the genuineness of Polycarp's epistle. Eusebius tells us that the Epistle was used by Papias. There are manifest traces of it in the 'Shepherd' of Hermas, in Justin Martyr, and Theophilus of Antioch. Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian quote it expressly, often by name. Origen refers to it frequently, and says expressly that it was accepted by all as genuine. Eusebius places it among those canonical Scriptures which are universally acknowledged. It is contained in the Peschito and the Old Latin versions. The Muratorian Canon mentions only an Apocalypse of Peter, "which some will not have read in the Church." But that document is so fragmentary that little weight can be attached to its omission of St. Peter's Epistles.

The genuineness of the Epistle has been questioned by certain modern critics, as Eichhorn, De Wette, Baur, Schwegler, Hilgenfeld, etc., chiefly on the following grounds: (1) Its resemblance to the Epistles of St. Paul; (2) its supposed want of originality; (3) because the description of the persecutions is regarded as indicating a later date; (4) the supposed absence of a sufficient occasion.

In answer to these objections, it may be urged: (1) It is true that this Epistle has many points of contact with St. Paul's Epistles, especially the Epistles to the Romans and Ephesians, as well as with that of St. James. But why should not apostles study the writings of other apostles, as Daniel had studied the writings of other prophets (Dan. ix. 2)? St. Luke was acquainted with earlier Christian records. St. Peter, when he wrote (as we fully believe he did write) the Second Epistle, had read the Epistle of St. Jude, as well as several of St. Paul's letters. St. Paul had communicated his gospel to "them which were of reputation" at Jerusalem. St. Peter, who was one of them, would be sure to take the deepest interest in such writings of St. Paul as might at any time become known to him through Silvanus or any other source; he would be sure to make use of them when writing to Churches which had been founded through the instrumentality of St. Paul. The many admitted coincidences furnish no argument against the genuineness of the Epistle, except to those who, like Baur, regard the Clementine Recognitions and Homilies as giving a true account of the state of things in the early Church, and exaggerate the original differences between the two apostles into an irreconcilable opposition. But it is by no means correct to describe the teaching of this Epistle as "insipid Paulinism." St. Peter's mode of presenting Christian doctrine is not that of St. Paul. He does not insist, as St. Paul does, on the doctrine of justification by faith only; he contemplates the death of Christ from a somewhat different point of view; his teaching on the subject of baptism has not a Pauline colouring. The great truths are the same; they are regarded in a somewhat different aspect.

(2) There is no want of originality. The writer is evidently a man of independent thought; he has several conceptions which are specially his own. Such are the Lord's preaching in the spirit-world; the priesthood of all Christians, which is also characteristic of the Revelation of St. John;

the view of the Deluge as a figure of Christian baptism; the reference to Sarah as an example to Christian wives; the presentation of ancient prophecy; the interest taken by the angels in the work of redemption; the enforcement of holiness as a means for convincing the heathen. The many words peculiar to the Epistle (there are about sixty such, several of them picturesque and unusual) furnish another indication of originality.

(3) It is true that believers are described as suffering as Christians; but the Epistle does not exhibit any systematic effort of the Roman magistrates to extirpate Christianity. There is no mention of formal trials; for the *ἀπολογία* of ch. iii. 15 is not a defence before a court of law, or an apology offered to an emperor or magistrate, but simply an answer such as any true Christian ought to be able to give to those who ask for the reasons of his hope in Christ. Again, there is no evidence in the Epistle of actual martyrdom; the sufferings mentioned in it do not seem to have reached unto death. The apostle even speaks as if blamelessness of life might soften the enemies of the faith (ch. ii. 12, 15; iii. 16). On the whole, the Epistle indicates, not a systematic persecution like that under Trajan, but such a state of things as might be expected to exist in the provinces after the Neronian persecution of A.D. 64. The fury of that persecution was limited to Rome. The Christians were accused of the definite offence of having caused the great conflagration, and were punished for their supposed guilt. It is morally certain that the outburst of hatred kindled in the imperial city must have spread in various degrees over the provinces, and that Christian provincials, though not formally brought to trial and punished for the crime falsely laid to the charge of their Roman brethren, must have been exposed to many indignities and much suffering from popular violence, and from the tendency of the provincial authorities to follow the example, and the wish to win the favour, of the Roman persecutors.

(4) There was a sufficient occasion. St. Peter had heard of the sufferings of the Christians of Asia Minor, perhaps from Silvanus; it may be also from Mark, who, when St. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Colossians, was intending to visit Asia Minor (Col. iv. 10), and may have joined St. Peter at Babylon after fulfilling his design. St. Peter wrote to encourage and comfort his suffering brethren, taking care to recognize and to stamp with his apostolic authority the teaching which they had received from St. Paul (see ch. i. 12, 25), and purposely incorporating much of that teaching into his Epistle. Thus the Epistle is not, as some say, an effort of some unknown Christian early in the second century to reconcile the supposed controversies between the Petrine and the Pauline parties, but a spontaneous outflow of St. Peter's sympathy for the suffering Churches.

II. TO WHOM THE EPISTLE IS ADDRESSED.

St. Peter addresses his Epistle to "the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." The question at once

arises—Is he writing to all the Christians in those provinces, or to Jewish believers only? St. Peter is regarded as the apostle of the circumcision; there was an understanding (see Gal. ii. 9) that James, Cephas, and John, “who seemed to be pillars,” should go to the circumcision, and that Paul and Barnabas should go unto the heathen. It has been thought that St. Peter would have been interfering with the province of St. Paul if he had written to the Gentile Christians of the Churches founded by St. Paul or his companions. The words also of the address mean, literally translated, “to the sojourners of the dispersion;” and “the dispersion” (*διασπορά*) was the name current in Judæa for the Jews who lived outside the limits of the Holy Land. On the other hand, if St. Peter was, as compared with St. Paul, an apostle of the circumcision, yet God had made choice (as he himself said in the council at Jerusalem) that the Gentiles by his mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. “He did eat with the Gentiles” at Antioch, and “lived after the manner of the Gentiles” (Gal. ii. 12, 14), although for a time “he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.” St. Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, was wont to offer the gospel first to the Jews, and preached, whenever it was possible, in the synagogues. It is not likely that St. Peter at any time confined his ministrations entirely to the Jews; nor would the supposed interference with St. Paul’s field of labour be altogether removed if the Epistle were addressed to Jewish Christians only rather than to the whole Christian population. The word “sojourners” (*παρεπίδημοι*) is used metaphorically, in ch. ii. 11, for Christians generally; it is probable that in ch. i. 1 St. Peter was adapting Jewish words to Christian thoughts, as he often does, and meant by the “sojourners of the dispersion” all the citizens of the heavenly country who were then sojourning upon earth, dispersed among the unbelievers. It is plain, from the narrative in the Acts of the Apostles, that the Gentile element was predominant in the Churches of Asia Minor; it would be strange if St. Peter had addressed his Epistle exclusively to the small minority. The Epistle itself witnesses to the Catholic character which its title suggests. Though it is saturated with Hebrew thought, and crowded with quotations from the Old Testament, there is no allusion to the Law of Moses; the word *νόμος* does not once occur in it—an omission which would be singular indeed if the Epistle were addressed exclusively to Jewish Christians, but not surprising as coming from one who once described the Law as a yoke “which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear” (Acts xv. 10). Again, such passages as ch. i. 14; ii. 10; iv. 3, and perhaps also ch. i. 18, could scarcely have been addressed exclusively to Jewish Christians; nor could St. Peter say of Jewish matrons that they *became* (*ἐγενήθητε*) the daughters of Sarah if they did well (ch. iii. 6). There are no traces at all of a distinction of Jews and Gentiles in the Churches of Asia Minor such that an Epistle could be written by an apostle to one section of the Church to the exclusion of the other. We conclude, therefore, that the readers contemplated by this,

as by all the writings of the New Testament, are Christians generally of whatever origin. "There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision . . . but Christ is all and in all."

III. PROBABLE DATE.

Though we cannot fix the exact date of the Epistle, there are indications which help us to determine the limits of time within which it must have been written. In the first place, the writer was evidently well acquainted with the Epistle to the Ephesians, which was written about the year 63, towards the end of St. Paul's first Roman imprisonment. St. Peter cannot have written till some little time after that date, for the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians—the former of which was probably a circular letter addressed to several of the Churches of Asia Minor—give no hints of such sufferings as those mentioned by St. Peter. But he must have written before the outbreak of any systematic attempt to crush out Christianity, or any legalized persecution such as that under Trajan. Judgment was about to begin at the house of God (ch. iv. 17); for the present there was a possibility that Christians might disarm the fury of their persecutors by an innocent and upright life (ch. iii. 13); there was room to hope that their good conversation in Christ might shame their accusers (ch. iii. 16); even that some of those accusers might be won to the faith by beholding the good works of their Christian neighbours. It was still possible to describe the Roman governors as sent "for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well" (ch. ii. 14). All this seems to point to the time of the Neronian persecution. Before that date, we gather from St. Paul's Epistles, there was no actual persecution in Asia Minor; there are allusions here and there to sufferings (see Gal. iii. 4; vi. 12), but apparently not nearly so severe as the sufferings of the Macedonian Christians (see Phil. i. 28, 30; 1 Thess. ii. 15; iii. 4; 2 Thess. i. 4; iii. 2). Even then, it seems, there were no formal laws against Christianity; probably it had not yet become a *religio illicita*, though Tertullian, apparently without sufficient evidence, asserts the contrary. The Christians of Rome were accused of burning the city; the fury excited against them doubtless extended to the provinces; the heathen would naturally catch the infection of cruelty from the imperial city; Christians would be accused of disloyalty, of contempt of law, of those supposed crimes that Tacitus lays to their charge ('Ann.,' xv. 44). The persecutions would be irregular, intermittent, perhaps illegal, caused rather by tumultuous violence than by formal accusations; but often severe and all the harder to bear because it was the first outburst. Christians regarded persecution as a strange thing (ch. iv. 12); the Church had to become inured to the fiery trial.

Again, we read in ch. v. 13 that "Marcus my son" was with St. Peter at Babylon. In all probability common opinion is right in identifying this Marcus with the "John whose surname was Mark" of the Acts of the

Apostles. Now, we know from Col. iv. 10 that St. Mark was at Rome when St. Paul wrote the Epistle to the Colossians, but was thinking of going into Asia Minor; while St. Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy (iv. 11) makes it probable that he was at Ephesus about the year 67. He may, therefore, have spent some portion of the interval between the dates of the two Epistles at Babylon with St. Peter. The alternative hypothesis, that Mark joined St. Peter after the death of St. Paul, is scarcely possible; for St. Peter himself in all probability suffered martyrdom at Rome under the Emperor Nero, and room must be left for the writing of the Second Epistle before his journey to Rome. It seems, therefore, most probable that the First Epistle was written about the year 65.

IV. WHERE THE EPISTLE WAS WRITTEN.

From ch. v. 13 we infer that it was written "at Babylon." It has, however, been held by many writers, ancient and modern, that St. Peter is using the word "Babylon" metaphorically, as a cryptograph, and that he was really writing at Rome. This was the opinion, according to Eusebius ('Hist. Eccl.,' II. xv. 2), of Papias and Clement of Alexandria. Jerome and Cæcumenius took the same view, which was generally accepted up to the time of the Reformation. It is also urged that there is no historical evidence of the existence of a Christian Church at Babylon, and that the large Jewish population which was once settled there, and to which St. Peter, as the apostle of the circumcision, would probably address his ministrations, had been destroyed or had migrated about A.D. 40 (see Josephus, 'Ant.,' xviii. 9).

In answer to the last two arguments, it may be urged that the absence of any notice of a Babylonian Church does not prove that the gospel had never been preached at Babylon: St. Peter's preaching may have been unsuccessful there. The apostle did not confine his ministrations to the Jews; he may have preached to Babylonian Gentiles; though, indeed, it is quite possible that many Jews may have returned to Babylon by the time of his visit. It may seem presumptuous to disregard the consent of the older writers; but the really ancient testimony is not very strong; the authorities are but few; the desire to find scriptural evidence of St. Peter's residence at Rome led subsequent writers to follow those few authorities and to exaggerate the weight of their testimony. In a mystical book like the Revelation of St. John, in such works as the Talmud or the Sibylline Oracles, we expect to find words and names used metaphorically. But in the New Testament generally, and more especially in a writing like this First Epistle of St. Peter, remarkable for its simplicity and directness, we see no sufficient reason for supposing that one word is used in a symbolical sense, while all else is plain and literal. Such a use of the word would be unintelligible to the Christians of Asia Minor. Even if we were to accept the earliest date assigned to the Apocalypse, it is very improbable that that

book could have been generally known in the Church at the date of St. Peter's Epistle. In that case St. Peter would probably have mentioned it, especially as the seven epistles of Rev. ii. and iii. are addressed to some of the Churches to which he was writing. Neither would there be sufficient reason for using a cryptograph in this Epistle. Babylon is mentioned only once, and that incidentally, in a salutation, with no terms of reproach or condemnation.

There seem, therefore, to be no sufficient grounds for importing a figurative meaning into St. Peter's words. If he was writing from Rome, it seems strange that he should make no mention of St. Paul, who, if not then present at Rome, was so closely connected with the Roman Church, and so well known to the Christians of Asia Minor; while the order in which the provinces are mentioned in ch. i. 1 furnishes at least some slight support to the hypothesis that the apostle was enumerating them as they would naturally occur, one after another, to a person writing from the East. It is true that we have no historical evidence of a journey to Babylon; but then we have no certain records of the apostle's history after the date of his leaving Antioch (Gal. ii. 11). We may, amid the confusion of romance and legend, see sufficient reason for accepting the ancient tradition of his preaching and martyrdom at Rome; but it cannot be said that even this belief rests on sure historical grounds. There was a Babylon in Egypt, a fortress mentioned by Strabo, bk. xvii. But if St. Peter had been writing from a place so little known, he would surely have described it as the Egyptian Babylon.

V. OBJECTS OF THE EPISTLE.

St. Peter is often called the apostle of hope. He begins his Epistle with a thanksgiving for the living hope which God, in his abundant mercy, has granted to his chosen. Evidently the grace of *hope* was a living power in the heart of the apostle; he is constantly dwelling upon it, it occupies that central place in this Epistle which *faith* has in the writings of St. Paul, and *love* in those of St. John (see especially ch. i. 3, 7, 9, 13; iii. 9—15; iv. 13; v. 4). Throughout the Epistle his eye seems fixed on the glorious hope which lies before the true Christian; he employs that hope as the principal topic of consolation in the prospect of the afflictions which were coming upon the Church. This is just what we should expect from the sanguine character of the apostle. Indeed, that character was not what it had been when he said to Christ, "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" It had been chastened and refined; the old impetuosity and forwardness had been subdued; but there was still the same natural temperament, the same sanguine hope, not now directed to self-exaltation and pre-eminence above his brethren, but guided by the refining influences of the Holy Spirit to dwell on the glorious prospects open to all faithful souls. One object which St. Peter had in view when writing this Epistle was evidently to comfort the Christians of

Asia Minor by directing their thoughts away from the sufferings which were gathering round them, to dwell in holy hope upon the inheritance reserved for them in heaven. Another, not the primary object, but secondary and incidental, was to show his entire sympathy with the teaching of his brother apostle. There had been differences between them; those differences may probably have been greatly exaggerated in the apostolic times, as they certainly have been by modern writers. St. Peter seems bent on showing that the two apostles held the one faith.

He fills his Epistle with thoughts apparently taken from St. Paul's Epistles, especially from the Epistle to the Ephesians (which, as a circular letter addressed to several Churches of Asia Minor, must have been well known to his readers) and from the great Epistle to the Romans (also, in the opinion of some scholars, sent with various endings to several Churches, one of which was probably the Church of Ephesus). He shows, too (ch. ii. 16 compared with Gal. v. 13), that he was acquainted with the Epistle to the Galatians. Writing now to the Churches of Galatia, where St. Paul's authority had been questioned and his teaching controverted, the apostle of the circumcision sides, not with the Judaizers, but with St. Paul. The agreement between the two great apostles is complete. They present the same truths, sometimes with a different colouring, sometimes from different points of view. Their early training, their mental characteristics, their habits of thought, were not the same; but the truths are the same—the writers are in perfect accord with one another. St. Peter had received from the Lord the solemn charge, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." He was converted—his old forwardness, self-reliance, impetuosity, were all subdued; he was not only an apostle, but a saint, sanctified by the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. He was now fulfilling the commandment of the Saviour; he was strengthening his brethren in the prospect of fiery trial. He had begun his ministry with that great sermon on the Day of Pentecost, when "with many words he did testify and exhort" (Acts ii. 40): he does the same now; he writes "exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand [or, 'stand ye fast therein']." This is the great object of his Epistle. It is full of exhortation—the earnest exhortation of one who knew from his own experience the certainty of the Christian's faith, and the sure unshaken foundation of the Christian's hope. It is full of comfort—the comfort which only a true Christian, rich in faith and rich in love, can give to the suffering. And the apostle bears his testimony, with the full weight of his apostolic authority, with the sure knowledge of an eye-witness who had received his commission from the Saviour's lips, who had seen the risen Lord, had witnessed his ascension, had felt the mighty presence of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; he bears his testimony that the teaching which the Christians of Asia Minor had received was the true gospel of God, that the grace which they felt working within them was the true grace of God: he bids them "stand fast therein."

VI. ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE.

The Epistle begins with doctrine and ends with practice. The first part treats of the privileges of Christians; the second (beginning at ch. ii. 11), of the duties which grow out of those privileges. The apostle begins by greeting the "sojourners of the dispersion;" he describes them as elect through the choice of the Father, the sanctification of the Spirit, the redemption of the Son. Next comes the thanksgiving; the apostle blesses God for his mercy shown in the gift of the new birth, and the living hope which issues out of that new birth through the resurrection of Christ from the dead; he dwells upon the glory of the heavenly inheritance which is the object of that hope, and the safety of those who are kept by the power of God for the salvation which is ready to be revealed in the last day. This hope, he says, fills the Christian heart with an abiding joy even amid troubles such as those which were now thickening round the Christians of Asia Minor. Those sufferings were necessary, or they would not have been sent. They would issue in the strengthening and refining of their faith; they would end in praise and honour and glory, when Christ's faithful followers, who now believe though they have not seen, shall see him face to face. Such are even now beginning to receive the salvation of their souls; a salvation so great and blessed that the prophets of old searched diligently into the revelations which anticipated it; that the Holy Ghost was sent down from heaven to give power and wisdom to those who preached it; that the angels in heaven desire to stoop and gaze into the mysteries which surround it. Then follows an exhortation to holiness: their present blessings being so great, the grace that is to be brought to them being so unspeakable, they must be earnest and active, sober and full of abiding hope. They must be holy, because God is holy; they must pass the short time of their sojourning here in fear, because they call on the Father, who judgeth according to every man's work, because they were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ. They must love one another from the heart fervently; for unfeigned love is the mark of the children of God who have been born again of the incorruptible seed. That new birth was wrought through the Word of God; that Word liveth and abideth for ever; it had been preached to them with its glad tidings. Therefore (ch. ii.) as newborn babes they must lay aside all that is inconsistent with Christian love, and long for spiritual milk that they may grow thereby. That growth implies union with Christ. They must come to him; he is the living Stone which men rejected, but which is chosen of God and precious; thus coming, they, as living stones themselves, are built up upon him, the chief Cornerstone. That Stone is laid in Zion; the faith of the believer leads to honour; to the unbelieving, the living Stone must become a stumbling-block and a rock of offence. But believers are not only living stones, built up a spiritual house; they are also a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices; they are now the spiritual Israel, the covenant people of God.

Here (ch. ii. 11) begins the practical part of the Epistle. Men who have these high privileges and these lofty hopes must live as pilgrims and strangers here. They must abstain from fleshly lusts; their life should exhibit a moral beauty which might attract the heathen to follow their example. St. Peter singles out the duty of submission to constituted authority (often in those times a very difficult duty), and draws it out into its details. Subjects should obey their rulers, servants should obey their masters, for the Lord's sake. And when this duty is especially difficult, when Christians are called to suffer for well-doing, they must fix the eye of faith steadfastly on the great Example, and learn of him to suffer, remembering always that by his death he took away our sin, and by his stripes he healed the diseases of our souls (ch. iii.). Christian wives, too, must obey their husbands; they must be modest and retiring, wearing the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. Christian husbands should give honour to their wives; the weaker vessel should be treated with delicate care, not with roughness. All have their duties one to another; those duties centre in brotherly love. Remembering the blessings assured to them, they must bless others; there must be no cursing, no thought of revenge. If they are called to suffer for righteousness' sake, they must think that the eyes of the Lord are upon them, and it may be that their patient and holy endurance will win the souls of their persecutors. It is better to suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing; the Lord Christ set the high example—he suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust; he did not render evil for evil; he preached, even in the under-world, to those who once were disobedient; they perished in the waters of the Flood, which was a type of that baptism through which Christians (if they continue in grace, inquiring after God) were to die unto sin. He was now ascended into heaven; all power was his; he could succour those who suffered for him. Therefore (ch. iv.) they must arm themselves with the holy resolve of Christ; they must take suffering patiently; they must regard it as a means of destroying the power of sin; they must break off altogether their old heathen life, not heeding the taunts or the wonder of men; for believers and unbelievers alike must stand before the judgment-seat of God, whose gospel was preached both to the living and to the dead, that they might be judged in the flesh, but might live in the spirit. In view of the coming judgment, they must watch and pray, and keep their love towards one another intense, and use all such gifts as God had given them to his glory. The apostle returns to the approaching persecution. It would be a fiery trial; but they must not think it strange; like St. Peter and the other apostles, they should rejoice that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the Name of Christ (Acts v. 41). Judgment must begin at the house of God; even the righteous would scarcely be saved: what, then, would be the lot of the unrighteous? Let those who are called to suffer commit their souls to God (ch. v.). The apostle proceeds to exhort the presbyters of the Church; they must feed the flock of God, looking for the glory-crown which the chief Shepherd

shall give, as their reward. Younger Christians must submit themselves unto the elder; all must be clothed with humility, and cast all anxious care upon God, trusting in his providence. Yet they must also watch, for the evil spirit is ever seeking to destroy them; they must resist him, steadfast in the faith. The Epistle ends with blessing and greetings.

VII. COMMENTARIES.

Bengel's 'Gnomon Novi Testamenti'; Luther's 'Exposition of the First Epistle of St. Peter'; the Commentaries of Gerhard, Steiger, Huther, De Wette, Wiesinger, Frommüller; Archbishop Leighton's 'Commentary'; the notes of Dean Alford, Bishop Wordsworth, Dean Plumptre; those contained in the 'Speaker's Commentary' and in Bishop Ellicott's 'Commentary'; Archdeacon Farrar's 'Early Days of Christianity.'

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1.—Peter. It is the Greek form of the name, which the Lord Jesus himself had given to the great apostle; first, by anticipation, in the spirit of prophecy (John i. 42); and again when the prophecy was already in a measure fulfilled, and Simon was proving himself to be indeed a stone, built upon the Rock of Ages, which is Christ (Matt. xvi. 18). It was his Christian name; he must have prized that name as the gift of Christ, reminding him always of his confession and of the Saviour's promise, urging him to maintain throughout life that rock-like steadfastness which was indeed characteristic of him, but in which he had more than once very sadly failed. The use of the Greek form seems to indicate that the Epistle was originally written in Greek, and gives some slight support to the view that it was addressed to Gentile converts as well as to Hebrew Christians. **An apostle of Jesus Christ.** He does not add any assertion of the truth of his apostleship, as St. Paul often does; his apostolic dignity had not been questioned; the false brethren, who so often disputed the authority of St. Paul, had never assailed St. Peter. He does not join other names with his own in the address, though he mentions at the close of his Epistle Marous—probably the John Mark who accompanied St. Paul in his first missionary journey—and Silvanus—probably the Silas of the Acts of the Apostles, and the Silvanus whom St. Paul associates with himself in addressing the Church of the Thessalonians. He describes himself as “an apostle of Jesus Christ.” All Christians who knew the gospel history knew that St. Peter was one of the first-called apostles, one of the three who were nearest to the Lord, one who had received the apostolic commission in a marked and special manner

direct from Christ. But he calls himself simply an apostle, not the prince of the apostles; he claims no superiority over the rest of the apostolic college. The impulsive forwardness which had once been the prominent defect in his noble character had passed away; he had learned that difficult lesson which the Lord had impressed upon the apostles when he set the little child among them as their example; he was now, in his own words, “clothed with humility.” To the strangers scattered; literally, *to the elect sojourners of the dispersion of Pontus, etc.* “The dispersion” (*διασπορά*) was the recognized term (comp. Jas. i. 1; John vii. 35; 2 Macc. i. 27) for the Jews who were scattered over Gentile countries. The gospel of the circumcision was committed unto Peter (Gal. ii. 7); Paul and Barnabas were to go unto the heathen; James, Cephas, and John unto the circumcision (Gal. ii. 9). But St. Peter had been taught to call no man common or unclean; he did not forget that God had made choice that the Gentiles by his mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe (Acts xv. 7); he can scarcely have intended to maintain in this Epistle that exclusiveness into which he once relapsed, and for which he was rebuked by St. Paul (Gal. ii. 11—14). He certainly uses the word here rendered “strangers” (*παρεπίδητοις*) metaphorically in ch. ii. 11 (comp. Heb. xi. 13); and we cannot but think that, by “the sojourners of the dispersion,” he means, not merely the Jewish Christians of Asia Minor, but all Christian people dispersed among the heathen. We shall see, as we proceed in the study of the Epistle, that the writer contemplates Gentile as well as Jewish readers. Those readers were sojourners for a brief time on earth (perhaps the preposition *παρά* marks the passing character of their sojourn): “Here have we no continuing city, but we

seek one to come;" they were dispersed here and there among the unbelievers, but they were one body in Christ. Compare Bengel's brief comment, "Advenis in terra, in celo electis." **Throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.** Bengel says, "He mentions the five provinces in the order in which the names naturally occurred to one writing from the East." This is not precisely accurate, for Cappadocia lies to the south-east of Galatia, and Bithynia to the north-east of Proconsular Asia; but yet the general arrangement of the names seems to furnish a slight argument in favour of the view that the Babylon from which St. Peter wrote was the famous city on the Euphrates. The Churches of Galatia and Asia (by "Asia" St. Peter means Proconsular Asia, that is Mysia, Lycia, and Caria; Phrygia also was commonly reckoned as belonging to it, but not always, see Acts ii. 9, 10) were founded by St. Paul and his companions; those of Pontus possibly by Aquila, who, like the other Aquila who translated the Old Testament into Greek, was a Jew of Pontus (Acts xviii. 2). Of Cappadocia all that we know from the New Testament is that dwellers in Cappadocia, as well as in Pontus and Asia, were in Jerusalem at the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and heard the great sermon of St. Peter, by which three thousand souls were added to the Church. The Cappadocian Churches may have owed their origin to some of these men, or to some of St. Paul's converts from Galatia or Lycaonia. St. Paul himself had once "assayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not" (Acts xvi. 7); that province may have received the word of God from Troas; the famous letter of Pliny, written about the year 110, shows how widely the faith of Christ had spread throughout the district. We notice that the missions of the Church in Asia Minor had now covered a field considerably larger than that reached at the date of the Acts of the Apostles. We notice also that many of the Churches addressed by St. Peter were founded by St. Paul or his converts. There was no rivalry between the two great apostles. There had been jealousies among the twelve (Matt. xviii. 1; xx. 24, etc.); there had been differences between St. Peter and St. Paul (Gal. ii. 11); but they were children no longer—they were full-grown Christians now.

Ver. 2.—Elect. This word, in the Greek, is in the first verse; the Greek order is "to the elect sojourners of the dispersion." We begin already to notice coincidences with the teaching of St. Paul. St. Paul insists strongly on the doctrine of election; St. Peter holds it no less clearly. Holy Scripture constantly ascribes all that is good in

us to the choice or election of God. The sacred writers do not enter into the many difficulties which lie around this central doctrine; they do not attempt to explain its relations to that other great truth, taught in Scripture and revealed in consciousness—the freedom of the human will; their statements of the two apparently conflicting doctrines balance, but do not explain, one another; they seem to recognize the fact that we are in the presence of an insoluble mystery; and they teach us by their silence that the proper attitude of the Christian, when brought face to face with mystery, is rest in the Lord, humble child-like confidence in his love and wisdom. **According to the foreknowledge of God the Father.** St. Peter sets in the forefront of his Epistle the mystery of the blessed Trinity and the Divine plan of human salvation. It is, however, a question whether the words just quoted should be taken, as in the Authorized Version, with "elect" or with "apostle." Many ancient authorities take the latter view. Thus we should have a description of St. Peter's apostleship, such as we often read at the opening of St. Paul's Epistle. He was, like St. Paul, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God; he was chosen before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blame; like St. Paul, he had received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations (comp. Rom. i. 1, 5). There is much to be said in favour of this connection. But, on the whole, the balance of the sentence, and the general usage of similar language in the New Testament, lead us to prefer the common view, and to regard St. Peter's words as a description of the origin, progress, and end of God's election. The origin is the grace of God the Father. He chose his elect before the foundation of the world. He predestinated them unto the adoption of children; and that according to the good pleasure of his will (Eph. i. 4, 5). It is interesting to note that the substantive "foreknowledge" (*πρόγνωσις*) occurs nowhere else in Holy Scripture except in St. Peter's Pentecostal speech (Acts ii. 23). We mark the agreement of St. Peter and St. Paul (comp. Rom. viii. 29, "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son;" comp. also Rom. xi. 2 and 2 Tim. ii. 19). Election is "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father;" but not simply, as the Arminians taught, *ex prævius meritis*; for we cannot separate foreknowledge and predestination; the foreknowledge of an Almighty Creator must imply the exercise of choice and will; what he knoweth, that he also willeth; *eligendos facit Deus* (in the well-known words of St. Augustine), *non invenit*.

Thus in ver. 20 "foreknown," the more exact rendering of the Revised Version must imply the "foreordained" of the old translation. But that foreknowledge is the foreknowledge of God the Father, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, but our Father also. He careth for his children; we must trust in him. The potter makes one vessel for honour, another for dishonour; but he makes none for destruction. A veil of awful mystery hangs round the relations which exist between the Almighty and his creatures; but "God is Love." Through sanctification of the Spirit; rather, *in*, as in the Revised Version. We have the same words in 2 Thess. ii. 13. The word *ἁγιασμός*, which St. Peter uses here, is almost peculiar to St. Paul; it occurs eight times in his Epistles; once in the Epistle to the Hebrews; but elsewhere only here in the New Testament. Like other verbals of the same form, it may have either an active or a passive meaning. Perhaps the former is the more suitable here. God's election places the Christian in the sphere of the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit; he lives in the Spirit, he walks in the Spirit, he prays in the Holy Ghost; and the blessed Spirit sanctifieth the elect people of God: he worketh in them that holiness (*ἁγιασμὸν*) without which they cannot see God (Heb. xii. 14); they have their fruit, the fruit of the Spirit, unto holiness (*ἁγιασμὸν*, Rom. vi. 22). The fundamental idea of the Hebrew *קדש*, which is represented by the Greek word *ἅγιος*, seems to be "separation, purity," though some connect it with *קדק*, and regard it as meaning originally "fresh, new, young," and so "pure, shining, bright" (see Delitzsch, on Heb. ii. 11). By the word "spirit" we might, if we took the words apart from the context, understand the spirit of man, which is sanctified by the Holy Spirit of God; but the context shows that St. Peter is thinking of the work of the three blessed Persons of the Holy Trinity. Unto obedience. Obedience is the work of the Spirit; for the fruit of the Spirit is love, and "if a man love me, he will keep my words." Thus election has its origin in the foreknowledge of the Father; it is wrought out in the sanctifying influences of the Spirit as its sphere, and it issues in active obedience. Obedience is the sign and test of God's election: "By their fruits ye shall know them." The end of election is obedience first, then everlasting life. And sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. The word *ῥαντισμός*, sprinkling, occurs also in Heb. xii. 24 (comp. also ix. 19). In both places there is an evident reference to the events related in Exod. xxiv. 8, where we read that "Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Be-

hold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you." We observe that in this place also ceremonial sanctification (Exod. xix. 10) and the promise of obedience (Exod. xxiv. 3) preceded the sprinkling of blood. "The blood of sprinkling" is called by the Lord himself the blood of the new covenant (Matt. xxvi. 28; Mark xiv. 24), the blood by which the covenant of grace was ratified and inaugurated. Moses sprinkled the blood of the old covenant once upon the people; the blood of the new covenant was shed once for all upon the cross; but it is ever fresh in its efficacy and power; still we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus; still, if we abide in him, we have our "hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience;" still, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, . . . the blood of Jesus Christ his Son is cleansing us from all sin." Those who are elect unto obedience are elect unto the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ; the loving obedience of faith keeps them in the presence of the cross, within the cleansing range of the one all-sufficient sacrifice. Thus we have in this verse the concurrence of the three blessed Persons in the scheme of salvation—the choice of the Father, the sanctification of the Spirit, the redeeming work of the Son. Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. St. Peter uses the familiar salutation of St. Paul; possibly he quotes it, for he was plainly familiar with St. Paul's Epistles—he refers to them expressly in 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16, and Sylvanus, the old companion of St. Paul, was now with him. He unites into one expression the Greek and Hebrew salutations, the *χαίρειν* of the Greeks under its Christian aspect of *χάρις*, the favour of God; and the *שלום* of the Hebrews—the peace which is the fruit of grace, which is the blessed possession of those on whom the favour of God abideth. That grace and peace is granted to all the elect of God. St. Peter prays that it may be multiplied, that his readers may be blessed with an ever-increasing measure of that heavenly gift. He uses the same form of salutation in his Second Epistle. It is interesting to observe that the phrase, "Peace be multiplied unto you," occurs also in the proclamation of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. iv. 1), and in that of Darius (Dan. vi. 25), both written in Babylon, the city from which St. Peter now sends the message of peace. The anarthrouness of these two verses is remarkable; in the original there is not one article in vers. 1, 2.

Ver. 3.—Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Greek word rendered "blessed" (*εὐλογητός*) is used by the New Testament writers only of God; the participle *εὐλογημένος* is said of men. St.

Peter adopts the doxology used by St. Paul in writing to the Churches at Corinth and Ephesus (2 Cor. i. 3; Eph. i. 3), the last being one of those to which this Epistle is addressed. It is a question whether the genitive, "of our Lord Jesus Christ," depends on both substantives or only on the last. The Greek will admit either view, and there are high authorities on both sides. On the whole, the first seems the most natural interpretation. The Lord himself had said, "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John xx. 17). He could not say, "our God," for the relations are widely different; he could say, "my God," as he had said upon the cross; for, in the well-known words of Theophylact, "he is both the God and the Father of one and the same Christ; his God, as of Christ manifest in the flesh; his Father, as of God the Word." So St. Paul, after using this same form of salutation in Eph. i. 3, speaks of God in the seventeenth verse as "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory" (comp. also Rom. xv. 6; 2 Cor. xi. 31; Col. i. 3). Which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; rather, *begat*, as in the Revised Version. St. Peter refers our regeneration back to the great fact of the resurrection of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is "the First-begotten of the dead" (Rev. i. 5); we are "buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead" (Col. ii. 12). The Church, "which is his body" (Eph. i. 23), died with him in his death, rose with him in his resurrection. Christians individually are baptized into his death, "that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. vi. 4). The resurrection of Christ was in a real sense the birth of the Church. Therefore St. Peter, who in ch. iii. 21 speaks so strongly of the effect of holy baptism, here refers our regeneration to that without which baptism would be an empty ceremony, the resurrection of our Lord. God's great mercy (comp. Eph. ii. 4, 5, "God, who is rich in mercy, . . . hath quickened us together with Christ") is the first cause of our new birth, Christ's resurrection is the means through which it was accomplished. St. Peter alone of the New Testament writers uses the word here rendered "hath begotten again" (*ἀναγεννᾷ*); it occurs also in ver. 23. But our Lord himself, and his apostles St. James and St. Paul, teach the same truth in similar words (see John iii. 5; Jas. i. 18; Titus iii. 5). Some commentators, as Luther,

Bengel, etc., connect the words, "by the resurrection," etc., not with "hath begotten us again," but with the word "lively" or "living"—a hope that liveth through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This connection is grammatically possible, and gives a good and true meaning; it is the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ which makes the Christian's hope living and strong; but the other explanation seems more natural, and is supported by such passages as Rom. iv. 25, and ch. iii. 21 of this Epistle. The heavenly inheritance is the ultimate end of our regeneration; the hope of that inheritance is the present joy of the Christian life. St. Paul reminds the Ephesian Christians that when they were without Christ they had no hope (Eph. ii. 12); but God according to his great mercy begat us again into a new life, and one important aspect of that new life is hope, the hope of ever-deepening fellowship with God now, of everlasting life with God in heaven. That hope is living; it is "pervaded with life, carrying with it in undying power the certainty of fulfilment (Rom. v. 5), and making the heart joyful and happy." (Huther); "it has life in itself, and gives life, and has life as its object" (De Wette). And it liveth, it doth not perish like the hopes of this world, but it lives on in ever fuller joy till it reaches its consummation in heaven; even there "hope abideth," for ever in heaven there will be, it seems, a continual progress from glory to glory, nearer and nearer to the throne. St. Peter is the apostle of hope. "He loves," says Bengel, "the epithet 'living,' and the mention of hope."

Ver. 4.—To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. The Christian's hope maketh not ashamed. The inheritance is sure; it is better than the inheritance promised to Abraham; for it is (1) *incorruptible*. All things earthly have in themselves the seeds of decay and death; but "when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption," the redeemed of the Lord shall receive a kingdom that cannot be moved, where "neither moth nor rust doth corrupt." (2) It is *undefiled*. The inheritance of Israel was defiled (Lev. xviii. 27, 28), but into the heavenly inheritance entereth not "anything that defileth" (Rev. xxi. 27). (3) It *fadeth not away*. "The grass withereth, the flower falleth away;" it is not so in the "land that is very far off." The crown reserved for its blessed inhabitants is an amaranth wreath (comp. Wisd. vi. 13 and ch. v. 4, where see note). There are no tendencies to corruption there, no possibilities of defilement, not even that fading which must pass over the fairest things of earth. Reserved in heaven for

you. The many mansions in our Father's house have been kept from the beginning, and still are kept for his elect; Satan cannot rob them of it, as he robbed man of the earthly paradise. Some of the Greek commentators find in the words, "in heaven," an argument against the millenarians. Some manuscripts read "for us," but the received reading is best supported. St. Peter passes from one person to another, as St. Paul often does, sometimes addressing his readers directly, sometimes including himself among them.

Ver. 5.—Who are kept by the power of God. "Hereditas servata est," says Bengel, "heredes custodiuntur." The verb *φρουρεῖν* is a military word. "The governor under Aretas the king kept [guarded] the city of the Damascenes" (2 Cor. xi. 32); the peace of God shall keep ("guard," Phil. iv. 7) the hearts of those who trust in him,—they are guarded by a heavenly host; "The angel of the Lord encampeth around them that fear him;" they are guarded by, or rather, according to the exact rendering, *in* the power of God. His power is all around them; it is the sphere in which they live and move; no harm can reach them in that all-embracing shelter. Through faith. Faith, the evidence of things not seen, realizes the presence of the heavenly guard, and gives courage and confidence to the Christian when assailed by temptations and dangers; the servant of Elisba feared no more the hosts of Syria, when he saw the mountain full of chariots and horses of fire round about his master. Faith is the instrument by means of which we grasp the Divine strength, so that it is made perfect in our weakness. Unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. By "salvation" St. Peter means not merely present deliverance from sin, but everlasting life, the joy of our Lord, the deep, full blessedness of his elect in heaven. Eye hath not seen it yet, it hath not entered into the heart of man. But it is ready to be revealed; the veil which now hides it from us will be withdrawn in the last time, when the last page of this world's history shall have been written, when the number of the elect shall be accomplished, and the eternal purpose of God shall have been fulfilled.

Ver. 6.—Wherein ye greatly rejoice. Is the word "wherein" (*ἐν ᾧ*) to be referred to the whole sentence, and to be understood of the Christian's present privileges and hopes? or is it to be taken in a temporal sense with the words immediately preceding it, "in the last time"? Authorities are divided. Of those who take the latter view some regard "the last time"—as the object of the Christian's joyful hope—he rejoices now in the hope of the glory of

God; others give the verb a quasi-future sense—"wherein ye will greatly rejoice." But the former connection seems more natural; the Christian rejoices in his present and future blessings—in the new birth, in the hope of the heavenly inheritance, in the assured protection of God. The verb (*ἀγαλλιάσθε*) is a strong expression; it means "to exult, to leap for joy." St. Peter may have had in his thoughts the well-remembered sermon on the mount, where the same word occurs (Matt. v. 12), and, as here, in connection with sorrows and persecutions. It is used of our Lord himself in Luke x. 21, of the Philippian gaoler's joy in his new-born faith (Acts xvi. 34), as well as of the joy of the blessed in heaven (Rev. xix. 7). There is, therefore, nothing unsuitable in taking the verb in its proper present signification; the Christian's experience is often, like St. Paul's, "sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." Some commentators, following St. Augustine, regard the verb as imperative. Though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations. The word rendered "for a season" (*ὀλίγον*, a little) may mean that the present suffering is but little compared with the future glory; it may cover both meanings (comp. 2 Cor. iv. 17, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment"). St. Peter, like St. Paul, enforces the lesson that that light affliction, which seems sometimes so heavy, is sent in love and wisdom; the words, "if need be," imply his belief that these trials were necessary for his readers' salvation—they would work for them "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." The words, "ye are in heaviness," represent the aorist participle *λυπηθέντες*, having been put to grief; it refers to definite afflictions, known to St. Peter, which had been suffered by those to whom he is writing. The words, "manifold temptations," remind us of Jas. i. 2.

Ver. 7.—That the trial of your faith. The words of ver. 6, "if need be," point to the purpose and end of the temptations. St. Peter proceeds to develop his meaning. The word rendered "trial" (*δοκιμιον* or *δοκιμείον*) means rather "test or proof;" it is explained by Dionysius of Halicarnassus ('Rhet.' 11) as that at which, when one looks, he is able to form a judgment. Cremer says it is "not only the means of proof itself, e.g. the touchstone, but also the trace of the metal left thereon. Hence here and in Jas. i. 3 τὸ δοκιμιον τῆς πίστεως is the result of the contact of faith with temptations, that in virtue of which faith is recognized as genuine—the verification of faith." Dr. Hort ('Notes on Select Readings') prefers the reading τὸ δόκιμον, which is given by two of the better cursives. He says, "τὸ δοκιμιον

is the instrument of trial, not even the process of trial, much less the thing tried; while it is only the thing tried that can be compared, as here, to gold refined in the fire." Compare the use of the cognate word *δοκιμή* in 2 Cor. ii. 9; Rom. v. 4; Phil. ii. 22. Being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire; rather, as in the Revised Version, *more precious than gold*. Gold is the most precious of metals, faith is more precious far; the proof of faith is more momentous beyond all comparison than the proof of gold. Gold perishes; "Consumitur annulus usque," says the poet; "Aurum cum mundo perit," says Bengel; but "Now abideth faith, hope, charity," says the apostle. Gold is tried with fire; as by the purifying fire gold is purged of dross (Isa. i. 25), so by the refining fire of temptations the faithful are cleansed from pride and self-reliance and the pollutions of sin. **Might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ;** "might be found" at the judgment, in the searching investigation of the great day. *Praise*; in words, "Well done, good and faithful servant." *Honour*; in the distinctions granted to the faithful—the crown of righteousness, the white robe, the palm. *Glory*; the glory which was Christ's before the world was, which he giveth to his chosen (John xvii. 22). *At the appearing*; rather, *revelation*. Now we see him only by faith; then his elect shall see him as he is—the veil will be withdrawn (see ver. 5).

Ver. 8.—Whom having not seen, ye love. Some ancient manuscripts read *οὐκ εἰδότες*, "although ye know him not;" but the reading *ἰδότες* is best supported, and gives the better sense. The Christians of Asia Minor had not seen the gracious face of the Lord, as St. Peter had. But though they had never known him after the flesh, they knew him by the inner knowledge of spiritual communion, and, having learned to love him, had attained the blessing promised to those who had not seen, but yet had believed. St. Peter may possibly be thinking of his well-remembered interview with the risen Lord (John xxi. 15—17). He has here the word *ἀγαπᾶν*, expressive of reverential love, which Christ had used in his first two questions; not the word of warm human affection (*φιλεῖν*) which he himself had employed in his three answers. **In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.** The words, "in whom" (*εἰς ὃν*, literally, "on whom now not looking, but believing"), are to be taken with the participles "seeing" and "believing," not with "ye rejoice." St. Peter insists on the necessity and blessedness of faith as earnestly

as St. Paul does, though with him the antithesis is rather between faith and sight than between faith and works. As a fact, St. Peter's readers had never seen the Lord; now, though not seeing him with the outward eye, they realized his presence by faith, and in that presence they rejoiced. The verb is that used in ver. 6—they rejoiced greatly, they exulted, and that though they saw him not. Human love needs the seen presence of the beloved one to complete the fullness of its joy (2 John 12); but their joy was even amid afflictions unspeakable—like all our deepest and holiest feelings, not to be expressed in words; and it was glorified by the unseen presence of Christ. His chosen behold even now, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, and, beholding, are changed into the same image from glory to glory. Joy in the Lord is a foretaste of the joy of heaven, and is irradiated by glimpses of the glory that shall be revealed. Others, as Huther and Alford, again give to the verb *ἀγαλλιάσθε*, "ye rejoice," a quasi-future sense. The word for "unspeakable" (*ἀνεκλάλητός*) is found only here.

Ver. 9.—Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. The present participle "receiving" (*καμίζόμενοι*) implies that the believer realizes the deep blessing of salvation gradually while he is being saved as one of *οἱ σωζόμενοι* (Acts ii. 47). Salvation is present as well as future. "By grace ye are saved through faith" (Eph. ii. 8); "According to his mercy he saved us" (Titus iii. 5). God's elect receive it in various measures now; in its blessed fullness it will be manifested hereafter. It is the end which faith ever holds in view, pressing towards it as the prize of the high calling. It is the salvation especially of souls; for, as Bengel says, "Anima præcipue salvatur; corpus in resurrectione participat."

Ver. 10.—Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently; rather, *prophets inquired and searched*. There is no article, and the verbs are aorist. St. Peter illustrates the glory and greatness of our salvation (mark how he loves to repeat the word) by showing that it was the subject of the searching study of prophets and of the contemplation of angels. St. Peter was a diligent student of the prophetic books, and constantly quotes them, both in his Epistles and in his speeches recorded in the Acts. Here he gives us a very remarkable glimpse into the conditions of the prophetic consciousness. The scheme of our salvation was in some way revealed to the prophets; the mode of the revelation, whether by vision or otherwise, is not made known to us. Every point of contact between the infinite and the finite is enveloped in mystery; we can only know the fact—there was such a

revolution. That salvation was so magnificent a prospect that it concentrated upon itself the rapt attention and deepest interest of those to whom the promise was revealed. Prophets inquired and searched diligently. The revelation was real, but it was not complete, not distinct in its details. God revealed so much of the coming salvation as was sufficient to support his servants in their trials, and to quicken their faith in the Messiah. Prophets searched diligently, as miners seeking treasure; they prayed, and thought, and meditated, and exercised all their intellectual energies in the effort to comprehend the revelation which had been vouchsafed to them. Daniel was a remarkable example of this searching (Dan. vii. 16; ix. 2, 3). The revelation came to the prophet from God; the prophet received it, but could not comprehend it in all its depth and height—he searched diligently.

"Thoughts beyond their thoughts
To those high bards were given."
(*Christian Year.*)

(Compare the song of Zacharias, Luke i. 68—79.) Who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you. He defines the prophets, of whom he speaks as those who prophesied of the favour of God manifested in the redemption of mankind through his blessed Son. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John i. 17). St. Paul loved to dwell on the grace of God; so did St. Peter.

Ver. 11.—Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify; or, as the Revised Version, *did point unto*. The Authorized Version neglects the preposition *eis*. The apostle says that the Spirit of Christ dwelt in the prophets. The words *πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ* cannot mean "the Spirit which bears witness of Christ," as Bengel and others. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ (see Rom. viii. 9; Gal. iv. 6). He is not only sent from the Father by the Son, but he proceedeth from the Father and the Son. This important statement involves also the pre-existence and the Divinity of Christ (comp. John viii. 56, 58; 1 Cor. x. 4; Jude 5, in the best-supported reading). The prophets felt within them the working of the Spirit. They knew that the mysterious voice which filled their souls was his voice. Its utterances were not always clear; they were sometimes obscure and mystical, but the heart of the prophets was stirred to the utmost; they sought with earnest prayer and devout thought into the purposes of God announced in the revelation. Especially they asked, as the apostles asked the Lord on the Mount of Olives, "When shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming?" At what time would the Messiah be revealed?

What would be the distinctive character, the marks, the signs, of that time?—"Prophets ab ipso habentes donum in illum prophetarunt" ('Ep. Barnab.,' c. 5). When it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow; rather, *the sufferings for Christ* (destined for Christ), and the glories after these. Compare St. Peter's speech (Acts iii. 18), "Those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled." So St. Paul, in his speech before King Agrippa (Acts xxvi. 22, 23), asserts that he had said "none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead." The doctrine of a suffering Messiah was a stumbling-block to the Jews. The apostles could not understand it till after the Saviour's resurrection: Peter himself had recoiled from it with horror, and had been rebuked by the Lord (Matt. xvi. 22, 23); now, taught by the Spirit, he understands the foreshadowings of the sufferings of Christ, which the Spirit of Christ had testified to the prophets. The Lord himself had expounded, on the day of his resurrection, the things concerning himself, beginning at Moses and all the prophets: "Ought not Christ," he said, "to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" (Luke xxiv. 26). Some think that St. Peter is referring mainly to the prophets of the New Testament, and that the words, "the sufferings of Christ," are to be understood mystically of Christ suffering in his Church, as "the afflictions of Christ" in Col. i. 24. But the context does not require this explanation, and the parallel passages quoted above seem to preclude it.

Ver. 12.—Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things. It was revealed to them, whether in answer to their search as in the case of Daniel, or as part of the original revelation made to them, that the vision was for many days (Dan. x. 14). Compare St. Peter's quotations from the prophetic Scriptures in Acts ii. 17, 31; iii. 24. The best manuscripts read here, "unto you." The prophets, doubtless, like Abraham, rejoiced to see the day of Christ; they saw it by faith, and were glad (John viii. 56); but they saw it in the far distance; they desired to see and hear what the apostles saw and heard, but the time was not yet (see Matt. xiii. 16, 17). *They did minister the things*; i.e. they were made the instruments of revealing them; they presented them to the devout for their spiritual food and support. Which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; rather,

which were now reported to you through them that preached the gospel unto you (literally, evangelized you) by the Holy Ghost. St. Peter claims for those who evangelized Asia Minor (St. Paul and his companions) the same authority which was possessed by the ancient prophets; they preached as fulfilled the great truths which the prophets foretold as future. The Spirit of Christ was in the prophets; the same Spirit worked and preached through the apostles; nay, he dwelt in them in fuller measure, for he had been sent down from heaven on the great Day of Pentecost, and it was by his aid that the apostles and evangelists preached. Which things the angels desire to look into. The salvation which God's elect receive is so full of glory and mysterious beauty, that not only did the prophets of old search diligently, but even angels (there is no article) desire to look into it. The verb *παρὰντο* means "to stoop sideways;" it is used of persons standing outside a place who stoop in order to look in. "The *παρά* of the verb," says Huther, "indicates that the angels stand outside the work of redemption, inasmuch as it is not for them, but for man (cf. Heb. ii. 16)." The same verb occurs in Jas. i. 25; John xx. 5, 11; Luke xxiv. 12, in which last place it is used of Peter himself, when he stooped to look into the empty sepulchre on the morning of the Lord's resurrection. St. Paul has a similar thought in Eph. iii. 10, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God." The attitude of the golden cherubim, whose wings covered the mercy-seat and whose faces were toward it (Exod. xxv. 20), seems to imply the same rapt, reverent attention.

Ver. 13.—Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind. St. Peter sums up in the word "wherefore" all the blessings, privileges, and hopes which he has enumerated; on these he founds his exhortations. *Gird up*. The word *ἀναζωοῦμενοι* (literally, "girding up, tucking up long garments by the help of a girdle") occurs in no other place of the New Testament. But the same metaphor, expressed in similar words, is common. St. Peter alludes, doubtless, to the Lord's exhortation, "Let your loins be girded about;" perhaps also the solemn words of John xxi. 18, "signifying; by what death he should glorify God," were present to his thoughts. *The loins of your mind*. St. Peter often explains a metaphor by adding a genitive or adjective; so "milk of the Word;" "hidden man of the heart;" "amaranthine wreath of glory." *Διάνοια*, translated "mind," is the reflective faculty. The Christian must reflect, and that with intense exertion of thought, on the glory of his hopes, on the greatness

of his responsibilities; he must seek to love God with all his mind (*ὅλην τὴν διάνοιαν*), as well as with all his heart and soul. Be sober. The Christian must be sober in his use of the gifts of God; he must be sober also in his habits of thought; he should preserve a calm, collected temper. Christian enthusiasm should be thoughtful, not excited and disorderly (comp. 2 Thess. ii. 2; iii. 11, 12). And hope to the end; rather, perfectly, with a full, unwavering, constant hope. It is better to take the adverb *τελειῶς* with the verb "hope" than with *ἡσυχῶντες*, "be perfectly sober." For the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. The Christian's hope must be directed to, set towards (*ἐν* with accusative), the continual growth in grace ("He giveth more grace," Jas. iv. 6). That grace is being brought now, being borne in upon the soul in the present revelation of Jesus Christ. "It pleased God," says St. Paul (Gal. i. 16), "to reveal his Son in me." So now the Lord manifests himself to those who walk in the path of loving obedience. Each gift of grace kindles the hope of a nearer manifestation, a fuller revelation; grace is continually brought, till at length the full unspeakable gift of grace is realized at the glorious revelation of Jesus Christ at his second advent. This seems better than to give the present participle *φερομένην* a future sense, and to understand the revelation of Jesus Christ only of his final coming in glory.

Ver. 14.—As obedient children; rather, children of obedience (comp. Eph. ii. 2, 3; v. 8; also 2 Pet. ii. 14; 2 Thess. ii. 3; Luke xvi. 8). Winer says ('Grammar,' iii. xxxiv.; 'Rem.,' 2), "This mode of expression is to be traced to the more lively imagination of the Orientals, by which the most intimate connection (derivation from and dependence on)—even when the reference is to what is not material—is viewed under the image of the relation of son or child to parent. Hence 'children of disobedience' are those who belong to disobedience as a child to his mother—disobedience having become their nature, their predominant disposition." Not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance. The remarkable word *συσχηματίζομενοι* seems to be an echo of Rom. xii. 2, the only other place where it occurs. It implies that men who live in sensual lusts take up the likeness of those lusts into themselves, and are made, not as man was at first, after the likeness of God, but after the likeness of those lusts of the flesh which are not of the Father, but are of the world. The word "ignorance" is to be taken closely with "lusts"—"the former lusts which were in the time of your ignorance." It seems to imply that St. Peter is addressing Gentiles as well as Jews; for, though ignorance is

attributed to the Jews (Acts iii. 17; Rom. x. 3; 1 Tim. i. 13), it was ignorance, not of the moral law, as here, but of the Person and office of Christ. The Jews had the oracles of God; they know his will (Rom. ii. 17; iii. 2; comp. also Eph. iv. 18 and Acts xvij. 30).

Ver. 15.—But as he which hath called you is holy; rather, *after the pattern of the Holy One who called you*. The calling is the fulfilment of the election: "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called." The Christian's effort must be to fashion himself, by God's grace, after the likeness of God, not according to the former lusts (comp. Matt. v. 45, 48; also Col. iii. 10; Eph. iv. 24). So be ye holy in all manner of conversation. In the whole course of your daily life, in all its details, as you move hither and thither among men, take the holiness of God for your pattern: "Be not conformed to this world." (For the word "conversation" (*ἀναστροφή*), comp. Gal. i. 13; Eph. iv. 22; 1 Tim. iv. 12; Heb. xiii. 7.)

Ver. 16.—Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy; literally, according to the best manuscripts, *ye shall be holy*—future for imperative. The words occur five times in the Book of Leviticus. God had called the Israelites to be his peculiar people, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exod. xix. 5, 6). He has called us Christians to be "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people" (ch. ii. 9). He is holy, awful in holiness; in his sight "the heavens are not clean." We who are his must strive to be holy, separated from all that is impure, consecrated to his service.

Ver. 17.—And if ye call on the Father. "If" does not imply doubt; it introduces an hypothesis which, being taken for granted, involves a duty. Apparently there is here a reference to the Lord's Prayer, as in 2 Tim. iv. 18. You call on God as your Father; then pass your time in fear (comp. Mal. i. 6, "If I be a Father, where is mine honour?"). He called you first; now ye call on him. The translation of the Revised Version is more exact than the Authorized Version, "If ye call on him as Father." Who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work. The adverb *ἀπροσωπολήπτως*, rendered "without respect of persons," occurs nowhere else in the New Testament; but the thought is familiar. St. Peter himself had said, when he was sent to receive Cornelius into the Church, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons" (Acts x. 34). The disciples of the Pharisees had said the same of our Lord (Matt. xxii. 16; comp. also Rom. ii. 11; Gal. ii. 6; Jas. ii. 1-4). The Lord said (John v. 22), "The Father judgeth no man,

but hath committed all judgment to the Son." But the Father is "Fons iudicii," as Didymus says (quoted by Alford), "judicante Filio, Pater est qui iudicat," for the Son judges as his Delegate; as it was through the Son that the Father made the worlds. He judges according to every man's work, regarding, not distinctions of rank, or wealth, or nationality, but only the character of the work. Observe that the word "work" (*ἔργον*) is in the singular number, as *πράξιν* in Matt. xvi. 27. God judges according to every man's work as a whole, according to the whole scope and meaning of his life as issuing from the one governing principle, whether faith or selfishness. So Bengel, "Unius hominis unum est opus, bonum malumve." Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear. The verb here, *ἀναστρέφετε*, corresponds with the noun *ἀναστροφή* ("conversation") of ver. 15; both might be rendered (as Dean Plumptre suggests) by "conduct" (noun or verb)—"in all your conduct" in ver. 15; and here, "conduct yourselves." The word "sojourning" reminds us of ver. 1 of this chapter and of ch. ii. 11, in which last place we have the corresponding Greek word. We are sojourners here, life is short; but the character of that short life determines our eternal condition; therefore live in fear. St. John says, "Perfect love casteth out fear;" but there is no contradiction, as some have said, between the two holy apostles; for the fear which cannot coexist with perfect love (it may in various measures coexist with imperfect love) is slavish fear, selfish fear of death and punishment. The fear which St. Peter and St. Paul (Phil. ii. 12) commend is holy fear—the fear of a son for a loving father, the fear of displeasing God before whom we walk, God who gave his blessed Son to die for us, God who will judge us at the last. This fear is not cowardice. Our Lord said (Luke xii. 4), "Be not afraid of them that kill the body. . . . Fear him," etc. They who thus fear God need fear nothing else but God.

Ver. 18.—Forasmuch as ye know; literally, *knowing, considering*. That ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold. The order in the original gives more emphasis: "That not with corruptible things, silver and gold, were ye redeemed." Alford notes here that the diminutives (*ἀργυρίῳ ἢ χρυσίῳ*) stand generally (not always) for the coined or wrought metal. The word *ἐλυτρώθητε*, "ye were ransomed," seems to point back to the great saying of our Lord, "The Son of man came . . . to give his life a ransom for many (*λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν*)" (Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45; comp. 1 Tim. ii. 6). Doubtless no human language can adequately express the mystery of the atonement. That stupendous

fact transcends human reason, and cannot be exactly defined in human words. But the Lord himself describes it as a ransom—"a ransom for many," given in their stead. Reverence keeps us from pressing the illustration in all its details. It may be that the correspondence between the atonement and the redemption of a slave from an earthly master is not exact in all points. But the illustration comes from the Lord himself, who is the Truth; it must be true as far as human language permits, as far as human reason can comprehend. It teaches, as plainly as words can express, the doctrine of vicarious satisfaction: he gave his life, not only in behalf of us, but also instead of us—a ransom for our sins. Compare the use of the word *ἀγοράζειν* (1 Cor. vi. 20), "Ye are bought with a price;" and (2 Pet. ii. 1), "The Lord that bought them;" also *ἐξαγοράζειν* (Gal. iii. 13), "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law." From your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; literally, out of your vain manner of life or conduct. The word here rendered "vain" is used of idolatry in Acts xiv. 15, and also the corresponding verb in Rom. i. 21. St. Peter seems to be thinking mainly of Gentile Christians; he would scarcely describe the sinful conversation of Israelites as "handed down from your fathers" (Revised Version) without some qualification. Habits are transmitted from fathers to children; habitual custom is made an excuse for many shortcomings, but "unus Pater imitandus" (Bengel).

Ver. 19.—But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; rather, as in the Revised Version, *but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, (even the blood) of Christ.* Precious, as opposed to the "corruptible things" of ver. 18; it is precious, because it is the blood of Christ. Christ's holy body saw not corruption; gold and silver must perish at last; the precious blood in its virtue and efficacy abideth evermore. The blood of Christ is compared with that of a lamb. The lambs and other animals offered as sacrifices were to be without blemish (Exod. xii. 5; Lev. xxii. 19, 20, 21); Christ was without sin, pure, harmless, undefiled. The blood of animals could never take away sin; yet it is written, "The life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul" (Lev. xvii. 11). That blood prefigured the precious blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin. The sacrifices of the Law directed the faith of the pious Israelite to the one great Sacrifice, the Propitiation for the sins of the whole world. Probably St.

Peter derived the comparison from the well-remembered words of the Baptist, reported by his brother Andrew, "Behold the Lamb of God!" The reference may be to the Paschal lamb ("Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us," 1 Cor. v. 7)—the blood of that lamb cannot, indeed, be regarded as a ransom from Egyptian bondage, but it saved the Israelites from the destroying angel—or to any sacrificial lamb. The apostle seems to be passing from the idea of ransom or price to that of expiation. The verb "ye were redeemed," the silver and gold, direct the thoughts to price; the blood and the lamb, to expiation. The two ideas are closely connected; the two illustrations combined give a fuller view of the blessed meaning of the Saviour's death than either of them alone could do.

Ver. 20.—Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world; rather, as in the Revised Version, *who was foreknown indeed; literally, who hath been foreknown.* But the foreknowledge of God implies the exercise of his will, therefore the "foreordained" of the Authorized Version, though not here an exact translation, is true in doctrine. St. Peter had asserted the same great truth in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 23; comp. also iii. 18 and iv. 28). He had heard the words, "before the foundation of the world," again and again from the lips of Christ; he may possibly have read them in the Epistle to the Ephesians (i. 4). The incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ were not the result of a change of purpose to meet unforeseen circumstances; they were foreseen and foreordained in the eternal counsels of God. Those counsels are wholly above the range of our understanding; we cannot see through the veil of mystery which surrounds them; we cannot fathom the awful necessities which they imply. But was manifest in these last times for you; rather, as in the Revised Version, with the best manuscripts, *was manifested at the end of the times for your sake.* The aorist (*φανερωθέντος*) marks the Incarnation as an event which took place in time; the purpose of God was eternal, before all time. For the phrase, "at the end of the times" (*ἐν ἑσχάτου τῶν χρόνων*), compare the reading of the most ancient manuscripts in Heb. i. 1 (*ἐν ἑσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων*), "at the end of these days"; also in Jude 8 (*ἐν ἑσχάτου χρόνου*). "This is the last time," St. John says; or, rather, "the last hour" (*ἑσχάτη ὥρα*) (1 John ii. 18); the last period in the development of God's dealings with mankind is the time which intervenes between the first and the second advents of Christ.

Ver. 21.—Who by him do believe in God; or, according to two of the most ancient

manuscripts, *who through him are faithful towards God*. Through himself, not only through his incarnation and atoning death, but through his grace and abiding presence. He was manifested for your sake who through him are faithful; for all the faithful, whether Jews or Gentiles; "for your glory," St. Paul says (1 Cor. ii. 7). The thought shows the greatness of God's love for his elect. The eternal Son was manifested for their sake; it gives an additional stimulus for Christian effort. That raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory. St. Peter returns to the "after-glories," which he had mentioned in ver. 11. The death of Christ is the atonement for sin; his resurrection and ascension are the grounds of our confidence and hope. They throw back a halo of Divine glory upon the awful cross; they bring out the beauty and the dignity of the atoning sacrifice; they show that it is accepted, that the work of our redemption is complete. The Resurrection held a very prominent place in the preaching of St. Peter, and, indeed, of all the apostles (Acts ii. 32—36; iii. 15; iv. 10; comp. also Acts iv. 33; Rom. i. 4, etc.). That your faith and hope might be in God; rather, *so that your faith and hope are in God*—directed towards God (*eis Θεόν*); or perhaps, as Weiss, Huther, and others, "so that your faith is at the same time hope towards God." The resurrection and the glory of Christ not only inspire the Christian with confidence in God, but they also give his faith the character of hope; they fill it with hope. Christ had promised that where he is there should his servant be; he had prayed that those whom the Father had given him should be with him where he is, to behold his glory. He is in heaven, on the right hand of God. Thus the Christian's faith assumes the attitude of hope; he hopes to be where Christ is, to see him as he is, to be made like unto him. This is "the hope of glory" for which we offer our thanksgivings. St. Peter is the apostle of hope.

Ver. 22.—*Seeing ye have purified your souls; literally, having purified*. The verb *ἀγνίσκω* is used of ceremonial purification in John xi. 55, and in Acts xxi. 24, 26; xxiv. 18. St. James and St. John, in their Epistles, give it the spiritual sense in which St. Peter uses it here (Jas. iv. 8; 1 John iii. 3). In this sense it implies consecration to God's service, and an inward cleansing of the heart from all that defiles—from sensual desires, from hypocrisy, from selfishness. The tense shows that this inward purification must precede the love to which the apostle exhorts us; there can be no true love in an unclean heart. In obeying the truth through the Spirit; literally, *in the obedience of the truth*. Obedience is the

condition of purification. God's people are elect unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. While they walk in the path of obedience they are walking in the light, the light of truth, the light of God's presence, and then the blood of Jesus Christ is cleansing them from all sin (1 John i. 7). The genitive (*τῆς ἀληθείας*) seems to be objective, "obedience to the truth," rather than obedience wrought by the truth. The truth is God's truth, the truth revealed in his Holy Word. So the Lord himself said, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy Word is truth" (John xvii. 17). The words, "through the Spirit," are not found in the best manuscripts; they may be a gloss, but a true one. Unto unfeigned love of the brethren. St. Peter had not forgotten the new commandment, "That ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." The word rendered "love of the brethren" (*φιλαδελφία*) is scarcely found except in Christian writings. St. Peter uses it again in his Second Epistle (i. 7), and also St. Paul (Rom. xii. 10; 1 Thess. iv. 9). It must be unfeigned, without hypocrisy, not in word, but in deed and in truth (1 John iii. 18). Our hearts must be purified in the obedience of the truth before that unfeigned love can dwell in them (comp. 1 Tim. i. 5, which is an exact parallel). See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently; literally, *love one another from the heart*. The word "pure" is omitted in two of the most ancient manuscripts; it may be a gloss, but it is most true and suitable. Christian love must be from the heart, true and pure. The word rendered "fervently" (*ἐκτενῶς*) means, literally, "intensely," with all the energies strained to the utmost. It is interesting to observe that the only other place where the adverb occurs is in Acts xii. 5 (according to the reading of the most ancient manuscripts), where it is used of the prayer offered up for St. Peter himself.

Ver. 23.—*Being born again; rather, having been begotten again*. St. Peter repeats the verb used already in ver. 3. It is the highest argument for brotherly love; the children of the one Father are all brethren; they should "love as brethren" (ch. iii. 8). Not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. The word used here (*σπορά*) means, properly, "sowing;" but, like *σπόρος* (Luke viii. 11), it stands also for the seed; and here the epithets "corruptible" and "incorruptible" seem to necessitate this second meaning. In the passage quoted from St. Luke, the seed (*σπόρος*) is identified with the Word, "The seed is the Word of God." Here there seems to be a distinction. God's elect are begotten again of incorruptible seed through the

Word. The use of different prepositions, *ἐκ* and *διὰ*, apparently implies a difference between the seed and the Word. In the conversation with Nicodemus the Lord had said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." And he continues, "That which is born of the flesh [*ἐκ τῆς σαρκός*, which seems to correspond with the *ἐκ σπορᾶς φθαρτοῦ* of St. Peter] is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit;" where the Greek words, *τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τοῦ Πνεύματος*, "that which is begotten of the Spirit," correspond very nearly with *ἀναγεγεννημένοι ἐκ σπορᾶς ἀφθάρτου*, "those who are begotten again of incorruptible seed." Then the incorruptible seed is the Holy Spirit of God, the Source of all spiritual life; it is the Spirit that "beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God;" "To be spiritually minded is life." Comp. 1 John iii. 9, "Whosoever is born of God (*ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ*) doth not commit sin: for his seed (*σπέρμα*) abideth in him: and he cannot sin because he is born of God"). There is a different explanation of this last passage: "God's seed, that is, his children, abide in him." But on the whole, it seems to be parallel with this verse, and to teach the same doctrine, that the first gift of the Spirit is the germ of spiritual life, and that that precious germ, abiding in the true children of God, lives and energizes "till we come . . . unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 13). But if the Holy Spirit of God is, in the deepest sense, the Seed of the new birth, the Word is the instrument. God's elect are begotten again through the Word, the Word preached, heard, read, pronounced in holy baptism. The Word preached by St. Peter on the great Day of Pentecost was the means by which three thousand souls were led to be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (comp. Jas. i. 18, "Of his own will begat he us with the Word of truth"). Again, the Word preached derives its power from the personal Word, from him who is the Word of God. "All things were made through him" (John i. 3; Heb. i. 2); and as the first creation was through him, so is the new creation. He is "the Beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. iii. 14); for he is our Life, the life hidden in the heart. He is the Word of life: "He that hath the Son hath life" (1 John v. 12); "Through

him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father" (Eph. ii. 18). It is through the Lord Jesus Christ that we receive the grace of the new birth. The words, "which liveth and abideth," may be connected with the Divine Name: "God, who liveth and abideth;" or, as in our version, with "the Word." The last connection seems most suitable here (comp. ver. 25, "The Word of the Lord abideth for ever;" and Heb. iv. 12, "The Word of God is quick and powerful"). The most ancient manuscripts omit the words, "for ever."

Ver. 24.—For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away. St. Peter quotes Isa. xl. 6—8, in illustration of his assertion that the Word of God abideth for ever. The quotation is from the Septuagint. St. Peter follows that version in omitting part of ver. 7; but he slightly varies the words, writing (according to the most ancient manuscripts), "all the glory thereof," instead of "all the glory of man;" and in the next verse, "the Word of the Lord," instead of "the Word of our God." The first variation shows an acquaintance with the original Hebrew. St. James refers to the same passage from Isaiah in Jas. i. 10, 11.

Ver. 25.—But the Word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the Word which by the gospel is preached unto you. In this verse, both in the quotation and in the apostle's comment, the Greek equivalent for "word" is not *λόγος*, as in ver. 23, but *ῥῆμα*. *ῥῆμα* is "an utterance, the word uttered," more concrete than *λόγος*; yet in some passages, as Eph. vi. 18; Heb. vi. 4 and xi. 3, it seems to be used as equivalent to *λόγος*, and the variation here may possibly be owing to the quotation. Compare the transition from *λόγος* to *ῥῆμα* in St. Peter's speech recorded in Acts x. 36, 37. The Revised Version renders the last half of the verse, *And this is the Word of good tidings which was preached unto you*; literally, *This is the Word which was preached as good tidings*. Here St. Peter recognizes the gospel which had been preached in Asia Minor as the Word of the Lord which abideth for ever. St. Paul and his companions were the missionaries from whom those provinces had heard the Word of God. St. Peter gives his formal testimony to the teaching of St. Paul, as he had already done at Jerusalem (Gal. ii. 1—9).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1, 2.—*The address.* I. ST. PETER'S DESCRIPTION OF HIMSELF. 1. *His name.* When his brother Andrew brought him first to Jesus, the Lord who calleth his own

sheep by name said to the son of Jona, "Thou art Simon." He knew him by name, and he knew his character; he gave him a new name descriptive of that character when matured and strengthened in the faith. He had been a hearer; he was to be a stone, a living stone in the spiritual temple, built upon that Rock which is Christ. That new name was destined to be famous in the world; but Peter had learned to rejoice not in earthly fame, but because his name was written in heaven. 2. *His office.* He is an apostle of Jesus Christ; he is sent by the Lord; he has a message from him. He feels his own responsibilities; he impresses upon his readers theirs; he must speak, for he has a message; they must listen, for that message is from Jesus Christ. The consciousness of being sent gives earnestness, weight, and dignity to the words of Christ's faithful ministers; if we do not feel that we have a message to deliver, our utterances are forced, unreal, unprofitable. His readers must receive his message with reverence and obedience, for it was the Lord Jesus Christ who gave him the apostolic commission, and the Lord had said, "He that heareth you heareth me." He thinks of the responsibilities of his office, not of its grandeur. His name stands first in all the lists of the apostles; he describes himself simply as a fellow-presbyter (ch. v. 1). The true minister of Christ knows the dignity of his calling; it will keep him humble in the deep consciousness of his own unworthiness.

II. HIS DESCRIPTION OF HIS READERS. 1. *They are strangers.* God's people are "strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. xi. 13, where the word rendered "pilgrims" is the same with that translated "strangers" here). Here they have no continuing city; they are sojourners—sojourners of the dispersion, dispersed here and there in an unbelieving world. But they have a city which hath foundations; it seems afar off, but faith, like a telescope, brings it within the range of vision. They must lay up their treasures there; their hearts must be there; they must be "not of the world," as their Lord and Master Jesus Christ was not of the world. This word "strangers" first strikes the key-note of the Epistle, which is hope—the hope of the inheritance reserved in heaven. 2. *They are elect.* The strangers on earth are God's elect in heaven. The fact that they are in a true sense strangers here, that their governing principles, hopes, motives, are not of this world, proves their election of God. We cannot read the names written in the book of life; but we can read our own hearts, and if our heart condemn us not, if the holy name of Jesus is written there, if his love is constraining us to live no longer to ourselves, but to him who died for us and rose again, then have we confidence toward God. (1) Their election is according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. The first source of our salvation lies in the electing love of God our heavenly Father. In the beginning, when God only was, and there was none but God; before the ages were, while yet there was no voice of angel or man to break the awful silence with words of prayer or praise, even then each ransomed spirit was known unto the everlasting Father; for to the Eternal time is not; all the long vista of future ages lies clear and open before the glance of the Omniscient. "The Lord knoweth them that are his;" he chose them in Christ before the foundation of the world. He chose them not because he foresaw that they would be worthy apart from his choice (which is impossible); rather by his choice he made them worthy. He decreed by his counsel secret to us to deliver them from curse and damnation, and to bring them to everlasting glory. Thus much is clearly taught in Holy Scripture; it follows also from the conception of God as infinite in power and knowledge. Our difficulties arise when we try to reconcile this teaching with the fact of free agency given in the human consciousness, or when we confront the tremendous fact that there is evil in the world which God made and governs. Unbelievers, alas! say he cannot, the world being what it is, be both all good and almighty. But we know that he is our Father. We are children now. We know only in part, very imperfectly. The child wonders, but it does not doubt. We must cultivate the childlike spirit; we must believe in humble faith our Father's words; we shall hereafter reach the point, now high above us, where these apparently conflicting truths meet in perfect harmony; we shall know even as also we are known. And now, in our ignorance, "the godly consideration of our election in Christ is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ." Those who know the power of God's grace know also the plague of their own hearts, their exceeding sinfulness and weakness. What joy, then, to know

that it is God who saves us, and not we ourselves! All that is really good within us comes from his grace. Then, if there be any sense of sin in us, any yearning for forgiveness, any hunger after righteousness, we may humbly and hopefully look upon these as indications of the work of God's good Spirit in our hearts; we may trust that he who hath begun the good work within us will complete it unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." Thus if we approach the mysteries of God's election from the practical point of view, as the Scripture leads us, rather than from the speculative, in which case we get at once beyond our depth, these awful and blessed truths should help to produce in us a childlike spirit, and teach us to live in loving trustfulness and humble dependence upon God. (2) Their election is in sanctification of the Spirit. This is the sphere in which God's election works, the form of life in which the elect must necessarily walk; for God's Holy Spirit sanctifieth the elect people of God—they are "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance." The Bible tells us that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord;" and these words are full of awful meaning, for holiness is the sum of all Christian graces; it is that heavenly mindedness which ever turns to things Divine and spiritual with a love so strong and deep that it rules the life and fills the soul, leaving but little room for this present world of sense. No power of man can effect this complete change of heart; it is the peculiar work of God the Holy Ghost. The still small voice of the Spirit whispering in the heart hath a power beyond all human effort, working sweetly, but with a still and quiet strength that draws God's people out of this lost world, as the voice of God called Abram from his country and his father's house. The Holy Spirit brings vividly before our hearts the teaching and the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He reveals unto the chosen the fair beauty of the Saviour, so that the heavenly vision kindles in the soul the flame of that Divine love which constrains a man to live no longer to himself, but unto Christ. That love, once awakened, spreads itself through the heart, and draws the whole man within the range of its sanctifying influences, driving out all low and earthly desires, and lifting up the soul to God. This is the sanctification of the Spirit, the pledge and earnest of our election. For (in the words of Archbishop Leighton) "if men can read the characters of God's image in their own souls, they are the counterpart of the golden characters of his love in which their names are written in the book of life. . . . He that loves God may be sure that he was first loved of God, and he that chooses God for his delight and portion may conclude confidently that God hath chosen him to be one of those that shall enjoy him, and be happy in him for ever; for that our love of him is but the return and repercussion of the beams of his love shining upon us." (3) Their election is unto obedience. God's election, drawing his chosen to himself through the sanctifying influences of his Spirit, must issue in obedience. "If we live in the Spirit," says St. Paul, "let us also walk in the Spirit." He whose daily life is irradiated by the indwelling grace of the Holy Spirit, must walk with God like Enoch, before God like Abraham, in the consciousness of God's presence; and when we feel that God's eye is on us, and God's presence with us, it must become more and more the great effort of our life to please him in all things, and to do his blessed will. "Thy will be done" is the constant prayer of his elect, filling their hearts more and more, fashioning their lives more and more after the example of their Lord. They are made righteous by his obedience, for his obedience is their pattern; and it is their strength, for he is theirs, they are one with him; and his obedience, revealed into their hearts by the Holy Spirit, works in them obedience unto life. (4) And sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. At Sinai Moses sprinkled with the blood of the covenant, not only the altar, but the people also. The blood of the Lord Jesus was shed once upon the cross; but Holy Scripture says of all believers, "Ye are come . . . unto the blood of sprinkling" (Heb. xii. 24). "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." The precious blood, once shed for the sins of the whole world, must be applied individually to each believer's soul. Therefore, St. Peter says that election is "unto the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." The Spirit sprinkleth the heart with the blood of Christ through the energy of faith, revealing to the believer his exceeding love in dying on the cross for us. Then the cross fills the believer's soul, and gathers round itself his best affections; then he walks in the light which streams from the cross; and while he is walking

in the light, the blood of Jesus Christ is exerting its living power, cleansing him daily and hourly from every stain of sin. Thus we may well pray that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost may be with us all, and that for evermore; for the love of God first called us into a state of salvation, the communion of the Holy Ghost is the only source of that holiness without which we cannot see God, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ alone can cleanse us from our sins and keep us in the way of obedience.

III. THE SALUTATION. 1. *Grace.* It is the favour of God, the source of every blessing, the origin of our salvation: "By grace are ye saved." It comes from God; it is not earned by any merit of ours; we pray for it for ourselves and for our friends; we can ask for nothing better. 2. *Peace.* When the grace of God abideth on a soul there is peace within the heart; he must be at peace with God and with himself who lives in the light of grace. Peace is twofold: (1) admission into covenant with God through the atoning blood; and (2) the rest of the believing soul in God's love and mercy (see homiletics on Phil. i. 2). 3. *St. Peter's addition.* "Grace and peace" is St. Paul's ordinary form of salutation; St. Peter adds the prayer that it may be multiplied. "The path of the just is as the shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day." The grace of God is a power; it draws the Christian onward "from grace to grace." As he grows in grace, the gift of peace becomes fuller and more blessed, passing all understanding. The life of faith is a progress; we cannot stand still; if we are not advancing, we must be receding. Our prayer must be to increase more and more.

LESSONS. 1. Christ's people are strangers here; they must lift up their hearts to their everlasting home. 2. They are the elect of God; they shall be his when he maketh up his jewels. 3. They must live a consecrated life, keeping themselves, by the grace of God, within the sphere of the blessed Spirit's influence. 4. They must walk always in the path of holy obedience; so shall the blood of sprinkling continually cleanse them from their sin.

Vers. 3-12.—*Thanksgiving.* I. FOR THE HOPE OF THE CHRISTIAN. 1. *The ground of that hope.* It is the mercy of God. We need to pray constantly, "Have mercy upon us, miserable sinners;" for, indeed, we are sinners, and sinners must be miserable, unless God is pleased to forgive them and to reconcile them to himself. But God did more than forgive; in his mercy he begat us again. The heavenly inheritance is ours by right of the new birth; we hope for it because we are children of God. We were by nature children of wrath (Eph. ii. 3), but God begat us again; and, if we are children, then are we heirs, heirs of God. 2. *The character of that hope.* It is a living hope. It is the hope of life, and it is full of life; it is bright, active, cheerful; it springs up ever fresh and clear in the Christian's heart, giving calm peace and inner joy even in the midst of troubles. And it dieth not; worldly hopes perish and die; they mock us with a deluding expectation, but they end in disappointment, and leave us sad and hopeless. "The hope of unjust men perisheth" (Prov. xi. 7), often while they live, always when they die. But "the righteous hath hope in his death" (Prov. xiv. 32); for his hope liveth even in death. "The world," says Archbishop Leighton, "dares say no more for its device than *Dum spiro spero*; but the children of God can add by virtue of this living hope, *Dum exspiro spero*." 3. *The means by which we are begotten again into that hope.* It was by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The new birth is sometimes ascribed, says Archbishop Leighton, "to the subordinate means—to baptism, called therefore the laver of regeneration (Titus iii. 5); to the Word of God (Jas. i. 18); to the ministers of this Word, as 1 Cor. iv. 15, 'For though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus have I begotten you through the gospel.'" But these subordinate means derive their efficacy from the mercy of God saving us through the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the only begotten Son. His resurrection was in some sense a birth into a new life of mediation and intercession. Compare St. Paul's application of Ps. ii. 7, 'Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee,' to our Lord's resurrection (Acts xiii. 33). And it is the cause of our new birth. St. Paul speaks of rising with Christ in baptism (Col. ii. 12); but we can only rise with Christ through his resurrection. That resurrection is 'not only the exemplar, but the efficient cause'

of the living hope on which St. Peter loves to dwell" (Leighton). 4. *The object of that hope.* It is the heavenly inheritance. It is God who fills his people's hearts with the hope of that inheritance. He enlightens the eyes of their understanding, that they may know "what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" (Eph. i. 18). That inheritance is (1) incorruptible; like the peace of God which is its foretaste on earth, it passeth understanding; it hath not entered into the heart of man; we can only describe it by contraries; we know rather what it is not, than what it is. It is not corruptible. Here we are "inter peritura perituri" (Leighton); we perish, our best possessions perish. There they die no more; their inheritance of gladness is like themselves, incorruptible. Here the very heavens shall perish; they shall wax old as a garment (Heb. i. 11); the new heavens and the new earth, which are the inheritance of the saints, abide for ever. (2) It is undefiled. Here the trail of the serpent is over all things; men's hearts, lives, conversation, bear the taint of evil; the earth has been marred by the sin of man; there is no earthly beauty, no earthly possession, free from blemish. The heavenly inheritance is wholly pure; "the street of the city is pure gold, as it were transparent glass;" nothing that defileth can enter there. (3) It fadeth not away. The lapse of time doth not affect it, for it is timeless, eternal. There is no old age there, but perpetual youth. The best joys of earth fade into weariness; there is no weariness in heaven; the new song never wearies the blessed. The joy of God's presence is never obscured there. God's saints sometimes have "sweet presences of God here, but they are short, and often interrupted; but there no cloud shall come betwixt them and their Sun; they shall behold him in his full brightness for ever" (Leighton). 5. *The certainty of that inheritance which is the object of our hope.* (1) It is reserved in heaven for God's elect. Its preciousness is shown by its being in heaven, and by its being reserved for God's chosen. He reserves it for them; therefore none can take their crown, none can spoil them of their reward, for God, who hath reserved it for them from the beginning, is able to keep it unto that day. (2) They are guarded unto salvation. The inheritance is reserved for them; they are guarded from the evil (John xvii. 15). God careth for them; his angels by his appointment succour and defend them. Their Guardian is almighty. "Fear not," he saith, "for I am with thee." They need only faith to look above, to grasp the promises, to cling to the Saviour's strength. (3) That salvation is ready to be revealed. It is veiled from us now; but the veil shall be withdrawn in the last time. Then shall "thine eyes see the King in his beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off" (Isa. xxxiii. 17). Now we must live in hope, blessing God for that living hope which is the anchor of the Christian soul.

II. FOR THE JOY OF THE CHRISTIAN. 1. *It is great.* He rejoices in hope; he exults when the blessed hope lives clear and bright in his heart; he strives to "hold fast the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Heb. iii. 6). But: 2. *That joy is amid tears;* for man is born to sorrow; suffering is the lot of all men, and Christians have their own peculiar trials: "Ye must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom" of God. Those to whom St. Peter wrote were suffering a great trial of affliction: the apostle comforts them, bidding them look away, as far as might be, from their earthly troubles to the joyful hope of everlasting life. 3. *The joy of the Lord is strength in the time of trouble.* (Neh. viii. 10.) It helps the Christian to discern the meaning of his afflictions; they are but for a moment, for a season, and they are necessary; they come from our Father in heaven, and he doth not willingly afflict nor grieve the children of men; he sends them "for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness" (Heb. xii. 10). They would not be trials if they were not felt; the Christian's cross must sometimes be sharp and heavy, or it would not make him partaker of his Saviour's sufferings. The Christian is often sorrowful, but he ought to be "always rejoicing" even in sorrow; for these trials, so hard to bear, are as necessary for the purifying of our faith as fire is for the refining of gold. Gold is counted precious among men; faith is precious in the sight of God. Gold perisheth; faith abideth. The proof of faith is of infinitely greater importance than the proof of gold. Temptations try the Christian's faith. God tried the faith of Abraham and Job; temptation, resisted and overcome, proves faith to be real and true. And temptation refines faith; temptation borne meekly and patiently purifies faith from the taints which cling about every human character; it helps us to overcome pride

and self-confidence and worldliness, and keeps us humble, distrustful of ourselves, trusting only in God. The joy of the Lord, realized amid sorrow, helps the Christian to believe that these trials, so grievous now, will be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. 4. *It springs out of the love of Christ.* Love implies knowledge. We see not the Lord Christ with the bodily eye; but the vision of faith is more precious far than sight; many who saw him did not believe. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed;" for faith brings the Lord very near to the soul, yea, into the heart; faith opens the door to him, and then he entereth in, and maketh his abode within the heart that in faith receives him. Therefore we may know him with a real knowledge, with that knowledge which is eternal life, with the knowledge with which the true sheep know the good Shepherd—the knowledge which he himself, in the wonderful words of John x. 14, 15, compares with the knowledge with which he himself, the Son of God, knows the eternal Father. It is a knowledge of love, of intimate spiritual communion. "Truly," says St. John, "our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." The joy of God's saints is unspeakable.

"No tongue of mortal can express,
No pen can write their blessedness;
He only who hath proved it knows
What bliss from love of Jesus flows."

It were a poor thing," says Leighton, "if he that hath that joy could tell it all out. *Pauperis est numerare pecus.* And when the soul hath most of it, then it remains most within itself, and is so inwardly taken up with it, that possibly it can then least of all express it. It is with joys as they say of cares and griefs, *Leves loquuntur, ingentes stupent.* The deepest waters run stillest. '*Res severa est verum gaudium,*' says Seneca. True joy is a solid, grave thing; it dwells more in the heart than in the countenance; whereas, on the contrary, base and false joys are but superficial, skin-deep (as we say); they are all in the face." And it is full of glory, glorified with a foretaste of the glory that is to be revealed; for they who have that joy are spoken of as even now receiving the end of their faith, the salvation of souls. That precious gift of salvation is not only negative, deliverance from the guilt and power of sin; it is much more than this—it is Christ himself manifested into the believer's heart. He is our Jesus, the Salvation of Jehovah to his chosen; his presence sheds a glory round. "The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them." In such measure as that presence is realized, is the blessing of salvation, the end of our faith, received. His saints as they grow in grace, are ever receiving a fuller and deeper salvation—the salvation of souls now. Hereafter he "shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory" (Phil. iii. 21, Revised Version).

III. THE DEEP INTEREST TAKEN IN THAT HOPE AND JOY. 1. *By the prophets.* Christians are often apathetic: they do not realize the exceeding glory and grandeur of the joy that is set before them; their hearts are dull and cold. It was not so with the prophets. They saw not what the apostles saw; but the Spirit of Christ was in them; it testified of the sufferings of Christ and his after-glories. They inquired and searched diligently by prayer and devout thought, like Habakkuk (ii. 1) and the psalmist (Ps. lxxxv. 8); or sometimes by study and reading, like Daniel (ix. 2). We should imitate them; we should search the Scriptures, we should meditate and watch and pray. We should every day fix our hearts in devout contemplation on the sufferings of Christ; we should lift up our souls to behold in thankful adoration the glories of the risen, ascended Lord. Very sacred and precious must be the mysteries of our salvation which attracted the concentrated attention of those holy men. They saw the facts of our Lord's life and death afar off; we have received the gospel from eye-witnesses speaking by the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. That Holy Ghost, the Comforter, once sent by Christ from the Father (John xv. 26), abides for ever with the faithful; he will guide us into all truth; if we search for it like the prophets, he will lead us nearer and nearer to the Saviour. 2. *By the angels.* But higher intelligences than the prophets are interested in the scheme of our salvation. The blessed angels long to look into these things, and that with rapt fixed attention. The mystery of godliness, manifest in the flesh, was seen of angels (1 Tim. iii. 16). They watched the

great facts in the history of redemption; they delight to contemplate the progress of the gospel now. They watch with intensest interest the great struggle between good and evil in the world, and as each ransomed soul, drawn by the power of the cross, turns to God, "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God." How strange that men, for whom the Lord Jesus died, should be so cold and listless, while angels, of whom he took not hold as he taketh hold of the seed of Abraham (Heb. ii. 16, Revised Version), look so eagerly into the great truths of our redemption! They are our fellow-servants (Rev. xxii. 9); we shall be their fellow-students, if we take example from them, and study with love and awe and reverence the life, the death, the resurrection, of him who loved us even unto death.

LESSONS. 1. Cherish the Christian's hope; earthly hopes are but castles in the air, delusive, unsubstantial; the living hope abideth. 2. Thank God for the hope of glory; it comes only from his mercy; it cheers us in our troubles, in the approach of death; in everything give thanks. 3. The heavenly inheritance is kept for God's elect; they are kept for it; let them rejoice evermore. 4. Their trials are precious; they issue in praise and honour and glory; let them rejoice even in sorrow. 5. The love of Christ gives the holiest joy; let us seek that joy in seeking to love him more and more. 6. Prophets and angels love to gaze into the mysteries of our redemption; let us do the like.

Vers. 13—25.—*Practical exhortations.* I. TO PROGRESS IN HOLINESS. 1. *The necessity of earnest effort.* Christians are pilgrims and strangers; they must not loiter on their way, they must press toward the mark. The journey is long and laborious; they must gather up their robes, for there are many miry places, there is much pollution in the world, and "blessed are they that have not defiled their garments; they shall walk with the Lord in white." They must gird them up round their loins lest they hang down and impede their progress. They must lay aside the sin which doth so easily beset them, and keep their affections and desires closely girt in, that they become not loose and hinder them. They must not allow their mind to be listless and apathetic; they must keep their thoughts active, fixed on their journey and on its end. (1) To do this they must be sober. Excess of meat and drink weighs down the soul and sinks it into a deadly lethargy. The intemperate use of any of this world's good things or enjoyments interferes with spiritual exertion, and lowers the tone of the spirit. The Christian must be temperate in all things, in all his habits and modes of thought; he must be calm, quiet, thoughtful, zealous but collected, full of high enthusiasm but wise and free from excitement. (2) And they must hope, and that perfectly. Hope urges the traveller onward; he heeds not the discomforts of the way while the hope of the joy that is set before him is fresh and bright in his heart. The Christian's hope is sometimes mixed with doubts and fears; but this, the psalmist says, is "mine own infirmity" (Ps. lxxvii. 10). He must lift up his eyes to the hills whence cometh his help; for the grace which is the object of his hope ("grace," says Leighton, "is glory begun, and glory is grace completed") is being brought to him. Grace comes from God; it is his free favour; he gave the first gift of grace; "he giveth more grace." It is his bounty, not deserved by any merits of ours: "dona sua coronat Deus, non merita tua," says St. Augustine. That grace is being brought now; as men gird up their loins and hasten towards it, it is brought nearer to them; when the prodigal arose and came, his father, while he was yet a great way off, ran and came to meet him. So God's grace is being brought in continually increasing measure as the Lord Jesus Christ reveals himself in nearer vision to the believing soul; it will be brought in perfect glory when his saints shall see him as he is in his kingdom. 2. *Old lusts must be forsaken.* The assured hope of salvation will urge the Christian to follow after holiness: "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself." Holiness is separation from all that defileth. Christians must, as obedient children, forsake the world, the flesh, and the devil; they must not fashion themselves after the likeness of the lusts of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; for the image of Christ cannot be traced upon the soul that bears the impress of these evil things. The heathen had the excuse of ignorance; we Christians have the light; let us beware lest any of us incur the awful condemnation of those who love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. 3. *The pattern to be set before us.* It is the all-holy God himself. "Summa religionis est imitari quem colis.

The essence of religion consists in the imitation of him we worship" (Leighton). The gods of the heathen were represented as actuated by human passions and stained with hateful sins; their character must have reacted upon their ignorant worshippers; their worship was degrading. Our God is the most Holy One, awful in holiness. He has not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness; he has set us apart for himself, that we should be holy to him. "Holiness unto the Lord" was inscribed upon the mitre of the high priest; it should be written in the hearts of Christians, who are a holy priesthood, dedicated to the service of God. Holiness lies in the imitation of God. "Be ye followers [literally, 'imitators'] of God as dear children," says St. Paul. It is the high pattern for the Christian, very high indeed above us, but yet set before us by God himself. We must make it our constant effort, by the promised help of his Holy Spirit, to become "partakers of his holiness;" we should follow after holiness in all things, in all the circumstances of our lives, in all manner of conversation. If we earnestly desire it with a strong sustained longing, with hunger and thirst, then we know—for we have his gracious word—we shall be filled.

II. TO HOLY FEAR. 1. *The first reason: the judgment.* St. Peter, the apostle of hope, dwells much on the deep and hidden joy which is vouchsafed to the faithful Christian. St. Paul, the apostle of faith, again and again urges upon us the same duty, the same privilege, of joy in the Lord. But both apostles bid us fear God; "pass the time of your sojourning here in fear;" "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Then faith and hope and joy are not inconsistent with fear. Nay, there can be no true faith and hope and joy without fear; for God's grace, out of which flow faith and hope and joy, produces also holy fear; without reverence and godly fear we cannot serve him acceptably (Heb. xii. 28). True religion implies a deep sense of God's presence; and that presence, realized by faith, must inspire a solemn awe into the heart to which it is granted. He who lives very near to God, as Abraham did, must feel, as Abraham did, that it is a solemn thing for one who is but dust and ashes to speak unto the Lord (Gen. xviii. 27). Flesh and blood, conscious of unworthiness, must have something of that awful dread which led St. Peter himself once to say, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" The first petition in the prayer which the Lord himself hath taught us, the prayer which St. Peter apparently had in his thoughts when he wrote these verses, is, "Hallowed be thy Name." Our first approach to the throne of grace must be made with deep and solemn reverence. The very seraphim covered their faces when they chanted, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord;" and we sinful men must learn reverence from the blessed angels when we draw near to God. We call him our Father; that precious name tells us of his love, but it reminds us also of the honour due to such a Father. We are but sojourners here; this life, with all its cares and excitements, will soon be gone. Be not over-anxious; fear not earthly troubles and trials; think of the end, the judgment which is coming, and live in the holy fear of God. He "judgeth according to every man's work." Is our work so thorough that we have no need to fear? God's holiest servants feel their unworthiness the most; they are conscious, not only of many great sins in the past, but of much frailty and inconstancy always. There are strange inconsistencies and vacillations and falterings, even in the holiest lives. The sense of weakness keeps God's people in the holy fear of God, and that fear makes them vigilant and circumspect. They think often of the judgment; they think of themselves standing before the throne. They have hope, a blessed hope through their Lord's atoning blood; but that hope must be mingled with fear even in saints. "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee," said the psalmist, "and I am afraid of thy judgments." 2. *The second reason: the great price with which we were bought.* There is another reason, higher and holier, for godly fear—the ransom given for our souls. The fear of judgment may have much of selfishness in it; the thought of Christ's exceeding great love is the high Christian motive. If a dear friend had given his silver and gold to redeem us from shame and punishment, we should regard him with reverent gratitude, and fear to displease him. But Christ gave himself; he shed his precious blood. The sacrifice was exceeding precious; the sacred Victim was without blemish and without spot, and fore-ordained before the foundation of the world. These thoughts ought to fill us with holy fear when we gaze upon the cross. The cross, as it reveals the blessed love of Christ, throws an awful light on the guilt of sin and on its tremendous consequences. Then

there is need of fear. Indeed, "perfect love casteth out fear," but (1) our love, alas! is not perfect, and imperfect love must be more or less accompanied with fear. And (2) the fear which love casteth out is that servile fear which simply dreads the punishment, heeding neither the guilt of sin nor the love of Christ. The Christian fears to offend God, who spared not his own Son; he fears to dishonour the cross of Christ; he fears to grieve the Holy Spirit of God. "This fear is not cowardice; it doth not debase, but elevates the mind; for it drowns all lower fears, and begets true fortitude and courage to encounter all dangers for the sake of a good conscience and the obeying of God. The righteous is as bold as a lion (Prov. xxviii. 1). He dares do anything but offend God; and to dare to do that is the greatest folly and weakness and baseness in the world. From this fear have sprung all the generous resolutions and patient sufferings of the saints and martyrs of God; because they durst not sin against him, therefore they durst be imprisoned, and impoverished, and tortured, and die for him. Thus our Saviour says, 'Fear not them that kill the body; but fear him which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell.' Fear not, but fear; and therefore fear, that you may fear not" (Leighton). 3. *Consider further (1) from what we were redeemed.* Out of (ἐκ) our former vain conversation. We were bought out of our old unconverted life, and that by no less a ransom than the precious blood. He who bought us will give us power to escape out of that old life; he will strengthen us with all might by his Spirit in the inner man; then let us fear to look back upon Sodom, to return to our sins and carelessness. It may be the traditional, the conventional mode of life; we are tempted to do as others do, to go with the multitude. But that blood was shed to redeem us out of the worldly life: let us fear. (2) *The purpose of that redemption.* That our faith and hope might be in God. The sacrifice of Christ was foreordained from all eternity. Christ was manifested in due time, and that, the apostle says, "for you, who by him do believe in God." All this was for us, if we believe. God provided for our salvation before the world was. He then determined to give up his own Son for us all. This thought, almost too great to take into our minds, gives us some insight into the momentous importance of that salvation, the exceeding value of our souls. Again, Christ was manifested for us; God raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; and it was all for us. Christ's manifestation, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, it was all for us sinful men, that our faith and hope might be in God. We are not worthy, we feel; we are utterly unworthy of this unutterable love, this tremendous sacrifice. But he loved us so, he counted it not too great a price. Then let us fear to offend him who loved us so deeply; let us fear to lose the salvation for which so great a price was paid; let us fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of us should seem to come short of it. Then "pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." When that time is past, and God's elect are sojourners no more, but at home in the many mansions of the Father's house, there will be no more room for fear; for they shall have everlasting rest, and perpetual peace will shine upon them.

III. TO BROTHERLY LOVE. 1. *Charity is the end of the commandment.* (1 Tim. i. 5.) St. Peter is the apostle of hope; but, like St. Paul the apostle of faith, he joins with St. John the apostle of love in his earnest exhortations to follow after charity. He presses that high duty upon us in words of intense earnestness. He knows how hard it is for our selfish hearts to love as Christians ought to love—he knows how essential it is for our salvation, for our happiness, for the happiness of others, that we should exercise that heavenly grace. He calls it *philadelphia*, brotherly love—a word which, except as the name of one of the seven Churches of Asia, we find only in St. Peter (here and 2 Pet. i. 7) and St. Paul (Rom. xii. 10; 1 Thess. iv. 9) and in Heb. xiii. 1. The Lord Jesus had said, "All ye are brethren;" the holy apostles remembered his words. (1) That brotherly love which is the badge and test of Christ's true disciples must be unfeigned. St. Paul uses the same word (Rom. xii. 9, ἀνυπόκριτος), where it is translated "without dissimulation." The world, in its ordinary forms of courtesy, counterfeits the grace of charity; the Christian must learn to love, not in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And that we can learn only of the Lord Jesus Christ, the one Teacher of all true disciples, through the help of the Holy Spirit of God. (2) It must be "out of a pure heart." The word "pure" is somewhat doubtful here; but St. Paul certainly has it in the parallel passage (1 Tim. i. 5). Christian love must issue from the heart, and that heart must be pure. Alas! impure, unholy passions

often usurp the sacred name of love; but these are only forms of selfishness; there is love on the tongue; there is only lust, loathsome and wicked, in the heart. True love is a very beautiful and holy thing; it springs only out of a pure heart. (3) It must be fervent, intense. For it must be like the love of Christ: "As I have loved you." His love was unto death; his apostle tells us that the measure of our love should be the same: "We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John iii. 16). How very far we are from this height of self-sacrificing love! It should be the aim of our holiest ambition. 2. *Whence that charity must spring.* (1) From a purified, a consecrated soul. Christian love is a product of spiritual religion; the soul must be consecrated to God's service that is to love the brethren with a pure heart, fervently. And the consecrated life moves in the path of holy obedience—obedience to the truth. The truth makes God's people free—free from the bonds of sin, free from the entanglements of sensual lusts, free from selfishness. While they walk in truth they walk in obedience, seeking to obey God in all things, not only in their outward lives, but by bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. While they walk in truth they are walking in the light, and then the blood of Jesus Christ is cleansing them from all sin. Only by the grace of God the Holy Ghost can they thus purify their souls. (2) A consecrated life implies a new birth. St. Peter returns to the doctrine of the new birth, because it is that new birth which makes us children of God and brethren one of another. Here is the Christian's highest privilege: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" We are begotten again of incorruptible seed. That incorruptible seed abideth in the faithful child of God, who hath been made partaker of the Holy Ghost, and hath not received the grace of God in vain. He doth not grieve the Holy Spirit; he doth not by wilful resistance quench the Spirit. "He that is born of God sinneth not." So far as the seed of the new life abideth in him, that life dieth not; it lives and energizes, for it is the life of Christ. "Not I, but Christ liveth in me." And that new life must show itself in love, in love unfeigned, pure, and fervent. For "he that loveth not, knoweth not God;" but "every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." (3) That new birth is through the Word. The Word of God liveth; it is quick and powerful; it is the cause of life. "Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." God said once, "Let there be light; and there was light." God hath said, "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;" and men are born of water and of the Spirit, and do enter into the kingdom of God. Whatever virtues the sacraments possess come through the Word of God. And when, alas! men have forgotten their regeneration, when they have neglected to stir up the grace of God, and it has well-nigh died out of their souls, it is the Word of God that stirs them again into life. "This my son was dead, and is alive again." For the Word is not merely the letter; the Word liveth; the Word, in the deepest sense, is the voice of God speaking through those letters and syllables, speaking to the hearts of men. And it is by his Son that God hath in these last days spoken unto us. He is the Word of God, the Word made flesh. He calls us by his Spirit: "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." He is the Life of the world, the Resurrection and the Life; when he speaks the word of power, then dead souls "hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." 3. *Charity abideth.* The seed whereof we are born again is incorruptible; and the Word of God, which is the instrument of our new birth, abideth for ever; therefore charity, the love of the brethren, which springs out of our common birth into the family of God, never faileth. It is the flower of the Christian life, bright and beautiful and fragrant. It fadeth not like the flowers of this world. "All flesh is grass," said the prophet, and the holy apostle repeats his words. "The grass withereth;" generations of men come and go; one after another, like the leaves of each successive year, they perish and decay. And if some men are conspicuous among the multitude, distinguished by rank, or riches, or learning, or great deeds and triumphs and successes, all these glories are no more abiding than the beauty of a flower. The rare flower, delicate or gorgeous, shines in its brightness above the common weeds; but it has no more permanence, no longer lease of life; it droops and fades and falleth away. So is it with that human life which seems most brilliant, most glorious. "The rich man also died, and was buried." The dust of Cæsar is no better

than the dust of Lazarus; both mingle with the earth from which they came. "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust," is said over the grave of kings and of beggars. "But the Word of the Lord abideth for ever." That Word is the instrument of our new birth. Therefore, if only we abide in him who is the Word of God, who hath the words of eternal life, and by his apostles has declared them unto us; if we abide in him as faithful branches abiding in the vine, then we can never perish, none can pluck us out of his hand; for "he is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him." And that Word is the gospel, the glad tidings which we have heard. Let us welcome it as good tidings of great joy, let us treasure it in our hearts; it will bring forth fruit—the fair fruit of holy deeds, "the white flower of a blameless life," fruit that dieth not, a flower that falleth not away.

LESSONS. 1. The journey is long, the way is steep; be active, sober, hopeful. 2. The end is before the throne; without holiness none can stand in that presence; follow after holiness. 3. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;" think of the judgment; think of the precious blood. 4. "God is Love;" "He that loveth not knoweth not God;" see that ye love one another. 5. "All the glory of man is as the flower;" it fadeth, it falleth away; holy love fadeth not; it is the fairest flower in the amaranthine wreath.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 1.—*The threefold condition of a Christian.* "To the strangers scattered ['sojourners of the dispersion,' Revised Version] throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." "The dispersion" was unquestionably the designation of Jewish residents in Gentile countries (John vii. 35; Jas. i. 1). "Strangers" means temporary residents in a foreign country. But the question whether this letter is really addressed to Jewish Christians is not necessarily answered in the affirmative by this superscription. For it is quite possible that the Gentile Christians in the countries named may be intended by "the sojourners of the dispersion," the description properly belonging to the Jews being transferred to them as in a profounder sense true of them, just as many other terms applicable to them are transferred in other parts of the letter. This possibility seems to be raised to a very high probability, at least by many expressions in it which appear to imply that the persons addressed were Gentiles. Such, for instance, as ch. i. 14, "the former lusts in your ignorance;" ch. ii. 10, "in time past were not a people;" ch. iv. 3, "The time past may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles." If, then, we may fairly take these words as addressed to all Christians, they bring before us the familiar but ever-neglected truth that, if Christians are faithful to their calling and to their true affinities, they will cherish a sense of belonging to another order of things than that with which they are outwardly connected. The word here rendered "stranger," or, as in the Revised Version, "sojourner," implies both residence in a foreign land, and temporary residence; and if we add to it the remaining word, we have a threefold view of the condition of a Christian, as an alien, a passing visitant, an isolated man.

I. HE IS AN ALIEN. He does not belong to the polity, the order of things in which he lives. No people on earth should understand that metaphor better than Jews and Englishmen; both belonging to nations scattered over the whole world, and accustomed to cherish a keen, proud sense of belonging to another nationality than that under whose flag they may be living. These Jews of the dispersion wandered all over the Roman world; but wherever they went, among the cold storm-swept uplands of Cappadocia and Galatia, in the rude villages of Pontus, or the luxurious cities and busy seaports of Asia Minor, they felt the mystic tie which bound them to Jerusalem on her hills, and the temple gleaming on its rock. So Christians are here members of another nationality, and foreigners in time. St. Paul gives us the same idea under a slightly different metaphor when he bids the Philippians live as citizens of heaven. Philippi was a Roman "colony," that is, it was regarded a piece of Rome itself in Macedonia, governed by Roman law, not by provincial codes, having the names of its citizens enrolled among the Roman tribes. So we, if we are Christians, are colonists here; our mother-country is beyond the stars. This is an honour and a privilege. Peter does not

utter these words with a melancholy face and a sigh, as so many of us do whose hearts hanker after the world, and would fain have it for our own. The Jew, the Philippian colonist, the roving Englishman were and are proud of their nationality, and knew that it was a descent to be naturalized in their places of residence. Let us glory in our belonging to the city which hath the foundations, and not sorrow that we are strangers. We have ceased to belong to the present material order, because we have been taken up into the higher. We rise to be aliens to earth and the race of men whose hopes and views are limited by it, just as some peasant's son may be educated out of the narrow surroundings and torpid life of his native village, and come to feel that he has little in common with relatives and friends, because a wider horizon expands before his mental vision. So then a prime duty is to keep separate from the order of things in which we dwell, and to keep vivid the consciousness that we do not belong to it. Think of the tenacious individuality of the Jewish people, eagerly mingling in the commercial life of every nation, and often having a large share in its intellectual life, and yet keeping apart, as oil from water. If Christians would learn the lesson, it would be well for them and for the world! Think of Abraham pitching his tent outside the cities of Canaan, mingling on friendly terms with the people, compelling their respect, but yet refusing to enter, and "dwelling in tabernacles, because he looked for the city." Nowadays Christians seem to be trying how far into the city of the Canaanites they can go, and how handsome a house they can build themselves there. It is never well with the Church unless the world describes it, as Haman did the Jews, "a certain people, scattered abroad, and their lives are diverse from all people." It is never well with a Christian soul which does not hear ever sounding in conscience the voice which says, "Come ye out and be separate." The world has got into the Church, and the Church has struck up a friendship with the world; and never was there more need to press upon every Christian that, in the measure in which he belongs to Christ, he is an alien here, and that if he feels quite at home among material things, that is because he has lost his nationality, and has stooped to the degradation of being naturalized in his place of abode.

II. EVERY TRUE CHRISTIAN BELONGS TO THE DISPERSION. Each human heart, even in the closest human love, has to live alone. But those who love Jesus Christ will often have to bear a peculiar solitude which comes from their necessary association with those who do not love him. The loneliness of outward solitude does not pain in comparison with the loneliness of enforced and uncongenial companionship. A Christian is least alone when alone, for then God comes to keep him company. He is most alone when pushed close against those who do not share his faith, for then all the holy thoughts which come to his soul in quiet, as birds will light on the grass, take flight and hide in the trees at the noise of tongues. The isolation is for high purposes. Leaven has to be diffused among the inert mass. Seed stored on a barn floor in heaps is of little use, and likely to rot. It is scattered that it may grow. Salt is rubbed into the meat which is to be preserved. Christians are spread abroad, as brands are carried from a fire, to carry light into dark corners. The same Providence which sent the Jews of the dispersion as missionaries throughout the Roman world, sends us to bear abroad the Name of Jesus. The more we are surrounded with uncongenial associates, the more imperative the duty, and the more hopeful the opportunity, of our witnessing for our King. We have to represent our country among strangers. Its honour is in our hands. We carry its flag. Wandering Englishmen of doubtful character make the name of England abominable, and men like Gordon and many an unknown missionary hero make it fragrant, in lands where they are the only known specimens of the race. Men judge of Christianity very largely by the specimens of it which they see. We are each sent among a circle of associates that they may learn what the gospel can do for men by what it has done for us. Are we such specimens as to inspire onlookers with a respect for the religion which has made us what we are?

III. CHRISTIANS ARE BUT PASSING VISITANTS. The colonists will be called to the mother-city. Native-born Australians think of coming to England as going home, though they have never touched our shores. The outlying posts which have been held for the king amid swarms of alien enemies will be relieved, and the garrisons welcomed to their true country. We too often speak and think of the transiency of this present and the coming of death, with sadness, or at the best with resignation. But if we rightly understood that our deepest affinities connect us with that other order into

which death introduces us, and that repose from weary effort, congenial companionship instead of isolation, and all the sweet satisfaction and freedom of home, are death's gifts to the Christian soul, we should think of our departure hence with hope. "Were the happiness of the next world as closely apprehended as the felicities of this, it were a martyrdom to live." It becomes us to be "glad" when they say unto us, "Let us go into the house of the Lord." Two men may embark in one ship—the one full of good cheer as the ropes are loosened and the first turn of the screw begins to move her from the pier; the other sad because he leaves all that is familiar and dear. The one is going home from exile; the other is being borne into banishment in a strange land, whose speech he does not know, whose king he does not serve. Which shall I be when death comes?—A. M.

Ver. 4.—*The inheritance reserved for the heirs.* The reference to the inheritance is especially appropriate, as following the designation of Christians as "strangers of the dispersion," homeless wanderers in a foreign land. The prospect which made Abraham dwell in tabernacles, and which shone before Israel during the weary years in the desert, is held forth to them here. They have been "begotten . . . unto an inheritance." Regeneration points to and issues in the possession of it. If children, they are heirs. The new life from Christ makes them "strangers," throwing them out of harmony with the existing order, and it makes them "heirs," giving them a present possession and a future heritage in the unseen.

I. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE INHERITANCE. There is, no doubt, a reference to Canaan as the promised possession of the wandering Israelites. The true meaning of the word is that of a portion obtained by lot. There is no reference to bequest or succession. No doubt the inheritance is here represented as future, but not exclusively so. The next verse obviously takes "salvation" as equivalent to the "inheritance" of this verse. The two words represent the same reality in two different aspects—the one mainly under the negative idea of deliverance from evil, healing from sickness, safety from peril, though it does not altogether exclude the positive element; the other, under the positive idea of a possession which enriches spirit, heart, mind, and all tastes and faculties of a perfected humanity. The underlying reality which brings about both is God. He himself is become our Salvation. He is our Portion, the only Heritage which enriches the soul. We are "heirs of God." Possibly that deepest thought is not to be pressed here, but certainly it is not to be omitted. To keep it ever clearly before us saves us from murmuring at the darkness in which the glories of heaven are wrapped, and from degrading them by taking the emblems—such as pearly gates and golden streets, harps, and crowns—as more than symbols. Both the inheritance and the salvation belong alike to the present and the future. The one is represented here and now by an earnest; the other is begun to-day, though perfected in heaven. The earnest is of the same nature as the inheritance. The partial salvation of to-day is essentially the same as the complete salvation of eternity. The faintest streak of morning twilight is the same light from the same sun which at noon floods the sky.

II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INHERITANCE. Our means of forming conceptions of what it is are analogy and contrast with the things of earthly experience. If a chrysalis could think of its butterfly state, it could only picture it as like or unlike its present. So we can only paint the future with colours supplied by the present. And to paint it as the negation of all imperfection, transiency, and limitation, makes it brightest to eyes which smart with weeping, and ache with looking for a good which comes not, or after a vanished joy. It is "incorruptible." All outward possessions have the seeds of dissolution and decay in themselves, or can be decomposed and destroyed by external forces. Perhaps Peter remembered "where moth and rust do not corrupt." Our true treasure, which is truth, righteousness, a full influx of God himself into our hearts, cannot decay. It is "undefiled." Some spot of evil is on all beauty, some flaw in every precious thing, some taint of imperfection or at best some limitation which is a blemish on all that we have or love here. But this is whiter than the driven snow, and purer than the sunlight which flashes on it. It "fadeth not away." The sad stern law that it must droop and shed the glory of its petals rules each fair flower which we gather, and some of them fade all the faster because of the grasp of our hot hands. "But this is a flower which cannot wither." What of God we possess is not parted

from its source, but lives his life still, though it dwells in us. Therefore it is woven into an amaranthine garland (ver. 4), which makes the brow on which it is twined immortal as itself.

III. THE RESERVATION OF THE INHERITANCE. It is—or rather it has been from of old—laid up in the heavens. A remarkable expression, evidently implying that future blessedness is more than “a state,” and that it has objective elements which are already in existence in the heavens, even while we who are one day to possess them are toiling and moiling here. We cannot think without incongruity of our “salvation” as being thus stored with God, but we can naturally regard the objective constituents of our future blessedness as being so. The metaphor would be too violent unless the inheritance is a real something which is now in existence, and which is in so far separate from ourselves that we shall one day *have* it as well as *be* it. The main idea is that of the security of the inheritance. The Divine hand is working on that side of the veil to keep the inheritance for the heirs, and on this, as the next verse tells us, to keep the heirs for the inheritance. Guarded by his hand, it is safe. “Being in heaven, that calm abode of peace, where changes never come, nor foes climb, nor thieves break through and steal,” it is safe. The heirs of earthly inheritances have not seldom found their patrimony wasted when they came to claim it, and their treasure-chests empty when opened. But kept by God, and lodged in heaven, our riches cannot perish. He himself is our Portion. So if we have him for our Treasure, and count his knowledge, his love, his likeness, our heaven on earth and our heaven in heaven, we shall not be without a sufficient allowance to live on as the earnest, nor fail to be “satisfied,” when we pass into the higher life, with the wealth which will pour into our souls in the full possession of God.—A. M.

Ver. 5.—*The heirs kept for the inheritance.* The power of God works on both sides of the veil—preserving the inheritance for the heirs, and here keeping the heirs for the inheritance. Both forms of the Divine energy are needful if either is to be effectual. It were little joy to know how secure the riches of the future lay in God’s treasure-chambers unless we know that he will also help our weakness and bring us to possess them. So every source of fear is dried up by this double assurance of the one mighty hand preserving us for our heritage and it for us. There is another double truth here in the brief words, “by the power of God through faith.” On the one hand, the Divine grace which sustains; and on the other hand, the human faith which takes the grace—the one being the condition and the other the real cause. These two have been wrenched apart and been regarded as contradictory, and Christendom has been divided into two camps, with these two for their war-cries; and here they lie harmoniously in one sentence, and complete each other.

I. WHAT THE HEIRS ARE KEPT BY. The military metaphor in the word “kept” is not to be passed by. We have the same word in its literal use in 2 Cor. xi. 32 (“kept with a garrison”), and employed figuratively as here in Phil. iv. 7 (“the peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds”). Our weak natures are garrisoned as it were by reinforcements of Divine strength. Not by providences acting on our outward lives only, or by any forces upholding us as with external help, but by pouring power to resist and to overcome into our souls does God keep us in our conflicts with evil. His grace within us is yet more blessed than his hand around us. “I can do all things,” said Paul, “through Christ strengthening me within.” An indwelling Lord is our security. The hard-pressed fort is relieved by fresh troops joining the feeble defenders. We have the right to expect an actual communication of Divine strength breathed into our weakness. As the prophet laid his hands on the king’s hands ere he drew the bow, in token of strength infused, so the touch of Christ’s tender and strong hand will teach our “hands to war,” so that a “bow of steel will be bent by our arms.” We are “kept by [literally, ‘in’] the power of God.” It may not be fanciful to keep the local meaning of the preposition here, and to think of that power as lying around us like some fortress, whose massive walls keep the feeblest in safety. If we keep within our castle, no harm shall befall. The enemy may prowl round the base of the fortress reared high on the cliff, but they cannot climb to it, and their fire cannot shake a stone in its walls. If we dwell in God, we dwell in safety, and whatever storms of war rage without, deep peace abides within.

II. WHAT WE ARE KEPT THROUGH. Faith is the condition, the necessary condition, on which God's power works in and on us. The garrison which God sends to hold our hearts cannot enter unless we open the gate and let down the drawbridge to receive them. Our faith has no power in itself, but as our receptivity for Divine influences it is omnipotent. It is only a channel—the pipe which conveys the water, the hand which grasps God's hand, the open door through which angels can enter and encamp in our poor hearts. They cannot come to our help without it. They will certainly enter if we exercise this faith. Its elements are conscious need, lowly sense of our own weakness, and self-distrust, absolute dependence on God in Christ, and a calm confidence and expectation of victory, which, when based on God, is reasonable and self-fulfilling. The measure of our faith will be the measure of our possession of the Divine power. If we open the gate but partially, we hinder the marching in of the celestial warriors whom God sends to our help. "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it."

III. WHAT WE ARE KEPT FOR. The "salvation ready to be revealed" is equivalent to the "inheritance" spoken of in ver. 4. "Salvation" here is of course used in its fullest meaning—complete and eternal deliverance from all the ills that flesh is heir to, and all the sins that mar the spirit, and complete and eternal possession of all the perfection and blessedness possible to glorified humanity. That complete flooding out of evil by the intruding tide of glory is the goal alike of regeneration (ver. 3) and of the sedulous guardianship of God's grace. It is but the completion of the begun salvation of earth, as the full corn in the ear which gladdens the golden harvest-time is of the tiny shoot peeping above the furrows in bleak, windy March. It is "ready to be revealed," says Peter. Possibly the meaning may be that this "salvation" is conceived of as lying hidden beneath much sin and imperfection in the hearts of Christians, as the full-spread beech-life lies wrapped up in the brown cone that braves the winter. The ultimate completed form of any germ may be said to lie ready to be revealed in its earliest form, and so may the remotest glories of the perfect salvation of the future be said to lie hid in the present, waiting for "the revelation of the sons of God." But perhaps, with more probability, we may regard this expression as in a general way parallel to the *reservation* of the inheritance, and as being a strong metaphor intended to convey the certainty of our possession of it, if we on our parts are faithful. Nor must we forget that Christ has gone "to prepare a place" for us; his entrance into the heavens making heaven ready for us in mysterious manner, and his abiding there making our entrance there possible. That other order of things is close around us, enfolding this visible, touching it at every point. The separation is thin and filmy, nothing solid, only a veil. A touch of God's hand on the curtain, and it runs back rattling on its rings, and all the glory blazes out. All is ready—ready from all eternity in the Divine counsels, made ready once for all in time by Christ's death and ascension, being made ready in our hearts day by day by his gracious discipline and indwelling life. At last the veil will be done away and the salvation revealed. What an apocalypse that will be! If we open our hearts wide for the entrance of Christ's healing and upholding power, we shall be made ready to go in with him to the feast prepared for believing hearts from of old. Trusting to his death and sharing his life, the heirs will be kept for the inheritance, and the inheritance for the heirs.—A. M.

Ver. 6.—*The paradox of the Christian life—joy subsisting with sorrow.* When he was young, Peter had been peculiarly impatient of sorrow, and blind to its necessity and worth. He had forgotten his reverence for Christ in his refusal to believe, even on his Master's authority, that sorrow could touch so dear a head. Years and experience had taught him the deep meaning of the prophetic contrast which Christ had drawn between his early self-willed, unhindered action, and his later days, when his will should be crossed and unwelcome compulsion should lord it over him. This Epistle is remarkable for the clearness of its insight and the frequency of its references to suffering as an indispensable factor in the Christian life. When he was old, he had learned the lesson which had been so foreign to his hot youth. Well for us if our past sorrows lie transfigured and illuminated by a beam of light like this in the text!

I. THE JOY OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. We have first the source of the joy. "*Wherein ye greatly rejoice.*" The complex whole of the blessings spoken of—the lively hope, the reserved inheritance, the guarding power, the prepared salvation, its future apoca-

lypsæ—these are the golden threads from which the bright tissue is woven. So this is the first distinction between the majestic Christian joy and the lighter-winged fluttering mirths and pleasures. It flows from no surface-pools, but from deep fountains, and is fed from everlasting fields of pure snow high on the mountains of God. Then we have the depth and calm rapture of the joy in the strong word of the original, which expresses a high degree of exultation. Peter was possibly quoting our Lord's words to his persecuted people, "Rejoice and be exceeding glad." At all events, Christian joy should be no pale and feeble thing, but full-blooded and full-voiced. It is far unlike boisterous mirth, which is noisy like the thorn-bushes which crackle and flare in flame for a moment. "The gods approve the depth and not the tumult of the soul." A present salvation, fellowship with a present Christ, the large and sure hope of his appearing, the exercise of faith and love and obedience, the immunity from fear, and the escape from the miseries of self-will, should all combine, like so many streams pouring down the hillsides, in this one deep and smooth-flowing stream of calm and equable gladness. Religion does us good only as it makes us glad. Any firm and adequate grasp of the facts and relations which the gospel brings will certainly make a man joyful. The average religion of this day does not believe in its own creed heartily enough to find in it support against temptations or joy in sorrow. If our Christianity has not the power to bless us with gladness in our hearts, there is something wrong either in the completeness of our surrender to it or in the articles of our belief. If our religion is largely self-inspection, or if it dwells on the sterner side of truth, or is mainly a prohibitory law keeping us from doing what we would like, or if it is a languid emotion not half so powerful as common appetites, we cannot expect to get sweet juice of gladness from such shrunken fruit. The coexistence of this joy with sorrow is, further, brought into prominence here. This paradox of Christian experience has seemed so startling that the future tense has been proposed as the true rendering; but a much deeper and grander sense results from adhering to the present tense. It is possible that joy should live side by side in the same heart with sorrow, and neither converting the other wholly into its own substance, and each made more noble by the presence of its opposite. "Central peace" may "subsist at the heart of endless agitation." Greek fire will burn under water. Flowers bloom on the glacier's edge. The depths of the sea are still, while winds rave and waves heave and currents race above. In the darkest night of sorrow and loss, starry and immortal hopes will brighten in our sky, and the heart that is united to Christ will have an inward solemn blessedness which no tempest of sorrow can extinguish.

II. THE SORROW OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. There is much unreality and consequent powerlessness in the one-sided pictures of the religious life so often drawn. To listen to some people, one would fancy that religion was meant to abolish all trial and sorrow. A picture without shadows is unlike anything on earth. The true Christian view neither portrays an impossible paradise nor preaches a hardening stoicism. Here we have in half a dozen words a theory of the meaning and uses of pain and grief, sufficient to live by and to alleviate many a pang. 1. Notice the insight into *the true nature and purpose of all sorrow*. It is temptation, or, more properly, trial. It is intended as a test, a proof, to reveal us to ourselves and so to better us. We do not get to the bottom of our sorrows till we look at the moral purpose which they serve, and regard them as discipline rather than pain. They take a shallow view who contemplate only the smart of the wound and leave out of sight the surgeon's purpose. They take as shallow a view who dispute or deny the benefit of sorrow, and assert that happiness tends to a sweeter virtue than it does. There is a lowly self-distrust quickly passing into calm faith which only sorrow can produce. The will is never bowed into submission without being softened in the furnace, and there is no real goodness but from a submissive will. The props round which the heart twines its tendrils have to be cut down, that it may fasten itself on the only true support. Only when we have nothing else to lean on do we lean all our weight on him. 2. Observe, too, *the recognition of the wise adaptation of our sorrows to our need*. They are not sent unless "need be." They are sent as need is. In the great Surgeon's instrument-case are many shining blades, all for cutting and paining. He chooses the right knife, and cuts where wanted, and close beside the sharp instrument lie bandage and balm. It is hard to believe that a sorrow which strikes many is at the same time proportioned in its force to each. But faith knows

that Providence neither forgets the general mass in care for the individual, nor loses sight of the wants of the individual in the crowd, but is at once special and general. 3. Finally, observe *the transiency of sorrow*. It is for a season. That is the highest attainment of faith, to see how short are the long slow hours which pain and grief lengthen. They seem to creep, as if the sun and the moon stood still as of old, that the storm may have time to break on us. But we have to take Heaven's chronology in our sorrows, and, though their duration seems interminable, to feel that after all it is but a little while. The long hours as they appear of a dream are but moments in reality, and seem so when the sleeper awakes. His anger is but a moment; his favour lasts all the life. Weeping may come to lodge with us—a sombre guest—for a night; but when the bright morning dawns Joy comes with a shout, radiant as the morning, and at his coming the black-robed visitant steals out of sight. Then the joy that coexisted with sorrow shall survive alone, and "sorrow and sighing shall flee away."—A. M.

Ver. 8.—*The unique love to an unseen Saviour*. Peter does not include himself among those who loved the Christ whom they had never seen. To him belonged the blessing of those who had believed because they had seen, and who had loved before they had fully believed. But he will not think that he and his fellows, who had been Christ's companions, love him "more than these" who inherit the blessing pronounced by Christ himself on those who have not seen and yet have believed. Perhaps some echo of that benediction may be heard among the antitheses of this verse, blending with some tones caught from the question which, as with triple point, had pierced his heart, "Lovest thou me?"

I. WE HAVE HERE BROUGHT INTO PROMINENCE A UNIQUE FACT, namely, love to an unseen Christ. Thousands in every age since have cherished a passionate attachment to Jesus, wholly unlike what is evoked by any one else. Time and distance seem to be powerless to diminish it. It is no tepid affection; it is no idle sentiment. Those who cherish it aver that it lies at the foundation of their lives. It rules, guides, stimulates. It is the mother of heroisms and of patience. It sheds light on all dark places. It mates and masters the fear of death. The stake and the gibbet, the dungeon and the rack, are powerless to repel those whom it attracts. It brings peace and hope, holiness and wisdom. It conquers the soul, and makes it conqueror of sin, time, and the universe. And all this passionate ardour of love which transforms the heart it enters is called out by and lavished on a Man who died nineteen centuries ago! There is no other fact the least like that.

II. WHAT IS THE EXPLANATION OF THIS UNEXAMPLED PHENOMENON? If Jesus is but one among the great names of the past, however high and pure; if whilst he lived he had no thoughts of us, and now sleeps in the dust and does nothing in the world but by the record of his past,—admiration rising to reverence may be his due, but anything worth calling love is impossible. It was not such a Christ who kindled the hearts of these Asiatics, who had never seen Peter's Master. But if I can believe that Jesus Christ died for me, that I had a place in his Divine-human love when he bore our sins, and that he lives to-day to love me and to succour and to save, and that he knows when I love him, and delights to accept and to return my love,—then I do not need the ordinary helps to love. All other benefactors and mighty names in the past stand in different relation to us. Praise and admiration are their guerdon. But One alone is loved though unseen, because, and only because, One alone died for each of us and lives to bless us. There are some mutilated forms of Christianity which present a Christ without a cross. They result in a Church without love enough to keep it warm. The Christ whom Peter preached was the Christ to whose transcendent love, as manifest in his death, the uttermost fervour of human love was the fitting and yet all-inadequate return. Is there any other conception of him and of his work which really has power to kindle through all the ages and in all hearts the flame of all-conquering love?

III. THERE IS NO REAL CHRISTIAN LIFE WITHOUT THIS LOVE. At bottom there is only one bond which unites spirits to spirits, men to men, or men to God. Love is the one uniting force. "Cords of love" must fasten us to Christ, or we are not fastened to him; and that love must flow from the faith which recognizes him for Saviour by his cross, and trusts him. Love is second, not first; but so second that wherever and as soon as faith is exercised, love comes to life. Imperfect conceptions of Christ's work as

Teacher, Example, and the like, do not really unite us to him. They may lead on to loftier and truer thoughts of him, but till we are united to him there will be no real love, and therefore no real union. Faint and feeble our love may be, unworthy of him it ever is; but if we have none we are not Christians. We shall have none unless our faith grasps him as our Saviour by his incarnation, cross, and resurrection. The question for us all is—Do we trust to Christ who died for us? Do we therefore love him because he loved us, and gave himself for us? Confidence and love have always been the bonds of union between men, which alone have made human society better than a den of hyenas. They are the bonds which unite us to God. Christ asks no more of us than that we should transfer to him the emotions and affections which we have lavished on one another, and let the tendrils which we have twined round rotten boughs and dead stumps clasp his cross, that there we may cling and climb, and grow and bear fruit. From his cross, from his throne, he asks of each, "Lovest thou me?" Though our eyes have not seen him, our hearts need not falter in the answer, "Thou knowest that I love thee."—A. M.

Vers. 8, 9.—*Christian joy.* There are better things than joy. A life framed on purpose to secure it is contemptible, and foredoomed to failure. Like sleep, it comes most surely unsought, and that angel of God meets us as we travel on the way of duty. It is not a worthy motive to urge for loving Jesus Christ that we shall be happy if we do, and much harm has been done by preaching a kind of gospel which winged its exhortations mainly with such calculations. But, on the other hand, it would be overstrained to take no account of the fact that joy follows faith in Christ as surely as fragrance is breathed from opened flowers. A pure and sober-suited gladness is one of the "virgins following" that queen. If it were not so, if there were no connection between goodness and happiness, there would arise a far greater difficulty in vindicating the ways of God than comes from the apparent absence of connection between goodness and prosperity. The strong words of this text assert that connection in the broadest way.

I. THE DEPTH AND HEIGHT OF CHRISTIAN JOY. It is a melancholy testimony to the meagre and shallow nature of the ordinary type of Christian life, that, in defiance of plain grammar, the words here have been often taken to refer to the future. They have been felt to be a world too wide for the experience of most of us. They speak of an exuberant joy which might be called a jubilant leaping up of the heart, of a joy far too great to be shut up in the bounds of speech and which has been glorified, transfigured, as if already clothed upon with the light of heaven. No wonder that men whose highest experience of Christian gladness fell far below this, should escape from the questions which the contrast suggests by throwing this joy into the future. But it is clearly meant to be realized in the present. Such joy is possible, and, if it be not actual in us, we should be wiser to look for the reason than to wrap ourselves in the comfortable excuse that it was never meant to be ours here. 1. *The true joy is silent.* It is but a shallow heart that can tell its treasures. "He is a poor man who can count his flock," says a proverb. All deep emotions pass beyond speech. The deepest love can but "love and be silent." The great river slides along with equable and noiseless motion, while the brook chatters among its pebbles. The Christian joy is not in need of laughter, nor of words, nor of any outward signs. Mirth is noisy; deep joy is calm, grave, still. It sits at the Master's feet, and moves not in its deep restfulness; only the light in the eyes and the holy glow on the still face tell the depth of the blessedness. Earth's joys are the crackling of thorns; Christian joy burns steadily. 2. *It is "glorified."* It already partakes of the glory which is to be revealed, and thereby is elevated and transfigured. Joy may easily become frivolous. Most of our earthly joys are but light-winged and painted butterflies in summer skies. But the emotion may be heightened and ennobled and changed from the short-lived flutterer among flowers to a strong-pinioned son of light, gazing on and rising to God. Instead of the iridescent bubble that bursts at a touch, it may become solid and permanent. Touched by the glory of that on which it is nourished, joy is glorified, even as, infected by the foulness of that on which it gorges, it may be debased. As is its object, so is it—varying from dignity to degradation. A man may have his face flushed with wine, or may turn to gaze on the sun, and be irradiated by the light to which he looks, as Stephen's face glowed

like an angel's from the reflected light of the open heavens. Is our joy lofty and touched with Heaven's own light, the common emotion being transfigured into likeness to the lofty hopes and visions on which it is nourished?

II. THE UNFAILING FOUNTAINS OF THE CHRISTIAN JOY. Two conditions are set forth in the two participial clauses on which our true joy depends. Of the two the former brings about the latter. Believing in, or rather trusting to, the unseen Christ, we receive the consequence of that trust—the salvation of our souls. And the exercise of faith and the possession of the resulting salvation pour a flood of joy into the heart, even though it dwell in a waterless land. 1. *The exercise of faith in the unseen Christ brings joy.* The very attitude of trust breathes calm gladness over the heart. It is always blessed to lean on one whom we love. There is rest in casting the burden on another. Anxiety and care darken the face and sadden the soul, when we have none but ourselves to rely on. But trust, even in human helpers whom we can trust, makes us glad, as a child safe on its mother's breast, or a wife guarded by her husband's arms. The more permanent and sufficient the object of our trust, the more joyful we shall be. If Christ be our Trust, we rely on absolute perfection and permanence and power; so our joy may be full, and may abide. To occupy mind and heart with him is joy. A warm thrill of gladness fills loving souls parted from one another, as they think of each other. And a bright light of joy should be kindled at every remembrance of Christ, and will be if we are trusting to him. Faith is self-distrust, and that is joy. Faith is self-surrender, and that is joy. Faith is the yielding of the will, and that is joy. Faith is the consciousness of union with Divine love and power, and that is joy. Faith turns its back on earth's fever and falseness, and that is joy. Faith rises to walk in heavenly places, and that is joy. Faith unites the soul with Jesus, and that is joy. The Christian joy is contemporaneous with active exercise of our faith. If that falls asleep, it fades away. It is like the note of a piano, which ceases to sound as soon as the finger is lifted from the key. Therefore is Christian joy so seldom up to the ideal set forth here, because faith is so spasmodic, so intermittent, and so feeble. If we would "rejoice evermore," we must "trust in the Lord for ever." 2. *The salvation which is the consequence of faith brings joy.* The language clearly co-ordinates "believing" and "receiving" as contemporaneous. Both are regarded as continuous, not single acts, done and done with, but as the standing characteristics of the Christian life. If continuous, they will be progressive; faith will become stronger, and, as it grows, salvation will be more fully possessed. For faith is receptivity, the opening of the door, and its degree, the width of the opening, settles how much "salvation" will enter. Salvation is past, present, and future—and in all epochs one in essence, however various in degree and form. Here and now we may possess the beginning "of the end of our faith," even the salvation of our souls, though the full salvation of body, soul, and spirit has to be waited for till the coming of the Lord. Surely that present salvation may well put into our hands a full cup of gladness. The consciousness of forgiveness; the sense of friendship with Christ; the assurance that all the sky is clear, and nowhere in the universe of things present or to come any cloud that can ever break in storm on our heads; the growing possession of holy desires, pure thoughts, and Christ-like character; the refining of the nature; and the hopes full of immortality which spring from present communion with him, and conquer death, and pour a great light of peacefulness into the grave;—surely these precious pearls, melted in the draught which the hand of faith receives from Christ, may well make sad hearts forget their misery, and rejoice as they drink, "with joy unspeakable and full of glory."—A. M.

Vers. 10—12.—*The work of Christ the central fact of the universe.* The salvation which is secured by the work of Christ, and the work which secures it, are the centre-point of the creation. "They that go before and they who follow after cry, Hosanna! blessed be he that cometh!" The calendar of civilized nations proclaims that he is the Lord of the ages—which are to be reckoned as "before Christ" or as "years of the Lord"—preparatory to or the development of his work. As for all time, so for all orders of being, the cradle and the cross are the centre. There were angels in the heavens when there where shepherds in the fields, and not only Wise Men from the East but "bright-harnessed" seraphs came as pilgrims to Bethlehem. There were angels in the tomb while weeping women stood without. Prophets heralded his coming; evangelists told

that he had come; and both were taught by the Spirit, whose chiefest office in the past and in the present is to take of the things of Christ, and to show them to us. Thus round him move all ages; to him turn all eyes; of him speaks all revelation; for man's salvation is the crowning work of God, and Christ effects man's salvation. Note, then, in this grand utterance four sets of persons, all concerned in that great work.

I. THE PROPHET-HERALDS. It has become fashionable now to speak doubtfully of Messianic prophecy. But any one who believes that Christ is what Peter knew him to be, the Son of God who died for all men, will feel it fitting that he should be heralded by the long series of predictions, and that before the King's chariot should be many outriders. The view of Old Testament prophecy given here is remarkable. Its main theme is declared to be the sufferings which were destined for the Messiah, and his subsequent glories. Precisely that suffering Messiah which had been such a difficulty to Peter himself and has ever been so to his nation, and which so many scholars now cannot see in the Old Testament, is here regarded as the centre of prophecy; not that the whole body of Jewish prophecy is concerned with him, but that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." The stratum crops out at many points, but is continuous, even where not exposed. The whole system has a forward look. Institutions and persons, ritual and kings, the very nation itself in its high vocation and its many sorrows, witnessed of One to come, whose personality should be all and more than all which these shadowed. And all this light of prophecy is gathered into certain bright points, such as Isa. liii. and Ps. xxii., in which that mystery finds speech, of the Messiah who suffers and then conquers and reigns. That thought is the centre of the Old Testament. The criticism which does not group it all round the suffering Messiah has missed the shaping principle which moulds it all, and in its perplexity has turned order into chaos. Again, the relation of the prophets to their message is taught here in a remarkable fashion. It is an axiom with some critics that prophecy must be interpreted in the sense in which the speaker and his hearers understood it. But Peter thinks that the prophetic inspiration sometimes left the speaker ignorant of the full meaning of his own predictions, so distinctly was it the utterance of a higher power. The period of fulfilment, in its date ("what") and characteristics ("what manner of time"), were not necessarily known by the prophet. Another axiom of modern philosophizers upon prophecy is that predictions must have had a bearing, consolatory or menacing, upon their first hearers. But Peter thinks that a prophecy may have been spoken which was only to be fulfilled long centuries after, and could only have gladdened the hearers with a far-off hope. Yet the prophet was not a mere machine or pipe through which the breath of inspiration blew. His heart throbbed in sympathy with his message, and he pondered it with all his force of thought. Peter's theory of prophetic inspiration is equally far from the naturalistic and from the mechanical theories.

II. THE ANSWERING CHOIR OF EVANGELISTS. The same truths were the theme of prophet and of preacher. The word "reported" and that rendered "preached the gospel" are both compounds of one root. To tell that message which prophets foretold is to preach the glad tidings to the world; and the whole business of the Christian teacher is to proclaim the joyful facts. So we have here: 1. The *full identity of the message* of the prophet and the preacher. The main difference is in the tense of their verbs. The one speaks in the future; the other, in the present; but the verbs are the same and the nominative is the same. The bud and the flower are one. Prophecy is condensed, outlined gospel. Gospel is expanded, specialized prophecy. Rays which were parted in the prophet's utterance are united in the evangelist's message. Anticipations are ever less definite than realities. But the theme is one, though prophecy touched with but a light hand the mysterious nature of the Messiah whom it proclaimed. 2. The *essential substance of the gospel* is the proclamation of historical facts. It is not a philosophy, nor directly a theology, still less is it a system of morality. It is the record of what has happened on this solid earth. Philosophy and theology and morality will all be evolved from these facts, but the first form of the gospel is history. Only it is to be remembered that the fact that Jesus has lived and died is not the gospel; but the fact that *Christ* has died for our sins is. The more plainly Christian teachers deliver their message, not as the product of their own thoughts, but as the message given to them, and the more they centre their energy on setting forth

the fact of *Christ's* sufferings in the past and glories in the present, the better for their success and for the world.

III. THE LISTENING, GAZING ANGELS. "To look into" is literally "to bend the body so as to gaze upon an object," as the apostles did at the sepulchre. This graphic figure may, perhaps, be a reminiscence of the quiet forms which sat the one at the head and the other at the foot where the body of Jesus had lain, as gazing upon a mystery and guarding a holy place, or it may even recall the cherubim bending with outstretched and meeting wings above the mercy-seat. At all events, it speaks of the remoter and yet earnest interest which other orders of beings in other worlds take in the story of redemption. Men have the honour of proclaiming it, whether as prophets or evangelists. To them it belongs. He helped not angels, but he helped the "seed of Abraham." Therefore they do not speak of it, but stand around, like spectators in some great arena, all silent and all eyes. Three great truths concerning angelic natures are here. They are capable of learning. They too know God by his work which excites in them wonder and interest as it unfolds. The life and death of Christ, with the resulting salvation, are a revelation of God to angels no less than to men, and, though they have no share in the redemption, they have a share in the knowledge which the cross brings to them as to us. From its far-darting beams of light shoot earthwards and upwards. It is the crowning manifestation of the Divine nature for all worlds and orders of being, as for all ages.

IV. THE ONE SPIRIT DWELLING IN PROPHETS AND EVANGELISTS. Not only is the theme the same, but the animating impulse also. The power by which the prophet saw all the wonder that should be is the same as the power which sat in cloven tongues of fire on the heads of all the Church on Pentecost, and has ever since been the strength of every evangelist and of every Christian. Inspiration is not a past phenomenon, but the permanent possession of the Church. Nay, the Spirit which of old came for special purposes on selected men and tarried not with them, is now, as it were, a denizen of earth, for it is "sent down from heaven" once for all, to abide among us, touching all lips which humbly and prayerfully speak Christ's Name among men. And it was the "Spirit of Christ" which dwelt in the prophets, and which they ever called "the Spirit of the Lord." From the beginning the Word was God; the manifested Jehovah of the old covenant is the Jesus Christ of the new. He is the Lord and Sender of that Spirit which spoke through all the prophets; he is the Medium of all revelation, the Self-manifestation of God from eternity. It is Christ who binds all the ages into one, filling the past, the present, and the future. It is Christ who binds all worlds and beings into one, revealing and ruling for angels and men. It is Christ who is the Theme and the Inspiration of all prophets and all teachers. To him cherubim and seraphim turn with eager gaze. The goodly fellowship of prophets speak of him; of him speak the great company who publish the Word. Let us, too, yield to the attraction of the cross, which binds all things in heaven and earth in golden unity. Let us gaze on those wonders of Divine pity and righteousness and love which have given to heaven a new conception of God. Let us open our spirits to that Spirit of Christ whose dwelling in our hearts shall set us free from sin and death. Let us cleave to that message which, in the history of his incarnation, death, and royal glories, brings to our hearts the good news that sheds light over all the darkest places of our human experience, and endows us with full salvation.—A. M.

Ver. 13.—*The Christian's hope.* The grammatical structure of this verse marks out the principal command as being that to hope, while two subsidiary participial clauses give subordinate exhortations to girding up the loins of the mind, and to being sober, as accompaniments of and helps to this Christian hope. The true meaning of the injunction is given in the Revised Version, which substitutes "hope perfectly" for "hope to the end." Peter is not encouraging to persistence but to completeness in our hope. The characteristic which he would have all Christians cultivate refers, not to its duration, but to its degree. Such a perfect hope is the only one corresponding to the perfect object on which it is fixed—the grace that will be ours when Christ shall come. The more clearly that object is discerned, the more vigorous will be the joyous anticipation which grasps it. But such strength of hope will not come of itself. It needs effort and discipline, self-stimulating and self-restraint.

I. We have to consider THE PERFECT OBJECT OF CHRISTIAN HOPE. There are three striking ideas suggested by the remarkable language here. 1. *We have a very unusual designation for that object, namely, "grace."* Usually the future blessings are called "glory," and in common religious language, "grace" and "glory" are contrasted, as belonging to earth and heaven. Here clearly "grace" means the whole sum of the blessings to be bestowed in another life, and is equivalent to the "salvation ready to be revealed" spoken of in an earlier verse. The unusual expression teaches us that the glories of our ultimate exaltation in all their splendour are purely gratuitous and the product of the undeserved love and liberality of our God. The whole Christian career from first to last owes all it enjoys, possesses, or hopes to "grace." The substantial identity of the Christian character here and there is also implied. Glory is but grace perfected; grace is incipient glory. The gift is one here and there, only the measure varies. What is a spark now, almost smothered sometimes under green wood, flames out ruddy and triumphant then. 2. *That ultimate grace is on its way to us. It is "being brought," or, as Leighton puts it, "a-bringing."* The same word is used to describe the onward-moving rush of the mighty wind of Pentecost. It is as if some strong angel-choir had already begun their flight with this great gift in their hands, and were hastening with all the power of their majestic pinions to this small island in the deep. The light from fixed stars may take centuries to reach us, but is speeding through space all the while. So that "great far-off Divine event" is coming steadily nearer, as if some star, at first a point in the distance, should take motion towards us and at last pour all its splendour on our eyes. A solemn but invigorating thought, fitted to brighten hope and kindle desire that "now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." 3. *This approaching grace is wrapped up in the revelation of Jesus Christ.* We may render "at," as the Revised Version does, and yet give full force to the preposition in the original. The grace is included in the revelation of Jesus Christ, as a jewel in a case. The manifestation of Christ in his glory shall be the participation in that glory of all who love him. It overflows, as it were, into us, partly because the sight of him in his glory shall work transformation into his likeness, as a light falling on a mirror makes a brightness; but chiefly because he and we shall be so truly one in deep mystic union that all this is ours, and the glory which streams from him shall brighten us. All which he shows to a wondering world we shall share. This is the perfect object of Christian hope. How different from paltry, perishable earthly hopes! Why let this great faculty trail along the ground, when it might climb to heaven by the trelliswork of God's promises? Why limit it to days and years, when it might expand to lay hold on eternity? Let hearts and hopes mount to fix on Christ, and they shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.

II. THE PERFECT HOPE WHICH GRASPS THE PERFECT OBJECT. There is no doubt that "hope perfectly" is the injunction here. It is more needful to exhort to perfection in degree than to permanence in duration, which will follow naturally. Hope may exist in all degrees from a tremulous "perhaps" up to "I am sure." Usually it is less than certainty. "Hopes and fears that kindle hope" are "an unextinguishable hope. A look of doubt slumbers in her fair eyes. How can that be firm which is built on a quagmire?" But it is possible for a Christian to have this perfect hope. God's fixed and faithful Word gives us certainty of future. Nor need our own sin or weakness dash our confidence, for his promises are made to the sinful and weak. We have rock on which to build. Why should our hope cast its anchor on some floating island which may drift and melt away, when it may be fastened within the veil? It is a duty to hope perfectly, because only such hope corresponds to facts. Not to hope is unbelief. Some good people say "I hope" in such tremulous melancholy tones that it sounds like "I fear." Joyous confidence becomes those who have God to lean on. "I am persuaded," "we know," are the words with which Paul and John heralded their hopes; and we should be held to use the same. It is blessedness to hope perfectly. So we escape the alternations which, like the hot and the shivering fits of ague, rack others, and the bitterness of disappointment when some gleaming vision collapses, and, instead of the rainbow-hued bubble, we are left with a drop of dirty water. He who lives by earthly hopes is in danger of dying by earthly disappointments. A fulfilled hope is often a disappointed one. We may have a pillar of fire to guide us in all the darkness, which will glow brighter as we draw near the end. It is strength to hope perfectly. Hope is often

a trifler, robbing us of energy, making the present flat, and withdrawing us from working in order to dream. But Christian hope is an armed warrior, grave and calm, ready for conflict because assured of victory. It will be as wings to lift us above care and sorrows, and as cords to bind us to duty and toil.

III. THE SELF-DISCIPLINE WHICH KEEPS THE PERFECT HOPE. It has two parts—"girding up the loins," and "being sober." These two are somewhat difficult to distinguish. But the former enjoins determined effort, the bracing up of all one's powers, or, as we say, "pulling one's self together." Travellers, servants, soldiers, have to tighten their belts and confine loose robes. A slackly braced mind has not force enough to cherish a perfect hope. There are many difficulties in its way, and vigorous effort is needed to concentrate the mind and heart on the truth which warrants it. All Christian virtue needs determined effort. Earthly hopes will not be vigorous unless the intrusive present is shut out by resolute effort, and the attention kept fixed on the future. How can a strong Christian hope be preserved on easier terms? Again, for the completeness of Christian hope, rigid self control and repression are needed. "Be sober" means "keep a tight hand on all desires and tastes, especially on animal passions and appetites." There is no possibility of clear vision of the future if the mists that steam up from these undrained marshes hide it, nor can the soul whose desires turn earthwards go out in keen expectation to the more ethereal joys above. If the plant is allowed to throw out side shoots, it will not run high. Our hopes are regulated by our desires. We have a limited amount to expend, and if we bestow it on things of time and sense, we shall have none to spare for the unseen. If we pour the precious ointment on the heads of earthly loves, there will be none with which to anoint our true Lover and King. A great possibility is set before us weary sons of men, whose hearts have been so often torn by disappointment that we know not whether it is sadder to hope or to despair. We may have the future made as certain as the past, and be made conquerors over sorrow and the dread of to-morrow and the apathy which does not look forward, by a calm hope which knows that it will be fulfilled. We need not build on peradventures, but on "Verily, verily, I say unto you." Do not build on sand when you may build on rock, even on "Christ, who is our Hope"—and you will not be confounded.—A. M.

Vers. 14—16.—*Christians God-like men.* Probably we are not to see in the first words of these verses any reference to the filial relation which Christians bear to God, tempting as the view is which would make them parallel to Paul's exhortation, "Be ye imitators of God, as dear children." The literal rendering is, "children of obedience," which is plainly a Hebraism, and means simply "persons whose characteristic is obedience," like "sons of light," or "of earth," or "of thunder." Submission to the Divine will in the twofold form of resignation to its appointments and of obedience to its behests is the very life-element of the believing soul. This obedience is to express itself in the ordering of the outward life. There was a time when self-will shaped their lives. They moulded themselves according to their own desires, but all that must be at an end now. A new pattern is set before them. They are now to fashion themselves, not after the ideal framed by their own tastes or inclinations, but, as we might read the words, "according to the Holy One who hath called you." So we have here—

I. THE MOULD OR PATTERN FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. Can that infinitely perfect Divine nature be proposed as a pattern for men with any good results? Is imitation possible? Will not the snowy whiteness of the far-off peak dazzle rather than attract, and its steep height seem to counsel rest in the valleys below rather than the toilsome climb to the summit? How can human virtue in its highest form be analogous to the holiness of a Being who has no weakness, no passions, no temptations, no changes, no limitations? But love, gentleness, goodness, righteousness, must be so far identical in God and man that we know what they are in him by what they are in ourselves. A dewdrop is rounded by the same law which moulds a planet, and its tiny rainbow is the same as the arch which spans the heavens. Power, wisdom, cannot be limited, but righteousness may. To be like God morally is the sum of all religion. Worship presupposes that the character of the being worshipped is regarded with admiration and aspiration. The worshippers make their gods as embodiments of their ideals, and then the gods make the worshippers. "They that make them are like unto them" is the law for heathenism, and explains many strange perversions of conscience. In Christianity

the end of all the grand manifestations of Divine love and power is just this—to make men like God. What is all revelation for? Not, surely, that men may know about God, nor that they may feel devout emotion towards him. We know that we may feel, and we know and feel that we may *be* and love like God and do his will. A holy God-like character is the crown of all religion and the highest purpose of all revelation. That model is comprehensive, so as to include the whole round of conduct. “All manner of conversation” is included within its great sweep. And it is homely, so as to fit tight to and regulate the smallest duties. The commonest things may be done in imitation of the holy God. The plan of the poorest kitchen garden cannot be made without celestial observations. In our pettiest affairs we can bring the mightiest principles to bear. Indeed, the only way to make life great is to apply great principles to small duties; and every deed of the humblest career may be glorified by not only being done as unto God, but in being done like his own acts, of which love is the motive and righteousness the characteristic.

II. THE PROCESS OF COPYING THE PATTERN. The language of the text suggests very clearly these points. 1. *We ourselves are to be the artificers of our own holy characters.* God gives his grace, and implants his Spirit, which transforms; but all these Divine powers, how numerous and strong soever they may be, do not reach their end without our own strenuous effort. They are the tools put into our hands to fashion the fabric of a holy life; but we must use them, and put our strength into the use of them, or the fabric will not be built. God makes no man holy by magic, without the man's own hard work. 2. *The process is slow.* We fashion ourselves by repeated efforts and gradually build up a character like his. Emotion may be quickly excited, but making character is always slow work. It cannot be struck out at a blow as sovereigns are struck, but has to be patiently elaborated like some delicately chased golden cup. Actions often repeated make habits, and habits make character. It is formed slowly, as the sedimentary rocks are laid down at the bottom of the sea, by an unseen process lasting for long æons. More than “forty and six years is this temple in building.” 3. *It is accompanied by a painful destructive process.* The character already formed after another model has to be recast. Formerly they had been moulded according to their own “lusts.” Each man's own desires had shaped him. He did as he liked best. That is sin. That is human nature—not in absolute exclusion of sense of law and duty. Yet still, on the whole, self-will moulds men's lives. Negatively, then, the false tendency of pleasing self must be thwarted. The character already formed must be fought against and subdued. The old man has to be put off. The old metal has to be thrown into the melting-pot, and to be run into a new mould. And that cannot be done without self-denial and pain, to which the bodily tortures of crucifixion are compared by St. Paul. Tears and blood are shed with less pain than accompanies tearing off this worse self. It is like tearing the very skin from the quivering flesh. But, hard as it is, it has to be done, if we are ever to be holy as he is holy. 4. *The command is made blessed by the motive which enforces it.* “He has called us.” Then, if he has called us to holiness, we may be quite sure that we shall not aim at it in vain. The thought that we are working in the line of the Divine purposes, and obeying a Divine call, inspires a hope which mightily strengthens us for the task, and goes far to fulfil itself. God's commands are promises. If he has called us to be holy, certainly, if we try to obey him, we shall be so. He never summons to tasks which he does not give power to perform. He has called, and that makes it certain that he will perfect that which concerneth us. Therefore we may set ourselves with good heart to the glorious task of copying the Divine holiness, assured that to do so is not presumption, but simple obedience, and that, however slow may appear our progress upwards to the shining, snowy summit, it is verily his will that we shall one day stand there, and be satisfied, when we awake, in his likeness.—A. M.

Ver. 17.—*The Father and Judge.* The injunction here and the reason for it are equally strange. Both seem opposed no less to the confidence, hope, and joy which have been glowing in the former part of this chapter than to the general tone of the New Testament. “Live in habitual fear, for God is a strict Judge,” strikes a note which at first hearing sounds a discord. Is not Christianity the religion of perfect love which casts out fear? Is not its very promise that he who believes shall not come

into judgment? Is not its central revelation that of a Father who hath not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our transgressions? Yes; God be thanked that it is! We cannot too earnestly assert that, nor too jealously guard these truths from all tampering or weakening. But these solemn words are none the less true.

I. THE TWOFOLD REVELATION OF GOD AS FATHER AND JUDGE. If we adopt the translation, "call on him as Father," we shall catch here an echo of the Lord's Prayer, and recognize a testimony to its early and general use, independent and confirmatory of the Gospels. We need not dwell upon the thought that God is our Father. There is little fear of its being lost sight of in the Christian teaching of this day. But there is much danger of its being so held as to obscure the other relation here associated with it. Men have often been so penetrated with the conviction that God is Judge as to forget that he is Father. The danger now is that they should be so occupied with the thought that he is Father as to forget that he is Judge. What do we mean by "judgment"? We mean, first, an accurate knowledge and estimate of the moral quality of an action; next, a solemn approval or condemnation; and next, the pronouncing of sentence which entails punishment or reward. Now, can it be that he who loves righteousness and hates evil should ever fail to discern, to estimate, to condemn, and to chastise evil, whoever does it? The eternal necessity of his own great holiness, and not less of his own almighty love, binds him to this. Our text distinctly speaks of a present judgment. It is God who judgeth, not who *will* judge; and that judgment is of each man's work as a whole, not of his works, but of his work. There is a perpetual present judgment going on. God has an estimate of each man's course, solemnly approves or disapproves, and shapes his dealings with each accordingly. The very fact of this Fatherhood, so far from being inconsistent with this continual judgment, makes it the more certain. He is not so indifferent to his children as to let their deeds pass unnoticed, and, if need be, unchastised. "We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence." They would have deserved little of it while we were children, and would have almost deserved our malediction when we became men, if they had not. Our Father in heaven knows and loves us better than they. Therefore he judges from a loftier point of view. Standing higher, he looks deeper, and corrects for a nobler purpose—"that we should be partakers of his holiness." To the Christian God's judgments are a sign of his love. So we should rejoice in and long for them. Do we wish to be separated from our sin, to be drawn nearer to him? Then let us be glad that "the Lord will judge his people," and while in penitent consciousness of our sins we pray with the psalmist, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord!" let us also cry with him, "Judge me, O Lord; try my reins and my heart!" Abundance of Scripture teaching insists on the fact that there is a future judgment for Christians as for others. "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." True, "in the course of justice none of us should see salvation." But though we are saved, not according to works of righteousness which we have done, it is also true that our place in heaven, though not our entrance into heaven, is determined by the law of recompense, and that, in a very real sense, "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." A saved man's whole position will be affected by his past. His place will be in proportion to his Christian character, though not deserved nor won by it. Let us ponder, then, the solemn words, almost the last which come to us from the enthroned Christ, "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

II. THE FEAR WHICH CONSEQUENTLY IS AN ELEMENT IN THE CHILD'S LOVE. Perfect love casts out the fear which has torment, but it deepens a fear which is blessed. By fear we oftenest mean an apprehension of and a shrinking from dangers or evils, or a painful recoil from a person who may inflict them. Such fear is wholly inconsistent with the filial relation and the child's heart. But the fear of God, which the Old Testament so exalts, and which is here enjoined as a necessary part of Christian experience, is not dread. It has no trembling apprehension of evil disturbing its serenity. To fear God is not to be afraid of God. It is full of reverential awe and joy, and, so far from being inconsistent with love, is impossible without it, increases it and is increased by it. It is a reverent, awe-stricken prostration before the majesty of holy love. Its opposite is irreverence. It is, further, a lowly consciousness of the heinous-

ness of sin, and consequently a dread of offending that Divine holiness. He who thus fears, fears to sin more than anything else, and fears God so much that he fears nothing besides. The opposite of that is presumptuous self-confidence, like Peter's own earlier disposition, which led him into so many painful and humbling situations. "A wise man feareth and departeth from evil." The fear enjoined here is, primarily, then, a reverential regard to the holy Father who is our Judge, and, secondarily and consequently, a quick sensitiveness of conscience, which knows our own weakness, and, above all else, dreads falling into sin. Such sensitive scrupulousness may seem to be over-anxiety, but it is wisdom; and, though it brings some pains, it is blessedness. This is no world for unwary walking. There are too many enemies seeking admission to the citadel for it to be safe to dispense with rigid watchfulness at the gates. Our Father is our Judge, therefore let us fear to sin, and fear our own weakness. Our Judge is our Father, therefore let us not be afraid of him, but court his pure eyes and perfect judgment. Such fear which has in it no torment, and is the ally of love, is not the ultimate form of our emotions towards God. It is appropriate only to "the time of our sojourning here." The Christian soul in this world is as a foreigner in a strange land. Its true affinities are in heaven; and its present surroundings are ever seeking to make it "forget the imperial palace" which is its home. So constant vigilance is needed. But when we reach our own land we can dwell safely, having neither locks nor bars. The walls may be pulled down, and flower-gardens laid out where they stood. Here and now is the place for loins girt and lamps burning. There and then we can walk with flowing robes, for no stain will come on them from the golden pavements, and need not carefully tend a flickering light, for eternal day is there.—A. M.

Vers. 18, 19.—*The scope, means, and purpose of redemption.* The immediate connection of these words is with the solemn exhortation to habitual "fear"—a reverential awe of our Father-Judge, and a consequent dread of sin which disturbs our filial relation and incurs his judicial displeasure. The consciousness of the purpose and price of our redemption is here urged as a motive to such fear. Love and thankfulness, joy and confidence, are its fruits. But none the less certainly will the adequate sense of that great sacrifice in its costliness and its purpose lead to our passing the time of our sojourning here in fear. The gospel of redemption is not meant to produce carelessness, or a light estimate of the holiness of God or of the heinousness of sin, but to make conscience more sensitive, and to lead to anxious scrupulousness in avoiding all conduct which would be condemned by the judgment of God. The apostle appeals to that consciousness as familiar and certain. He presupposes the distinct and developed teaching of the sacrificial death of Christ, and of its redemptive efficacy, as well known and universally received. The tone of his reference establishes the existence of that teaching as the fundamental doctrine of the gospel in all the Churches to which his letter was addressed. And the use which he makes of that truth, as the great motive to practical holiness, is in accordance with all New Testament teaching, which ever regards Christ's sacrifice in its practical aspect as the foundation in us of all goodness. We have here three great aspects of redemption—what it is from; what it is by; what it is for.

I. WHAT WE ARE REDEEMED FROM. The original idea of "redemption" is, of course, purchase from slavery. Here we have no reference to what is prominent in other places of Scripture—the deliverance by Christ's blood from guilt and condemnation. That aspect of redemption is involved in more than one place in this Epistle, and underlies it all. It must first be experienced before we can be redeemed from the love and practice of evil. But the purpose which the apostle has here in view leads him to dwell on the other side of the complex idea of redemption—the deliverance from the bondage of sin, holding will and affections in thralldom. "Ye are redeemed," says he, "from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers." Now, that expression is a pregnant description of the whole course of godless life. "Conversation," we perhaps need not observe, is equivalent to "conduct." 1. The implication that all godless life is slavery lies in the very word "redemption." If we consider how sin masters a man, fetters his will, and binds him with iron chains of habit, which hold him in spite of conscience, and in mockery of resolutions and efforts, we can understand the deep truth in our Lord's paradoxical words, "He that committeth sin is the slave of sin." Do a wrong thing, and it is your master, as you will soon discover if you try to efface its

consequences and to break away from its dominion. But besides this implication that all sin is slavery, which lies in the idea of redemption, we have here, secondly, the thought that all sin is empty and profitless. 2. There is a whole world of meaning in that epithet "vain." It is the condensation into one little monosyllable of the experience of all the generations. All sin is empty. As one of the Hebrew words for it literally means, it is a missing of the mark. It is always a blunder—no man gets the good which he expected by his sin, or, if he does, he gets something else which spoils it. "It is as when a hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and is faint." Sin is vain, for it yields no results correspondent to the nature of man, and so does not satisfy him. It produces none corresponding to his obligations, and so in the eyes of God, or what is the same thing, in reality, a godless life is a wasted and barren life, however full of fruit it may appear. It produces none that abides. All are annihilated by the judgment of God, and survive only in remorse and pain. The devil always plays with loaded dice. A godless life is a vain life. "The man who lives it sows much and brings home little," and "the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow." 3. This vain life is the fatal gift from generation to generation. A twofold application of the fact that it is transmitted from father to son may be made. This godless course of life has no higher source and sanction than men's notions. It is a poor miserable account for a responsible being to give of his moral conduct and judgments to say, "My father did so and thought so before me." In that view this clause exposes the hollowness and weakness of the foundation on which many a godless life is unthinkingly and almost mechanically built. Or the apostle's purpose may rather be to signalize the strength of evil derived from that solemn fact of its transmission from parent to child. "Heredity" is a new word to express an old truth. A man's ancestors live again in him. Moral qualities descend as plainly as physical peculiarities. And besides the strain in the blood which affects the moral nature, example and habit tell in the same direction. Thus the evil becomes generic and wraps the whole race in its folds. Hence, too, the need for a new power acting from without if men are to be redeemed from it. There must be a new beginning from an untainted source if the bitter waters are to be healed. He who is to redeem the race must come from outside the race, and yet must work within it.

II. So we have here, **WHAT WE ARE REDEEMED BY.** The apostle employs his favourite epithet in speaking of the blood of Christ. It is "precious." What a profound sense of the worth of that wondrous sacrifice lies in that one simple word, more eloquent and full of feeling than a crowd of superlatives! Our Lord's death is evidently regarded here as sacrificial. The "lamb without blemish and without spot" distinctly refers to the requirement of the Mosaic Law in reference to the sacrifice. It is not merely the sinless purity of our Saviour's life, but that purity as fitting him to be the Sacrifice for the world's sin, which comes into view here. We cannot do justice to the thought unless we recognize the sacrificial character of Christ's death as the teaching of this passage. At the same time, we have to remember that redemption here is regarded as deliverance from the love and practice of evil rather than from its guilt and punishment. But while this is true, these two aspects of redemption are inseparable. Christ redeems us from the former by redeeming us from the latter. The sense of guilt and the fearful looking for of judgment bind men to sin, and the only way to wean them from it begins with the assurance of pardon and the removal of the burden of guilt. Unless we have a gospel of atonement to preach, we have no gospel of deliverance from the bondage of sin. Christ makes us free because he dies for us, and in one shedding of his blood at once annihilates guilt and brings pardon and destroys the dominion of sin. That death, too, is the one means for so influencing men's hearts that they shall no longer love evil, but delight to do his will, and by love and fellowship grow like their Lord. Sin's reign has its fortress in our will and affections, and Christ's death believed and trusted changes the set and current of these, casts out the usurper, and enthrones Jesus as our rightful Lord. Again, Christ's death procures for us the Divine Spirit who dwells in our hearts, and by his presence "makes us free from the law of sin and death." So by setting us in new relations to the Divine Law, by taking away the sense of guilt, by bringing to bear a new motive, by procuring a Spirit to give a new life, the sacrificial death of the sinless Christ redeems us from the power of sin.

III. WHAT WE ARE REDEEMED FOR. The text is a motive urged by the apostle to enforce his previous exhortation: "Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." The consciousness of our redemption and the fact of our redemption should lead, not to easy confidence or indifference, but to reverential awe and dread of "receiving the grace of God in vain." The more clearly the purpose of our redemption to be our complete emancipation from all sin be seen, and the more profoundly we value the tremendous price at which God has thought it worth while to buy us back for his own, the more we shall dread every sin. Surely no motive can so powerfully commend the solemn comprehensive command, "Be ye holy as I am holy," or so strongly impel to that wholesome fear without which it can never be obeyed, as the contemplation of the precious blood shed for our sakes. That awful sacrifice is in vain so far as we are concerned, the blood of Jesus has poured out for nought, unless it has not only availed to still our fears and bring us pardon, but also to "cleanse us from all sin," and make us love and do righteousness. We are redeemed from sin by the blood of Christ, that we may be the lambs of his flock without blemish and without spot, like the Shepherd-Lamb.—A. M.

Ver. 8.—*Faith, love, and joy.* Peter had seen Jesus constantly during the course of his ministry, had known him intimately, and had loved him well. But most of those to whom he wrote this Epistle had not been brought into such association with the Son of man. The apostle's aim in communicating with such professed Christians as those to whom he addressed his letter was to encourage and stimulate their spiritual life. It was his privilege to bear the testimony which it was their privilege to receive and to act upon. They were in a position to experience and enjoy the blessing pronounced upon those who, "not having seen, yet believe."

I. IT IS DISTINCTIVE OF THE CHRISTIAN THAT HE HAS FAITH IN THE UNSEEN SAVIOUR. This faith has a human side—it is prompted and justified by the witness of those who beheld Christ's glory, and who wrote the things which they had seen and heard in order that others might, by their evidence, be led to believe on Jesus. This faith has a Divine side; for Christ is his own witness to the heart, which finds in him the realization of its loftiest and its purest aspirations. It is the Divine provision and appointment that the life of the Christian should be a life of faith. And this is a wise and merciful arrangement, evidently calling forth the best feelings of our nature, supplying us with the highest motive and aim to a new and better life, and calling us away from absorbing interest in self and in earth.

II. THE CHRISTIAN'S FAITH IN CHRIST PRODUCES LOVE TOWARDS CHRIST. Faith in an unseen Being seems more natural than love towards him. The earthly friends whom we love we have seen and known; Christ we have not listened to or looked upon. Yet what surpassing and all-sufficient motives we have to love him! 1. Because he first loved us. 2. Because of our gratitude for his interest in us and his willing sacrifice on our behalf. 3. Because we admire his peerless character, his blameless and benevolent life. 4. Because our fellowship with him develops sympathy and congeniality.

III. JOY IS THE PROPER RESULT OF THE CHRISTIAN'S FAITH AND LOVE. This assertion doubtless appears to some minds enthusiastic and ridiculous. Yet it is a reasonable assertion in itself, and it is justified by Christian experience. 1. This joy is altogether different from the pleasures sought and prized by the unspiritual and worldly. These rejoice in the gratification of sense, in the excitement attending the quest of pleasure, in the attainment of favourite objects of desire. But Christians rejoice in quite other delights. 2. This joy is awakened by the Spirit of God in the heart. It is a fountain springing up within, when the rock is smitten by Divine grace and power. For this cause it is largely independent of circumstances. 3. This joy is characterized as unutterable, because it is deep and calm, and not by any means noisy and demonstrative. Its infinite side—that towards eternity and heaven and God—is inexpressible in human language. 4. This joy is "full of glory," or glorified, both because of the transcendent character of the Christian's pure delights even in the present, and because of his justifiable anticipations of future and imperishable bliss.

Oh that Christian people could appreciate their privileges, shake off the melancholy characteristic of the age in which we live, and enter into the possession of this primeval joy!—J. R. T.

Vers. 10—12.—*Salvation a matter of universal interest.* Christ is given in order to awaken faith, and faith is exercised with a view to the possession of salvation. This being so, it must be impossible to over-estimate the importance of a blessing to secure which is the purpose of this great and Divine economy. In these verses the interest in salvation is represented as extending through the past ages of time and through the whole universe of God.

I. SALVATION WAS MATTER OF PROPHETIC STUDY. The prophets were not so occupied with the repetition and enforcement of the Law which had been given by Moses as to be uninterested in a future dispensation. The grace that was to come engaged their thoughts. The Spirit of Christ led them to anticipate the sufferings and the glory of the Messiah. The very time of the coming dispensation and age, was of the deepest interest to these inspired men, who looked forward to the further manifestation of the purposes of God.

II. SALVATION WAS MATTER OF APOSTOLIC REPORT. What the prophets had looked forward to, the apostles looked back upon. Peter and his colleagues had a gospel—good tidings to proclaim. To benevolent minds no employment could be more congenial than to convey, upon Divine authority, declarations of God's favour, promises of Divine mercy, to the sinful and pitiable sons of men.

III. SALVATION IS MATTER OF ANGELIC INQUIRY. The present is not the only passage in which it is intimated that the unfallen intelligences who, not having sinned, need for themselves no salvation, are nevertheless students of the Divine plan for the recovery of sinful men. It is through the Church that principalities and powers learn additional lessons concerning the wisdom and the love of God.

IV. SALVATION IS FOR THE APPROPRIATION AND REJOICING OF INDIVIDUAL BELIEVERS. The grace, says the apostle, comes *unto you*; *unto us* these things were ministered. It is instructive to know how prophets, apostles, and angels have been affected by the gospel of God's grace. Yet that gospel is for the hearers of the Word—for men of every rank and every character. And surely it deserves and demands that those who may most benefit by it should give it their most reverent and grateful attention. If the gifted and the holy find a sacred joy in pondering the provisions of God's love and mercy, how urgently does it become the sinful and the helpless to give heed to tidings which offer to them a gracious pardon, a spiritual cleansing, and a deathless life!—J. R. T.

Ver. 11.—*Sufferings and glory.* Peter did, indeed, in the course of his Master's ministry, see something of Christ's proper and Divine glory. He was with him on the Mount of Transfiguration, and bore testimony to what he there saw and heard of the majesty of the Son of man. But Peter had disapproved of Christ's humiliation and sufferings. When Jesus foretold the ignominy and woe that were awaiting him, he exclaimed, "That be far from thee!" And when the hour of suffering came, Peter drew his sword to defend his Master. Yet, immediately after the Lord's ascension, Peter, enlightened by the Spirit, proceeded to preach that Christ's sufferings were a fulfilment of Old Testament predictions, and a condition of the participation by mankind in spiritual blessings. And in this Epistle he taught that the sufferings of Christ and the glory alike were necessary parts of the Divine plan of redemption.

L THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST. It was involved in Christ's taking our nature that he should suffer; as Son of man he accepted the human lot. But there were pains and griefs peculiar to himself; he was the "Man of sorrows." 1. His *mental* sufferings. These were many and sore, and only partially comprehensible by us. They arose from the contact of the Holy One with sin and sinners; the misunderstanding of his character and mission even by his own beloved and trained disciples; his rejection by his countrymen, who should have been foremost in welcoming him. They arose from the unique burden which he bore for us, the unique sacrifice which with tears and blood he presented as our High Priest. 2. His *bodily* sufferings. Jesus shared throughout his humiliation the sinless infirmities of those whose lot he accepted with the view of securing their salvation. But the reference in this and similar passages is unquestionably to those pathetic and awful experiences which our Saviour deigned to undergo during the last hours of his life; when his form was bruised and pierced, when his blood was shed for us. 3. The *moral aspects* of Christ's sufferings. He endured them, in expression and proof of his obedience to the Father; in the maintenance of his hostile attitude towards

sin; in compassion to the human race he came to save; in achieving the redemption which it was his aim and mission to effect. The humiliation, the cross of our Saviour, were endured for the highest purpose; they give no countenance to the ascetic notion that pain is in itself a good; but they show us how it may be the means, under the moral government of God, of good of the very highest order.

II. THE GLORY OF CHRIST FOLLOWING UPON HIS SUFFERINGS. 1. This glory was partly personal to our Lord himself. So viewed, the reference is to his resurrection and ascension. The glory which he had before the world was, by the events which swiftly followed the Crucifixion was enhanced. 2. Glory accrued to Jesus in the establishment of his Church. The Holy Spirit descended, and the signs which accompanied the Word were the incidents of a triumphal progress. The Conqueror, the King, appeared, and a kingdom was set up excelling in majesty and splendour all the powers of the world, and even the empire itself. 3. The world itself became the scene of the Saviour's glory. A new moral principle was introduced into our humanity; it was seen that weakness and suffering might lead to moral dominion. The very conception of glory itself was glorified through the cross. Spiritual glory was shown to excel all beside.

III. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS AND GLORY. 1. It was a connection predicted in Old Testament Scripture, e.g. in passages in Isaiah and in Daniel. 2. It was a connection foreseen and expected by Christ himself. It is noticeable that, in announcing beforehand the events about to happen to himself, Jesus associated his crucifixion and resurrection as parts of one purposed whole. 3. Though the sufferings and the glory were in striking contrast, the former were the means to which the latter was the end. The one made the other possible, and indeed brought it about. The crown of thorns blossomed into a crown of empire and of majesty —J. R. T.

Ver. 13.—*Practical Christianity.* The apostle has been speaking of the loftiest and most celestial themes—of faith, love, and joy; of revelation and salvation: of prophets and angels; of Christ and of God himself. But he would not have his readers lost in thoughts so sublime; he recalls their attention to the plain and practical duties of this earthly life. He shows that every true Christian is called to be—

I. SOBER AS TO LIFE'S PLEASURES. As a reasonable man and a wise teacher, he does not take the attitude of the ascetic. He does not say, "Denounce pleasures! despise pleasures! abstain from and abjure pleasures!" but "Be sober!" Not only in food and drink, but in the various enjoyments and pursuits of life, it behoves the follower of Jesus to practise moderation, self-restraint, and prudence. He should not lie down, stretching himself by the stream, and taking his fill of the waters of enjoyment; he should be satisfied to quaff the refreshing draught as from the hollow of his hand.

II. DILIGENT AS TO LIFE'S DUTIES. Flowing garments are all very well for times of ease and festivity; but they must be girded when a journey is to be undertaken, when a work is to be performed, when a warfare is to be waged. If this precaution be not taken, the raiment may be trodden upon, soiled, and torn, and the wearer may stumble and be hindered. So the Christian is bidden to look upon his life as something serious and earnest. He must gird up the loins of his mind, and set about the business to which his Lord has called him. What his hand findeth to do, he is required to do with his might.

III. HOPEFUL AS TO LIFE'S AIM. Peter has been called the apostle of hope, so great is the stress he lays upon this Christian virtue. 1. The *object* of hope is grace, i.e. a free gift of God. He who comes for streams of refreshment and blessing brings with him nothing but his thirst. 2. The *occasion* of the satisfaction and fulfilment of this hope. This is the expected and promised revelation of Jesus Christ. 3. The *quality* of this hope. The expression is a remarkable one, "Set your hope *perfectly*." The hope recommended is sure, enduring, joyful, purifying. And as the hope is well grounded, it may fairly be expected to possess this quality, and to exercise accordingly an elevating and purifying power. Such a hope lends cheerfulness to toil.

Work without hope draws water in a sieve,
And hope without an object cannot live."

J. R. T.

Ver. 17.—*Christian fear.* Fear is an emotion which is much misunderstood and misrepresented. It is sometimes denounced as something radically and necessarily bad. But this is not the case; all depends upon what is feared, for this determines whether the emotion is justifiable and capable of tending to some good result.

I. THE CHARACTER OF CHRISTIAN FEAR. 1. It is quite different from the fear of the unbelieving and irreligious. Such persons fear to lose their worldly possessions, and to lose life itself. They may have a certain fear of God, for even the devils believe and tremble. 2. It is inculcated in Scripture. Not only does the Old Testament bid us "serve the Lord with fear," "fear God, and keep his commandments;" the New Testament records Christ's admonition, "Fear him who is able to destroy," and the apostolic injunction to "perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord," and, "Be not high-minded, but fear." 3. The grounds for the Christian's fear are evident. He fears lest he should yield to temptation, lest he should be defeated by his spiritual adversary. He fears God, not with the abject terror of the slave, but with the reverence and awe due to the All-holy, the infinitely Just. 4. Fear is not the all-absorbing emotion in the Christian's breast. Its presence is not incompatible with love and hope and a measure of joy. Fear mingles as an element in Christian experience.

II. THE MOTIVES TO CHRISTIAN FEAR. 1. Our state as one of sojourning and pilgrimage. We are not yet "at home;" we are in the wilderness. The season of desert-wandering is appointed by Divine wisdom; yet it is a probation not to be avoided. How can we do other than fear, when we think of our weakness, and of the might of our foe? Indeed, had we not the assurance of our Captain's spiritual presence and aid, fear might well become the predominant emotion in our mental life. 2. The anticipation of judgment will not suffer fear to be quelled. Is our "work" fit for the Master's inspection? However our fellow-men may regard us, we know that we must appear before him who is "no respecter of persons," and who will estimate us and our service with justice and impartiality. That we may not fear *then* it is well for us to fear *now*. 3. The recognition of God's Fatherhood gives the true character to the Christian's fear. This is a paradox. Men would say, "If God be a Father, and not merely a Judge, then he need not be feared." This is not the apostle's view. On the contrary, the holy fear which becomes us is made gracious and purifying by our knowledge that a Father's eye is upon us, that a Father's heart ceases not to cherish us.—J. R. T.

Ver. 21.—*The Divine means to faith and hope.* In admonishing his readers to holiness and obedience, Peter supported his injunctions by appeals to the highest motives. He placed his reliance upon especially Christian principles. He brought before the minds of his brethren the preciousness and the power of the Saviour's resurrection.

I. MAN'S NEED OF FAITH AND HOPE IS IMPLIED. If man have a higher than a merely animal life, he requires higher principles by which the higher life may be sustained. He must be related to the unseen in the present and in the future. Faith must have an object, and hope a ground and aim. If we were without these we should be left sinful, ignorant, and helpless; without a Divine law for life, without a Divine assurance of pardon, without a Divine prospect of immortality. The unseen present and the eternal future being alike unknown, self-indulgence or brutal apathy would take the place of a spiritual life. But in fact we have a nature capable of infinite aspiration, and the Creator has not set us narrow limits or appointed for us inevitable poverty of spirit.

II. GOD'S RAISING OF CHRIST FROM THE DEAD IS DECLARED. There is in this statement of Peter, that God raised his Son from the dead, nothing opposed to Christ's declaration, "I take it [*i.e.* 'my life'] again;" and nothing inconsistent with the assertion that Christ was "quickened by the Spirit." The New Testament is one continuous witness to our Lord's resurrection. The Gospels circumstantially record it; the Book of the Acts represents it as the chief theme of apostolic preaching; the Epistles base upon it the whole of Christian doctrine and life. If Christ was not raised, the New Testament is full of misstatements, our Lord's own predictions were unfulfilled, the apostles' witness was deceptive, the Lord's day and Easter-tide had no historical origin, and Christianity itself remains unaccounted for. Further, God, who raised Jesus from the dead, gave him glory. It was in obedience to the Father that

Christ endured pain, humiliation, and death. But it was also by the will of the Father that Christ partook of glory. This glory was partly external and palpable, yet chiefly spiritual.

III. THE MEANS OF FAITH AND HOPE ARE BY THIS RISEN SAVIOUR THUS ASSURED TO MEN. It is not asserted that, before and apart from Christianity, faith and hope were unknown on earth; but that Christianity imparts to humanity a firmer confidence in God and a livelier anticipation of heaven. 1. More especially, a risen Christ encourages and justifies *faith* in a personal God, a righteous Ruler, a gracious and forgiving Father. They who believe that God raised Jesus from the dead have faith in the supreme Lord as interested in us, as caring for us, as sending and commissioning his own Son to make himself known and to bring himself near to us. They have faith in the just moral government of the world, and they do not doubt this even when they see the good oppressed and in some cases persecuted and slain. They have faith in the fatherly affection of the Eternal, and are assured that "all things are theirs." 2. A risen Christ awakens and sustains *hope*. For themselves, Christians have hope of individual salvation; for the world, they have hope of the victory of the good; for the Church, of final, reciprocal, and immortal communion.—J. R. T.

Ver. 2.—*The elect of God*. This is no mere Jewish title, for there are passages in the Epistle which forbid the idea that it was addressed exclusively to Jews (ch. i. 18; ii. 10; iv. 3, 4). It is the title of the universal Church and the individual believer. The verse is a summary of the most important and difficult points of Christian doctrine; hardly a word in it but is inexhaustible.

I. THE FACT OF DIVINE ELECTION STATED. Perhaps no greater mystery in Scripture, and none more perverted; but if it is revealed from heaven we need not be afraid of it; if it comes from God who would draw all men unto him, only by misunderstanding it can it repel them from him; if it be in this book, we cannot withhold it from ourselves without spiritual loss. *What is the Divine election?* It is used in Scripture in different connections—of election to an office (John xv. 16); of election to certain privileges, as the Jews (Ps. cxxxv. 4); but in a large class of passages it clearly refers to the blessings of salvation (Rom. viii. 28—30; Eph. i. 4, 5, 11; 2 Thess ii. 13; 2 Tim. i. 9; ch. i. 2). This is not election of a community, for it refers to matters necessarily personal; e.g. "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed;" "All that the Father giveth me must come to me, and him that," etc.; "sanctification of the Spirit;" "belief of the truth;" "sprinkling of the blood;" "conformed to his Son." It must be the Divine election of individuals to eternal salvation. There are certain serious prejudices to this doctrine—such as *that it is opposed to the goodness and justice of God*. But that prejudice is unwarranted if the doctrine be really here, for God cannot break the bounds of his nature, and these must harmonize in some way, though as yet we see not how. At the same time, notice that it is election to salvation, not to perdition; we are saved by the sovereign grace of God, we are lost because of our own sin ("Come, ye blessed of my Father!" but it is only, "Depart, ye cursed!"). Why does not grace save all? All we know is that it does not, and that "the Lord is righteous in all his ways," and what we know not now we shall know. "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee." Another prejudice: *It seems opposed to the freedom and responsibility of man*. Certainly man is free; he is commanded to repent and believe, and held responsible for not obeying, and is reasoned and pleaded with by God; and "How often would I, but ye would not!" We cannot harmonize that with election, yet they may both be true. If we make an objection in this to seeking salvation, it is not as we act in other matters; we know that our recovery from sickness is amongst what God has determined, yet we use means for recovery, and are hopeless otherwise; so, as though there were no foreordination to eternal life, we are responsible for employing the means to secure it. If we are lost, it will not be because of foreordination, but because in our freedom we failed to use the necessary means. Another prejudice is *that the doctrine seems opposed to the universal offer of salvation*. Salvation is offered to all; "God willeth not the death of a sinner;" all are commanded to believe, and are condemned for not believing. Then election is not out of harmony with that, and closes the door to the salvation of none. We may not see the harmony, but God's secret purposes cannot contradict his declared purposes.

II. CERTAIN PARTICULARS RESPECTING THIS DIVINE ELECTION. Father, Son, and Spirit—the whole Godhead, so to speak, combine to the redemption of a single soul. 1. *The source of election*: “*The foreknowledge of God the Father.*” The word “to know” in Scripture is often used for “to know with favour” (Matt. vii. 23; Rom. xi. 2; viii. 29). God knows, foreknows all, so that the idea of foreknowledge with favour is involved in the expression in these passages. So here; the same word as is translated “foreordained” in ver. 20—the foreknowledge of purpose, favour, as in Eph. i. 5, 9, 11. Our salvation is entirely on a Divine basis; we are not elect because of anything in ourselves; we choose him because he first chose us (Eph. i. 4). 2. *The working out of election*: “*The sanctification of the Spirit.*” Sanctification in the sense of separation, something that comes before “the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ;” separation to God, equivalent to the new birth; for only thus are we called out from the world, from its joys, and sorrows, and principles, and attitude towards God. This is the seal of election—the elect are the separated; the Spirit separates for God those whom God chooses for himself. And this separation is carried on to faith and every Christian grace, and final perfection in heaven. 3. *The end of election*: “*Obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.*” “Obedience” here can hardly mean “submission to law;” it probably stands for the full expression, “the obedience of faith,” as in Rom. i. 8 (comp. with xvi. 19; x. 16; 2 Thess. i. 8; ch. iv. 17). The passage, then, is a striking parallel to 2 Thess. ii. 13. The end of election is faith, and the consequent application of the atoning blood. Because of what the sprinkling of that blood does for us: justifies (Rom. iii. 9); cleanses (1 John i. 7); seals to us the blessings of the covenant (1 Cor. xi. 25); heaven (Heb. x. 19).

III. THE BENEFITS OF THE DIVINE ELECTION. “Grace and peace multiplied.” The fact of election can only be stated because there is untold good in it. It is essentially the believer’s doctrine. For such it is full of encouragement and support. 1. *It assures us of the certainty of multiplied grace.* If God chose us to all the blessings of perfect salvation, it is certain we shall have them. Nothing can be more sure than God’s eternal purpose. 2. *And this assurance produces perfect peace.* None can be afraid who have (in the separation of the Spirit) the seal that they are divinely elected to grace multiplied without end.—C. N.

Vers. 3—5.—*The key-note of the Epistle—the believer’s hope.* The “sojourners of the dispersion” were now entering on a season of severe trial; one purpose of the apostle, therefore, was to send them encouragement and support; and the purport of these chapters may be summed up in the word “hope.” Paul was pre-eminently the apostle of faith; John, of love; Peter, of hope. This passage has additional interest as written by the Peter of the Gospels. He was one of those who had “thought the kingdom of God should immediately appear,” and a party to the question, “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom unto Israel?” In those early days they were captivated by the thought of an earthly heritage. How different now! Here his eye is fixed on the “inheritance reserved in heaven.” We remember, too, that we here listen to him who, on that never-to-be-forgotten morning, whilst it was yet early, came breathless to the sepulchre, and looking in, saw the linen clothes, etc., and was assured that the place was empty, and how the sudden conviction of the Resurrection flashed on his mind with all the wonderful hope this would impart to the troubled heart of the Lord’s denier. What he says here is what his whole consecrated, joyous life had been saying ever since that day and because of it: “Blessed be the God,” etc.

I. THE CHRISTIAN’S HOPE. “The lively hope . . . of an inheritance.” 1. *It is that of the inheritance of sonship.* “God hath begotten us” unto it; that is, God hath made us children a second time—by regeneration. “And if children, then heirs;” the inheritance is ours because we are God’s sons. That brings its glory before us prominently. Fatherhood does its very best for the children (“Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children”—we’ll do the work, if they see the glory). Apply that to the heavenly Father and the heritage he prepares for us. Prepares. “I go to prepare a place for you;” that will be God’s best! What must that be which is proportionate to his resources and love? 2. *This inheritance is permanent.* “Incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away” (three almost synonymous words, characteristic of Peter’s energy). They all include the idea of permanence, but they

treat it in different aspects. "Incorruptible;" that is, spiritual, not material. The blessedness of that state will not depend on anything that can decay. The blessedness of heaven will be in the development of our spiritual nature. "Undeified;" that is, untainted, unblemished. Here our spiritual blessings have some taint; there will be activity without weariness, love without coldness, hope without fear, purity without doubt, songs without sighs, light without shade. "That fadeth not away;" that is, all this to be everlasting; the beauties of that state will never diminish, its tasks never be monotonous, nor its tastes insipid, nor its fellowship ended.

"There the eye grows never dim,
Gazing on that mighty sun."

3. *This inheritance is certain.* "Reserved in heaven for you who are kept" for it. It is kept where waste or diminution cannot be known, and we are kept for its enjoyment. No earthly heritage is sure, but this is. "Reserved in heaven for you." Then that is safe. "You who are kept by the power of God for it." Then you are safe; the child of God is as sure of heaven as if he were there. We should be surprised if it were not so; for "as for God, his way is perfect." The word "kept" literally means "garrisoned." There is a picture in the word: "The angel of the Lord encampeth," etc. Garrisoned by the power of God, not by his weakness. Left to ourselves, we should lose it; but we cannot lose it thus. 4. *This inheritance is the object of lively hope to God's children.* Equivalent to "life-giving." This hope is life. What can animate us to fight like the assurance of victory? what make us steadfast in pilgrimage like the certainty of reaching the goal? what destroy the fascination of the present like the conscious possession of better things? what solace us in grief like the knowledge that we are on the way to the eternal home of tearless eyes? This hope brings with it a new being.

II. THIS HOPE IS JUSTIFIED BY THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD. 1. *Christ's resurrection is the proof of immortality.* Man asks, "If a man die, shall he live again?" The natural heart thinks so, but cannot prove it. The Old Testament rather dimly hints it. Christ's resurrection is the assurance of it. He died—his enemies admitted that; he lay for three days in the grave; but then he rose, and that with undiminished powers and unchanged affection. The risen Saviour was the proof that death was but like the plunging of the swimmer into the wave, from which he emerges on the other side essentially unchanged. 2. *Christ's resurrection is, further, the assurance of the believer's justification.* It settled the question with his foes as to who he was. He said he was the Son of God; they said he made himself equal with God, and they asked for some sign by which they could know it, and he replied that they should have the sign of the Prophet Jonas. He was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead. The Resurrection was the Divine endorsement of the claims of Jesus, another voice from heaven: "This is my beloved Son; hear him!" Thus Christ's teaching was endorsed (John iii. 16), and the sufficiency of his atoning work. "God raised him from the dead and gave him glory, that our faith and hope might be in him." 3. *And Christ's resurrection is the pledge of the believer's preservation.* For he has risen into the inheritance, and that as our Representative. Before he rose he said, "Because I live ye shall live also;" "Where I am there shall also," etc.; "Father, I will that they whom," etc. But not only so. What is he doing there? He is there still as Saviour, to keep by his intercession those for whom by his cross he atoned. "Who is he that condemneth? It is," etc.; "Wherefore he is able to save to," etc. How surely, then, we are "begotten to lively hope by the resurrection," etc.!

III. THE CERTAINTY OF THIS HOPE CONSTRAINS THE CHRISTIAN TO BLESS GOD. As the apostle thinks of all this, he exclaims with fervour, "Blessed be the God," etc. 1. *The note of joy is here.* Grasp the hope revealed in the resurrection of Christ, and life loses its gloom, and songs rise in the desert. 2. *And this is also consecration.* For to bless God is to glorify him. When we realize what thus he gives to us, we shall already begin the heavenly life where from love and gratitude they praise him night and day.—C. N.

Vers. 6—9.—*The saints' joy notwithstanding heaviness.* In the previous verses the apostle describes the state of salvation; he then says here, "Wherein," etc. So the

experience recorded here is the possible experience of the believer. Comp. ver. 5, "Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time," with ver. 9, "Receiving [now] the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls;" i.e. salvation is not a future matter only. We can receive the end of our faith now; heaven is only fully revealed hereafter, but it is already possessed. And here the apostle tells them how. Heaviness may minister to it; out of heaviness may grow such joys as shall be the salvation which is the goal of their hopes. Heaviness—joy—salvation; that's the order here. Sometimes when the sun is setting behind the hills, making the peaks glow like burnished gold, the beauty is repeated on the peaks opposite, eastern and western both aglow; but the valleys between are already in twilight or darkened with mist. That is an emblem of many a Christian life; the beginning and the end are radiant, but the years between are filled with shadows. Now, that need not be. The Light of the world is a sun which no more goes down, and when he has risen on our hearts henceforth east and west horizons, the summits of our history, but no less the broad plain, and every little glen and lowly place that comes between, may lie in the soft full glow of perpetual noon. The hindrance to this, we say, is the "heaviness through manifold trials," which will come; but, says Peter, there is a secret by which out of these may grow "joy unspeakable and full of glory." Not only notwithstanding these, but because of these, the believer's life may be a continuous chastened joy; and to have that is to anticipate heaven.

I. THE SAINTS' HEAVINESS THROUGH MANFOLD TRIALS. The trials must be; they are part of the necessary discipline of sonship. If "man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward," more still is the new man. But for our help, then, consider: 1. *The necessity for the heaviness.* "If need be." Only "if need be;" that is assured by the paternal love of God. It is a witness to his love that, when trial cannot be avoided consistent with our good, he is willing to bear the pain of inflicting it. It does not follow that we can see the "need be;" it may be the needs be of preparation for some exceptional blessedness rather than that of chastisement. Perhaps the "need be" is implied in the text: "Ye are kept . . . through faith unto salvation;" but "ye are in heaviness . . . that the trial of your faith might be found," etc., equivalent to "we are kept in the state of salvation only through faith, and affliction is one of the means by which alone faith is maintained." The love of God, however, assures us that there is a needs be for the affliction which would satisfy even us could we see it. 2. *The manner of the heaviness.* "Manifold trials," and these like the "fire" of the refiner. God's trials are not all of one pattern, but are "afflictions sorted, anguish of all sizes." Loneliness, weakness, a nervous temperament, discordance in the home, responsibility, or duty, may be as real a trial to us, though no one detects it, as the more manifest sorrows of others. Does it burn?—that's the question; is it to the soul what fire is to the body—deep, searching, consuming pain? If so, it is the "heaviness" of the text, and may issue in joy unspeakable. And if it be fire, we know who presides at the crucible, who regulates the heat, and blows aside the blue flame to see if the dross be gone, and waits to see his face mirrored in the clear liquid metal. "He shall sit as a refiner," etc. 3. *The duration of the heaviness.* "Now for a season." Only "for a season." If a continuous line from here to the sun, and beyond the sun as far again, and beyond that as far again, represent only a part of our immortal history, the season of suffering would be represented by the smallest point you can make on that line. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is not worthy," etc. Presently we shall say—

"Now the crucible is breaking,
Faith its perfect seal is taking.
Like the gold in furnace tried.
Through the test of sharp distresses,
Those whom Heaven most richly blesses
For its joys are purified.

"Sighs and tears at last are over.
Breaking through its fleshly cover,
Soars the soul to light away.
Who while here below can measure
That deep sea of heavenly pleasure,
Spreading there so bright for aye?"

II. THE SAINTS' JOY GROWING OUT OF THIS HEAVINESS. Sorrow and joy at the same time! The believer ought to be "always rejoicing," and that is a puzzle to many. But there is great difference between *always* rejoicing and *only* rejoicing. The idea that the believer ought only to rejoice is as foolish as it is false. But it is possible always to rejoice—"as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." Here we have some of the grounds of this joy. They concern faith, hope, love. 1. *Heaviness is said to be the proving of our faith.* "Trial," equivalent to "trying, testing, proving." Is it not? Is it not just in darkness that our faith is tested? That gives a new aspect to heaviness. Heaviness is the time when we show what we are. Then we are being watched. Heaven and earth are gathered around us then, God and Satan looking on, and the Divine honour and joy are at stake. What a solemn, sublime moment that! 2. It is also said to be *the enlargement of our hope.* "That the trial of your faith might be found," etc. That carries our thought forward. Our present life is often unbearable because we live as though it were all. In almost every other department we are cheered on through difficulty by hope. So in this. See what the angel of hope did for Paul on the wrecking ship, when all hope that they should be saved had been taken away: "Be of good cheer, fear not, thou must be brought before Cæsar." Hope ever points to the blessed end, and whispers, "Be of good cheer." Moreover, the heaviness is going to minister to our enrichment *then*. We shall not only escape the storm, but be stronger because of it. 3. *Heaviness is said to be the quickener of our love.* "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though," etc. A kind of tender pity in the words, as though Peter said, "Oh that you had but seen him, and how you would have loved him!" The sentence is equivalent to "love to Christ imparts to heaviness an unspeakable joy." Does it not? This for the Lord's sake. By this, too, I get nearer to the Lord!

III. THE SAINTS' SALVATION IN THIS JOY. "Ye rejoice with joy . . . receiving the," etc. 1. *Salvation is a mystery to be revealed in heaven.* He has said that. "Salvation ready to be revealed at the last time." However much is revealed of it here, "eye hath not seen, nor ear," etc. 2. But *the unfolding of this mystery begins in Divine joys on earth.* It is possible to anticipate heaven, to receive now the salvation of our souls, and heaviness may be the means to this. Then blessed heaviness! the storm may bring us to the very shore of eternal bliss, and though as yet we cannot land, its sacred chimes may be our music even now.—C. N.

Vers. 10—12.—*The certainty and greatness of Divine salvation.* The tone of the whole letter shows that its readers were entering on a season of severe trial (vers. 6, 7; ch. ii. 19—23; iii. 13—18; iv. 12—14; v. 10), and one object of the writer was to sustain and encourage them. Now, what is his method? what is the Divine way of consolation? How well should we be able to minister to the tried if we knew how God would minister to them! His method is to bring before them the wonderful blessings of that salvation of which, in Christ, they partake. That is what we have here. As we read from the third verse, we seem to hear the apostle saying the blessings of salvation are the true solace for the distressed believer. He begins with an outburst of praise for their great hope; but he goes on to say their joy is not in the future only; then comes this paragraph on the substance of their salvation in Christ.

I. SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST THE SUBJECT OF OLD TESTAMENT PREPARATION. The work of the prophets was not so much for their own day and dispensation as for this; they knew there was a deeper meaning in what they were impelled to say than they were conscious of intending; it was clear to them that they, centuries beforehand, were really working for New Testament times. That is, Christianity is no modern invention; it is not a step in the upward movement of the race dating back to Jesus of Nazareth, and now to be left behind as the race advances beyond it; to say nothing of appearances being against such a theory, for there are no traces that Christianity is not still infinitely above what any of the race has reached, its fundamental idea is false; Christianity dates from the beginning, its basis is a Divine work of preparation carried on through all the ages that were before it, and "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son." Our text, however, does not take us further than this—that salvation was the subject of Old Testament preparation. It is no heresy of the modern Church; it did not originate with Paul; it is not an idea of Jesus; it dates back through all the Old Testament that the world's redemption should spring from a Saviour suffering

and then glorified. 1. *Old Testament events were but steps leading up to it.* Promised in Eden, again to Noah, again with additions to Abraham and to Isaac and to Jacob, etc. Prepared for in the work of Moses, in the calling out and training of Israel, to the choice of their land, in their being made the depository of Divine truth, in the lives of David, Solomon, and the prophets, in the scattering of the Jews, in their connection with Roman power and Greek literature; all these were but, like the Baptist, preparing the way of the Lord. 2. *Old Testament prophecies were but the heralds of salvation through Christ.* Whatever the origin of sacrifice by blood, it goes back to the first family; and since they were accepted by God—and it would be strange indeed for man to anticipate this great method of salvation—we regard them as prefigurings of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. Later on they were developed in the elaborate Jewish ritual—atonement, high priest, mediation, entrance into the holiest, sprinkling of blood, etc. In the psalmists and prophets there is a yet further development of this—the nature, the date, the birthplace, the character, the work, the death, the resurrection, the universal reign of the Messiah, are drawn in outline, so that “beginning at Moses and all the prophets,” etc. Salvation in Christ, therefore, is the termination of a wondrous system promoted from the beginning, and was, after being worked out, “the mystery which from the beginning hath been hid in God according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

II. SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST THE SUBJECT OF DIVINE REVELATION. The prophets taught through “the Spirit of Christ which was in them.” So much for the Old Testament. The apostles—“them that have preached the gospel unto you”—have done this “with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.” So much for the New Testament. 1. *The Spirit of Christ, therefore, is the author of Sacred Writ.* Inspiration was the operation of the Divine Spirit on the minds of men so that they were led to utter infallible truth. It sometimes consisted simply in power to narrate facts and discourses accurately; but sometimes it included the suggestion of the very thoughts they should express, and of the very words they should use. So in listening to prophets and apostles we listen to God himself. 2. *Consider the evidence of the Divine inspiration of Scripture.* The great central witness to this is Christ. The Old Testament of his time and ours is identical; he always regarded it as the authoritative voice of God; we accept its Divine inspiration because we accept him. As to the New Testament, the apostles claim an inspiration equal to that of the Old, e.g. 1 Cor. ii. 12, 13. And unless that claim be true, how can Christ’s words be fulfilled? as e.g. to Peter as the representative of the twelve, “I will give unto thee the keys,” etc., or after his resurrection, “As the Father hath sent me, so send I you; . . . receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose-soever sins ye remit,” etc. Thus “the Church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ,” etc. 3. *Then in Scripture we have the infallible declaration of the most high God.* In all Scripture. We must take the whole, or we have no Divine warrant for any part. There is no power which can be trusted to discriminate between what therein is Divine and what not; those who affirm such discrimination to be needful differ among themselves as to the test. Here God has deigned to speak; what is here is certain truth; here God has declared salvation; then that salvation is real.

III. SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST THE SUBJECT OF ANGELIC RESEARCH. “Which things the angels,” etc. Another evidence of the sublimity of the salvation offered in this book. The word is a graphic one, descriptive of the idea of bending down and fixing an intense, searching gaze on something, as when John stooped down and looked into the sepulchre; Peter may have been thinking of that. 1. *The angels have vast privileges, yet they seem to envy the knowledge granted to us.* They have all the blessings of a sinless state in God’s presence, but they look down on the mysteries of grace revealed to us, as though coveting the revelation. 2. *The angels have great acquaintance with God, yet apparently they discern the greatest revelation of him here.* They are familiar with nature and heaven, but

“God in the person of his Son
Hath all his mightiest works outdone.”

“To the principalities and powers in heavenly places may be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.” 3. *The angels have wonderful faculties of insight, yet there is more here than they can fathom.* Such is the fulness of the gospel that they are still far from comprehending it.—C. N.

Vers. 13—16.—*Salvation by Christ issuing in holiness.* The modern demand for a religion which is practical is but an echo of the demand of Scripture. Right being and doing are the aim and proof, yea, the very substance, of Christianity. But Scripture adds that on which the moralists are silent—how this right living can be acquired. Redemption first, then holiness. Holiness grows out of redemption as its natural result. To say we do not want the doctrines of grace, but rather a setting forth of God's requirement of holy character, were as reasonable as to insist that the roots in the garden should be dug up, because we want, not roots, but fruit. Holy character is the outcome of a knowledge of free redemption through the Son of God. So much is involved in the word "wherefore" here. The paragraph has to do with practical life; it holds up the loftiest ideal: "As he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy," etc., and this is set forth as the necessary sequence to the preceding.

I. SPIRITUAL REDEMPTION IS HERE SPOKEN OF AS "THE GRACE THAT IS BEING BROUGHT TO US IN THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST." Revised Version margin, "Greek, Is being brought." "At" is the ordinary preposition signifying "in." We, therefore, take the expression as covering all that the apostle has spoken of from the third verse. The nature, certainty, sublimity of redemption; redemption beginning here, perfected in heaven;—that has been his theme, and he now sums it up in the beautiful and comprehensive phrase, "The grace that is being brought unto you in the revelation of Jesus Christ." Think of salvation under this title. 1. *It is God's free gift.* "The grace." It is gratuitous. One of its marvellous features is that it is for "whosoever will." A salvation we had wrought for ourselves could not have rectified our relation to God; it would have freed us from condemnation, but not have opened to us the Father's heart, nor constrained us to his service. There is a priceless power in God himself discharging our liabilities by the atonement of his own blood, and thus saving the unthankful and evil, the outcast and lost, for nothing. 2. *It is possessed by us in an extraordinary degree.* There is evident stress on the words, "to you." The expression seems to look back to vers. 10—12. Divine truths were in their dawning in the Old Testament, but they are brought to light in the New. Compared with what has to be revealed, it is darkness; for that which is the expression of God's boundless love, and the full reward of the atonement, will need enlarged capacities for its perception, and all eternity for its reception; but compared with what was revealed before New Testament times, it is brightness. Very touching is it, for instance, to think of Isaiah sitting down and pondering the prophecies he was given to utter, and vainly trying to understand their mysteries. "The Spirit was not yet;" but he has come now, and in his light we see light. Now we may "comprehend with all saints what," etc.; now "the eyes of our understanding being," etc.; now "eye hath not seen, nor ear . . . but God hath," etc.; "Verily I say unto you, many prophets," etc. 3. *It is continuous and increasing with the revelation of Jesus Christ.* "That is being"—it is a prolonged, unceasing, ever-enlarging bestowment. What we received when we first knew Christ as Saviour was far surpassed by what came with glowing knowledge of him; and this, in turn, shall be immeasurably surpassed when we shall see him as he is. What is the joy on the face of the young disciple; what the calm of the saintly heart as it comes forth from the closet; what the growing likeness to the Saviour in the good man's character; what the holy peace of the aged believer; what the glory of the redeemed in heaven,—but "the grace that is being brought to us in the revelation of Jesus Christ"?

II. THE POSSESSION OF THIS GRACE CLAIMS THAT WE CLEARLY APPREHEND ITS FULLNESS. "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for this grace;" equivalent to "God would have us see how great salvation is; if it is to work in us its proper work, we must have adequate views, and a firm, personal, intelligent grip of it." 1. There must be *activity of thought concerning it.* To gird up the loins is the preparation for activity. In Scripture we have the thoughts of God, but they are not revealed to the careless reader; they only yield to patient study under the illumination of the Divine Spirit. The absolutely needful truths of Scripture, like the corn on the surface of the earth, are easily gathered, but for the gold and gems we must dig. Some Christians know so little of God's grace because they have no systematic, leisurely, deliberate, prayerful study of Scripture. "Search the Scriptures;" "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord." 2. There must be *freedom from what would dim our vision of it.* "Be sober." Sobriety is self-restraint from what intoxicates. The

intoxicated man has no clear perception of anything; he sees nothing as it is. There is an intoxication of soul which operates thus on spiritual perceptions. We may be intoxicated with business, worldly pleasure, pride of intellect, etc. To understand God's grace, a restraining hand must be put on this. 3. There must be *confident anticipation of it*. "Hope perfectly [Revised Version] for," etc. Hope is beyond faith. Faith reveals somewhat, then hope anticipates it. Hope expects, ponders, yearns for. "Perfectly;" equivalent to "without any admixture of doubt." To make the blessings promised in Christ a subject of hope would make them grow before our vision, and intensify the consciousness that they are ours. It does not impress us to know that a vast multitude of stars fill the sky, but to go into the observatory and single out one star for observation, and fix our mind on that, ensures one new beauty after another gleaming out of the darkness, and where we thought was but a star, a galaxy is discerned.

III. THE APPREHENSION OF THE FULNESS OF DIVINE GRACE WILL LEAD TO HOLINESS. Man says, "Be holy, then you will have hope; do your duty, then you will find rest." God says, "Salvation free through Christ first; thou holiness as the result." Vers. 14—16 are the sequel to ver. 13. A fable tells of a stream which made those that drank of it new beings; so to drink of the blessings which flow from Calvary is to find ourselves new creatures. None can know what redemption is, and that it is his, and fashion himself according to his former lusts in his ignorance; it rather creates a desire to be "holy in all manner of living." 1. It is so *because of the filial love redemption evokes*. Without redemption we have no sufficient motive to holiness; that comes with love to God in Christ. 2. And it is so *because of the high purpose of God redemption reveals*. As we apprehend what redemption is, we see it includes God's purpose of likeness to him. Then this likeness can be reached, for what God wills can be.—C. N.

Vers. 17—21.—*The holiness in which salvation consists a reason for Christian fear.* The order of thought in the first twenty-one verses may be summed up in salvation (vers. 3—12), holiness (vers. 12—16), fear (vers. 17—21). This last paragraph contains one long reason why those who have salvation through Christ should live in fear. It is remarkable that the demand for fear should follow what has been already said. The apostle has spoken strongly of the certainty of their redemption to whom he writes; he calls them "elect according to," etc.; he blesses God that they have an inheritance reserved for them, and that they are kept for it; he says that loving Christ they have now the salvation of their souls; he adds that the revelation of this salvation, being given through the Holy Ghost, is infallibly true; but after all that, he bids them pass the time of their sojourning here in fear—an emphatic contradiction of the idea that the doctrines of grace foster a spirit of carelessness. Fear is the natural result of God's free salvation.

I. THE FACT OF REDEMPTION NECESSITATES HOLINESS. The seventeenth verse is based on the eighteenth and following verses. 1. *Redemption is from the vain manner of life received from our fathers.* "Conversation;" equivalent to "manner of life." Christ died to deliver us from the sinful manner of life received from our fathers. From hell; yes, that is clear. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all;" "He bore our sins in his own body on the tree;" "There is therefore now no condemnation," etc. But that is not the end for which he died, only a means to an end. Holiness in us was the purpose of the atonement, so much so that if we can imagine one getting no further than the cancelling of his sins, we should have to say that Christ died for him in vain (see 2 Cor. v. 15; Gal. i. 4; Eph. i. 4; v. 25—27; Titus ii. 14). Redemption by Christ is from the life of the natural man: "If any man be in Christ Jesus, it is a new creation." 2. *Redemption is only effected at unspeakable cost.* "Not with corruptible," etc. An emphatic testimony that redemption is through our Lord's death—not through his life, or example, or holiness, or mediation, but, as Scripture invariably says with unwavering consistency, by "his blood." God himself bore the penalty of human guilt that he might righteously extend his mercy to the guilty. Nor can we imagine any method which so glorifies his grace and reveals himself. Think of the worth of our Lord's offering. The universe were as nothing compared with the Son of God. What unfathomable meaning is in the words, "the precious blood of Christ"! Now, this stupendous price was paid for nothing less than that we might be holy. In that we see how imperative, how indispensable, holiness is. 3. *Redemption is to faith and hope in God.*

(Vers. 20, 21.) Characteristic of Peter to emphasize the foreordination of Christ. It occurs here naturally when we see that it is a point in perhaps all his recorded sermons. What a redemption this is which is based on God's eternal purpose! and what a hope which goes back through all time, and finds its foundation in the everlasting thought of God! But the point is that Christ was appointed to this work by the Father, manifested by the Father, raised up by the Father, given glory by the Father—Redemption is the working out by the Father of his own plan, quite contrary to the idea that Calvary was to appease him. The text says that God did all this that we might be believers in him, not stop short at Jesus, but go on to rest in the Father. Alienated man drawn to act in faith and hope. Then as the stream flows from the fountain, so by the constraint of conscious obligation and loving petition, consecration to God will flow from this faith and hope, and thus, if redemption is to faith and hope, it necessitates holiness.

II. THIS NECESSITY CALLS THE PROFESSING CHRISTIAN TO FEAR. (Ver. 17.) The more Christian life we have, the more we find that fear is one of its characteristics. Not that which hath torment, and repels; but that which is the opposite of carelessness, presumption, self-confidence, disobedience. 1. For a *filial spirit toward God leads to the fear of his disfavour*. Perfect love produces fear—fear of distressing him we love. The word "father" tells of tender relationship, mutual happiness, reciprocated affection; that either would shrink from painning the other; and that any barrier coming between them is unbearable. He on whom we call as Father must have holiness. Then we cannot help going through life with this element of fear; he who does not fear does not love. 2. Then, a *remembrance of his impartiality leads to a fear of his judgments*. "The Father, who without respect of persons judgeth," etc. The kind Father is also the impartial Judge, and he will judge us by our works. We are saved by faith; we are judged by holiness; we are redeemed to holiness. Then if we are amongst the redeemed, we are holy. What should we like to be tested by—experiences, profession, creed, charity, opinions of others? God will judge us impartially by our works. "Show me thy faith by thy works." Is not that something to make us fear? 3. *A consideration of the brevity of life leads to the fear of losing eternal blessing*. "Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." We are here but for a short time; the perfected blessings of redemption are yonder, and what they are no tongue can tell. But redemption is holiness, and therefore apart from holiness we have no right to anticipate these. Without holiness there is no redemption, that is, no heaven. Is not this calculated to create fear, to destroy spiritual indifference, carelessness about conformity to Christ, light-heartedness respecting inconsistency? Does it not compel us to examine heart and life with anxiety, and press forward to better things with something of the feeling of the racer lest he lose the prize?

III. THIS FEAR IS CONSISTENT WITH JOY UNSPEAKABLE AND FULL OF GLORY. This must be remembered to avoid misapprehension. The fear the apostle urges is not that which clouds life, but that which harmonizes with the joy he has spoken of. Yes; this fear contributes to the joy. 1. *It leads to a correct knowledge of our Christian position*. Making us search to the foundations of our hope, it enables us to say, "I know." 2. *It compels us to a simpler dependence on the Saviour*. For looking for holiness as an evidence of redemption, we discover how little we have, and are compelled to fall back on Christ the more entirely—than which what is more blessed? Blessed fear, which makes us know better how perfect a Saviour Jesus is! 3. *It glorifies even our trials as a means of keeping us holy*. For if holiness be essential, we can welcome that as a friend which tends to deepen it, and makes us thank God for our very sorrows.—C. N.

Vers. 22—25.—*Christian love the test of the possession of salvation*. Christian love is the subject of this paragraph. There are no words here to show why that is dealt with in this particular place, but as the preceding verses treat of fear lest we should fail of the fruits which prove the possession of redemption, we may assume that the apostle here gives them a test by which this fear may be removed or confirmed, and no better test could be suggested than that of love. For love is such a test (John xiii. 34; 1 Cor. xiii. 1—3; 1 John iii. 14). Peter might have chosen some other test. Possibly he had reason for anxiety on this particular ground, for the Epistle contains several hints on the proper mutual relation of these Christians; e.g. ch. i. 22; ii. 17; iii. 8—10; iv. 8; v. 5.

I. SALVATION IS HERE SPOKEN OF AS THE PURIFICATION OF THE SOUL IN OBEYING THE TRUTH. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth;" only another way of saying, "Seeing you have received this salvation of which I speak, which issues in holiness." For: 1. *This is a suitable and comprehensive expression of the fact of salvation.* "Obeying the truth" is a synonym for "believing the gospel;" e.g. 2 Thess. i. 8; Rom. vi. 17; Heb. v. 9; Rom. x. 16, in all of which "obey" is evidently equivalent to "believe." The word is used by Peter in that sense in this Epistle (ch. iii. 1 and iv. 17). Link that with the other word, "purifying the soul;" and whether that refers to the cleansing by the atonement or by the work of the Spirit, we have the essential elements of redemption. 2. *This expression with this meaning harmonizes well with what has gone before.* The last two paragraphs from ver. 13 dealt largely with purification resulting from faith. 3. *This particular way of speaking of salvation bears closely on the subject in hand.* In each of the epistles to the seven Churches, our Lord gives himself a different title, according to the special condition of each Church. So here the apostle speaks of their redemption under this aspect of it, because this aspect of it bears on the duty of Christian love he is about to enforce.

II. SALVATION NATURALLY ISSUES IN CHRISTIAN LOVE. "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren." 1. *Love a necessity where salvation is.* That is shown as follows: "See that ye love one another, . . . being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God." (1) Love a necessity because the Christian has a new nature. We are to love every man; but the love we are here called to is love of the brethren. But no power can make us love as a brother one who is not a brother; for that there must be a common fatherhood, and where that is it must be felt. Children of the same father, animated by the same principles, influenced by the same Divine Spirit, sharing the same hopes, joys, sorrows, conflicts,—these cannot help being drawn together. (2) But this is also spoken of as a Divine nature. "Incorruptible." The relation between Christ's people is not a union after the flesh, such as connects Abraham's children. They are born, not of man, but of God; God's nature inspires them. Think of the love God has to his children! Then where God's nature is, love of the brethren must be. (3) This is also an ever-living nature. The human nature fades, its strongest principles and closest bonds may last but a little while; even the mother may forget the child. But, said Isaiah, "the word of the Lord endureth for ever;" and Peter adds, "This is the word which has been preached to you." That is, this new life of ours does not die out; that which has produced it liveth and abideth for ever, and is a living, operative power in us. What God has thus implanted, he does not suffer to die. "He will perform it till the day of Jesus Christ;" he will develop its hidden possibilities. Then is it not certain that the redeemed man will love? God cannot impart and train a nature of love which does not love. 2. *This love is of a very high order.* (1) "Unfeigned." Peter, Paul, and John all speak of this feature of Christian love. "Let love be without dissimulation;" "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth"—as though an assumed affection were common. But that is not Christian love. (2) "Love out of a pure heart." That is holy. Christian love is holy love. Holiness is its base. Contrary to loving all men, bad and good, as brethren. There must be charity to all, but true brotherly love towards those who turn from Christ there cannot be. Or does "pure" mean "unmixed"?—a love that rises from purely spiritual causes, and not because others are good to us, or give us pleasure, or belong to our Church. The publicans and sinners have that love. Christian love is due to love of God, and loves others because God does. (3) "Fervent." The opposite of coldness. A love that lights up the features and makes the hand-grasp warm and kindles happiness. It consumes selfishness, and sets our thoughts to work for others' good. Fed from a heavenly source, "many waters cannot quench it" (waters of infirmity, neglect, jealousy, injury, yea, even wrong); that is Christian love—very different from bare courtesy. How can one feel coldly where the father loves divinely?

III. SALVATION IS THEREFORE TESTED BY THE POSSESSION OF THIS LOVE. Where the life is, the love is; where the life is low, so is the love. 1. *Have we sympathy with the people of God*—true fellow-feeling that helps? "Whoso hath this world's good," etc. We should if we loved. 2. *Do we delight in fellowship with them?* Love must be with its beloved. Is it so with us? do we love the house of God, the brotherhood, etc.?

We should if we loved. 3. *Are our judgments concerning them tender and charitable?* "Love covers a multitude of sins;" "Love thinketh no evil," etc. Is it so with us? Do we find ourselves trying to put a favourable construction on evil reports, hushing them up, sorrowing over them, talking to God about them? We should if we loved. 4. *Are we ashamed to call them brethren?*—C. N.

Vers. 1—3.—*The introductory greeting.* Here is for our consideration, as introductory and preparatory to an intelligent study of this letter, some suggestions about—

I. *THE GREETER.* "Peter." The allusions to incidents in his life, and the checkered light thrown upon his character, which are found in this Epistle, are in harmony with what we gather from the Gospels and the Acts concerning him. For instance: 1. *His name.* The Rock-man. What a reminiscence of the giving of that name! What it tells (1) of his former character; (2) of Christ's knowledge of him; (3) of the ideal at which he is to aim! 2. *His vocation.* "An apostle." Here is a hint of (1) his dignity; (2) his brotherliness, not *the*, but "an apostle;" (3) his allegiance, "Jesus Christ." As Keble sings—

"Friend thrice denied and thrice beloved—
Master, Redeemer, King."

II. *THE DESCRIPTION OF THOSE HE GREETED.* *Who* were these? Here at once we open the vein of sadness which runs through this Epistle, and again and again rises to the surface. "Sojourners of the Dispersion." Homeless through persecution. Jewish and Gentile Christians, carried, as seed on the wings of the storm, to many lands where they would fertilize and multiply. *Where* were they? Widely scattered, from under the shadows of the mountains of Galilee to the shores of the Black Sea. This fisherman is casting his net in a deep and wide ocean. *What* are they? Divinely chosen to perfection of character. 1. They are being made holy. 2. They are being made holy by the Spirit. 3. They are being made holy by the Spirit in the fruits of obedience. 4. And this by self-sacrificing consecration. 5. And all this through the power of the sacrifice of Christ.

III. *THE SUBSTANCE OF THE GREETING.* "Grace and peace." The highest ideal of both Greek and Hebrew as to true blessedness. "Grace"—the thought in Greek sculpture, architecture, and oratory, the very name and charm of Greek divinities, and signifying the beauty of gentleness in strength, the favour of the high to the lowly, and all its effects in the lowly. "Peace"—the salutation of Hebrew prophet and patriarch, the wish for the city in the midst of enemies, for the soul in its relations to God and man. And both these combined, and both these multiplied tenfold, a thousandfold, on and on indefinitely and infinitely, for of such blessing a soul cannot have too much.—U. R. T.

Vers. 3—5.—*An outburst of praise.* "Blessed be the God and Father," etc. So the writer passes from himself and from his readers up to God; and with this elevation of theme there is an outburst of praise. Meditating on this outburst of praise, we note it is—

I. *PRaise TO GOD.* He traces the great joy he is describing up to its Fountain—God; he sees the gift of which he almost seems to be singing, in the open hand of the Giver—God. "Blessed be," etc. 1. Here is *reverent praise*. "Blessed." The word is consecrated to God alone, and is completely different to the word in the Beatitudes. The Hebrew meaning is "speaking him well." 2. Here is *loving praise*. It is not alone to God as God, the infinitely Good One of transcendent perfection, but the insertion of this conception of Father, and Father of Jesus, makes him nearer and dearer to the heart than the old description, "God of Israel." 3. Here is *intelligent praise*. "Father of our Lord Jesus." How vividly Peter could recall the form and voice and countenance of Jesus! It was his *Father* he would have men praise. No vague, dim, unrelated, infinite essence and origin of all things do we worship, but the Father of Jesus, revealed to us in the face of Jesus Christ. 4. Here is *grateful praise*. It is praise for great mercy. Pity is love to the weak; mercy is love to the *undeserving*—is therefore the climax and crown of love. This is God's love to man. St. Bernard had a familiar saying to the effect that "great sins and great miseries need great mercy, and many sins and many

miseries need many mercies." Hence we have revelations of God's mercy, as *great* mercy, *abundant* mercy, *plenteous* mercy, *tender* mercies, *multitude* of mercies, mercy that "*endureth* for ever." The heart of man may well glow with gratitude as he vows, "I will sing of mercy," etc.

II. PRAISE TO GOD FOR A BRIGHT HOPE OF A GLORIOUS FUTURE. 1. Here is praise to God for a *hope*. This is, indeed, part of the praise of every heart which thanks God for Christianity. For Christianity does not profess to satisfy *all* the aspirations of the heart *here*. Much yearning for knowledge, for pardon, for grace, is met *now*, but much remains as unfulfilled hope, and for that hope we praise God. What hope? (1) Hope is *expectant desire*. What we wish for and what we count on having are the two ingredients of hope. (2) *Living hope*. (a) This, in contrast to the dead-alive surmises, vague guesses at the future, the pagans had, and above which Jews scarcely rose. (b) This in contrast, as Leighton says, to lying hopes and dying hopes about things in the world—hopes that die before us or die when we die. (c) This is a hope that makes life a life of hope, an anchored life that does not drift, a brightened life that does not darken into despair; eager, expectant vision; who, though "sojourners of the Dispersion," with a vast sense of weariness enfolding all things, were truly pilgrims whose faces and whose feet were set towards the land of sunrise, not of sunset. 2. Here is praise to God for a *future*. What future? St. Peter describes to them a plan that is (1) a *contrast* to their present lot as "sojourners of the Dispersion," who had lost inheritance in Palestine; and (2) a *completion* of what inheritance Palestine might have been and what their Christian character already was. "Inheritance." It can only be known negatively, and there is no actual description of what is beyond apprehension and understanding. But we can know what it has *not*—that which mars and spoils best things here. A possession secured, *surely* awaiting them. A *state* and a *condition* of the soul and its surroundings. (a) "Incorruptible." No tendency in it to decay and to destruction. *Substance* imperishable. The tenure not to expire as in Palestine. (b) "Undeified." Not to be spoiled by defilement or pollution, as their old inheritance in Palestine, by idolatries and tyrannies. (c) "Fadeth not away." Its beauty immortal. No winter to wither it.

III. PRAISE TO GOD FOR HIS WONDERFUL METHODS OF INSPIRING THE HOPE AND ENSURING THE FUTURE. The future. Peter is here praising God both as *Trustee* of such a future, and *Guardian* of those who inherit it by hope. 1. God has that future *reserved*. "In heaven"—in safe keeping. 2. God will in due time let it be *revealed*. "Salvation." 3. God has that future for his *bestowal* as an inheritance. He gives heaven to man as a gift of love—free love. Righteously, and according to their fitness for it; but graciously, and not as measured by their merits. A heaven we *merited* would be a poor, meagre heaven in contrast with what is here described; and so might it not be a *hell*? The *heir* does not buy, does not win, does not by battle secure *inheritance*; he simply grows up to the age that claims it. So with *heaven*. When John at Runnymede asked the barons assembled about him there, by what *right* they held their lands, hundreds of swords flashed like lightning from their sheaths, and defiant tones pealed like a thunder-clap on the king's ears, "By *these* we won them, and by *these* we hold them." But let any inquiring lips ask multitudes above, in blessed possession of the inheritance of heaven, by what *right* they hold those high and priceless possessions; and, taking crowns of dignity and glory from their brows, and casting them before the Lamb that was slain, their adoring exclamation, is, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood," etc. Nay, not only when the redeemed are *in* heaven do they realize that it is an unbought, unmerited *inheritance*, but even when good men tread the frontier of that kingdom, and step on the threshold of that home, they feel the same. When Bossuet, perhaps the most illustrious of French preachers and prelates, lay dying in great suffering and prostration, one who was present thanked him for all his kindness, and, using the court language of the day, begged him when in another world to think of the friends that were so devoted to his person and *reputation*. At this last word ("reputation"), Bossuet, who had almost lost the power of speech, raised himself from the bed, and gathered strength to say, not without indignation, "Don't talk like that! Ask God to forgive a sinner his sins." Yes; that is the Christian's attitude, that the Christian's spirit, even entering heaven.

"When I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyelids close in death . . .
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee."

IV. HOW DOES GOD INSPIRE AND PRESERVE THE HOPE? 1. It is a *hope that is born with man's new birth*. A man is an heir, by birth, of his father's patrimony; a Christian is an heir, by regeneration, of heaven. (1) The godly man is *born again*. (2) The godly man is born again *by the power of God*. "He begat us again." (3) The godly man is born again *by the power of God through the resurrection of Christ*. Christ's resurrection is not only a parable of the higher life you live, but it is the power of it. 2. It is a *hope that is continued by God in connection with a man's character*. God, as we saw, is Trustee of the future; so is he Guardian of the heirs. They are: (1) Guarded by the *power of God*. Kept as with a garrison. (2) Guarded by the power of God *through faith*—fidelity on man's part. Peter had at length learned implicitly to trust Jesus Christ, and to be brave in *fidelity* to him. This is the twofold thought of the word "faith" here, namely, trust and fidelity. God, who is reserving heaven for the redeemed, is by their faith training them for heaven. So that the old saying is wise and good, "Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people." "It a good land: let us go up and possess it."—U. R. T.

Vers. 6, 7.—*The testing of religious faith*. As we saw in our exposition of the preceding verses, Peter taught that a man's faith, *i.e. trust* in Christ and *fidelity* to Christ, is a pledge of and preparation for the heavenly inheritance. It is a *pledge*. The example of Columbus sailing westward in search of unknown America is often and rightly quoted as an instance of faith. The Christian man is a spiritual Columbus, whose *faith* alone leads him across mysterious seas of time to shores of eternity. Moreover, faith is a *preparation* for that inheritance; for it has been well said that Faith and Hope and Love are so related that if Faith dies—as, indeed, it does often die first—Hope and Love are very prone to say, "Let us also die with her." Indeed, the three often perish hand-in-hand. Therefore a man's faith is of profound importance to him—"precious faith;" hence Peter touches here with a strong hand the question of the *testing of religious faith*.

I. THAT THE PROCESS OF TESTING A MAN'S FAITH INVOLVES MUCH PAIN. Peter sees souls rejoicing in the hope of heaven—"wherein ye greatly rejoice"—and yet, by this very process of testing their faith, meanwhile, in much pain. How much pain we gather: 1. *From the use of the word that describes the process*; *i.e.* "temptations"—"trials." A word that really means "testing," but that, because of the usual nature of testing, is a synonym for "affliction." Does not the word "trial" contain in itself tears, battles, persecutions, martyrdom, even death? 2. *From the spirit in which Peter says the tried are*. In heaviness, in grief, sorrowful, dejected, heavy-hearted. 3. *The nature of the element employed in the process*. Compared to fire. No material element causes so much pain as fire.

II. THE PROCESS OF TESTING A MAN'S FAITH IS OF SUCH UNTOLD WORTH AS TO COMPENSATE FOR ALL SUCH PAIN. 1. *The testing is only temporary*. "For a season"—even if lifelong, the days dwindle to hours, etc. Already Peter uses words of retrospect: "ye have been," etc. 2. *The worth of the soul for which testing is designed*. Though not grammatical, this is application. "Much more precious than gold." This is implied that gold loses lustre and becomes worn out with hourly use. The soul is imperishable! 3. *The purposes of the process*. "If need be;" deep, inevitable, necessary. (1) *Try the genuineness of faith*. God knows whether it is genuine. Men may not; we do not frequently. Chaff looks like wheat; hence the threshing-floor—the *tribulum*. Gilt looks like gold; hence the crucible. Devoutness of ceremonial, orthodoxy of creed, decorum of conduct, look like faith; and yet it may be absent. (2) *Tend to purification*. That is even more merciful. Remove alloy and dross. Not only detect, but refine. As Elizabeth Browning says, "purification being the joy of pain." This is the Christian woman's echo of the conviction of the old patriarch of Uz, "When I am tried, I shall come forth as gold." (3) *Train for highest uses*. Higher purposes for which metal is designed—keener furnace, etc. The most durable and precious metal in ancient art was Corinthian bronze, which was said to have been first obtained, at least discovered, by the fusing of all precious metals when the city of Corinth was burned.

Joseph, David, Peter, our blessed Lord, were most blessed products of the experience reached by the fires of suffering. (4) *Lead to highest destiny.* Praise; honour; glory.—U. R. T.

Ver. 8.—*Love—trust—joy.* Here is—

I. LOVE FOR THE UNSEEN. 1. This appears *difficult*. Many say, "If we could only hear, see, touch Christ, we could love him; but it is now beyond our power." Nevertheless, this is: 2. *Very common*. What is all love for the absent but love for the unseen? 3. This is *possible* to all the highest forms of love. We have historic heroes whom we love (such as Melancthon, Howard, Henry Martyn, Frederick Robertson) with a much higher form of love than the self-seeking thing that often goes by that name among men. 4. This is a *most blessed reality* when, as with Christ, there can be communications with the Beloved, even though he be unseen. The unseen stands calm amid all our rush of life, changeless amidst all our transition and decay. To love him in his bodily presence must ever be to have a love that is limited, partial, accidental, temporary. Not so if we love "Christ in us the Hope of glory."

II. TRUST IN THE BELOVED. It is certain there must be some faith before there is any love, but it is equally certain that where there is much love there will be increasing faith. Love is the basis of a new and stronger faith. The vision of the soul rises from its affections. The anchor of faith has the firmest hold on the shores of love; the roots of faith draw their richest nutriment from the soil of love. Love Christ more, and you will believe him more.

III. JOY IN THE BELIEVED AND THE BELOVED. The joy that Paul as well as Peter knew, and that multitudes have possessed as they trusted in Christ and cleaved to Christ with their affections, is (1) the joy of rest; (2) the joy of intercourse. And it is: 1. A joy that is "unspeakable." Even song cannot utter it. 2. A joy noble now, and destined to perpetual nobleness. "Full of glory." There is no mean, or base, or decaying element in it. The casket, the human heart, is indestructible; and the jewel, this Christly joy, is imperishable.—U. R. T.

Vers. 9—12.—*Soul-salvation.* The thought of soul-salvation in these verses is at once deeper and broader than that contained in ver. 5 of this chapter. There it was mainly deliverance from evil, and deliverance from evil of the individual soul. Here there is the reaching a blessed destiny, and that by many.

I. THE GREAT WORTH OF SOUL-SALVATION. This is seen: 1. *From the illustrious beings interested in it.* (1) Prophets. (2) Angels. (3) Apostles. (4) The Holy Spirit. From this it follows, first, that soul-salvation is no *modern invention*, it was known to ancient prophets; no *mean conception*, it was the theme of exalted angels; no *obscure dream*, it was proclaimed by well-known apostles; no *earth-born scheme*, it was a revelation of the Holy Spirit. But the worth of soul-salvation is seen: 2. *By our knowledge of the Saviour by whom salvation came.* Christ is Christianity. The Saviour is the revelation of the worth of salvation. (1) In his sufferings (ver. 11). (2) In his following glories (ver. 11): his conquest of temptation; his resurrection; his ascension; his triumphs by his Church; the restitution of all things.

II. THE GRADUAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE REVELATION OF SOUL-SALVATION. It has dawned upon us who now have its noontide brightness, just as every day brightens to noon—gradually. In this passage we are reminded how it was: 1. *Predicted.* By prophets who were taught (1) gradually and separately; (2) often unconsciously; but (3) divinely. We have it as: 2. *Fully declared.* It was plainly "announced" and is widely "preached."

III. THE SIMPLE MEANS OF ATTAINING SOUL-SALVATION. "Faith" (ver. 9). Salvation is the thing we trust for, and to which trust tends. It is not only *assent of the mind*, though it is that. Nor only *consent of the heart*, though it is also that. But it is *response of the will*. "Believe, and be saved."—U. R. T.

Vers. 13—16.—*The call to holiness.* Peter sums up as the conclusion from what he has just written as to prophets, apostles, angels, the very Spirit of Christ being deeply concerned in our soul-salvation, "Be *holy*." Holiness is salvation. Just as there is no salvation for a sick man but to give him health, so there is no salvation for a sinful

man but to ensure him holiness. Holiness is the supreme purpose of religion. So now, in his own direct, glowing, practical manner the apostle voices the call of God—"Be holy." And in doing this he sets forth—

I. THE ONE MODEL AND MOTIVE OF TRUE HOLINESS. Does he not, however, in passing, show what is *not a standard of true holiness*? For he guards his readers against shaping their character by their own past habits of life. He gently recalls the sad fact to them that they had led lives of vice and of ignorance. He warns them that such living is altogether bad; it was a life according to *lusts*, coarse and dark, of men, not laws of God. And he suggests to them by the very use of the word "fashioning," which denotes what is fleeting and on the surface (as when he says, "the fashion of this world," the scenery of it, "passeth away"), that a life moulded according to the vicious and ignorant lusts of men is transient, decaying, perishing. Do not so *degrade* and so *destroy* human nature. Then again, in passing, he shows what the *manifestation* of true holiness will be. The body of holiness is described by Moses in the Decalogue—the breath of it is breathed by Jesus in the sermon on the mount. But where will this holiness, this breathing body of Christian holiness, show itself? Peter answers, "Holy in all manner of living." The word "conversation" means a "turning about," and the thought is, wherever that life turns in the revolutions of daily history it will be holy. Holy not in its moods, sentiments, religious rites *alone*; but in its "behaviour." The holy man is a revolving light—a light, not with six sides darkened and the seventh flashing some special lustre, but wherever he turns translucent with the virtues of the indwelling Christ. Of such holiness the passage before us gives the one model and motive—namely, God. God is the *Model* of true holiness. "He which called." God is the great "Caller." He cares to call, and is ever calling. And he is holy. And we are called to be holy *like* as he is holy. Moreover, God is the *Motive* of true holiness. Not only *like* as he is holy, but *because* he is holy, we are to be holy. We notice: 1. *Because of God's nature it is right that man should resemble him.* 2. *Because of man's nature it is possible for him to resemble God.* And the fact that we are God's *offspring* may indicate some hope of our having the capacity of resembling him. But the incarnation of the Son of God declares that man is like God; and that incarnate life of Jesus, where the life of God was lived in a human frame, its thoughts scintillating in a man's brain, its emotions vibrating in a man's heart, its character revealed in a man's conduct, is the one great warrant for the appeal made from the nature of God to the duty of man. The *almighty* God says, "Be ye holy; for I am holy." All the forces of the universe, all the energies of God, are in battle against sin and in league with holiness. The *all-wise* God says, "Be ye holy; for I am holy." He who knows what man is and what man can be, and what are all the possibilities of woe or of blessedness throughout creation—the heart-searching, man-knowing, hell-knowing, heaven-knowing God calls us to holiness. The *all-loving* God says, "Be ye holy; for I am holy." There is no true love without holiness, and he who is the Holy One, who is Love, yearns for us to be like him. Yes, it is written, "Be ye holy." Peter was quoting Leviticus or Exodus, or both, for there it was written. In that the music of the Old and New Testaments is in unison, and not merely in harmony. But it is written in the stones of Sinai, and in the fires of Sodom, and with the blood of Calvary. It is still echoing in messages of prophets and apostles and in the deathless words of Christ. It is written in all the laws of nature which give pain; and in the moral realm, where is violence of remorse; it is written as with pen of iron in man's reason, and point of diamond on his conscience, "Ye shall be holy, as I am holy."

II. SOME OF THE ESSENTIALS IN THE PURSUIT OF TRUE HOLINESS. We say "some," because it is not the habit of Peter to deal exhaustively, and we should not expect all to be set out; and because clearly all essentials are not here, though certainly those, such as the working of the Holy Spirit, are implied. But those that are distinctly enumerated are: 1. *Vigorous intelligence.* "Gird up the loins of your mind." 2. *Firm self-control.* "Be sober." 3. *Thorough hope.* "To the end;" reserved perfectly to the limit of hope. (1) *Thorough in itself.* To the bound of hope; no anxious doubt, no fiftulness. (2) *In its object.* The "grace." The gift of grace which is being brought to us at the revelation of Christ. Every unveiling of Christ brings grace; the last apocalypse perfects the gift. 4. *Filial obedience.*—U. R. T.

Vers. 17—21.—*The awe of the redeemed.* The one injunction of this passage is, "Pass your time in fear"—"the time of your sojourning." Peter had already addressed them as sojourners as to country; now he addresses them as sojourners in this world altogether. "In fear" does not mean in dread or in terror; that meaning is contradicted by the whole tenor of this Epistle, and by the very name of God in this verse, "Father." "Fear" is synonymous with "piety" in Old Testament language, and might be rendered "reverence," or better still by the less frequently used, but fine Saxon word "awe." You are in the midst of great things, of stupendous realities; cherish awe. This is not to be a passing paroxysm, but an abiding, settled habit of soul. Notice—

I. THE AWE OF THE REDEEMED TOWARDS THE REDEEMING GOD. "If ye call on him as Father;" the call being, not simply an appeal, but a claim of kindred, an acknowledgment of close, tender, and withal solemnly responsible relationship. The relationship is: 1. *To the supremely impartial Father.* (Ver. 17.) 2. *To the supremely omniscient Judge.* (Ver. 17.) The twofold thought is gathered up in Christ's cry, "O righteous Father!"

II. THE AWE OF THE REDEEMED IN RECOLLECTION OF THE EVIL FROM WHICH THEY HAVE BEEN DELIVERED. Out of what have they been bought and brought? 1. *A course of conduct.* "Conversation;" not only the circle of behaviour, but centre of motive. 2. *A course of conduct that was evil.* "Vain." Frivolous, empty, unworthy. 3. *A course of conduct that was inherited.* "Handed down." The legacy of evil is with some unchastity, with some insobriety, with all sin. We are the sons of a slave race, and tendency and imitation continue us in bondage.

III. THE AWE OF THE REDEEMED BECAUSE OF THE COST AT WHICH THEY HAVE BEEN EMANCIPATED. Not silver and gold, that may redeem from the brigands, that may be the ransom of the Crusader king. But see the cost: 1. *As revealed in Christ Jesus.* "But with precious blood." The pouring forth of a priceless life. "As of a lamb," etc. And that priceless life the life of a Spotless One. That mystic blood detaches us from the dominion of sin. 2. *As felt by the heart of the infinite God.* "Foreknown." Raised by God, who with unspeakable care felt that part of himself was there.

IV. THE AWE OF THE REDEEMED BECAUSE OF THE BLESSEDNESS TO WHICH THEY ARE DESTINED. Faith and hope. Faith now in the invisible; hope of perpetual glory in the Eternal.—U. R. T.

Vers. 22—25.—*The life of the True, and the Word of truth.* The direct precept of this passage is, "Love one another." Many other duties are implied in the words that surround these, but the kernel of duty here is, "Love one another."

I. MUTUAL LOVE A DUTY OF THE PURE AND THE OBEDIENT. "Seeing ye have purified your souls, in your obedience . . . unto unfeigned love." The very end and purpose of becoming pure, which is only by obedience, is not to be safe or happy, but to be able in the highest sense and for ever to love, and to live a life of love when it is the life of God. This love is to be *unfeigned*. Dissemble anywhere rather than in the region of love. It is counterfeiting the coin of the Divine mint. This love is to be *deep*—"from the heart;" not of hand only, or of purse only, or of life only, but of the fountal source whence all activities and gifts will flow. This love is to be *intense*—"servently." The powers are to be on stretch. The harp only yields music when its strings are tightened to their fullest tension.

II. THIS LOVE AND PURITY AND OBEDIENCE ARE THE SIGNS OF A NEW LIFE WHICH EVERY CHRISTIAN IS LIVING. 1. The life is indeed new, for it has a *wondrous origin*. "Begotten again." No stronger figure could tell of loftier thought and nobler affection of the Christly man in contrast with the meaner views and selfish aims of his old life. 2. The life has a *wondrous Originator*. The quickening is from God.

III. THE FORCES OUT OF WHICH THIS NEW LIFE ARE DEVELOPED. The life of holiness is developed from seed. It has its origin in forces that (1) appear insignificant; (2) are often hidden; (3) are vital.

IV. THE WORD OF GOD IS THE MEANS BY WHICH THESE FORCES OPERATE ON THE HEART OF MAN. "Through the Word of God." The Word of God is not the seed, but the vehicle by which the seed is communicated to man. The seeds are the thoughts

of God, the truth of God; and they are seeds out of which the life of holiness must burst and grow. But even the Word of God that conveys these is imperishable. "It liveth and abideth." It lives and continues to live, though men, like the grass, perish and pass away. This word of "good tidings" is preached to men. Amongst those to whom it is preached, the penitent who receives its pardon, the mourner who receives its consolation, the dying who is strengthened by its hope, all witness to us with clear, convincing tone, "The Word of the Lord endureth for ever."—U. R. T.

Vers. 1, 2.—*Introduction.* I. ADDRESS. 1. *Writer.* "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ." The name is chosen which was most familiar to the readers. It is also the name which belonged to him as an apostle. He was commissioned by Jesus Christ to do important work for the Church, including the composition of this letter. 2. *Readers.* (1) *The elect circumstantially.* "To the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." It is in a Jewish mould that the apostle's thought is cast. "Elect," "sojourners," "Dispersion," derive their meaning from their application to the *Jewish nation*. There was a national election to the occupation of the land of Canaan. Latterly many Jews were resident on foreign soil, while regarding Canaan as their fatherland. In their sojourning condition they were not in close neighbourhood, but were scattered among the nations. Christians have inherited the title of the "elect people." They are in the condition of dwelling on earth and not in the heavenly Canaan. As away from home they are often far separated from each other, and not, as they will be, brought together and gathered round Christ above. The Christians addressed by Peter belonged to *Asia Minor*. In this region there were many Christian communities, in which the preponderating element was Gentile. In Galatia there were Churches founded by Paul, to which he addressed one of his Epistles. In Proconsular Asia were Iconium, Derbe, Lystra, Antioch (Pisidian), Miletus, Laodicea, Hierapolis, Colossæ, Philadelphia, Sardis, Thyatira, Ephesus (the capital), Smyrna, Pergamos, Troas, where (probably) Churches were formed under Paul's influence, and to three of which he addressed letters. Neither in Pontus, nor in Cappadocia, nor in Bithynia do we read of Christian work (showing how much there is of unrecorded Christian work). We may think of Peter writing to Pauline Churches in Asia Minor when Paul is dead. (2) *The elect fundamentally. Thought connected with the Father.* "According to the foreknowledge of God the Father." Our election is *conformed to the foreknowledge of God*, i.e. to his thinking of us beforehand for himself. What led him thus to think of us beforehand was his being the Father, i.e. his being essentially love. *Execution connected with the Spirit.* "In sanctification of the Spirit." Sanctification points to our being fit for fellowship with the Holy One. This the Father had in his mind when he thought of us beforehand for himself. The Spirit (often called the Holy Spirit) carries out the Father's thought in commencing, advancing, preserving, the holy life in our souls. *End connected with Jesus Christ.* "Unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." The Spirit works in us, on the one hand, not that our wills should be crushed, annihilated, but that they should be brought into a state of *obedience* (which is their true freedom). He works in us, on the other hand, that there should be applied to us the *blood of Jesus Christ*, without which he cannot sanctify those whose starting-point is a state of sin.

II. SALUTATION. "Grace to you and peace be multiplied." The introduction is constructed so as to throw the description of the readers into prominence as foreshadowing the thought of the Epistle. Like his description of himself, his salutation is brief. Let them be graciously dealt with by God, and, as the blessed fruit of gracious dealing, let them have peace, even under fiery persecutions. They had grace and peace already; let there be not only continuance, but increase.—R. F.

Vers. 3—12.—*Salvation in its completion.* I. THE SUBJECT OF A DOXOLOGY. 1. *God praised.* "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Peter may have seen the same form of words in Paul's opening doxologies in 2 Corinthians and Ephesians. Having called up his readers before his mind and saluted them, he here bursts forth in an ascription of praise to God. To praise God is with becoming feelings to acknowledge what he is or has done. As this is pleasing to God (Ps. l. 23), so also,

if we are much exercised on what God is or has done, it is a relief and delight to us. It is not the God of Christ (as the language might seem to imply) that is here praised, but God generally. It is the exalted Name that is fitted to call forth all sacred feelings. But there is added the *Christian* interpretation. We praise "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." We praise *Jesus Christ*, who, according to Divine appointment, did saving work for us. We praise him as *our Lord* who receives our service for God and dispenses to us the Divine blessings of salvation. We praise not only him, but *his Father*, who, in the incarnation of the Son and atonement made by him in his death, has shown us *Fatherly* love. 2. *God praised for his mercy.* "Who according to his great mercy." The Pauline expression is "God who is rich in mercy" (Eph. ii. 4). Mercy has been called the *internal impulsive cause* of salvation. It was mercy which moved God to come to our help in our misery. Mercy up to the measure of the human would have been insufficient as a cause. For we rose up before his mind as those who had rebelled against his authority and brought on our own misery. But "let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man." It was mercy up to the measure of the Divine—great beyond all mensurement—that led to our being rescued. 3. *God praised for his mercy in begetting us again unto a life of hope.* "Begot us again unto a living hope." Peter appears here as the apostle of hope, as Paul is the apostle of faith and John the apostle of love. Regeneration has been called the *formal cause* of salvation. The mercy of God moved him to put forth creative power upon us so as to bring us into a new relation to himself, and give us the commencement of a new life (Eph. ii. 5). This life is meantime a life of hope. What we were born out of was a state of hopelessness (Eph. ii. 12); what we are born into is a state of hope, and a state in which hope is "living," i.e. instinct with life, full of energy, able to bear up the spirit, able to resist decay. 4. *God praised for his thus begetting us by means of the resurrection of Christ.* "By the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Peter goes beyond the meritorious cause of our salvation in Christ's death, and sees the power which can regenerate in his resurrection (efficient cause). Because he rose again after being dead, therefore God can put forth power upon dead hearts, and upon dead bodies too, to raise them to newness of life. It is not only in the power of Christ's resurrection that we live, but also that our life is a life of hope. We see, in the fact that our Head lives with a full and glorious life, what can make our life full and glorious too. 5. *God praised for his thus begetting us with a view to an inheritance.* (1) *The inheritance in its peculiar nature.* "Unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." The inheritance is the *final cause* of salvation. It is the objective appointment corresponding to the subjective hope. "As long as we journey we have the living hope; when the journey is finished the living hope becomes the promised inheritance." Here again the Jewish colouring of Peter's thought appears. As the elect people, we have an inheritance (an apportioned possession), such as the land of Canaan was to look forward to. The Canaan condition represented rest, satisfaction, in comparison with the wilderness condition. In describing the antitype of the land of Canaan, Peter proceeds not positively, but by *negation*. It is an inheritance *not subject to corruption*. The fruits of the earthly Canaan, however good, perished with the using; not so the fruits of the heavenly Canaan. It is an inheritance *not susceptible of defilement*. The earthly Canaan, though sacred, could be defiled (Jer. ii. 7); not so the heavenly Canaan. It is an inheritance *that fadeth not away*. The flowers of the earthly Canaan soon faded away; not so the beauty of the heavenly Canaan. Thus by three negatives does he magnify the inheritance. (2) *The inheritance in its present relation to us.* *The inheritance reserved for the heirs.* "Reserved in heaven for you." Far separated from us, it is beyond the perils of earth, and is inalienable from us. *The heirs guarded for the inheritance.* "Who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." We are safe guarded as in a citadel. That which guards us is the power of God, so that it is active toward us. That by means of which the power of God guards us is our faith, so that we are not to be inactive toward God. That toward which the power of God guards us is our salvation in its completion, which is not the inheritance, but rather the condition of the inheritance (to be interpreted by reference to the Israelites, who, when their salvation was completed, enjoyed the possession of the land of Canaan).

This salvation is viewed as hidden, but already in existence, only waiting God's time for its revelation, which is not to be till the *last time* (also hidden).

II. THE SOURCE OF JOY IN ITS COMPLETION. 1. *The last time is associated with joy.* "Wherein ye greatly rejoice." Peter has a way of moving from one section to another by catching up the last word. The preceding section concluded with the words "in the last time;" this section commences with the words "in which," *i.e. in which last time.* If "in" retains the same force (which is only natural), then the present tense following comes to have (as it sometimes has) the force of a future. This view greatly helps to clear up the thought in this section. The use of the present in this way has the effect of "emphasizing the certainty of the future joy." In the last time we are greatly to rejoice (originally, "dance for joy"). We are to have a joy which cannot be repressed, but must find expression in outward signs of triumph. 2. *The present time may be associated with being put to grief.* "Though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold temptations." Instead of rejoicing (as we shall do in the future), we may now be put to grief. The being put to grief is regarded as from without. The grief arises within us from temptations, which we may think of as events of an adverse nature. Those make an assault on us, and, from our imperfect spiritual life, would lead us into sin. It is said in 2 Tim. iii. 12, "Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." There are events in the lives of us all that, instead of making us sad, make us glad. But none of us are exempted from the coming on us of sorrowful events. If they do come, there is a "need be" for them. As our needs are manifold, so the temptations appointed for us as suited to them are manifold too. The view that the apostle has reference to future joy is confirmed by the language here. For first, the being put to grief in manifold temptations is regarded retrospectively. Looking back from the time of rejoicing, it is said, "Ye have been put to grief." Again, the "little while" has its due force only when compared with the length of the future joy. 3. *The end sought in our now being put to grief is the joy of future recognition.* "That the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire, might be found unto praise and glory and honour." We are not to think here of the putting to proof, nor of the means of proof (untoward events), but of the approving that comes out in the result. What comes out in faith, when brought into contact with temptations, is its sincerity and its strengthening. Faith thus sincere and strengthened is more precious than perishable gold: are we to wonder at the treatment being similar? Gold is subjected to fire for the purpose of being tested and purified: shall not imperishable faith be similarly tested and purified? "Gold is committed to the fire, not for its destruction, but for glory;" so our faith, after having passed through "fiery trial," as the result of judicial investigation, is to be "found unto praise and glory and honour." There is an accumulation of words to bring out what there will be, in contrast with the present needful fire, to make us glad. 4. *Our joy will be completed at the revelation of Jesus Christ.* (1) *What there is in the revelation of Jesus Christ to give us joy.* "At the revelation of Jesus Christ." In 2 Tim. i. 12 there is reference to the first "appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus;" the reference here is to his *second* appearing, for which Peter uses what Trench calls the grander word (grand as "appearing" is). There was revelation in his first appearing. There was a bringing out into accomplished fact of the hidden counsel of God. It was made clear how God was to proceed in laying the foundation of human salvation. In the Incarnation we have the essential revelation. But even in revealing Jesus Christ was hidden. It was not known what depth of love there was in his heart, and what glory properly belonged to him. His revelation will be a joyful event, because it will be the full disclosure of his grace, with such glorious accompaniment as is fitted to exalt him as Saviour. (2) *The foregoing conditions of joy at the revelation of Jesus Christ.* (a) *Love.* "Whom not having seen ye love." Peter was not among those who had not seen Christ; he therefore does not include himself. We are told of one who had three wishes—that he had seen our Lord in the flesh, that he had heard Paul preach, and that he had seen Rome in its glory. There is a certain advantage to our loving in our standing at a distance from our Lord's day. We stand clear of prejudices connected with our having seen him; and we have all the facts before us, so that we can form an accurate conception of what he was and did. If we get at the meaning of

these facts, and have our hearts touched with love to him, then the first condition is fulfilled of our having joy at his revelation. (b) *Faith*. "On whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing." A point has been raised regarding love coming here before belief. "Why is the natural order of things reversed? How can we love before we believe? Must we not first feel convinced of the reality of Christ and the genuineness of his claims? Must we not on this conviction trust him, and so have love generated in our souls?" The answer given is that "in the history of a soul's coming to Christ we are touched by the narrative of his sufferings, or stirred by an appeal, or moved by the grandeur of some utterance," and thus are led on to the more difficult exercise of trust. It may be said that love is mentioned first as lying near to our rejoicing as it ever will do. It would be an advantage if (prejudice aside and an imperfect conception aside) we saw the Object of our love. The present substitute for seeing is believing. We are to have living intercourse with an unseen Saviour until, to the great advantage of our love and also of our joy, our faith becomes sight. (3) *How our joy at the revelation of Jesus Christ is characterized*. (a) *As transcendently excellent*. "Ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory." The present tense is again used with the force of a future. When at the revelation of Jesus Christ, with hearts full of love to him, we see, our joy will be unspeakable. "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." What a joy to look upon him, then, in the human nature which he took upon him! to look upon him with the marks testifying to the mysterious sufferings through which he came! to look upon him finally triumphing over sin and death! It will be unspeakable experience of joy added to experience of joy beyond all power of expression. It will be as if the joy of a lifetime were concentrated into a moment. It will also be *full of glory*, the joy of a glorified spirit in a glorified body in presence of the glory of the Redeemer. (b) *As faith's reward in the soul's experience*. "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." The revelation of Jesus Christ is to be the time for distributing rewards. What we are to receive as our reward is not apart from our foregoing faith; it is its *goal*. Faith is the principle of life: the soul is the subject of the life, which is to be saved or lost. When Christ makes our faith issue in our emancipation from all sin and imperfection and in the vigorous exercise of all our powers, our joy will be complete.

III. THE SUBJECT OF INQUIRY BY PROPHETS AND ANGELS. 1. *Prophets*. (1) *Their private desire and public function*. "Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you." Salvation, carried forward from the preceding section, must continue to have the sense of completed salvation. It is a magnifying of this salvation that prophets had to do with privately and publicly. They are mentioned here as a great order. They had their private exercises. Concerning the salvation they "sought and searched diligently." There is the idea of intensified search in both verbs. If there is a distinction, the one may refer more to the *end*, and the other to the *means*. They eagerly tried to grasp what the full salvation was to be. The remarkable thing is that their private desire was in connection with their public function, which is here defined as a telling beforehand of the grace that was to come to men in Christian times. What they were eager to find out was the *Christian elements* contained in the salvation. This is pointed to in *grace*, which is to be referred to that on which salvation depends, and by which also it is characterized. There was a display commencing with the incarnation of the Son of God on our behalf, which certainly was not due to our merit, but only to grace. There is additional grace in our living in Christian times. (2) *To what their inquiry was directed*. "Searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them." The latter of the verbs is here continued (not in the intensive form). Their search was directed to two connected points—*time* and *manner of time*. This must be referred to *Messianic time and circumstance* as giving a gracious character to the salvation. How were they led to think of a salvation connected with Christian facts? In a very direct way—the *Spirit of Christ* was in them. It was this that made the prophets a great order; and yet in this respect they were not entirely

removed from us, for in Rom. viii. 9 it is said of us that we have the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit of Christ was in them to fit them for their prophetic function. The language is remarkable as pointing to the pre-existence of Christ, and also to the Spirit in the prophets as proceeding, not directly from the Father, but from the Son, and the Son that was to be incarnate. The language is also to be noted as explaining the *private desire* of the prophets. If they had been uttering their own thoughts, they would have understood them; but as they were uttering the thoughts of the Spirit of Christ, they had, as well as other men, to set themselves to understand them. The matter of revelation was closely related to the Revealer. It was a testifying beforehand to the sufferings of Christ (destined for Christ), and the glories that should follow them. There was a time when Peter did not see what he here sets down. His mind was full of the triumphs of the Messiah, but not of the triumphs as founded on sufferings. "Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee." Since that time he had read prophecy in another light. "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself." The sufferings of Christ reached their climax in his death; the glories of Christ began with his resurrection, and cannot be said to have yet reached their climax. The plural indicates that, as there was a plenitude of suffering, so there will also be a plenitude of glory. Our salvation cannot be apprehended aright apart from both Christ's sufferings and glories. Both enter into it to give it character. We are saved not only in virtue of Christ's death, but also in virtue of Christ's triumph. (3) *Favoured position of men in Christian times. As ministered to by prophets.* "To whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things." It was revealed to prophets that the things which they announced beforehand would not be fulfilled in their day. They had application not to themselves, but to others. This was *not altogether repressing* so far as they were concerned. It set their mind at rest for their own day; and for the future they could still closely examine their own words, and try to form some conception of what gospel realities were to be. Picturing the gospel day as well as they could, they would look forward to it with longing desire. It was *honouring* so far as Christian believers were concerned. Prophets, in what they said of the gospel day, had been ministering unto them. *As ministered to by apostles.* "Which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Ghost sent forth from heaven." The same things which had been announced beforehand had then been announced as fulfilled. The announcers were the apostles. They also are a great order having to do with salvation—"the glorious company of the apostles." Their function was to preach the gospel, *i.e.* the message of salvation, but connected with the facts of Christ having come into the world, having suffered, and thereafter passing into heaven. They were fitted for their work not otherwise than were the prophets. It is not said that the Spirit of Christ was in them; but the Holy Spirit by whose influence they were moved in their preaching is represented as sent forth from heaven, *i.e.* as following on Christ's going into heaven. As thus endowed, they could preach the gospel with proper unction, and unerringly. We have not the presence of the apostles; but we have many of those statements of truth which, under the guidance of the Spirit, they omitted. 2. *Angels.* "Which things angels desire to look into." This is a third great order connected with salvation. The things announced by apostles which before had been predicted, *i.e.* gospel facts which give meaning to salvation, angels desire to look into. "God manifest in the flesh" was "seen of angels." While the mystery was being evolved they were held in rapt wonder. What is here said has reference to an after-period. After Christ has undergone "the suffering of death," and passed into glory, they are still occupied with inquiring into the meaning of the facts. The language is remarkable. Angels desire to bend aside, *i.e.* from matters properly belonging to them, to examine into, *i.e.*, matters belonging properly to men. Whatever happens under the government of God cannot but be interesting to them. They are profoundly interested in the facts pertaining to human salvation as throwing a new and powerful light on the character of God, and opening up to them therewith a new and higher life. For although they cannot undergo the saving change, yet they can take the great facts of the gospel into them for their spiritual nourishment and growth.—R. F.

Vers. 13—25.—*The pilgrim-life.* I. PREPAREDNESS. 1. *Unity of the energies.* "Wherefore girding up the loins of your mind." The apostle has been dwelling on the bright future before the people of God. We are pilgrims on our way to our inheritance. It becomes us *therefore* to gird up the loins of our mind. It belongs to the richness of our endowment that there are strong forces in our nature. But these are naturally in a state of *dispersion*. We are like travellers with loose flowing robes which form an impediment in walking. We need to gird up the loins of our mind—to gather up our scattered energies, to unite them in a common bond for the accomplishment of a common end. For this there is needed a vigour of will which is by no means common. There is a Chinese proverb which says, "Most men have passions, strong men have wills." We are not to allow ourselves to be swayed by alternate passions, which counteract one another and involve loss of force. We need all the vigour we can command for sustaining us in the accomplishment of our arduous journey, in the execution of our difficult plan. It has been pointed out that even for success in an evil undertaking there is needed an *harmonious* character, or agreement of the powers. And men have sometimes failed in their evil schemes just because they have not been bad enough; there has been some better feeling of their nature drawing them back (Macbeth). For all success we must be able to say with Paul, "*This one thing I do.*" It is to be observed that the language here comes with a special appropriateness from Peter, to whom were spoken the words of destiny, "When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." 2. *Sobriety.* "Be sober." "Peter commands," says Calvin, "not merely moderation in eating and drinking, but spiritual sobriety rather, when we shut in all our senses, that they do not intoxicate themselves with the unlawful things of this world." The sobriety here enjoined has a natural association with wakefulness, being a condition of wakefulness. Hence Paul says, "Let us watch and be sober." As thus associated with wakefulness, it naturally follows on girding up the loins. Hence the Master says, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning." We are not to allow the pleasures of the world to bring us into a state of unnatural excitement or of stupor; but we are so to sober ourselves with all sobering thought (such as the vanity of worldly pleasure, the shortness of time) as that with a clear head we can discern the way we are taking, and the end to which it leads. 3. *Hope.* "And set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Stress is laid in this verse on the exercise of hope. There are various degrees in which it may exist. We are to aim at exercising it *perfectly*. One aspect of the perfectness is brought out in the old translation, "*Hope to the end.*" To be thus enduring it must be vigorous, conquering. The ground of hope on our part is grace on the part of God. Grace has already been brought unto us in our election (ver. 1); it is to be signally brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. What we hope for from grace is our inheritance. When Christ is to be glorified then are we also to be enriched from grace. In order that our hope may be perfect or abundant (Rom. xv. 13), we must not only realize the inheritance as well merited for us, but must form some distinct conception of its nature. This is what Paul teaches when he thus prays for his Ephesian converts, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, *what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.*" When gathering up our energies, and sobered against the blandishments of the world, we are also sustained by hope, we are prepared for the journey of life.

II. FASHION. 1. *Not after self.* "As children of obedience, not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in the time of your ignorance." The apostle proceeds on our being *children of obedience* (ver. 2). We are naturalized in obedience, so that we have it as our father. The dignity of our nature lies in this, that we are character-making. We have the power of fashioning ourselves, leaving our own mark on our nature—a power not possessed by the lower creatures. We have not the power of adding any new principle or eradicating any that there is; for we do not stand to our nature as creators; but we can lead to such a change in ourselves as amounts to a second nature. As children of obedience, we are not to fashion ourselves as we please. There is a nega-

tiving here of *lusts*, which are just self in some form or other. If, like many of those addressed in this Epistle (Gentile converts), lusts once had the fashioning of us, that belonged to our *former* life when we were in *ignorance* of Divine things. Now that we are enlightened, let them not have the fashioning of us any more. Let there not be the slightest impress on us from sensuality, from avarice, from falseness, from pride, from worldliness, from ambition, from injustice, from hatred. 2. *After God*. "But like as he which called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy." We are to have the Divine impress on us. We are to fashion ourselves according to the character of him who called us to be his people. This held under the old covenant. The command laid repeatedly on the people of God then was, "Ye shall be holy; for I am holy." As belonging to God and enjoying many tokens of the Divine favour, it was their duty to take the fashion of their life, not from the heathen around them and their pollutions, but from God and his absolute holiness. We have come into their privileges, and also their obligations. As called by God to a rich inheritance in the future, there is for us a *shall be*, a *must be* holy in the holiness of God. We are bound to approve what he approves, to condemn what he condemns. This obligation extends to every part of our life. We are to be holy in *all manner of living*. Whatever holy form there is (purity, generosity, sincerity, humility, spirituality, earnestness, honourableness, gentleness), we are to impress it on all we think, and feel, and say, and do.

III. FEAR ACCOMPANYING THE PILGRIM-STATE. 1. *Fear of judgment*. "And if ye call on him as Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to each man's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear." The fear enjoined here is not the feeling of reverence which we are for ever to cherish toward God as infinitely exalted above us. It is the fear connected with our state of sojourning—our being away for a time from the Father's house, the fear of sin endangering the happiness, if not the certainty, of our home-going. "It is not fear alone, or fear supreme, or fear thwarting or limiting love and hope and joy that the Word of God enjoins, but fear surrounded, intertwined, and subservient. Fear must be like the sentinel—always awake, always on the alert, always faithful, but always aware that he is neither general nor leader of any kind. Although fear in itself and by itself cannot produce truly good or spiritually right action, it yet performs a vital function in keeping the soul awake. Fear rings the alarm-bell and rouses the conscience. It blows the trumpet of warning. Where the sense of right is growing numb the smart blows of fear bring it back to consciousness again. It creates pause and opportunity for all better and nobler things to make themselves heard. To be regardless of dangers is to cut the sinews of effort" (Leckie). Fear is represented as springing out of our view of God as judging. His essential relation to each man (believer or not believer) is that of Judge. He judges *without respect of persons*, i.e. not by appearances, but by the actual realities of the case. He judges according to each man's *work*, i.e. all in which character is displayed. His judgment is ever going forward along with our work; it is to culminate in a pronounced judgment on our work as completed. It is fitted to inspire us with fear, that the Divine judgment accompanies every deed. It is fitted by itself to overwhelm us with fear, that the Divine judgment is to be pronounced on our deeds as a whole. But then as believers we call on (in our prayers acknowledge) this Judge as our Father. That does not make his judgment free from fear. "The judgment of a King does not feel half so searching and painful as that of a Father. It is dreadful to feel that even love, that even a Father's love, condemns me. But still Father is Father, and the heart that clings to the word will find enough in that to keep the fear from paralyzing or even depressing" (Leckie). Let us, then, pass the time of our sojourning in the fear of judgment. Let us not lull ourselves into a feeling of security. Let us realize that there are perils by the way, and that we must never for a moment relax our efforts until we actually possess the inheritance. 2. *Fear of redemption*. *Two points in analogy founded on*. "Knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold." The first point in the analogy is suggested in words which follow ("vain manner of life"). The life of a captive is a *vain* manner of life, i.e. empty of the activities and therefore the pleasures which belong to a life of freedom. The second point in the analogy is brought out. The usual way of redeeming a captive is by *silver* or *gold* being paid for him. The captive who has thus been redeemed has reason to

fear first when he thinks of the life he has escaped, and also when he thinks of the cost of his redemption. (1) *The fear of the life escaped.* "From your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers." The life of sin is a *vain* manner of life, i.e. empty of the holy activities and pleasures which are the contents of a true life. The life of sin is here viewed as *inherited*. When, as in heathenism, wrong ideas and customs are handed down from generation to generation, deliverance presents appalling difficulty. The redeemed to whom Peter wrote had reason to fear, when they saw in the heathen around them what they once had been. When the man rescued sees the bridge or ledge on which he lately stood toppling into the abyss, his first feeling is that of fear. So have we not reason to fear when we think of the life of sin in which we were once involved, or when we see in the sinful lives of men around us what we might have been? (2) *The fear of the manner in which redemption has been effected.* *The cost of redemption.* "But with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ." We were redeemed not with corruptible things, but with *precious blood* (which therefore is to be ranked with incorruptible things and marks incorruptibility as a chief element of the preciousness). "Precious blood" is a description of the blood of Christ, i.e. of him who was the Anointed of God for his redeeming work. He is here represented as offering himself a sacrifice in the way of redeeming. The main point in which his sacrifice differed from all previous sacrifices was that it was no mere prefigurement, but was the real transaction with God on behalf of man. It was no unconscious victim, but conscious, free, morally characterized life in the nature identified with the sin. There is also the representation of the innocent being offered for the guilty and vile. There are two words used to express innocence. Bengel is probably right in the distinction—has not blemish in itself, nor has contracted spot from without. As applied to Christ as a sacrifice, the meaning is, that he had no pollution in himself, neither did he take pollution from without. In his sacrifice we see the required *physical* immaculateness of the animal sacrificed rising into *moral* immaculateness. "That he who sought to give himself as a sacrifice to free the world from sin should have been conscious of being himself a sinner, or felt himself to be in any one respect unclean before God, would have been not merely a contradiction, it would have been a gross impiety" (Ullmann). The two epithets used are negatives; but we must for a full conception think of there being on the positive side absolute excellence. He yielded complete obedience to the Law of God under which he was placed, and, in the result, carried our nature forward into a state of perfection. It was only by his offering life on which God could look with the highest satisfaction that our redemption could be effected. Have we not, then, reason to fear when we think of the precious blood, the incorruptible reality, that has obtained redemption for us? "You have felt, when some blessing came to you, a sort of pain at the thought of your own unworthiness. The kindness of God has made you ashamed. It did not make you glad, as you expected. It rather made you sad and afraid lest you should prove unworthy of it all. So it is with redemption. It shows so grandly and tenderly the love of God; it shows so powerfully God's desire to have you, his determination to win you by love, his resolution that no barriers shall be allowed to stand between you and him. It shows a God so intensely in earnest, both for happiness and holiness, that you feel afraid. He is so much in earnest, and I so careless; he so intent on my salvation, and I so dull and indifferent. He so anxious for me, he the Infinite One so intent on having me, and I, poor worm, so cold about him who is in himself all wealth and glory and blessedness. Such love, such intensity, such sacrifice for me. I am ashamed and I fear—I fear lest I should not respond to all this. What a devotedness and thoroughness, what a living existence it would take to be at all in harmony with such love! And I, shall I be able to come even near to such a course?" (Leckie). *The sphere of its operation.* *Redeemer provided from eternity.* "Who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world." There is similar language in Rev. xiii. 8, "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." The purpose was formed, and the fact taken into account from eternity, that the Second Person of the Godhead was to be sent forth as Redeemer. And therefore, when the world was founded, it was not without respect to redemption. God planned and acted beforehand, as though redemption had taken place—throwing a splendour over material creation, giving a day of grace to men, sending forth redeeming power upon men's souls and, in

some instances, upon men's bodies. In redemption reaching in its operation through preceding times far back into the eternal counsels of God, is there not reason for fear—the fear that we do not sufficiently endeavour to appreciate what has entered so long and so deeply into the thought of God? *Manifested in time.* “But was manifested at the end of the times.” The Redeemer was provided from eternity; he was also the subject of prophecy from a very early time (Gen. iii. 15)—he was manifested, we are told here, “at the end of the times.” Time, according to the idea, is divided into various times. At the beginning of the last of the times Christ was manifested. It was then made clear what the thought of God was. The Incarnation burst forth (not to the carnal eye) in all its wonderfulness. And when we think of the “strong Son of God, immortal Love,” dwelling in our nature and in it redeeming, have we not reason to fear—to fear lest by our sin we dishonour the nature upon which so much love and honour have been bestowed? *Persons benefiting by the manifestation.* “For your sake, who through him are believers in God, which raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; so that your faith and hope might be in God.” Peter's readers were many of them benefited to a very great extent in relation to the time of the manifestation. From being idolaters, by one bound they had got into the position of *Christian* believers. We are also greatly benefited, as having our lifetime on earth connected with the last of the times. Now that Christ has been manifested, we have presented to us what in its essential elements is the highest conception of God. This conception embraces not only God providing the precious blood of Christ for redemption, but, beyond that, showing Christ triumphant in *raising him from the dead and giving him glory*. Thereby God compels, not only our faith, but our hope—our faith in the proof that is given of the redeeming virtue of the blood, and our hope in the pledge that is given of our full redemption, which is a being raised and glorified with our Head. When we think of our having been brought into a position in which our prospects are so great, have we not reason for fear—fear lest we should prove unworthy of what redeeming love has in store for us?

IV. RULE BETWEEN FELLOW-PILGRIMS. 1. *Prerequisite to brotherly love.* “Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren.” What we are to aim at is love of the brethren, i.e. Christian brethren; and, since love is so often and so easily feigned, we are to see to it that it is love not in appearance, but in reality (1 John iii. 18). With a view to this, we are to purify our souls, i.e. ourselves in our individual life. We cannot do this from ourselves; it is only the truth that has the power to sanctify (John xvii. 17). The way in which we are to bring ourselves within the sanctifying influence of the truth is by our living in the element of obedience to the truth, i.e. believing what the truth proclaims, and realizing what the truth requires. We are to think especially of the truth of the gospel. When we grasp what God is in redemption, and allow ourselves to be swayed by the love of redemption, we are prepared for loving the brethren. 2. *Statement of the duty of brotherly love.* “Love one another from the heart fervently.” Cremer remarks on the expression, “loving from the heart,” that it denotes “the love of conscious resolve.” It is love which is here viewed as depending on ourselves. We are to see to it that it comes from the depths of our being. “Fervently,” which should be translated “intently,” points to the energetic way in which we are to give our heart's affections free play. We are to allow nothing to come between them and their object. We are to allow nothing to stop them in the steadiness of their course. We must not think that we only require to be passive to love; to love rightly, our energies, as we are here taught, must be on the stretch. 3. *Ground of brotherly love in regeneration.* (1) *Connection of the Word with regeneration.* “Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the Word of God, which liveth and abideth.” As regenerated, we are capable of attending to the duty of loving one another. Stress is laid on the way in which we have been regenerated. We have been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible. By the seed we are to understand the Word which, lodged in the soul (“implanted Word,” Jas. i. 21), is the beginning of a new and incorruptible life. This Word is also viewed as the outward means by which regeneration is effected. And, as the seed which is the beginning of the new life is said to be incorruptible, so the Word of the Lord by which the new life is effected is said to live and abide. Though its earthly form is not to remain, it has

a living, active power in it which can never fail. The bearing of this is that, being alike in having been born into the new abiding life, we are plainly intended for loving one another. As on the way to the same inheritance, we are to keep up good brotherhood. (2) *Confirmation of the abiding power of the Word.* "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower falleth: but the Word of the Lord abideth for ever." That with which grass is compared is all flesh, i.e. man on the earthly side of his life. That with which the flower of grass is compared is all the glory of flesh—beauty of form, strength of muscle, greatness of intellect, riches, honours. The image sets forth the transitoriness of human life and glory. Grass has only a certain amount of vitality, and, when a certain stage is reached, it withers; it is not otherwise with the flower—it falleth. The language is graphic—the grass we looked upon withered and the flower fell. So the life of man on its earthly side has only a certain amount of endurance, which is soon exhausted, and its greatness soon comes to its decadence. It is otherwise with the Word of the Lord—it abideth for ever. The language in this verse, which is from Isa. xl. 6—8, is not formally introduced as a quotation, and is quoted freely. It gives us an exalted conception of the Word as that by which we are introduced into a life that is never to end. (3) *Means of recognizing the Word.* "And this is the Word of good tidings which was preached unto you." The Word, in this as in the preceding verse, is appropriately the *spoken* Word. It is thought of as the Word of glad contents. It is the Word which had been preached to Peter's readers by Paul and others, so that they could have no difficulty in understanding what was meant by it. "This, therefore, also instructs us where we must seek for the Word of God, viz. in the authentic originals of the apostolic preaching" (Stager).—R. F.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER II.

Ver. 1.—*Wherefore laying aside.* Those who would wear the white robe of regeneration must lay aside the filthy garments (Zech. iii. 3) of the old carnal life. So St. Paul bids us put off the old man and put on the new (Eph. iv. 22, 24; Col. iii. 8, 10; comp. also Rom. xiii. 14, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." The metaphor would be more striking when, at baptism, the old dress was laid aside, and the white chrisom was put on. St. Paul connects the putting on of Christ with baptism in Gal. iii. 27, and St. Peter, when speaking of baptism in ch. iii. 21, uses the substantive (*ἀνθέσεις*) corresponding to the word here rendered "laying aside" (*ἀποθέμενοι*). All malice, and all guile, and hypocries, and envies, and all evil-speaking. The sins mentioned here are all offences against that "unfeigned love of the brethren" which formed the subject of St. Peter's exhortation in the latter part of ch. i. St. Augustine, quoted here by most commentators, says, "*Malitia malo delectatur alieno; invidia bono cruciatur alieno; dolus duplicat; adulatio duplicat linguam; detractio vulnerat famam*" (comp. Eph. iv. 22—31); the close resemblance between the two passages proves St. Peter's knowledge of the Epistle to the Ephesians.

Ver. 2.—*As new-born babes.* The words look back to ch. i. 3, 23. God begat them

again; they were new-born babes in Christ; they must remember their regeneration. The rabbis used the same metaphor of their proselytes; but the apostle was doubtless thinking of the Saviour's words (Matt. xviii. 3; Mark x. 14, 15). *Desire the sincere milk of the Word.* *Desire*, long for it eagerly (*ἐπιποθήσατε*), as babes long for milk, their proper food, the only food necessary for them. It seems that in the adjective *λογικόν* (paraphrased in the Authorized Version "of the Word," rendered "spiritual" or "reasonable" in the Revised Version) there must be a reference to the Word of God (*λόγος Θεοῦ*), mentioned in ch. i. 23 as the instrument of regeneration, and called by our Lord (Matt. iv. 4, from Deut. viii. 3) the food of man (but the Greek in Matthew is *βρῆμα*, as in ch. i. 25). The paraphrase of the Authorized Version gives the general meaning; but the adjective means literally, "reasonable" or "rational." The apostle is not thinking of natural milk, but of that nourishment which the Christian reason can regard as milk for the soul—spiritual food, pure and simple and nourishing, capable of supporting and strengthening those new-born babes who not long ago had been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the Word of God. The adjective occurs only in one other place of Holy Scripture (possibly St. Peter may have read it there)—Rom. xii. 1, *τὴν λογικὴν λατρίαν ὑμῶν*, where it means the

service of the sanctified reason as opposed to the mechanical observance of formal rites. It is explained by Chrysostom as οὐδὲν ἔχουσαν σωματικὴν, οὐδὲν παχὺν, οὐδὲν αἰσθητὸν. Thus it seems nearly to correspond with the use of the word πνευματικός, spiritual, by St. Peter in ver. 5 of this chapter, and by St. Paul in 1 Cor. x. 3, 4. St. Paul also speaks of milk as the proper food of babes in Christ (1 Cor. iii. 2; comp. also Heb. v. 12), though the thought is somewhat different; for St. Peter's words do not convey any reproof for want of progress. This spiritual milk is ἄδολον, pure, undiluted (comp. 2 Cor. ii. 17; iv. 2). That ye may grow thereby; literally, *therein*, in the use of it. All the most ancient manuscripts add the words, "unto salvation." The soul which feeds upon the pure milk of the Word groweth continually unto salvation.

Ver. 3.—If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious; rather, *if ye tasted*. If ye once tasted the good Word of God (Heb. vi. 4, 5), if ye tasted of the heavenly gift which comes through that Word (ch. i. 23), long after it that ye may grow therein. The "if" does not imply doubt; the apostle supposes that they have once tasted, and urges them, on the ground of that first taste, to long for more. The first experiences of the Christian life stimulate God's people to further efforts. The words are a quotation from Ps. xxxiv. 8, "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good!" This makes it less probable that St. Peter is intentionally playing, as some have thought, on the similarity of the words *χρηστός* and *Χριστός*. The confusion was common among the heathen; and Christian writers, as Tertullian, sometimes adopted it; *Christus*, they said, was *chrestus*, "Christ was good;" and Christians, followers of the good Master, followed after that which is good. But St. Peter is simply quoting the words of the psalm, and applying them to the metaphor of milk. It is possible that there may be an under-current of allusion to the Lord's teaching in John vi. The Lord himself is the Bread of life, the food of the soul. The epithet *χρηστός* is not unfrequently used of food (see Luke v. 39).

Ver. 4.—To whom coming as unto a living stone. Omit the words, "as unto," which are not in the Greek, and weaken the sense. The participle is present; the Christian must be ever coming to Christ, not only once for all, but always, every day. The "living Stone" is Christ; the "Lord" of Ps. xxxiv. 8 is Jehovah. St. Peter passes from the figure of milk to that of a chief corner-stone. So St. Paul, in 1 Cor. iii., after saying that he had fed his Corinthian converts "with milk, and not with meat,"

passes first to the figure of labourers on the land, and then to that of builders upon the one foundation "which is Jesus Christ." This, like so many other coincidences, indicates St. Peter's knowledge of St. Paul's Epistles. St. Peter may have been thinking of his own name, the name which Christ gave him when Andrew brought him to the Lord; though the Greek word here is not *πέτρα* or *πέτρος*, but *λίθος*—not the solid native rock on which the temple is built, nor a piece of rock, an unhewn stone, but a stone shaped and wrought, chosen for a chief corner-stone. But the apostle does not mention himself; he omits all reference to his own position in the spiritual building; he wishes to direct his readers only to Christ. He is plainly referring to the Lord's own words in Matt. xxi. 42, where Christ applies to himself the language of Ps. cxviii. He described himself as a Stone; St. Peter adds the epithet "living" (*λίθον ζῶντα*). The figure of a stone is inadequate, all figures are inadequate, to represent heavenly mysteries. This stone is not, like the stones of earth, an inert mass; it is living, full of life; nay, it gives life, as well as strength and coherence, to the stones which are built upon it: for the Lord hath life in himself—he is risen from the dead, and is alive for evermore. Disallowed indeed of men. St. Peter slightly varies the quotation, and attributes to men in general the rejection ascribed in the psalm and in the Gospel to the "builders." "He was despised and rejected of men." In his speech before the Sanhedrin (Acts iv. 11), he had directly applied the prophecy to the chief priests. But chosen of God, and precious; rather, as the Revised Version, *with God elect, precious*, or perhaps better, *honoured*; a reference to Isa. xlviii. 16. He was rejected of the builders, but chosen of God; despised of men, but with God held in honour. The adjective is not the same as that rendered "precious" in ch. i. 19: *τιμιος* there marks the preciousness of the blood of Christ in itself; *ἐντιμιος* here, the honour with which God "hath highly exalted him."

Ver. 5.—Ye also, as lively stones; rather, *living stones*. The word is the same as that used in ver. 4. Christians are living stones in virtue of their union with the one living Stone: "Because I live, ye shall live also." Are built up a spiritual house; rather, *be ye built up*. The imperative rendering seems more suitable than the indicative, and the passive than the middle. The Christian comes; God builds him up on the one Foundation. The apostle says, "Come to be built up; come that ye may be built up." The parallel passage in Jude 20, "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith," might seem

to point to a reflexive rendering here; but the verb used by St. Jude is active, *ἐποικοδομῶντες*. St. Jude is apparently thinking of the human side of the work, St. Peter of the Divine; in the deepest sense Christ is the Builder as well as the Foundation, as he himself said in words doubtless present to St. Peter's mind, "Upon this rock I will build my Church." That Church is the antitype of the ancient temple—a building not material, but spiritual, consisting, not of dead stones, but of sanctified souls, resting on no earthly foundation, but on that Rock which is Christ (comp. Eph. ii. 20—22; 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17; 2 Cor. vi. 16). **An holy priesthood; rather, for (literally, into) a holy priesthood.** The figure again changes; the thought of the temple leads to that of the priesthood. The stones in the spiritual temple are *living stones*; they are also priests. According to the original ideal of the Hebrew theocracy, all Israelites were to be priests: "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation" (Exod. xix. 6). This ideal is fulfilled in the Christian Church; it is a holy priesthood. Here and in ver. 9 the Church collectively is called a priesthood; in the Book of the Revelation (i. 6; v. 10; xx. 6) Christians individually are called priests. Bishop Lightfoot says, at the opening of his dissertation on the Christian ministry, "The kingdom of Christ . . . has no sacred days or seasons, no special sanctuaries, because every time and every place alike are holy. Above all, it has no sacerdotal system. It interposes no sacrificial tribe or class between God and man." He continues, "This conception is strictly an ideal, which we must ever hold before our eyes . . . but which nevertheless cannot supersede the necessary wants of human society, and, if crudely and hastily applied, will lead only to signal failure. As appointed days and set places are indispensable to her efficiency, so also the Church could not fulfil the purposes for which she exists without rulers and teachers, without a ministry of reconciliation, in short, without an order of men who may in some sense be designated a priesthood." The whole Jewish Church was a kingdom of priests; yet there was an Aaronic priesthood. The Christian Church is a holy priesthood; yet there is an order of men who are appointed to exercise the functions of the ministry, and who, as representing the collective priesthood of the whole Church, may be truly called priests. To offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. The priest must have somewhat to offer (Heb. viii. 3). The sacrifices of the ancient Law had found their fulfilment in the one all-sufficient Sacrifice,

offered once for all by the great High Priest upon the altar of the cross. But there is still sacrifice in the Christian Church. "That one Sacrifice is ever present in its atoning virtue and cleansing power; and through that one Sacrifice the priests of the spiritual temple offer up daily spiritual sacrifices—the sacrifice of prayer and praise (Heb. xiii. 15), the sacrifice of alms and oblations (Heb. xiii. 16), and that sacrifice without which prayer and praise and alms are vain oblations, the sacrifice of self (Rom. xii. 1). These spiritual sacrifices are offered up through Jesus Christ the great High Priest (Heb. xiii. 15); they derive their value only from faith in his sacrifice of himself; they are efficacious through his perpetual mediation and intercession; through him alone they are acceptable to God. They are offered through him, and they are acceptable through him. The Greek words admit of either connection; and perhaps are intended to cover both relations.

Ver. 6.—Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture; literally, *because it contains in Scripture*. There is no article according to the best manuscripts; and the verb (*περιέχει*) is impersonal; it is similarly used in Josephus, 'Ant.,' xi. 7. Compare the use of the substantive *περιοχή* in Acts viii. 32. St. Peter proceeds to quote the prophecy (Isa. xxviii. 16) to which he has already referred. Behold, I lay in Zion a chief Cornerstone, elect, precious. The passage is taken from the Septuagint, with the omission of some words not important for the present purpose. St. Paul quotes the same prophecy still more freely (Rom. ix. 33). The rabbinical writers understand it of Hezekiah, but the earlier Jewish interpreters regarded it as Messianic. And he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. The Hebrew words literally mean "shall not be in haste;" the Septuagint appears to give the general meaning. He that believeth (the Hebrew word *יִשְׁמַח* means "to lean upon, to build upon," and so "to trust, to confide") shall not be hurried and excited with vain fears and trepidation; his mind is stayed on the Lord.

Ver. 7.—Unto you therefore which believe he is precious; rather, *unto you therefore which believe is the honour*. The apostle applies the last clause of the prophecy to his readers: they believe, they are built up by faith upon the chief Cornerstone; therefore the honour implied in the words of the prophet, "He that believeth on him shall not be confounded" is theirs. There may also be in the word *τιμή*, honour, an echo of the *ἐντιμος* ("precious," literally, "held in honour") of ver. 6; and thus the further meaning may be implied, "The worth which

the stone has it has for you who believe" (Wiesinger, quoted by Huther). But the first explanation is nearer to the Greek. But unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the Head of the corner; rather, as in the Revised Version, *for such as disbelieve*. St. Peter repeats the words of the hundred and eighteenth psalm, quoted by our Lord in Matt. xxi. 42, and by himself in Acts iv. 11. The builders, the priests and teachers of the Jewish Church, rejected the living Stone; but it became, and indeed through that rejection, the Head of the corner. "He became obedient unto death . . . therefore God also highly exalted him." If this psalm is post-Exilic, as most modern critics think, the corner-stone, in its first application, may be Israel regarded as a whole. The great builders, the rulers of Assyria, Babylon, Persia, had despised that stone; but it was chosen of God, and now it was set in Zion. It is possible, as Hengstenberg and Delitzsch suggest, that the building of the second temple may have recalled to the mind of the psalmist Isaiah's prophecy of the chief Corner-stone.

Ver. 8.—*And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.* St. Peter combines Isa. viii. 14 with his first quotations, as St. Paul also does (Rom. ix. 33), both apostles quoting from the Hebrew, not from the Septuagint, which is quite different, inserting two negatives. The living Stone is not only made the Head of the corner to the confusion of the disobedient, but becomes also to their destruction a Stone of stumbling; they fall on that Stone, and are broken (Matt. xxi. 44). That Stone is a Rock (*πέτρα*), the Rock of Ages, the Rock on which the Church is built; but to the disobedient it is a Rock of offence (*πέτρα σκανδάλου*). *Σκανδάλον* (in Attic Greek *σκανδάληθρον*) is properly the catch or spring of a trap, which makes animals fall into the trap; then a stumbling-block—anything which causes men to fall. We cannot fail to notice how St. Peter echoes the well-remembered words of our Lord, recorded in Matt. xvi. 18, 23. Peter was himself then a *πέτρα σκανδάλου*, a rock of offence. Even to them which stumble at the Word, being disobedient; literally, *who being disobedient stumble at the Word*—the relative referring back to "them which be disobedient" in ver. 7. This seems better than (with Huther and others) to take *τῷ λόγῳ* with *ἀπειθοῦντες*, "who stumble, being disobedient to the Word." *Ἀπειθοῦντες*, literally, "unbelieving," contains here, as frequently, the idea of disobedience, wilful opposition. St. Peter seems to come very near to St. John's use of *λόγος* for the personal Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. Whereunto also they were appointed. "Whereunto" (*εἰς ὃ*) cannot

refer back to ver. 5; God had appointed them to be built up in his spiritual house, but they were disobedient. It must refer either to *ἀπειθοῦντες*—sin is punished by sin; for sin in God's awful judgment hardens the heart; the disobedient are in danger of eternal sin (Mark iii. 29, according to the two oldest manuscripts)—or, more probably, to *προσκόπτουσιν*; it is God's ordinance that disobedience should end in stumbling; but that stumbling does not necessarily imply condemnation (see Rom. xi. 11). The word, the preaching of Christ crucified, was to the Jews a stumbling-block (1 Cor. i. 23). But not all stumbled that they might fall. Nevertheless, perseverance in disobedience must end in everlasting death.

Ver. 9.—*But ye are a chosen generation.* The pronoun "ye" is emphatic. St. Peter is drawing a contrast between the disobedient and unbelieving Jews and Christian people whether Jews or Gentiles; he ascribes to Christians, in a series of phrases quoted from the Old Testament, the various privileges which had belonged to the children of Israel. The words, "a chosen generation" (*γένος ἐκλεκτόν*), are from Isa. xliii. 20, *Γένος που τὸ ἐκλεκτόν*. The Corner-stone is elect, precious; the living stones built thereupon are elect likewise. The whole Christian Church is addressed as an elect race, one race, because all its members are begotten again of the one Father. A royal priesthood. Instead of "holy," as in ver. 5, St. Peter has here the epithet "royal." He follows the Septuagint Version of Exod. xix. 6; the Hebrew has "a kingdom of priests." The word "royal" may mean that God's elect shall sit with Christ in his throne, and reign with him (Rev. iii. 21; v. 10), and that in some sense they reign with him now over their lower nature, their desires and appetites; or, more probably, the priesthood of Christians is called "royal" because it belongs to the King—"a priesthood serving Jehovah the King, just as we speak of 'the royal household'" (Weiss, quoted by Huther). *An holy nation.* Also from Exod. xix. 6. The Israelites were a holy nation as separated from the heathen and consecrated to God's service by circumcision. Christians of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, are one nation under one King, separated to his service, dedicated to him in holy baptism. *A peculiar people.* The Greek words, *λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν*, represent the words, *לֵבְיִים עַם*, of Deut. vii. 6, translated by the LXX. *λαὸς περιούσιον*, "a special people" (Authorized Version). St. Paul also has this translation in Titus ii. 14. The Hebrew word *לֵבְיִים* in Mal. iii. 17 is rendered by the LXX. *εἰς*

περιποίησιν, by the Authorized Version "my jewels." The children of Israel are called *אֲנִי הָאֵלֹהִים*, as the *peculium*, the private, special, treasured possession of God. God says of them, in Isa. xliii. 21, "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise;" rendered by the LXX. *Λαόν μου ὃν περιποίησάμην τὰς ἀρεὰς μου διηγέσθαι*. God hath now chosen us Christians to be the Israel of God; the Christian Church is his *peculium*, his treasure, "a people for God's own possession" (Revised Version). The literal meaning of the Greek words used by St. Peter is "a people for acquisition," or "for keeping safe," the verb having the sense of "gaining, acquiring," and also that of "preserving, keeping for one's self" (comp. 1 Thess. v. 9; also Acts xx. 28, "The Church of God, which he purchased (ὅν περιποιήσατο) with his own blood"). That ye should show forth the praises of him. That ye should tell out, publish abroad. The verb is found nowhere else in the New Testament. The word translated "praises" (*ἀρεὰς*, literally, "virtues"), so very common in classical writers, occurs in the New Testament only here, 2 Pet. i. 3, 5, and Phil. iv. 8. Here St. Peter is quoting from the Septuagint Version of Isa. xliii. 21 (the word is similarly used in Isa. xlii. 12 and lxiii. 7). Perhaps the best rendering is that of the Revised Version, "excellencies." Who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. He had chosen them before the foundation of the world; he called them when they received the gospel: "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called." He called them out of the darkness of ignorance and sin. The Gentiles walked in utter darkness, in less measure the Jews also. The light of his presence is marvellous, wonderful; those who walk in that light feel something of its irradiating glory.

Ver. 10.—Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God. St. Peter quotes the prophecy of Hosea (ii. 23), as St. Paul also does in Rom. ix. 25, 26. And as St. Paul applies the prophet's words (said originally of the Jews) to the Christian Church, to those called "not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles," so apparently does St. Peter here. They were not a people; "Ne populus quidem," says Bengel, "necum Dei populus." It is the calling of God which gives a unity to the Church gathered out of all races and all lands, and makes it the people of God. Which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. The aorist participle, *ἀπεθέρνεις*, implies that that mercy had been obtained at a definite time, at their conversion.

Ver. 11.—Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims. St. Peter returns

to practical topics: he begins his exhortation in the affectionate manner common in Holy Scripture. He calls his readers "strangers and pilgrims." The word here rendered "strangers" (*παροικοί*) is equivalent to the classical *μέτοικοι*, and means "foreign settlers, dwellers in a strange land." The second word (*παρεπίδημοι*, translated "strangers" in ch. i.) means "visitors" who tarry for a time in a foreign country, not permanently settling in it. It does not contain the ideas associated with the modern use of "pilgrim;" though that word, derived from the Latin *peregrinus*, originally meant no more than "sojourner." St. Peter is plainly using the words metaphorically—his readers were citizens of the heavenly country; on earth they were sojourners. Both words occur in the Septuagint Version of Ps. xxxix. 12 (xxxviii. 13 in the Greek), with the same metaphorical meaning. Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul. Strangers and pilgrims should remember their distant home, and not follow the practices of the strange land in which they sojourn. The lusts of the flesh are all those desires which issue out of our corrupt nature (comp. Gal. v. 16—21). They "war against the soul." "Non modo impediunt," says Bengel, "sed oppugnant; grande verbum" (comp. Rom. vii. 23). St. Peter uses the word "soul" here for the whole spiritual nature of man, as in ch. i. 9, 22.

Ver. 12.—Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles. If we read *ἀπέχεσθαι* in ver. 11 (some ancient manuscripts have *ἀπέχεσθε*), there is a slight irregularity in the construction, as the participle *ἐχούρες* is nominative; it gives more force and vividness to the sentence (comp. in the Greek, Eph. iv. 2; Col. iii. 16). The conversation (*ἀναστροφή*, mode of life or behaviour) of the unconverted is described as "vain" in ch. i. 18; the conversation of Christians must be seemly (*καλή*), exhibiting the beauty of holiness. The Churches to which St. Peter wrote were in Gentile countries; they must be careful, for the honour of their religion, to set a good example among the heathen—a warning, alas! too often neglected in modern as well as in ancient times. That, whereas they speak against you as evil-doers; literally, *wherein*, in the matter in which they speak, i.e. in reference to manner of life. Christians were commonly accused of "turning the world upside down;" of doing "contrary to the decrees of Cæsar," as at Thessalonica (Acts xvii. 6, 7); of being atheists and blasphemers of the popular idolatry, as at Ephesus (Acts xix. 37). Suetonius calls them a "genus hominum superstitionis novæ et maleficæ" ('Vit. Neron.', ch. xvi.). Probably the grosser accusations of Thyes-

tean banquets, etc., came later. They may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. The word rendered, "which they shall behold" (*ἐποπτεύοντες*, or, according to some of the older manuscripts, *ἐποπτεύοντες*, beholding), occurs only here and in ch. iii. 2. It implies close attention; the Gentiles watched the conduct of the Christians, narrowly scrutinizing it to discover faults and inconsistencies. The use of the corresponding substantive, *ἐπίσκοπος*, in 2 Pet. i. 16 is a coincidence to be noticed. It is not probable that there is any reference to the heathen use of the word in connection with the Eleusiniian Mysteries. St. Peter hopes that this close observation of the lives of Christian people would lead the Gentiles to glorify God; he was thinking, perhaps, of our Lord's words in the sermon on the mount: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Perhaps in the following clause also we may trace an echo of the Saviour's words in Luke xii. 44, "Because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation" (*ἐπισκοπῆς*, as here). St. Peter hopes that the holy lives of Christians may be made the means of saving many Gentile souls in the time of visitation; that is, when God should visit the heathen with his converting grace, seeking to draw them to himself, whether by gracious chastisement or by the preaching of his servants. This seems more natural than to understand the words of God's visitation of the Christians in the persecutions which were impending; though it is true that many Gentiles were won to Christ by the calm and holy bearing of suffering Christians.

Ver. 13.—Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man. The aorist passive (*ὑποτάγητε*) is used, as often, in a middle sense. The word for "ordinance" is *κρίσις*, which in classical Greek means "foundation," as of a city; but in the New Testament is used elsewhere only of the works of God, in the sense of "creation," or "a creature" (see Mark xvi. 15; Col. i. 23, etc.). Hence some, as De Wette, translate the words, "to every human creature," supporting their view by ch. v. 5. But on the whole this seems unlikely; *ὑποτάσσειν κρίσις* is a strange and awkward periphrasis for *ὑποτάσσειν*. It is better to understand it as meaning a human creation or foundation. Certainly "there is no power but of God" (Rom. xiii. 1); but the form which that power assumes is a human institution. St. Peter bids his readers to submit themselves to the *de facto* form of government. For the Lord's sake. Not from human motives, as fear of punishment; but for the Lord's sake, because "the

powers that be are ordained of God," and in obeying them we obey the ordinance of God. Christians were commonly accused of insubordination, of doing "contrary to the decrees of Cæsar" (Acts xvii. 7); they must show by their conduct that these accusations are false, that the progress of the gospel be not hindered. Whether it be to the king, as supreme. By "the king" is meant the Roman emperor, who was frequently so described in the Greek writers. Nero was emperor when St. Peter wrote. Christians were to obey even him, wicked tyrant as he was; for his power was given him from above, as the Lord himself had said of Pilate (John xix. 11).

Ver. 14.—Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him; literally, *through him*. Some commentators, following Calvin, understand the pronoun of the Lord. Certainly, governors are sent through him; he "ordereth all things, both in heaven and earth." But it seems more natural in this place to refer the pronoun to the nearer substantive, the king; it was through the Roman emperor that the various governors, legates, etc., were sent from time to time (as the Greek present participle implies) to administer the provinces. For the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well. Observe the close resemblance to Rom. xiii. 3, 4. St. Peter recognizes the Roman sense of justice which we see in men like Festus and Gallio. At first the Jews were the persecutors of the Christians; the Roman magistrates were their protectors. St. Peter wrote before the great outbreaks of Roman persecution; he was himself to suffer under that emperor whose authority he upheld.

Ver. 15.—For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. The Gentiles speak against the Christians as evil-doers; they are to put their accusers to silence by well-doing; this is to be their answer rather than indignant self-vindication. The Greek word rendered "put to silence" (*φισμῶν*) means literally "to muzzle" (comp. Matt. xxii. 12; Mark iv. 39; 1 Cor. ix. 10). The word for "ignorance" (*ἀγνοῖα*) occurs, besides this passage, only in 1 Cor. xv. 34, where it evidently means "culpable, self-caused ignorance." The word for "foolish" (*ἄφρων*) is a strong one—it means "senseless" (comp. 1 Cor. xv. 36). Here it has the article, "the foolish men," i.e. those "who speak against you as evil-doers."

Ver. 16.—As free. This verse is not to be taken with what follows, for it does not well cohere with the contents of ver. 17; but either with ver. 14 (ver. 15 being regarded as parenthetical) or with ver. 15, notwithstanding the change of case in the original,

which presents no real difficulty; the meaning being that Christian freedom must show itself, not in licence, but in willing obedience to constituted authorities: "Not only for wrath, but for conscience' sake" (Rom. xiii. 5). Those whom the truth makes free are free indeed, but true freedom implies submission to legitimate authority. And not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness; literally, *not having your liberty as a cloke*. The word rendered "cloke" (*ἐρικλυμμα*) is used in the Septuagint (Exod. xxvi. 14) for the covering of the tabernacle. The pretence of Christian liberty must not be made a covering, a concealment, of wickedness. But as the servants of God. The truest liberty is that of the servants of God; his service is perfect freedom (comp. Rom. vi. 16—23).

Ver. 17.—Honour all men. St. Peter illustrates the well-doing which he enjoins in ver. 15, drawing out his general exhortation into four rules of conduct. First, he bids us give honour to all men. The Christians of Asia Minor saw heathenism and vice all around them; they heard of the abominable life of Nero and his courtiers at Rome. They were conscious of a great and elevating change which had passed over themselves; St. Peter has just been enumerating the dignities and privileges of the Christian life. But they must not be lifted up; they must despise no one, but honour in all men the handiwork of God, created after God's own image, though sadly marred and defaced by sin. Respect is due to all men, of course in varying degrees and to be shown in different ways; but in some sense it is due to all, to the humblest and even to the worst. The aorist imperative (*τιμήσατε*) seems to lay down this principle as a sharp, definite rule, to be accepted at once, and to be applied as need arises, according to the circumstances of each case. The three following imperatives are present; the duties which they prescribe are viewed as continuous, recognized elements in well-doing. There was something new and strange in the command to honour all men; it is expressed forcibly, once for all, by the aorist imperative. Love the brotherhood. The word *ἀδελφότης*, brotherhood, is peculiar to St. Peter; it stands for the aggregate of Christian brethren regarded as one body in Christ. The Lord bids us "love our enemies." St. Peter's rule does not weaken the force of the Saviour's precept. But love must vary in depth and degree according to the varying relations of life; and the love which true Christians feel for the like-minded must be one of its strongest forms. Fear God. Honour the king. The holy fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. The fear of God as the King of kings will

lead us to give due honour to earthly princes, who rule by his controlling providence. It was especially necessary to urge the fear of God as a motive, when the king to be honoured was such as Nero.

Ver. 18.—Servants. The word is not *δούλοι*, slaves, but *οἰκέται*, household servants, domestics. St. Peter may have used it as a less harsh term, in Christian kindness and courtesy; or he may have chosen it purposely to include the large class of freedmen and other dependents who were to be found in the houses of the great. The frequent mention of slaves in the Epistles shows that many of the first Christians must have been in a condition of servitude (comp. 1 Cor. vii. 21—23; Eph. vi. 5—8; Col. iii. 22; 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2, etc.). It was only natural that men should feel uneasy and irritable under the yoke of slavery as they came to learn the equality of all men in the sight of God, and to understand the blessed privileges and the high hopes of Christians. The apostles counselled submission and resignation to the will of God. Slavery was an unnatural institution; it must in time disappear under the softening influences of the gospel. But Christian slaves were to wait in faith and patience. The sacred writers use language of studied moderation, carefully avoiding any expressions which might be regarded as exciting to violence or revolutionary outbreaks. Be subject to your masters with all fear. The participle *ὑποτασσόμενοι* seems to look back to the imperative *ὑποτάγητε* in ver. 13; the relation of slaves to their lords being one of the ordinances of man alluded to there (comp. Eph. vi. 5, where St. Paul bids slaves to be obedient to their masters "with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ"). The holy fear of God, by whose providence they were set in that lowly station, would involve the fear of failing in their duty to their masters. All fear; not only fear of punishment, but also fear of neglecting duty. Not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. Servants must not make the character of their masters an excuse for disobedience; if their masters are froward (*σκολιού*, literally, "crooked, perverse"), still they must be submissive to the will of God.

Ver. 19.—For this is thankworthy; literally, *this is grace* (comp. Luke vi. 32, *ποία ὑμῖν χάρις ἐστὶ*; "What thank have ye?" where the parallel passage in St. Matthew is *τίνα μισθὸν ἔχετε*; "What reward have ye?"). A comparison of these passages seems to show that *χάρις* and *μισθός* are used in a similar sense as expressive of God's condescending love. In his gracious tenderness he speaks of reward, though we deserve only punishment; he even speaks of thanks, though we deserve only condemnation. Other

possible explanations are, "This is the work of God's grace;" or, "This is lovely;" or, "This is favour;" or "This implies" or "This causes favour with God." If a man for conscience toward God; literally, *for conscience of God*; that is, consciousness of God's presence, of his will, of our duties to him. This is better than to take the genitive as subjective, and to interpret, "because of the consciousness of God," because he sees and knows all that we do and say and think (comp. 1 Cor. viii. 7, where "conscience of the idol" seems to mean a belief or half-belief in the real existence of the god supposed to be represented by the idol). Endure grief, suffering wrongfully; literally, *grieves*, λύσας (comp. λυπηθέντες, ch. i. 6). St. Peter echoes our Lord's teaching in the sermon on the mount (Matt. v. 39).

Ver. 20.—For what glory is it? The word translated "glory" (κλέος), common in Greek poetry, occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, first, "rumour, report;" then "fame, renown." If, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently; literally, *if sinning and being buffeted*. The word translated "buffeted" (κλᾶφι δύνει), used by St. Matthew and St. Mark in describing our Saviour's sufferings, has a figurative meaning in 1 Cor. iv. 11; 2 Cor. xii. 7. It is probably used literally here; blows were a common occurrence in the life of slaves. To be patient when suffering deserved punishment is often difficult, but it is no more than a simple duty; it would not be for the glory of religion. Christian slaves ought to do their duty to their masters, and not deserve punishment. But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently; literally, *but if doing well, and suffering*. The words "for it" are not in the Greek. This is acceptable with God. If we read "for" (τοῦτο γάρ), with some of the best manuscripts, we must supply "there is glory" after the last clause. "If, doing well and suffering, ye take it patiently, there is glory (κλέος), for this is thank-worthy (χάρις) with God." Such conduct will bring honour to Christianity, for it is thankworthy even in the sight of God. When Christian men and women took cruel sufferings patiently and joyfully, as the apostles did (Acts v. 41; xvi. 25), that was more than a mere recognized duty—that showed the power of Christian motives, that brought glory to Christianity, and was held to be thankworthy (such is God's gracious condescension) even in the sight of God. The word for "acceptable" here is that translated "thankworthy" in ver. 19, where see note.

Ver. 21.—For even hersunto were ye called; that is, to do good and to suffer patiently (comp. 1 Thess. iii. 3). Omit

"even," for which there is no authority. St. Peter is speaking of slaves, but what he says of slaves is true in some sense of all Christians (comp. Acts xiv. 22). Because Christ also suffered for us; rather, *for you*, with the oldest manuscripts. You do not suffer alone; Christ also suffered, and that for you slaves, on your behalf. "Christ himself," says Bengel, "was treated as a slave; he deigns to exhibit his own conduct as an example to slaves." Leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps. The oldest manuscripts have the second person here in both places. Leaving (ἐπακολουπών), leaving behind; Bengel says, "in abitu ad patrem." The Greek for "example" is ὑπογραμμός—a word which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means a copy set by a writing or drawing master, which was to be exactly reproduced by his pupils (see 2 Macc. ii. 28, in the Greek). The life of Christ is our model. In particular St. Peter urges us to imitate the Lord's patience in suffering undeserved afflictions. In the last clause the figure is changed to that of a guide along a difficult route, so difficult that those who follow must put their feet in his footprints. We should follow his steps, one by one, closely following him, as the word ἐπακολουθήσῃτε means (comp. Mark xvi. 20; 1 Tim. v. 10, 24).

Ver. 22.—Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. St. Peter is quoting the Septuagint Version of Isa. liii. 9, almost exactly, the word ἀμαρτίαν, sin, being substituted for ἀνομίαν, lawlessness ("violence" in our version). We should notice that the Messiah, whose example is here set before Christian slaves, is called by the prophet "the Servant of Jehovah" (Isa. lii. 13). Slaves were often tempted to deceit and guile; they must look to the Lord Jesus, and strive to copy his innocence and his truth. The verb εὐρίσκεισθαι, to be found, is sometimes said to be used, by a Hebraism, for the simple verb "to be." Winer says, "Between these two verbs, however, there is always this distinction, that, whilst εἶναι indicates the quality of a thing in itself, εὐρίσκεισθαι indicates the quality in so far as it is discovered, detected, recognized, in the subject" ("Greek Grammar," lxxv. 8).

Ver. 23.—Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not (comp. Isa. liii. 7). The Lord again and again denounced the hypocrisy and unbelief of the Pharisees; he bade Caiaphas remember the coming judgment. But that was the language of prophetic warning, the sternness of love. He sets before them the impending punishment, that they may take heed in time and escape from the wrath to come. In the midst of

his strongest invective against the sins and hollow unreality of Pharisaism there is an outburst of the deepest love, the tenderest concern (Matt. xxiii. 27). But committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. The verb "committed" *παρεδίδου* is without an object in the original. Most commentators supply "himself," or "his cause;" others, "his sufferings;" some, as Alford, "those who inflicted them." Perhaps the last explanation is the best: he left them to God, to God's mercy, if it might be; to his judgment, if it must be. There may be a reference to his prayer, "Father, forgive them." Compare by contrast the language of Jeremiah, speaking in the spirit of the Old Testament (xi. 20 and xx. 12). There is a curious reading, entirely without the authority of existing Greek manuscripts, represented by the Vulgate, *Tradebat judicanti se injuste*, as if the words were understood of the Lord's submitting himself "to one who judged unrighteously," that is, to Pilate.

Ver. 24.—Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree. St. Peter has thus far spoken of our Lord as our Example of patient endurance; but he seems to feel that, although this is the aspect of the Saviour's sufferings most suitable to his present purpose, yet it is scarcely seemly to dwell upon that most momentous of all events, the death of Christ our Lord upon the cross, without mentioning its more solemn and awful import. A martyr may be an example of patient suffering; he cannot bear our sins. The apostle proceeds to unfold the contents of the *ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν* in ver. 21. The Lord died for us: but what is the meaning of the preposition? Was it that his example might stimulate us to imitate his patience and his holy courage? This is a true view, but, taken alone, it would be utterly inadequate. The death of the Son of God had a far deeper significance. The *ὑπὲρ* used here and elsewhere is explained by the more precise *ἀντὶ* of Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45; 1 Tim. ii. 6, in which last passage both prepositions are combined. The Lord died, not only in our behalf, but in our stead. He gave "his life a ransom for many;" "he is the Propitiation for our sins." St. Peter exhibits here, with all possible emphasis, this vicarious aspect of the Saviour's death. "He bore our sins himself." The pronoun is strongly emphatic; he bore them, though they were not his own. They were *our* sins, but *he* bore them—he alone; none other could bear that awful burden. *He bare* (*ἀνέχετο*). The apostle is evidently quoting Isa. liii. 12, where the Hebrew verb is נָשָׂא, and the Septuagint Version is καὶ αὐτὸς ἁμαρτίας πολλῶν ἀνέχετο; comp. vers. 4 and 11 (in ver. 11 there is another Hebrew verb) of the same

chapter. In the Old Testament "to bear sins" or "iniquity" means to suffer the punishment of sin, whether one's own sin or the sin of others (see Lev. v. 1, 17, and many similar passages). In the description of the ceremonial of the Day of Atonement in Lev. xvi. it is said (ver. 22) that the scapegoat "shall bear upon him [the Hebrew is נָשָׂא הַחַטָּאת; the Greek is λήψεται δὲ χίμαρος ἐφ' ἑαυτὴν] all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited," where the scapegoat is represented as bearing the sins of the people and taking them away. Compare also the great saying of the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" where the Greek (ὁ αἰών) may be rendered with equal exactness, "who beareth," or "who taketh away." The Lord took our sins away by taking them upon himself (comp. Matt. viii. 17). As Aaron put the sins of the people upon the head of the scapegoat (Lev. xvi. 21), and the goat was to bear them upon him unto a land not inhabited, so the Lord laid on the blessed Saviour the iniquity of us all, and he bare our sins in his own body on to the tree, and, there dying in our stead, took them away. He bare them on himself, as the scapegoat bare upon him the iniquities of Israel. It was this burden of sin which made his sacred body sweat great drops of blood in his awful agony. He bare them on to the tree (ἐπὶ τῷ ξύλῳ); he carried them thither, and there he expiated them (comp. Heb. ix. 28, "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many," where the same Greek word is used—ἀνεγκέιν). Another interpretation takes ἀναφέρειν in its sacrificial sense, as in Heb. vii. 27, and regards the cross as the altar: "He bore our sins on to the altar of the cross." The Lord is both Priest and Victim, and the verb is used in the sacred writings both of the priest who offers the sacrifice and of the sacrifice which bears or takes away sin. But the sacrifice which the Lord offered up was himself, not our sins; therefore it seems best to understand ἀναφέρειν here rather of victim than of priest, as in Heb. ix. 28 and the Greek Version of Isa. liii. 12. The thought of sacrifice was doubtless present to the apostle's mind, as it certainly was to the prophet's (see ver. 10 of Isa. liii.). The word ξύλον is used for the cross twice in St. Peter's speeches in the Acts of the Apostles (v. 30; x. 39). It is also so used by St. Paul (Gal. iii. 13). That we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness. The Greek word ἀπογενόμενοι occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. Bengel understands it differently. He says that ἀπογενόμενοι means "to become the slave of some one," so ἀπογενέσθαι may mean to cease to be a slave. But this would require

the genitive, not the dative, *ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις*; and the ordinary translation is more suitable to the following context. The word is several times used in Herodotus in the sense of "having died;" more literally, "having ceased to be." The tense (aorist) seems to point to a definite time, as the time of baptism (comp. Rom. vi. 2, 11; Gal. ii. 19, 20). Righteousness here is simply the opposite of sin—obedience, submission to the will of God. Bengel says, "Justitia tota una est; peccatum multiplex." By whose stripes ye were healed. The apostle is quoting the Septuagint rendering of Isa. liii. 5. The Greek *μάλαν* means the mark or weal left on the flesh by a scourge (comp. Eccles. xxviii. 17, *Πληγὴ μάστιγος ποιεῖ μάλαν*). The slaves, whom the apostle is addressing, might perhaps not unfrequently be subjected to the scourge; he bids them remember the more dreadful flagellation which the Lord endured. They were to learn patience of him, and to remember to their comfort that those stripes which he, the holy Son of God, condescended to suffer are to them that believe healing and salvation. Faith in the crucified Saviour lifts the Christian out of the sickness of sin into the health of righteousness.

Ver. 25.—For ye were as sheep going astray; rather, with the best manuscripts, *for ye were going astray like sheep*. The apostle is probably still thinking of the great prophecy of Isaiah, and here almost

reproduces the words of the sixth verse, "All we like sheep have gone astray." He who had been thrice charged to feed the sheep and the lambs of Christ would think also of the parable of the lost sheep, and of the people of Israel who were "as sheep having no shepherd" (Matt. ix. 36). But are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls; literally, *but ye returned* (the verb is aorist); that is, at the time of their conversion. The aorist passive, *ἐπιστράφην*, is so frequently used in a middle sense that the translation, "ye were converted," cannot be insisted on (comp. Mark v. 30; Matt. ix. 22; x. 13). Christ is the Shepherd of our souls. The quotation from Isaiah doubtless brought before St. Peter's thoughts the sweet and holy allegory of the good Shepherd, which he had heard from the Saviour's lips (comp. also Isa. xl. 11; Ezek. xxxiv. 23; xxxvii. 24; also Ps. xxii.). The word "bishop" (*ἐπίσκοπος*) is used in a similar connection in Acts xx. 28, "Take heed . . . to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers (*ἐπισκόπους*);" comp. also Ezek. xxxiv. 11, "I will both search my sheep, and seek them out," where the Greek word for "seek them out" is *ἐπισκέψομαι*. The Lord Jesus Christ is the chief Shepherd (ch. v. 4). He is also the chief Bishop or Overseer of those souls which he has bought to be his own with his most precious blood.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—10.—*The regenerate life*. I. ITS GROWTH. 1. *What must be shunned*. St. Paul bids us work out our own salvation. The new birth is the beginning; that comes from God—from his free grace. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." But the new man must grow; and that growth is not spontaneous; it will not evolve itself without effort from the "incorruptible seed." Progress, growth in grace, requires earnest prayer, watchfulness, constant self-denial. St. Peter bids us "grow in grace" (2 Pet. iii. 18). We do not bid a plant to grow; we watch its growth, we assist it. But Holy Scripture bids the Christian grow; the commandment implies the power. Our Father doth not mock us with precepts which we cannot obey. And growth in free agents implies effort. They must avoid all pernicious influences, everything which might check the growth of the precious germ. Especially they must avoid all offences against the law of love; for love is the very pulse of the regenerate life; those who are born again of the incorruptible seed must love one another with a pure heart fervently. There can be no such things as malice and guile and envy in the heart wherein the holy seed abideth; for these things come of Satan; they have the taint of hell. Christians must not speak evil of one another; it is Satan who is the accuser of the brethren. Christians must be true and real. The Lord Jesus hates hypocrisy; he condemned it sternly in the Pharisees; it is more hateful still in those who are called by his holy Name. The Christian must lay aside all these evil things; he must strip them off. They are the garments of the old man; he must put on the new. 2. *What must be desired*. "The sincere milk of the Word," the spiritual nourishment of the soul. They who cherish malice and envy in their hearts have no appetite for the heavenly food. They who have not holy love within themselves

cannot desire the Word of him who is Love. But all who answer to the apostle's description will long for it. Those to whom he wrote had not been Christians very long; some of them probably only a very short time—they were new-born babes. But the true Christian will always regard himself as a mere child in Christ; he will feel what little progress he has made in spiritual growth; and, feeling this, he will long for spiritual nourishment. The Word of God is the food of the soul; it is the suitable food, the food divinely provided for the soul, as milk is for infants. It is pure, undiluted. The soul that desires it will assimilate it, will grow by its nourishing influence unto salvation, unto the measure of the stature of Christ. The Christian will desire the Word, that he may grow thereby; not simply for present pleasure and excitement, not simply for knowledge, or for facility in preaching and theological controversy; but above all things, that he may grow thereby. The Word of God is sweet to hear, knowledge is precious, religious eloquence is a great gift; but this pleasure and this knowledge are little worth in comparison with growth in holiness of heart and life. The Scriptures are able to make us wise; the wisdom which we should seek there is that wisdom which cometh from above, which is unto salvation. 3. *What leads us to desire it.* Experience, the taste of its sweetness. The psalmist says, "How sweet are thy words to my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" And in another psalm, which St. Peter quotes here, we are invited to "taste and see that the Lord is good." His Word is sweet, but it derives its sweetness from him whose Word it is. We do not realize the sweetness of the Word of God till we have felt something of the sweetness of the Saviour's presence. For he himself, who is in the highest sense the Word of God, is the true food of the soul. He bids us feed on him by faith; he giveth food and drink to the soul that hungereth and thirsteth after righteousness; and that food and drink, which is himself, he giveth in the blessed sacrament and in the daily life of faith to those who lift up their hearts to him with earnest longing and strong desire. Those who have known how gracious the Lord is will long more and more for increasing nearness unto him.

II. ITS CENTRE, WHICH IS CHRIST; AND OUR RELATIONS TO HIM. 1. *The Church is a spiritual temple, of which Christ is the chief Corner-stone.* The whole universe is in a sense the temple of God; he fills it with his presence. The heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him; he inhabiteth eternity. Yet he vouchsafed to manifest his presence in the ancient temple—it was "the habitation of his house, the place where his honour dwelt." But that temple was the figure of a holier temple. God is a Spirit; his temple in the highest sense must be a spiritual house. It is built up of living stones, Christian men and women, living with the life of Christ, who come, drawn by the attracting force of love (as, the fable said, the stones of Thebes were drawn by the lyre of Amphion) to the one living Stone which was once disallowed of men, but is chosen of God and precious, and range themselves, or rather are built up by the power of the Holy Spirit, as chosen stones upon the one Stone first chosen, which is at once the Foundation on which the building rests, and the chief Corner-stone that holds the walls together, so that the whole building fitly joined and compacted in all its parts groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord. The whole building is a temple; so in a true sense is each living stone therein, for the bodies of Christians are temples of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. vi. 19); but in the fullest sense the whole Christian Church is the spiritual temple of God—it is a corporate unity, knit and framed together into one building by the chief Corner-stone, the principle of unity on which it rests, which binds its various parts into one whole. The closer Christians are bound by spiritual union with that one Corner-stone, the closer will they be bound together in the communion of saints, though they may be set as living stones in widely distant parts of the spiritual building. And God dwelleth in this temple, which is the holy Catholic Church, the whole congregation of Christian people throughout the world. He fills it, all and in every part, with his sacred presence. For this temple is very precious in his sight; each living stone is precious, and precious above all price is the chief Corner-stone which holds the whole together. "For this purpose chiefly did he make the world, that in it he might raise this spiritual building for himself to dwell in for ever. . . . And from eternity he knew what the dimensions and frame and materials of it should be. The continuance of this present world, as now it is, is but for the service of this work, like the scaffolding about it; and therefore, when the spiritual building

shall be fully completed, all the present frame of things in the world and in the Church itself shall be taken away, and appear no more" (Leighton). 2. *The Church is a spiritual priesthood.* As Christ is in a transcendent sense the Temple of God, and yet Christians individually and the Christian Church as a whole are temples also through his grace, so Christ himself is the one great High Priest; but though that high priesthood is his alone and incommunicable, yet his saints thank him because he has made the Christian Church to be a holy priesthood, and individual Christians to be priests unto God. Under the ancient Law the priests only entered into the temple, the high priest alone into the holy of holies, and that but once a year; but now the veil which hid the holiest place is rent in twain, and all true Christians may enter as priests into the immediate presence of God, "having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Heb. x. 19). Through him (Eph. ii. 18) we have access to the Father, we come having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, having with us the blood of sprinkling, pleading the atoning power of the one great Sacrifice. For as the Lord Jesus is Temple and Priest, so is he also the one true Sacrifice. Yet we, if we are priests, must have something to offer: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?" St. Peter tells us that our offerings must be spiritual sacrifices. Such sacrifices are the prayers of the saints. "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as the incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice" (Ps. cxli. 2). These prayers are presented before the throne in "golden vials full of odours" in the sacred imagery of the Revelation (v. 8). Prayer is a sacrifice when it issues from the heart, when its sweet odour is wafted upwards with the fire of holy love. And praise is a sacrifice: "Offer unto God thanksgiving;" "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me" (Ps. l. 14, 23); but to be a sacrifice it must be that sweet and holy melody which the thankful heart singeth unto the Lord. Almsgiving, too, is a sacrifice (Heb. xiii. 16), when the Christian offers willingly, out of a thankful heart, seeking not the praise of men, but only the glory of God. God accepts our poor gifts when they are brought to him in faith, as the Lord Jesus Christ accepted the two mites of the poor widow. But the chief sacrifice that we can offer is the sacrifice of ourselves. "My son, give me thy heart," is the Lord's requirement. If we give him that, we give him all: it is a poor gift, worthless in itself, but yet precious in his sight because he first loved us, made more precious still by the precious blood of Christ which was shed that these hearts of ours might be cleansed and purified for a holy offering. It is all he asks, and all we have to give; if we give it, we shall be all the richer, for he giveth in return the unspeakable Gift—the gift of himself, to abide for ever in the heart that is given to him. "We offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto thee." We offer these our offerings through Jesus Christ, (Heb. xiii. 15), pleading his merits, his atonement; and through him they are acceptable unto God. In themselves they are very mean and imperfect; not without blemish, as an offering should be; defiled with lingering taints of selfishness and earthliness; but if they are offered through him, in the faith of him, they are acceptable. For the priests of the spiritual temple are also living stones in that temple, incorporated into the mystical body of Christ, and thus their spiritual sacrifices are consecrated by his one prevailing Sacrifice, and through that Sacrifice are acceptable unto God. 3. *What Christ is to true Christians.* The apostle confirms his teaching by an appeal to the prophets: "It is contained in the Scriptures," he says. Search the Scriptures; they testify of Christ; we shall find treasures there, if only we search. The evangelical prophet testified of Christ long before he came in the flesh; he spoke of him as the chief Corner-stone; he speaks in the Name of God, "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a Stone, a tried Stone, a precious Corner-stone, a sure Foundation." God the Father is the Master-builder; it was he who laid the Corner-stone: "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes." It is laid in Zion, in the Church, to be its one Foundation, the Rock on which it is built, which gives it strength and solidity; its chief Corner-stone, which gives it unity, without which it would fall to pieces. And that chief Corner-stone is elect, chosen of God from all eternity, chosen in the eternal purpose of God the Father to be the Foundation of the Church. And it is precious exceedingly, held in high honour of God, worthy of his love, for it is faultless in beauty and in strength—a polished Corner-stone without flaw and without blemish. He that resteth on that Corner-stone, built up in faith upon it,

shall not be put to shame. "For God hath laid this precious Stone in Zion for this very purpose that weary souls may rest upon it" (Leighton): and he that so resteth need not make haste; he need not run hither and thither for help, for his soul is established, his mind is stayed upon God. Nothing can shake him from that sure Foundation, while he rests on it in faith, "neither death, nor life, . . . nor things present, nor things to come, . . . shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." "Such honour have all his saints." This honour is for them that believe; they have the honour, high above all other honour, of indissoluble union with Christ; they rest on him, they are his and he is theirs: "My beloved is mine, and I am his." They know the exceeding preciousness of that living Stone, for they feel its strong support beneath them; its preciousness is for them; for their sakes, for their salvation, God laid that elect, that precious Stone in Zion. How precious faith is (2 Pet. i. 1)! it is faith that binds us firmly to that precious Corner-stone. 4. *What he is to the disobedient*; or to such as disbelieve (Revised Version); for, as Leighton says, unbelief itself is "the grand disobedience;" "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John vi. 29). Unbelief lies at the root of all disobedience; all disobedience flows from it; he cannot be disobedient who realizes by faith the power, the love, the presence, of God. The builders were disobedient; the priests and scribes disallowed the stones which God had chosen. So, alas! now too often the great men of the world, the builders of its policy, "leave out Christ in their building;" and not only they, but sometimes "the pretended builders of the Church of God, though they use the name of Christ, and serve their turn with that, yet reject himself, and oppose the power of his spiritual kingdom. There may be wit and learning, and much knowledge of the Scriptures amongst those that are haters of the Lord Christ and of the power of godliness, and corrupters of the worship of God. It is the spirit of humility and obedience and saving faith that teaches men to esteem Christ, and to build upon him" (Leighton). But the unbelief and disobedience of men cannot turn aside the purpose of God; the living Stone that was once disallowed is become the Head of the corner. He is exalted high above all the power of the enemy. "The kings of the earth may set themselves, and the rulers may take counsel together against the Lord, and against his Anointed. . . . But he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, . . . he shall speak unto them in his wrath, . . . Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." He is the Head of the corner now, "Head over all things to his Church." "He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet;" then shall the King sit upon the throne of his glory, and they who have rejected him shall to their confusion see him raised "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." But he is to the disobedient not only the Head of the corner to their confusion, but also a Stone of stumbling and a Rock of offence to their destruction. It is no light thing to reject the Son of God, to set the cross at nought, to despise the love of him who died upon the cross for us. Such sinners against their own souls must fall. He tasted death for every man; and to every man the death of the Son of God is full of momentous results—everlasting life to the believer, but to the wilful and impenitent sinner what can it be save utter death? The living Stone is the Foundation, the Head of the corner; "this is the Lord's doing," and who can stand against the Lord? The Stone becomes a Stumbling-block to the disobedient; they fall upon it. One day it must fall on them, as in the vision of Nebuchadnezzar it fell on the great image which represented all the empires of the world. "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." For this is the Lord's appointment. That Stone must become a great mountain and fill the whole earth; and resistance to the decree of the Most High can only end in ruin and destruction; those who reject the living Stone must in the end be crushed beneath it. 5. *What true Christians are to Christ.* (1) They are "a chosen generation," an elect race. As the Israelites were one race, descended from one ancestor, so Christians, in virtue of their new birth, are the children of the heavenly Father, a regenerate race. And they are chosen, the elect people of God, chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world; a high and sacred dignity. (2) "A royal priesthood." Not only a priesthood, as St. Peter had said in ver. 5, but a royal priesthood. Royal, because the priests of the spiritual temple serve the King of kings; they are his attendants; they belong to "the household of God,"—the royal household

of the great invisible King. And they reign upon the earth; for they have given their hearts to Christ to be his kingdom; and "this is the benefit of receiving the kingdom of Christ into a man's heart, that it makes him a king himself. All the subjects of Christ are kings, not only in regard of that pure crown of glory they hope for, and shall certainly attain; but in the present they have a kingdom which is the pledge of that other, overcoming the world, and Satan, and themselves, by the power of faith" (Leighton). The true Christian has a royal heart; he reigns with Christ the King over the passions, affections, and desires of his lower nature. The free Spirit of God dispenses to the contrite "the princely heart of innocence" ('Christian Year: Sixth Sunday after Trinity'). (3) "A holy nation." One nation, though living in different lands, under different forms of earthly government; but all citizens of the one heavenly country, all subjects of the one Almighty King. And holy, because they are his, separated to his service, bound by that dedication to follow after holiness of heart and life. (4) "A peculiar people." The children of Israel were to be God's "peculiar treasure above all people" (Exod. xix. 5). The Christian Church, the Israel of God, is his treasure now, his special possession. He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for them; and that Church, purchased at such a price, is very precious: "They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels;" or rather, as in the Revised Version, "in the day that I do make, even a peculiar treasure." 6. *What is their bounden duty.* All these high and holy dignities are theirs. The estate of Christians is very lofty; they are the children of the Most High, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. They should maintain a greatness of mind, a holiness of life suitable to their exalted station; they "should show forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light." For they were once not a people; they had no centre of unity, no part in the heavenly kingdom, no hope; for they had not obtained mercy. But now God hath called them, "Say ye unto your brethren, Ammi; and to your sisters, Ruhamah" (Hos. ii. 2); they are his people; they have obtained mercy. "Ammi, my people." There is a treasure of holy meaning in that word. We are his; he cares for us; we belong to him. Then we must show forth his praises, and that not only with our lips, but in our lives. We must proclaim to others the blessedness of religion. He has called us out of the darkness of sin and ignorance into the light of his presence. That light is wonderful. Christians never cease to wonder at the glory and blessedness of that light which in times of near communion with God streams into their hearts. If they walk in that light, it must kindle a holy flame in their own souls; they must become a light also ("Ye are the light of the world," the Saviour said to his chosen); they must let their light shine before men, that men may see their good works, and glorify their Father which is in heaven.

LESSONS. 1. "Taste and see that the Lord is good." Having once tasted, you will long for his presence, you will desire the heavenly food. 2. Seek to be built up in Christ; not loose stones lying round the one Corner-stone, but resting upon it, joined as living stones to the one Foundation. 3. Be faithful priests unto the Lord. Offer every day the daily sacrifice of prayer and praise; renew every day the sacrifice of self. 4. Consider the great dignity of Christians; be full of thankfulness; rejoice in the Lord; show forth his praises.

Vers. 11—17.—*Various exhortations.* I. TO PURITY OF LIFE. 1. *The ground of the exhortation.* St. Peter has been dwelling on the high dignities and privileges of the Christian life. They who are living stones in God's spiritual temple must remember their close union with Christ, the chief Corner-stone; they who belong to the holy, the royal priesthood must remember that "Holiness to the Lord" is the badge of those who are consecrated to his service (Exod. xxviii. 36). The living stones in the spiritual temple are to become pillars in the heavenly temple (Rev. iii. 12), the priests in that spiritual temple are to be priests of God and of his Christ in the glory of the Resurrection (Rev. xx. 6). They must remember their high destiny. Here they are sojourners and strangers; they must not follow the example of those among whom their lot is cast during the time of their sojourning. Fleshly lusts are of the earth, earthy. "The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, are not of the Father, but are of the world." And God's people are not of the world; they are sojourners and strangers in it for a little time; they must not imitate its modes of

thought and life; they must live as citizens of the heavenly country. 2. *The necessity of the exhortation.* (1) For the salvation of the soul. Fleshly lusts are not only beneath the dignity of God's peculiar people; they are full of danger, for they war against the soul; they are, as it were, the dark hosts of the evil one sent to wage a deadly warfare against the souls of men. It is the soul against which they fight—the soul which was first breathed into man by God; the soul for which the Lord Jesus died. To lose one's soul is to lose one's all; no apparent gain can compensate for that tremendous loss. (2) For the glory of God. If the inward life be pure, the outward life will be blameless. If fleshly lusts are indulged in the heart, they will appear somewhere or other in the life. The outward life cannot be uniformly fair and seemly unless the heart is pure. But the Christian must for the glory of God let his light shine before men. Unbelievers will narrowly scan the lives of Christians; they will watch for any little inconsistencies, and magnify them, and turn them to the dishonour of their religion. The Gentiles spoke against the Christians of the ancient Church; they caricatured their sacraments, their worship; they accused them of atheism, of exciting seditions. Still the lives of Christians are watched. Therefore they should have their "conversation honest," that is, their life should be fair and beautiful; and as the "beauty of a Christian's life consists in symmetry and conformity to the Word of God as its rule, he ought diligently to study that rule, and to square his ways by it; not to walk at random, but to apply this rule to every step at home and abroad, and to be as careful to keep the beauty of his ways unspotted, as those women are of their faces and attire who are most studious of comeliness" (Leighton). And their object in all this should be the greater glory of God. We are bidden not to seek the praise of men; we might take no heed to their blame, to calumny and misrepresentation, were it not that we must care for the souls of the slanderers, and for the glory of God. For those ends Christians must try to exhibit the beauty of holiness in their outward lives, that men may see their good works, and glorify their Father which is in heaven. It is from him that all holiness comes; all spiritual beauty is his gift. Men will see it in the lives of true Christians; they will feel its reality, its true loveliness; they know that such beauty is not of the earth; they may by God's grace be led to recognize it as coming from God, and to glorify him by seeking themselves to imitate the holy lives of Christians, that they too, in the day of visitation, may be ready to attend the heavenly Bridegroom in the wedding garments of holiness.

II. TO OBEDIENCE TO CIVIL AUTHORITIES. 1. *The extent of that obedience.* "The powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. xiii. 1); "The Most High giveth the kingdoms of the earth to whom he will;" "By him kings reign, and princes decree justice." Therefore the Christian must be loyal to the government under which God's providence has placed him. One form of government may be better than another; but any regular government is better than anarchy. St. Paul bids us pray "for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life." Government is from God; the form of it is determined, under God's overruling providence, by man. St. Peter bids us obey every ordinance of man, every human creation—all rulers, whether the sovereign or those who are set in authority under him; and that because orderly government is necessary for the well-being and the very existence of society, "for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well." On the whole, the strong rule of Rome had worked for the good of mankind, for the peace and order of that vast empire. Roman governors and officers, like Festus and Gallio and Claudius Lysias, had been on the side of right against the violence of Jewish mobs; even Felix and Pilate showed some traces of the Roman sense of justice. The reigning emperor, indeed, was a monster of vice; he had treated the Christians of Rome with atrocious cruelty; the persecution would soon spread into the provinces. But hitherto the Roman authorities had generally protected the infant Church. The institutions of civil government work for the good of society; Christians must be loyal and peaceable citizens. 2. *The ground and limits of that obedience.* It should be "for the Lord's sake." His providence has set us where we are; we must not rebel against his will. He ruleth all things both in heaven and in earth, and he will make all things work together for the eternal good of his chosen. It is enough for us; our duty is to say, "Thy will be done," and for his sake, in the consciousness that, in obeying those who are set over us, we are obeying the King of kings, to submit ourselves to every human ordinance. But

that obedience is for his sake; therefore it cannot extend to unlawful commands. St. Peter himself had once said to the high priest, "We ought to obey God rather than man" (Acts v. 29; comp. also Acts iv. 19); and the time was coming when brave Christian men and women would have to choose between renouncing Christ and the death of martyrdom. The disobedience would be "for the Lord's sake." The higher duty would overrule the lower. To "fear God and to keep his commandments is the whole duty of man;" this highest rule will guide the Christian under ordinary circumstances to obey human law and government, sometimes under exceptional circumstances to obey God rather than man. As a rule, Christians must be subject to the higher powers. Indeed, they are free; Christ hath made them free from the yoke of bondage. But they are the servants of God; his will should be the law of their lives; and his will is that Christian liberty should be orderly and sober. The soul is free from the bondage of sin; the outward life should be regulated by obedience to authority and law; and that for the glory of God, that the well-ordered lives of Christian people may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. 3. *Four rules for the guidance of Christians in social life.* (1) "Honour all men." The apostle has just enjoined a dutiful submission to kings and magistrates. He extends his precept; all men are to be treated with honour. St. Paul had said, "Render therefore to all their dues; . . . honour to whom honour is due" (Rom. xiii. 7). Though we owe not the same measure of honour to every one, yet in some sense honour is due to all men; for all men are God's creatures, made originally in the likeness of God. The Jews, Leighton reminds us, would not tread on any chance piece of paper, lest, they said, the name of God might be written on it. So the Christian may not despise any one, however base in his outward condition, in body, or in mind, or even however much fallen from God and goodness. The name of God may be written on that soul; low in all earthly things, it may be high in grace; the Lord Jesus died for that poor fallen soul; it may be restored and won back and forgiven like the sinful woman who washed the Lord's feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. Therefore the Christian must treat all men with consideration and respect; scorn and contempt are utterly out of place in the disciples of the lowly Saviour. (2) "Love the brotherhood." Christians are not only brethren, but a brotherhood, one body in Christ; they are knit together by the one Spirit into one communion and fellowship; they must regard one another with fraternal affection. The nearer they draw to Christ, who loved them and gave himself for them, the more fully will they learn of him this high and holy lesson of Christian love. (3) "Fear God." This great principle must guide the Christian in all the relations of life. "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom." He who has the fear of God before his eyes will do his duty towards his neighbour; for to fear and to obey God, the preacher says, is "the whole of man" (Eccles. xii. 13)—it covers the whole sphere of his life and conduct. Other rules are subordinate to this central rule. We must honour all men, because all men are the creatures of God; we must honour most those in whom the image of God is best reflected. We must love the brotherhood, but so that we love God first above all. We must honour the king, because all power is of God. (4) "Honour the king." That king was Nero. It was hard to honour such a one, a monster stained with every infamy. But Christians were to see in him the representative of law and order, and they were to respect his authority while they could not but loathe his crimes.

LESSONS. 1. Let us always remember that we are strangers here, and that the citizens of the heavenly country should be "not of the world." 2. The Christian must ever strive to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, seeking always the glory of God. 3. He must yield a loyal obedience to human law for the Lord's sake. 4. The law of liberty is not licence; Christian freedom is the service of God.

Vers. 18—25.—*Special address to servants.* I. THEIR DUTIES. 1. *Submission to their masters.* Religion touches every condition of life; none is left out. And none may make the circumstances of their life an excuse for neglecting religion. God set them where they are; their station, their circumstances, are such as he was pleased to appoint. He "will have all men to be saved;" therefore we may be sure all men may be saved, whatever may be their outward circumstances. It is for them to do their duty to God and to man in that station to which God has been pleased to call them. There are many compensations in life; riches have their cares; high rank has its

responsibilities. Men must not fret and chafe against the toils and privations of their lot; they must do their duty in it, and they will find peace and inward satisfaction. "Brethren," says St. Paul, speaking to slaves (1 Cor. vii. 24), "let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God." God has a message for servants. Their lot was very hard under the stern rule of slavery, when even men of wide views like Aristotle regarded slaves as "living tools." But Christian slaves were to take comfort; they were the Lord's freedmen (1 Cor. vii. 22); they were, equally with the highest in rank, living stones in the Lord's spiritual temple; they might gain for themselves a high place there by the quiet, faithful discharge of the humblest duties. Then let them serve their masters with all respect and reverence; and that, not simply out of gratitude, if they happened to have kind and indulgent masters, but out of submission to the holy will of God, whatever might be the character of those under whom they were placed. There is a lesson here for all who occupy subordinate positions of any sort—let them pay proper reverence and obedience to their superiors. It is their duty, not only to those superiors, but to God. 2. *The motive of that submission.* Consciousness of God. This high motive dignifies the humblest position in life, and makes the respect and submission which Christian servants yield to their masters, or Christians in any condition to their superiors, a beautiful and holy thing. They recognize the great truth of the presence of God; they try to live in the habitual consciousness of that presence; they try to think of God all the day long, in all the little details of their daily occupations, and to perform each duty, great or small, as unto the Lord. Thus Christians in the humblest positions may "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Titus ii. 10). These words of St. Paul were spoken of Christian slaves. Slaves might adorn the Church of God, and bring honour to Christ. Through the grace of God, the last are often first, the lowest in this world highest in the kingdom of heaven. 3. *The reward of that submission.* It is thankworthy; it is acceptable with God. The master might be much beneath his slave; the superior may be much beneath his official inferiors in all that constitutes true greatness; it has often been so, it must be so sometimes still. The Christian, in whatsoever state he is, must be content; if he has to suffer wrong, injustice, cruelty, he must take it patiently. To submit to deserved punishment, to own our fault, and to accept the consequence, is hard to our proud, selfish nature; yet it is but a plain duty; it merits no praise. But when Christians submit to undeserved suffering; when in the ancient times they endured stripes and the prison and the death of martyrdom; when now Christian men, or women, or children endure persecution, sometimes very hard to bear, from those in various ways above them, or, it may be, from fellow-servants or school-fellows;—when they take it patiently in the consciousness of God's presence, this is the work of God's grace; this is lovely in the sight of God; and the Scripture saith in God's great condescension, this is thankworthy with God.

II. *THE GREAT EXAMPLE.* 1. *Christians are called to imitate Christ.* Christians are called to suffering; the cross is the badge of their profession; without the cross they cannot be disciples of the crucified Lord. 'Tis was the meaning of your calling, St. Peter says; you knew it when you became Christians; you must not forget it in the hour of trial. Christ suffered for you, yes, for you slaves; he left behind him, when he ascended into heaven, an example for you to imitate, a sketch for you to fill up in detail. Try by the grace of God the Holy Spirit to renew the likeness of God in your hearts; look to the Lord Jesus Christ as your Model; copy one by one the features of that Divine loveliness; fill up the portrait, little by little, touch by touch, looking with fixed attention on the great Original. And, to change the figure, follow him; he goeth before you. Climb the steep ascent of heaven, stepping in the very footprints of the Divine Guide. He will lead you safe. But there is only one way—the way which he trod himself, the royal way of the most holy cross. 2. *The innocence of Christ.* He did not sin, yet he suffered. We have sinned, yet we murmur under our chastisements. We fret and complain all the louder, if we think that our afflictions are not the direct result of sin; all the more if we think that they are wrongfully inflicted. We fancy that there are none so hardly dealt with, none so unjustly treated; we magnify our distress; we will not be comforted; we refuse to see any alleviation, any ray of light, any evidences of mercy. But we should think of our sins, our unworthiness, our need of chastisement for our profit in holiness. Above all, we should think of the innocent Saviour. "He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." We have sinned in thought, word,

and deed ; let us not complain. 3. *The patience of Christ.* He was buffeted and spat upon and cruelly mocked, yet he opened not his mouth ; he was scourged, he was nailed to the cross ; he suffered through all those six hours the intensest agony ; he threatened not, he did not call for the twelve legions of angels. He committed all, himself, his cause, his torturers, to him that judgeth righteously—he left it all to God. He is our high Example. We should learn of him ; we should pray for those who despitefully use us : “ Father, forgive them.” Here is the Christian’s comfort when he is unjustly treated. God judgeth righteously ; he knoweth them that are his ; he knows their prayers, their self-denials, their temptations. If the world judge them harshly, it matters little ; God judgeth righteously ; they leave all to him. And when men speak evil of them, when they impute unworthy motives and accuse them falsely, they think of Christ mocked, reviled, blasphemed, and try to learn of him meekness and patience. 4. *How Christians are enabled to follow that example.* Christ is our Example ; but he is more—he is the Propitiation for our sins. It would be vain to set before us miserable sinners an example of perfect holiness, were it not that he bare our sins in his own body on to the tree. None other than the holy Son of God could bear that awful burden. The Lord “ laid on him the iniquity of us all.” He bare that tremendous load of human sin in his own body on to the tree, and there he took our sins away, dying, as he did, for all men, in our stead, suffering our punishment. Men think sin a light matter ; true Christians know that it is a heavy burden, too heavy for them to bear. It was a heavy burden to Christ ; it made him sweat those great drops of blood ; it made him cry, “ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?” He only could bear that tremendous load. The Lord laid it on him ; he took it on himself in his gracious mercy. He came to give his life a ransom for many ; he was made sin for us, though he was without sin ; the Lord made his soul an offering for sin. And the end of that stupendous sacrifice was that we, being dead to sin, should be enabled to copy that Divine Example, and should live unto righteousness. Such an event as the death of the Son of God must involve great and far-reaching consequences ; it requires of us, for whom he died, not merely an outward change, not some slight improvement in our lives, but a death unto sin. When we look upon the cross, and think who it was that suffered there for us, we see the intense guilt of sin, we see the great love of God ; and we draw from the death of Christ a hidden source of strength which helps us to crush sin out of our hearts, though the effort be like a death-struggle and the agony like a death-pang ; for by his death he broke the power of Satan, giving himself in his deep holy love to suffer our punishment and to take away our sins. Therefore we must be unto sin as though we were not, as though we had departed, as though the sinful “ I ” was gone, and Christ was there instead : “ Not I, but Christ ; ” “ To me to live is Christ ; ” he who knows the meaning of those words is dying unto sin. As he dies unto sin, he lives unto righteousness ; a new life dawns into his soul, new aspirations, new emotions. He is full of the energy of a vigorous life ; but it is not the old life—that is gone ; it is a new life which only they can know who die with Christ unto sin. It is his death which gives them life ; his stripes heal their souls. They tortured and lacerated his holy body, but they heal the sickness of our souls ; for it was for our sins that he submitted to that dreadful outrage. Each blow shows us the guilt and misery of sin ; each drop of blood most precious cleanses the souls that turn to him in faith. He has borne our punishment, and we are free if we are his indeed, he abiding in us and we in him. Let us contemplate his sufferings with awe and reverence and gratitude, mourning for those sins of ours which added to his agony, killing them out of our hearts by the power of his death ; thanking him in adoring love for his exceeding great love ; bearing our little griefs patiently and cheerfully in the remembrance of his bitter cross and passion. 5. *What they were ; what they are now.* “ All we like sheep have gone astray.” All have wandered from God, some in one direction, some in another, each turning to his own way. We flatter ourselves, in our folly, that we have not sinned like this or that neighbour. It may be so ; his temptation was not our temptation ; but our sin may be greater in the sight of God. All without exception have gone astray. But the Lord came in his mercy to seek and to save that which was lost. Happy those lost ones whom he has found, who, drawn by his grace, have returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls ! For he is the good Shepherd ; he knows his sheep, and cares for

them; and those sheep that have returned to him shall never perish, none can pluck them out of his hand. He is the Bishop, the Overseer, of our souls. He thinks of all our spiritual wants, our temptations, our distresses. He watches for our souls; he provides for our present necessities, for he feeds us with the sincere milk of the Word, with the bread of life; for our future welfare, for he is gone to prepare a place for us in heaven.

LESSONS. 1. Christ took upon him the form of a servant; let Christians in humble positions be content. 2. Let them do their duty, taking slights and injustice patiently, as in the presence of God. 3. Let them fix their thoughts upon the great Example. He did no sin; yet he suffered; he reviled not again. 4. He is more than our Example; he is our Strength. He bore our sins. He gave us power to die unto sin and to live unto righteousness. We can do all things (if we abide in him) through him that strengtheneth us.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 2.—*Infants' food.* There has just been a reference to regeneration as effected by the incorruptible seed of the Word. The metaphor is carried on in these words, which speak of the nourishment and growth of the regenerate. There does not, however, appear to be any limitation of the injunction of our text to Christians in an early stage. For all stages of the Christian life on earth the food which nourishes is the same. All should be growing, and the most mature is still, when his attainments are contrasted with what he will be in the future, and when the brief span of earthly life is measured against eternity, but as a new-born babe. So we have here the universal food; the appetite which all should cultivate; and the growth which all may attain.

I. **THE TRUE FOOD OF THE CHRISTIAN SOUL IN ALL STAGES.** It is impossible to preserve the force of the Greek in an English translation. The two adjectives which qualify "milk" are both ambiguous. That rendered "sincere" in the Authorized and "without guile" in the Revised Version is evidently suggested by the mention of guile in the previous verse, and may either mean "guileless" in the sense of having no by-ends to serve, or more probably "unadulterated." The other epithet may either mean "belonging to a word," or (as it means in Rom. xii. 1) "spiritual," that is, figurative, not material. The latter is no doubt its meaning here. But that spiritual, unadulterated milk is certainly the Word of God, and probably the expression was chosen because of the very ambiguity. At all events, Peter's thought is plainly that the Christian soul's true food is the Word, which is at once the instrument of regeneration and the support of life. Of course, he intends by "the Word" the truths which that Word brings to men. We are more accustomed to speak of Christ as being the Food of the soul. Is it possible that Peter here is speaking as his brother John would have spoken, and has floating before his mind in this context the thought of that Incarnate Word who liveth for ever, and in his holy humanity was without guile? This is improbable, and not necessary in order to give full force to the text. "The Word of the truth of the gospel" is the life of our souls, because it proclaims and brings to us Christ, who is truly their Life. The only way by which he can enter the soul to give and to sustain a better being is by means of the truth concerning him received and meditated on. Physiologists tell us that milk contains all the constituents needed for healthy life. The truth as it is in Jesus has no admixture of deleterious matters, is unspoiled by men's errors, and has in it all which the soul needs. As much cannot be said of any other "word."

II. **THE APPETITE WHICH ALL CHRISTIANS SHOULD CULTIVATE.** "Long for" is nearer the intensity of the original than "desire." There is no bodily craving more vehement and tyrannous than that of hunger. We all know how an infant cries for food. Such keenness of appetite ought to mark every Christian. But the very fact that this hunger has to be enjoined is a sad confession. "Infants do not need to be told to seek the mother's breast." But we, alas! have to acknowledge languid indifference and often positive distaste for the wholesome food which God gives. So this appetite has to be cultivated. And that it may, other appetites have to be restrained and starved. We are like children who eat sweetmeats, and so do not care for our

meals. If we gorge ourselves on the sugared delights of earth, or on the rank "leeks and garlic" of Egypt, how can the manna but taste insipid to our palates? Therefore abstinence from these, and a tight hand on our desires and passions, are essential if we are to have any healthy hunger for wholesome food. Again, the appetite will in this case secure its being satisfied. This hunger is unlike all other hunger, in that it will certainly be filled. So the apostle does not even say *drink*, but he only says *desire*. For he knows that if there be the longing there will be the fruition, as certainly as the air flows into expanded lungs, or the sunshine into opened eyes. Other longings are often pain, and often vain. This is blessed in itself, and blessed in its sure fulfilment. He who can say, "I long for thy Word," will always be able to say, "I did eat it, and it was the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Is this eager appetite for the Word of God the characteristic of our Christianity? Does the neglect of Scripture, the preference of almost any book to the Bible, which so many of us must confess, look like it? Does the utter disuse of meditation by such multitudes of professing Christians look like it? Can anybody suppose that people who scarcely ever occupy their minds with Divine truth, except when they languidly sit out a sermon, are thirsting for the pure milk of the Word?

III. THE GROWTH. "Unto salvation" is now usually admitted, as in the Revised Version, at the close of the verse. Of course, that word is here used, as it is in ver. 9 of the previous chapter, for the complete deliverance from evil and investiture with good, which waits the believer in heaven. The whole Christian life on earth, then, is to be a continuous growth. Here we are all but as infants at the best, and we only come to maturity in another life. Salvation is the possession of "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." It is not, as some caricature the Christian doctrine, a mere escape from an outward hell, but is the attainment of the full height of manhood made God-like. That is the goal set before the Christian—an ever-progressive approximation to the unreachable God, an ever-increasing appropriation of infinite perfection into his indefinitely expanding being. And towards that endless growth and eternally increasing knowledge of and likeness to the revealed God in Christ, we may be steadily advancing here. If we will only use the amply adequate means provided for us, and let our souls feed on the Word of God, we shall grow as certainly as the child passes from infancy to boyhood and adolescence. But in order to feeding on that Word there must be rigid self-restraint, and many a struggle with lower appetites. Christian growth is no natural process. The painless, unconscious, spontaneous growth of the infant at the breast, or of the corn in the field, does not tell us all the facts. There are other symbols of Christian progress. It is a pilgrimage often to be trodden with bleeding feet. It is a building which does *not* "rise like an exhalation," but tasks strength and skill to lay its courses. It is a fight often desperate, always real, and in which that Word of God which is milk for the growing babe, is the sword for the warrior-hand. We have to fight that we may have room to grow; and of our conflict and of our growth the instrument is the Word of God.—A. M.

Vers. 4, 5 (to "built up").—*Living stones*. We have here incidentally a plain proof that to Peter, Jesus Christ was Divine. He has just been quoting Old Testament words which speak of "the Lord" as "gracious," and he goes on, "to whom coming, as unto a living Stone." He therefore regards Christ as standing in the place of the Jehovah of the old covenant, and has neither scruple in asserting that he is the "gracious Lord" of the psalm, nor thought that he need pause to explain or vindicate the assumption. Obviously such a tone indicates that the truth of our Lord's Divinity was familiar to the recipients of the letter. We have here, in broad, general outline, the great office which Christ sustains; the highest gift which he bestows; and the condition on which we receive it from him.

I. CHRIST'S GREAT OFFICE—THE FOUNDATION-STONE FOR ALL MEN'S LIVES AND HOPES. In this metaphor many Old Testament references unite. The Shepherd, the Stone of Israel had been celebrated in ancient poetry. Isaiah had spoken of the tried Foundation laid by God's own hand in Zion, which yet should be a Stone of stumbling to those who refused to build on it. A psalmist of a later period had sung amidst the ruined walls of Jerusalem, and the effort to rear again the temple, of the Stone rejected by the builders becoming the Head of the corner. A prophet of the same epoch had

seen in vision the head-stone of the completed and transformed theocracy brought forth with triumphant acclaim. Daniel had prophesied of a Stone cut out without hands, which should crash among the kingdoms of the earth like a boulder hurled by an avalanche among peasants' cottages and gardens. And all these streams of prediction had been gathered into one, in the words which Peter so well remembered, with which, in those last days of hand-to-hand conflict, his Master had silenced his antagonists, and claimed to be at once the tried Foundation, and the ponderous Rock which, when it was set in motion, would grind opposition and opposers to powder. The echoes of these mighty words sound here, as they have been interpreted to the apostle by all that has passed since he first heard them. He understands now better than he did, even when he fronted the Sanhedrin with the bold proclamation, "This is the Stone which is set at nought of you builders." He has learned that his Lord is not merely meant to be the Foundation on which Israel may build, but that on which "strangers scattered abroad may be gathered into one." In all aspects and relations Jesus Christ is the Foundation-stone. The whole universe rests on him. He is "the Firstborn of every creature," the Agent of creation, the Mediator through whom all things came to be, and based upon whom the mighty whole of the material creation continues to exist. He is the Foundation of humanity, the Root from whom it springs, the Head in which it is gathered into one. He is the Foundation on which the individual soul must build all hope, joy, and goodness. He is the Foundation of the highest and purest form of social life, in which ultimately all others shall merge, and men be one in him. He is the Basis of all true thoughts of God, man, immortality, and duty. He is the Motive and Inspiration of the purest life. His Person, work, and teaching underlie all being, all peace, and all nobleness. He is the "living Stone," inasmuch as in him is essential life, and he ever lives to be the Source of life to all who build on him.

II. CHRIST'S GREAT GIFT, THAT OF ASSIMILATION TO HIMSELF. Coming to him, we become living stones. One can scarcely avoid seeing here some allusion to the apostle's own name, as if he would share whatever honour there was, with all his brethren, and disown any special prerogative. "'Thou art Peter' was, indeed, said to me; but you are *all* living stones. 'On this rock' was, indeed, said to me; but Christ is the only Foundation." Peter's own understanding of these much-controverted words is no bad guide to their meaning. The image here but puts under one aspect the wide general principle that transformation into Christ's likeness is the great end of his work on us. Is he a Son? Through him we become sons. Is he "the Light of the world"? Illumined by him, we too become lights. Is he anointed with the Spirit? Through him we too receive that unction which invests us with his three-fold office of prophet, priest, and king. We are one with him, and participate in his relation to God; we are one with him, and receive of his fulness, are clothed with his righteousness, and growingly conformed to his image. We are one with him, and shall be one in destiny. "As he is, so are we in this world." "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." And the deep truth which underlies all these representations is the actual communication of the life of Christ to us. That life rises up from the foundation through all the courses of the building. This truth is more obviously suggested by the kindred metaphors of the vine and the branches, and the head and members; but it is clearly intended here also, and is conveyed, though with some incongruity, by the expression, "living stones." The life which is in us is Christ's life. Therefore it unfolds itself in us in a form like his, and the vital contact with the living Stone makes us, too, living stones.

III. THE CONDITION OF ASSIMILATION. It is expressed in grand simplicity by that one pregnant phrase, "to whom coming." The original word implies, by the force of a compound, a very close approach. We must be so near him as to touch him, if his transforming power is to flow into our hearts. A hair's breadth of separation is enough to stop the passage of the electric current. The thinnest film of distance between the soul and Christ is thick enough to be an impenetrable barrier. There must be a real living contact if his life is to pour into my veins. And if we ask how this close approach is to be effected, our Lord's own words are the simplest answer, "He that cometh unto me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." We come in the act of faith. To trust him is to draw near to him. Faith is the

approach of the soul to Christ, and we touch when, with the reliance of our whole nature, we grasp his cross, and him who died on it, as our only Foundation. But that act of faith must be continuous, if we are to draw life from him in an unbroken stream. The form of expression in the Greek shows that the "coming" is not an act done once for all, but one constantly repeated. The grace drawn from Christ in a moment of active faith cannot be stored up for use in a time when faith has fallen asleep. As soon as we cease to draw near to him, the flow stops. There must be a present faith for a present blessing. Let us, then, rely on no past acts of devout emotion, but hourly renew our conscious faith, and seek to nestle closer to his side, from whom all our life and all its hopes and joys, with all its goodness and power, proceed. So shall there rise up into us, from the living Root, the sap which shall produce in us flowers and abiding fruit. So shall there be one life in him and in us.—A. M.

Ver. 5.—*Temple, priest, sacrifice.* Temple, priest, sacrifice—these three are the constituents of worship, as the world knew it before Christ. He is the reality, felt after by heathenism in its rites, shadowed by Judaism in its ceremonies. A universal want is unconsciously confessed by the former; a Divine satisfaction of it is prophesied by the latter. But not only does Christ in his own Person and work supply these three to men; he also makes those who come to him by faith all these in a real though derived and subordinate manner; they, too, become temple, priest, and sacrifice. Christianity lifts the externals of sacrificial religion into a higher sphere, and does away with the symbols, because it brings the realities. Whether the first readers of this letter were Jewish or Gentile Christians, they must have felt the bareness of their new worship as contrasted with the elaborate rituals of their former faiths, and have especially needed the insight into their real dignity which these words supply. Perhaps this age needs the lesson not less, though for different reasons. Let us simply look at these three aspects of the ideal Christian character.

I. CHRIST IS THE TRUE TEMPLE; WE BECOME A TEMPLE THROUGH HIM. The temple is the dwelling-place of Deity. The need for it arises from man's weakness, which cannot grasp the pure spirituality of the Divine nature, but has to aid its conceptions by localizing God, and still more from man's sin, which to his own consciousness has profaned the world, and cannot bear the thought of God's dwelling among the foulness of everyday abodes. Christ is all which temples shadowed. The temple was the dwelling-place of Deity, and in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. It was the place of meeting between God and man, and in him we draw near to the God who in him has drawn near to us. It was the place of sacrifice, and in his flesh the one propitiation has been offered for sin for ever. It was the place of Divine manifestation, and in him the whole glory of the Divine nature has been flashed upon the world with a brightness before which the light that shone between the cherubim pales its fires. The burden of the context here is that by coming to Christ we become partakers of his life, and are therefore assimilated to him. So the whole aggregate of the scattered strangers to whom Peter writes, and all the solitary souls who, one by one, draw near to Jesus, are builded up into one great temple, the true sanctuary, consisting of all redeemed humanity, in which God dwells. All Churches are but chapels in its side aisles. Its ample roof covers them all, and will shelter new forms of Christian fellowship as yet undreamed of. Through the ages it is being slowly builded, like some great cathedral unfinished for centuries, each of which has added something to the pile. And as the Church as a whole is the temple, so its members in detail are temples of God. By a real though mysterious indwelling, more real if one may say so, and less mysterious than that by which he inhabits eternity or dwells in the material universe, God comes and makes his abode in every believing soul. A Divine Spirit can fill and penetrate the human spirit, as the sunshine drenches and saturates some poor film of mist, till every particle is suffused with the fiery brightness. We are too apt to water down that most solemn and blessed truth of God's indwelling into the mere presence of an influence on our spirits. We need to rise to the height of the wonderful, awful, gladsome thought that God himself dwells in every soul that comes to Christ.

II. CHRIST IS THE TRUE PRIEST; WE ARE PRIESTS THROUGH HIM. The priest, like the temple, has his origin in man's consciousness of unworthiness to draw near to his

God. Therefore he takes one of his tribe, and sets him apart to stand between him and his deity. The priest has to represent man to God and God to man. His chief function is sacrifice, and, in addition to it, he has to be intercessor and mediator—to bring the messages of the god to his worshippers, to represent the worshippers before their god. Jesus is all this in himself, by no external appointment, “not by the law of a carnal commandment, but by the power of an endless life.” He is all this in solitary incommunicable manner. He, and none but he, brings God to men, and men to God. He alone is, in real essential unity, man’s Representative and Intercessor. He alone offers the sacrifice for the world. He stands the sole Priest, his office unique, his Person sole and supreme, having and tolerating no companions in his solemn entrance within the veil, and having neither beginning of days nor end of life. But the consecrating oil flows from him to us, and we too, by derivation from him, become priests to God. His hand laid on us sets us apart for sacred functions which are not all unlike his own, but are their consequence and carrying out. We too have to represent God to men, because Christ has given God to us. We have to move among our fellows, showing to them something of the splendour of the Divine love, the reflection of which on us some weak eyes may bear, which would be dazzled by the direct beams. We have to intercede for men with God, and are invested with the solemn privilege carrying with it a heavy responsibility, of free access to the secret place of the Most High, and of prayer that prevails with him. There is but one Priest in the Church. There are no priests in the Church. All are priests in the Church.

III. CHRIST OFFERS AND IS THE ONE SACRIFICE; WE BECOME ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICES THROUGH HIM. There are two elements in the idea of sacrifice—surrender and expiation. The great work of Jesus Christ embraces both. “Not my will, but thine,” is the inmost meaning of his whole life. He offered himself in the perfect, unbroken, joyful surrender of his will to the Father. That sinless Being, perpetually yielding itself in meek obedience, undisturbed by self-will, and spotless in its purity, attains the highest form of surrender, and stands alone as, in that aspect, the fulfilment of the ideal of sacrifice. All the life, which was thus perfect surrender to the Father’s will, was also expiation. Himself bare our sins in his lowliness and sorrows, in the sympathy which wrung his heart, as well as in the awful solitude when he experienced the utmost penalty of the sin which he had never committed, in the consciousness of separation from God, which is eternal death, and in the physical death which is but the pictured shadow of that awful reality. His sacrifice, as surrender, stands alone in degree, as being absolute and stainless. His sacrifice, as expiation, stands alone in kind, incapable of repetition or imitation, and, blessed be God, needing none. But if we have come to him and partaken of his life, we shall, in the measure of our participation, become sacrifices too—not indeed expiatory, but eucharistic. For, touched by his love, and possessing his Spirit, we shall joyfully give up ourselves. Our true sacrifice is the surrender of our wills to the Divine will. We have to lay ourselves upon the altar which sanctifies and glorifies giver and gift; so shall we receive back again a better self, ennobled and purified. Life should be one long sacrifice, being all lived with continual reference to him, and continual suppression of self. By him, too, we should offer the sacrifice of praise continually, and present the “much incense” of prayer. By him, too, we are to bring the sacrifices of doing good and imparting, with which God is well pleased. And by him we may at last offer the libation of pouring out our souls into death, and complete the sacrifices of a life of faith by a death of submission. The dignities and prerogatives of the Christian life, expressed in the grand truths that we are temples and priests, are granted to us, not for honour, but for service. We are temples and priests that we may be sacrifices. All lofty gifts are ours with a view to this highest end, that we may yield ourselves wholly to God, and, losing ourselves in utter surrender, may have our poor sacrifice accepted through him who alone has offered the one perfect sacrifice for sins for evermore.—A. M.

Ver. 7.—*The Head of the corner; or, the Stone of stumbling.* The Authorized Version’s rendering of these words has been felt by many devout souls to contain a truth which their deepest experience joyfully confirmed. The true meaning is no less great and beautiful. Literally, they read, “Unto you who believe is [or, ‘belongs’].”

the preciousness." What preciousness? The definite article points us back to the attribute of the "Corner-stone" in the previous verse. It is "elect, precious." Peter's thought, then, is that all in Christ which makes him precious belongs or passes on to us by faith. That is a profound thought put in very simple and homely words. Faith makes us owners of all Christ's infinite worth.

I. THE TRANSFERENCE TO US OF THE PRECIOUSNESS OF THE FOUNDATION. There are two possible meanings of this phrase, and probably both are included in the apostle's thought. It may either be that the qualities which make Christ precious pass over to us and become our qualities and character, or that the qualities which make Christ precious become available for our benefit. The first of these thoughts is in accordance with the immediate context, for we find the same idea expressed in several aspects in ver. 5, where the living Stone is said to make those who come to him also living stones, and Christians are represented as being like their Lord, living temples, consecrated priests, and acceptable sacrifices. The idea that vital union with Christ brings about a communication of qualities from him to his followers, as if the virtue of the Foundation rose through all the building, is surely taught in a hundred places in Scripture, and is the very climax of the gospel. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. He that is grafted into the true Olive Tree partakes of its root and fatness. We share our Lord's life; and his character shall growingly become ours. Whatever makes him precious in the sight of God we may partake of, and so be accepted in the Beloved, and be found in him, not having our own righteousness, but clothed with his. We may hope for progressive assimilation to his character, which will not cease till entire conformity has been realized, and we have absorbed all the preciousness of his infinitely worthy and spotlessly pure nature. Water stands at the same level in two communicating vessels, and if our hearts are open to the influx of Christ's life, the flow will not cease till all his is ours, and his fulness has filled our emptiness. Looking at the other aspect of the thought, it implies that the preciousness of the Foundation is available for us rather than communicated to us. The "therefore" of our text suggests that it is substantially equivalent in meaning to the closing words of the previous verse, "He that believeth on him shall not be confounded." So that part of the meaning, at all events, is the security of building on that Foundation. The preciousness of a foundation is its solidity and power to bear the superincumbent pressure without yielding. That steadfast capacity to sustain all our weight if we build ourselves on him is available to benefit and bless us. Therefore we need never fear that our Foundation will settle or give. We need not fear to pile upon it all the pressure of our cares and sorrows, or to rear on it the fabric of our hopes and security. It will stand. Those who have reared their lives on other foundations will stand aghast when they feel them crumbling away in some hour of supreme need. They will have to flee with the haste of despair from the falling ruins. But if we have built on Christ, we shall have no need for haste, and no pale confusion need ever blanch our cheeks. The steadfastness of the Foundation will avail to make us build upon it steadfast too, and, if we believe, all its preciousness will be ours and for us.

II. HOW THIS PRECIOUSNESS BECOMES OURS. The order of the sentence in the original puts emphasis on "who believe." The purpose of the clause is to mark the persons to whom alone the preciousness belongs, in sharp and solemn contrast with another class, to whom none of the saving, but only the destructive, powers which lie in the Foundation pass over. The worth of Christ is ours on one condition, but that condition is inexorable; faith, simple trust, which takes him for what he is and rests the whole being on Jesus as incarnate Son of God, Sacrifice for my sin as for all men's, Inspirer of all my goodness, Pattern, Friend, my Life, my All in all,—is the simple, sole, and indispensable condition of receiving his blessings and being enriched by his preciousness. There is nothing arbitrary in such a condition. It arises necessarily from the very nature of the case. How can Christ's sacrifice benefit me if I do not believe in it? What possible connection can be established between him and me, except through my trust in him? Faith is but stretching out the hand to grasp his extended hand. How can he hold me up, or give me the blessings of which his hands are full, if mine hang listless by my side, or are resolutely clenched behind my back? Faith is the opening of the heart for the inflow of his gifts. How can the sunshine enter the house if doors are barred and windows shuttered? Faith is but the channel

through which his grace pours. How can it enter if there be no channel? Faith is the sole condition. Let us learn, then, how much and how little it takes to put us in possession of the preciousness of Christ. How much? Nothing less than the surrender of our hearts to him in entire self-distrust and abasement, and in absolute reliance on his all-sufficiency for our every need. How little? No external connection with Churches or Church ordinances; no efforts of ours after self-improvement nor fragmentary and partial goodness; but simply trust in the Christ whom the gospel reveals. That faith must be a continually active faith. It is "you who believe," not "you who believed," to whom the preciousness belongs. The transference is continual, if the faith be continual. Every interruption of the latter causes a cessation in the former, and is marked by breaks like those on a telegraphic ribbon where the contact was suspended. Builders put a film of pitch between the foundations and the upper courses to keep the damp from rising. How often Christians put a film of impenetrable unbelief between Christ and themselves, so that his grace cannot rise in their hearts!

III. THE GRIM ALTERNATIVE. If the condition of possession be as the apostle declares it, then the absence of the condition means non-possession. The freeness and simplicity of the gospel of salvation by faith has necessarily a dark under side, and the more clearly and joyfully the one is preached the more clearly and solemnly should the other be. Therefore Peter's message would not be complete without the awful "but" which follows. Christ is something to every man to whom he is preached, and does something to him. Mark how significantly the following clause varies the statement of the condition, substituting "disobedient" as the antithesis of "believing," thereby teaching us that unbelief is disobedience, being an act of the rebel will, and that disobedience is unbelief. But observe, too, that while faith is the condition of all reception of Christ's blessings, unbelief does not so isolate from him as that he is nothing to the man. Unbelief, like some malignant alchemy, perverts all Christ's preciousness to harm and loss, as some plants elaborate poison in their tissues from sunshine and sweet dews. One thing or other that great Saviour must be to us all. We cannot stand wholly unaffected by him. We cannot make ourselves as if we had never heard of him. There is a solemn alternative offered to each of us—"either . . . or." Either our life, being received, or being rejected—our death. There will come to us from him either the gracious influences which save, or the terrible ones which destroy. He is either the merciful Fire which cleanses and transforms, or the awful Fire which consumes. Faith builds on him as the Foundation, and is secure. Unbelief pulls down that Rock of offence on its own head, and is ground to powder by the fall.—A. M.

Ver. 9 (last clause).—*What the Church is for.* "This people have I formed for myself," says the Divine voice through the Prophet Isaiah; "they shall show forth my praise." The Revised Version gives the latter clause as the purpose of the former, "that they might set forth," thus showing still more distinctly a verbal correspondence with the text, which is evidently quoted from the prophet. The apostle's mind is full of the Old Testament representations of the sacred office and dignity of Israel as a royal priesthood and God's chosen possession, and he transfers the whole without hesitation to the Christian Church, which he, like all the New Testament writers, regards as the heir of Israel's forfeited position. The remarkable word rendered "praise" in the Authorized Version makes the quotation from Isaiah unmistakable, as it is found in the Septuagint rendering of the verse, from which the apostle is quoting. It literally means "virtues," or, if that word is felt to be inappropriate to the Divine nature, the translation of the Revised Version, "excellencies," may be adopted. In either case the meaning is that the great end of the Church's existence is to manifest the glories of the Divine character, and so to praise him. We praise God best when we set forth what he is. The act of praise follows on the exhibition of the Object of praise.

I. WE HAVE HERE A REMARKABLE VIEW OF THE GREAT PURPOSE OF GOD IN HIS HIGHEST WORKING. The manifestation of his own character that his creatures may see it and magnify him, is his end, so far as we can speak of God as having ends which he reaches by his acts. Self-manifestation to creatures who can somewhat feel the infinite beauty and bow adoring and blessed before it, is his supreme purpose in all his acts. Such an end alone is fully congruous with and worthy of God. For this

end creation came into being, that it might be a mirror of God, and eyes were made that in the mirror they might behold him and rejoice in the vision. Every creature has this for its highest end, to glorify God, because that was God's end in its creation. Of creatures man is the highest revelation of the Divine character; and among men, man redeemed is the highest. This great thought as to God's supreme end being the manifestation of himself has often been stated so as to repel, and to make God almighty selfishness. "For a man to seek his own glory is not glory," and the same thing is true about some forms into which this truth has been thrown. But rightly understood, it is but another way of saying, "God is love." For the impulse and need to impart one's self is the very life of love, and he seeks in all his acts to reveal himself, because, being love, he delights to give himself to his creatures, and because their highest blessedness and their eternal life stand in the knowledge of his Name.

II. WE HAVE, SECOND, AN IMPRESSIVE THOUGHT AS TO THE MANNER IN WHICH THIS GREAT PURPOSE IS EFFECTED. It is largely entrusted to the members of the Christian Church, who are, as George Herbert says of mankind as a whole, "the secretaries of his praise." And there are three ways in which they are and should be so. 1. *The very existence of the Church proclaims God's excellencies.* Its founding, in the one wondrous act of Christ's death, proclaims his wisdom, power, and love, all in superlative degree. All his character shines forth there with brightness before which the revelation of him in creation pales and dwindles, and is as a nebula to a sun. Its preservation, notwithstanding the imperfections and sins of its members and the opposition of its enemies, shows forth his guarding and sustaining power no less than his long-suffering. If the Church had less than almightiness to preserve it, the faults of Christians would have destroyed it long ago, and would have provoked him to destroy it if he had not been infinite in patience. The great evidence of Christianity is Christ, and the second is the Church. 2. *The characters of Christian men proclaim God's excellencies.* They are "called out of darkness," as the text says, "into his marvellous light." That implies, as part of its meaning, that Christian men do in some measure enter into and walk in that light in which he is. The process of conversion is their passage from the darkness of self, which is ignorance, and sin, and sadness, into the possession, in part at least, of his light, which brings knowledge and goodness and joy. The black thunder-clouds are borne into the sunlight, which pours on their ebon masses and touches them into lustre or thins them away. Thus we may and should become means of making God visible and lovely to dim eyes which could not bear to look on his brightness except as reflected in the mirror of our characters. All the beauty of self-sacrifice which has ever irradiated a saint, all the heroism of the martyr, all the wisdom and eloquence of the teachers, all the prudence of the leaders, all the charity and benevolence, are but the reflex of his excellencies. All these, which gleam so brightly in the dark world, are but diamond dust, microscopic fragments, as it were, from the solid rock of his infinite perfection. They tell of him, as the stream of its source. How profound the depth, how wide the expanse, how pellucid the waters of that great lake which pours through the ages that broad stream of human goodness that flows between the banks of the Christian Church! 3. *We should proclaim God's excellencies by direct words, as occasion serves.* Every Christian is bound both to witness for God by a life made fair by communion with him, and by speech, when speech may be used. It is not enough to show forth his Name in our lives, for sometimes life needs a commentary, and a Christian will often have to avow the principles which guide his actions, in plain words, if the actions are to be intelligible or he to be faithful. Common honesty requires it. Loyalty to our Lord requires it. Ordinary humanity requires it. God has entrusted all Christian men with the treasure of his love in Christ, not that they may themselves be enriched only, but also that by them it may be ministered to others; and the dumb Christian who has never opened his mouth to press the gospel on others incurs a worse "curse" than that which falls on him who "withholdeth bread" from starving lips. Alas! for the many professing Christians who do their best to thwart the Divine purpose in their conversion by cowardly indolent silence! Their duty cannot be delegated, their responsibility cannot be evaded, nor the punishment which comes in their feeble hold of the concealed truth eluded.

III. WE HAVE HERE, TOO, AN EXHIBITION OF SOME OF THE MOTIVES IMPELLING THE

DISCHARGE OF THIS DUTY. The greatness of the blessing is suggested by the emphatic words which describe God as calling us out of darkness into his marvellous light. His love and his power have summoned us into light which is his own, thus giving us to participate in the very element of his own being, and which is marvellous, as being bestowed by processes beyond nature which may well call forth wonder, and as in its own lustre so far transcending all other light. A gift so wondrous is meant to call forth gratitude, and that gratitude should express itself in a continual offering up of self to manifest God's glory. Thankfulness, then, to him who has called us is the first motive to which the apostle appeals. It is a poor gratitude which never mentions the name of its benefactor. Dumb thankfulness is no thankfulness. If his praises die on our lips, gratitude must be dead in our hearts. A second motive is a sense of responsibility arising from possession of the gift. If we have the light, and are walking in it, how can we bear to know that there are poor souls stumbling in the dark! Put the candle in your window. It may light home some lost wanderer on the dreary moor. A third motive arises from the consideration of God's purpose to which we have already referred. Surely his purpose should be our aim. Our own happiness or salvation is not all God's meaning in his mercy towards us.

"Heaven doth with us, as we with torches do,
Not light them for themselves."

We have received Christ that we may impart Christ. "God hath shined in our hearts, that we might give to others the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Let us see to it that we fulfil that Divine purpose. Let us not be silent recipients of his grace, like the sand that sucks up the rain and bears no flowers; but let us give back in praise and witness what his mercy gives to us.—A. M.

Ver. 21.—*Christ's Passion our peace and pattern.* Christianity brings its highest principles to bear on the lowliest duties. If it did not regulate these, what would there be for it to regulate? Life is made up of a great many little things and a very few great ones. The clock only strikes twelve twice in the twenty-four hours. The apostle is engaged in exhorting a handful of Christian slaves to patience and submission, and he points to the solemn mystery of the cross, and bids them look to it amid their squalid miseries, and take pattern from the infinite meekness and un murmuring submission seen there. The supreme truth of revelation is fitly used for so lowly a purpose. Further, note how here the two views of Christ's work which have been often held apart, and even made antagonistic, are united—suffering for us, and example to us.

1. THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST OUR GAIN. It is interesting to notice the change in the apostle's insight into the meaning of Christ's sufferings. At first, it was he especially to whom they were a stumbling-block. The very intensity of his belief that his Master was "the Christ, the Son of the living God," made him recoil from the thought of his violent death as an inconceivable contradiction. "Be it far from thee, Lord. This shall not be unto thee!" expressed with characteristic vehemence at once his blindness and his love. Even after the Resurrection, Peter's earlier preaching, as recorded in the Acts, does not go beyond putting in contrast the two things—the death as man's crime, the rising again as God's seal. He does not seem, in these first days of transition, to have reached the harmonizing thought of the purpose of the sufferings. But in this Epistle these sufferings have become the very keystone of the arch. The references to them are continual. The whole fabric of his theological and moral teaching is built on them. The black thunder-cloud has been discerned to be the source of all-refreshing rains and the cause of fruitfulness, and the inexplicable anomaly has been unfolded as the deepest truth on which faith and hope and soul-transforming love, the mother of all practical obedience, may fasten and feed. The one thought which has thus illuminated the darkness is the recognition of Christ's sufferings as for us. The world has admitted that the Sufferer had no sin of his own. Unless we see in them suffering on behalf of others, his life becomes the great indictment of God's providence. Only when we see that he was wounded for our transgressions do we understand the mystery of the cross. The text does not define the manner in which these sufferings work on our behalf. "For us" is not necessarily "instead of us." But there can be no doubt as to what that manner was in the view of the apostle. "His own self bare our sins in

his own body on the tree," says the context. His death was a sacrifice; by the sprinkling of his blood we are hallowed. No other view does justice to the plain import of these and other passages than that which takes Christ's sufferings to be substitutionary in their character and propitiatory in their operation, and therefore to be for our advantage. Note, too, that the apostle dwells on the sufferings, the actual mental and physical pain, and not only on the fact of death. The loving memory of the eye-witness of his Lord's Passion retains each incident of the slow torture, the buffeting, the mocking, the livid weals of the cruel scourge, the fainting form bearing the heavy cross, and the unmoved meekness in it all. Sensuous representations of Christ's sufferings have often been carried too far, but surely there is a danger of going to the other extreme; and every Christian life needs for its vigour a believing and realizing contemplation of the sufferings of Christ endured for and instead of us.

II. THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST OUR PATTERN. We are familiar with the idea that our Lord's life is our pattern. But here we have his Passion presented not only for our faith, but for our imitation. 1. *Note the special force of the two metaphors here.* "Example" is only used here in the New Testament. It means a copy of writing set to a scholar to be traced over by his unaccustomed hand. Think of the clear firm characters below, and the wavering clumsy ones scrawled over them. How the figure speaks of careful observance of the example, of laborious effort after reproducing it, and of the hope of constant gradual improvement! The view of the whole Christian life which is involved in the figure is that in it all we are like schoolboys writing our copybooks, which have to be examined by the Master one day. What we have written, we have written. Let us live as remembering that we have to take up our books to the Master's desk when school is over! The other metaphor is remarkable on Peter's lips. Did he remember how rashly he had asked, "Why cannot I follow thee now?" and the last solemn command by the fire of coals on the lake-side? The word employed has the force of "follow closely." We are to take Christ for our Guide, as men walking across a glacier might do by their guide, stepping in the prints of his footsteps, and keeping very near him. 2. *Notice the solemn thought that Christ's sufferings can be imitated by us.* They stand alone in their bearing on man's salvation, and in certain respects, in their severity and awfulness. We have but, at the most, to go a little way down the awful descent which he travelled to its depths, to drink a little of the cup which he drained to its dregs, to stand on the edge of the storm through the worst of which he passed. But yet the same spirit and temper may be ours. Not the mocking but the meekness, not the scourging but the submission, not the dread desertion by the Father's love but the Son's cry to the Father, may be copied by each of us in our lighter griefs. Complete surrender to the will of God and meek endurance of the enmity of men are to be our patterns. The highest ideal of human character is the Christ who, when he was reviled, reviled not again. How utterly opposed to it are the so-called virtues of high-spirited resistance, and the whole practice of most of us in regard to slights, insults, and injuries! We call ourselves Christians, and say that we take Christ for our Example: do we ever remember that his cross is not only the ground of all our peace and hope, but the law of our lives? or bethink ourselves that whatever more "being made conformable to his death" may mean, it means that "when we do well and suffer for it, we take it patiently," and let no anger, or revenge, or bitterness to our worst enemy ever ruffle the clear waters of our hearts?

III. THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST OUR POWER. The world has plenty of examples. Men do not go wrong for want of patterns. The worst man knows more of goodness than the best man does. Models make us neither willing nor able to copy them. What is the use of a headline in a copy, be it ever so beautifully written, if the scholar has no will to imitate it, has a lame hand, and a bad pen with no ink in it? We want something more than examples if we whose disease is that we know the good and choose the evil are ever to be better. So all types of Christianity which merely take Christ as an Example fail to get his example imitated. We must begin with "Christ suffered for us" if we are to live like Christ. Only when I look to his cross as the great act of his love, by which he gave himself wholly for me and bore the burden of my sin, do I receive the power to follow him and live as he lived. That death, if I look to it with faith, opens the deepest springs of love in my heart, which make obedience to and imitation of him necessary and delightful. It joins me to him in a union so close that

in him I am crucified to the world, and a new life, the life of Christ himself, is implanted within me. It brings to me a new power of holiness in the Spirit which he gives. Unless the sufferings of Christ are to us the propitiation for our sins, they will never be to us the pattern for our lives. Unless they are the pattern for our lives, it is vain to fancy that they are the propitiation for our sins. What God has joined together let not man put asunder. "Christ has suffered for us"—there is the whole gospel; "leaving us an example"—there is the whole Law.—A. M.

Ver. 25.—*The Shepherd and Bishop of souls.* This letter is addressed to scattered strangers. But though locally separated, over wide lands, a handful here, a single soul there, they were in spirit united, and, seen truly, were a flock gathered round the one Shepherd. Long ago Peter had heard the great words, "Other sheep I have . . . them also I must bring, . . . and there shall be one flock, and one Shepherd." And in these Gentile Christians, thinly sown over the Asiatic peninsula, he sees the beginning of their fulfilment. They had been wandering sheep. They are now a flock; for the real dividing influence is sin, which drives us apart into the awful solitude of a self-absorbed life, and the real uniting power is Christ, in their common relation to whom men the most widely apart in place, race, condition, or culture, are brought into close union with each other. There is one flock because the sheep cluster round the one Shepherd. These two expressions—"Shepherd" and "Bishop" of souls—cover very much the same ground, but they set forth our Lord's relation under somewhat different aspects, each blessed, and suggesting different phases of encouragement and exhortation.

I. THE SHEPHERD OF SOULS. It is needless to trace this metaphor through the Old Testament, where it is employed to express the relation of Jehovah to Israel. The most familiar of all the psalms shows us a single devout soul appropriating the whole rest and blessedness of the thought for the nourishment of the individual life of trust. Isaiah's great prophecy of the Servant of the Lord proclaims the coming of Jehovah to feed his flock like a Shepherd. Ezekiel brings out more plainly still that not only Jehovah, but Jehovah's "servant David," is to be the Shepherd in a golden future. Zechariah's mysterious words add dark shades to the picture, and set forth Jehovah's Shepherd as smitten by Jehovah's appointment. And all these foreshadowings are interpreted and the scattered beams focussed in the words which were as vivid in Peter's memory as when first spoken, and far better understood than then: "I am the good Shepherd. The good Shepherd giveth his life for his sheep." It is remarkable that, with all this prophecy and teaching from our Lord himself, this text and one verse in Hebrews are the only places where the name is applied to him in the New Testament, especially when we remember how early and how universally the figure came to be employed in the succeeding periods. What aspects of our Lord's relation to us does it present? The ancient application of the metaphor, not only in Israel, but in other lands, was to kings and rulers; but we cannot confine the meaning thus. The twenty-third psalm and the tenth chapter of John give far deeper and tenderer thoughts than rule. There are mainly three ideas expressed. 1. The first is *guidance*. The shepherd leads. "When he puts forth his sheep he goeth before them." And under that thought is included all the shaping of outward life, for Christ is the Lord of providence, and the hands that were pierced for us hold the helm of the universe. But our text does not add, "of souls," without a deep meaning. It would have us see the operation of our Shepherd's care, not only nor chiefly in outward life. And therefore we must think of his guidance as mainly his leading of our souls in paths of righteousness, and "showing us that which is good." His recorded example, the touch of his hand on our wills, the sweet constraint of his love, the wisdom which directs breathed into the soul which lives in fellowship with him, and has silenced the loud voice of self that his voice may be heard,—these are the Shepherd's guidance of the sheep. His sceptre is a simple shepherd's staff. He says, "Come, follow me;" and his sheep walk not in darkness, but have the light of life. 2. The second thought is *guardianship*. David learned to trust his Shepherd's care over him in dangers by meditating on his own hazarding his life against the "lion and the bear." Our Shepherd gives his life to drag us from the mouth of the lion. Body and soul are under his care. Himself may sometimes strike a straying sheep with his merciful rod, but he will let no foe touch us, and our sorrows are tokens of his care, not of their power. If we keep within hearing of his voice, sin,

which is our only real enemy, will not harm us. Our docile submission is the correlative of his guidance, and our trust should answer to his defence. If he guard, let us press close to the shelter of his presence, and ever look for the benediction of his eye. 3. The third thought is *provision*. He will not lead where we must starve, but even in the most unpromising situations will show his flock some scattered blades of grass which they may crop. "Their pastures shall be in all high places, the very bareness of the mountain-tops yielding food. He himself is the Pasture as well as the Shepherd of the soul, and ever gives himself to satisfy the hunger of the human heart, which needs a changeless and perfect love, a personal truth, an all-commanding will to feed upon, else it aches with hunger. And for outward wants these too he remembers, and on the low-liest shore will kindle a fire of coals, and himself prepare food for his servants. So let us wait on the Shepherd of our souls, assured that his sheep never 'look up, and are not fed.'"

II. CHRIST THE BISHOP OF OUR SOULS. Undoubtedly the allusion here is to the bishop or elder of the early Church, with distinct reference to the etymological meaning of the word as well as to the functions of the officer. Looking to the later development of these, and to the associations which they have connected with the word, the marginal rendering of the Revised Version ("overseer") is perhaps better than "bishop." How closely the two ideas of "shepherd" and Church "overseer" are connected is clear from Paul's address to the elders at Ephesus (Acts xx.), and from the exhortations in this Epistle (ch. v. 1, 7) to the elders to feed the flock, as well as from the universal use of "pastor" as a synonym. What aspects of Christ's relation are thus presented? 1. We have the great truth that *he is himself the Source from which all Church officers draw at once their authority and their faculty*. He gives all gifts to men, and sets them in his Church. If they forget that, and use their offices for themselves, or fancy that they originate the gifts which they but receive, they are usurpers. From him are they all. To him should they all live and serve. There is but one Authority and one Teacher in the Church; the rest are delegates. There is but one Fountain; the others are cisterns. "One is your Master, and all ye are brethren." 2. *The original meaning of the word is "overseer."* and that suggests the vigilant inspection which he exercises over his Church. The good Shepherd knows each sheep by name, and his watchful eye is on every one of the flock. The title is the condensation into one word of the solemn clause in the apocalyptic vision of the Christ in the midst of the golden lamps, which tells how "his eyes were as a flame of fire," and of the sevenfold "I know thy works," which heralds each message to the Churches. The thought has many sides, according to the spiritual condition of each. To Ephesus which has left its first love, to Sardis ready to die, to Laodicea sinking from lukewarmness to ice, it comes monitory, rebuking and putting to shame, though even in these the clear eye sees for the most part something to commend. To Smyrna, threatened with persecution and martyrdom, it brings courage and the assurance of a crown of life. To Philadelphia, which has kept his Word, it seals the joy of his approbation, which is reward indeed. So to us all, the thought that we walk ever in the light of his countenance and are searched by the flame of those eyes may be a gladness, as bringing the assurance of his perfect knowledge who loves as he knows, and is guided by it in all his care for us and gifts to us. "Search me, O Lord, and know my heart." 3. The thought that *Christ discharges for each soul an office of which the elders in the Church is a shadow*, may also be suggested. He teaches and he rules. All authority over and all illumination in our souls are his. And that not merely through men, nor only by the influence of his past life and death as recorded, but by a present and continual operation on our spirits. We have not only a Christ who lived and died, and so declared the Father, but a Christ who lives, and from his throne in the heavens is still declaring him to all listening loving hearts. The present activity of Christ is plainly implied here. Nor have we to think of him as only helping and teaching the collective body, but single souls. He is not here spoken of as the Shepherd of the flock and the Overseer of the Church, blessed as that truth is; but he is held forth as Shepherd and Bishop of each unit in the Church, for he sustains these relations to the individual, and will draw near to each of us, solitary and small, if we will only believe that by his stripes we are healed, and, conquered by his dying love, turn from our wanderings and couch trustful at his feet.—A. M.

Vers. 4—6.—*The spiritual temple, priesthood, and sacrifices.* A Jew, writing to
I. PETER. H

Jews, very naturally made use of language and of metaphors based upon the usages and practices of the Jewish religion. Peter knew well that the temple offices and observances, the building and its purposes, to which he here referred, had all their meaning in their relation to the Saviour in whom he and his fellow-Christians believed, in their relation to the gospel which he preached.

I. CHRISTIANS ARE THE MATERIAL OF THE TRUE AND SPIRITUAL TEMPLE. 1. They are built in and upon the divinely chosen Corner-stone—Christ himself. Cephas, Peter, “the rock,” thus witnesses to the Rock of Ages, whose perfect qualifications to occupy this position were well known to the apostle who enjoyed his intimacy and friendship. His nature, his character, his mediatorial work, all concurred to fit our Lord to be the Support, the uniting and central Force, of the spiritual edifice. None other could have constituted the living unity; none other could have served as the Corner-stone, and at the same time the Foundation-stone, of the new humanity. 2. They are individually living stones; in this differing from the fair and costly masonry employed in the temple at Jerusalem. An intimation this of the dignity of each Christian’s vocation, who has his own place to fill, his own work to do, in the spiritual sanctuary; and at the same time a summons to that life, that conscious and voluntary fulfilment of service, which distinguishes the living from the lifeless material. 3. They constitute in concert the “spiritual house,” which is the glory of the “new dispensation;” the idea of which is in the mind of the Divine Architect, and which is gradually being brought to realization and perfection under his superintendence, and through the concurrence of those who can only very partially comprehend the bearing of their life upon the glorious whole which is in due time to be consummated. The whole edifice is based by faith upon Christ; the several stones are cemented by mutual love.

II. CHRISTIANS ARE THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE TRUE AND SPIRITUAL TEMPLE. 1. This is asserted of the whole body of the faithful. There are indeed *special* ministries in the Church—bishops, presbyters, deacons, etc.; but there is one *general* ministry to which all Christians are called, and that is the priesthood. 2. The character of this priesthood is stamped as “holy.” From the Book of Leviticus and other parts of the Old Testament we learn what were the marks of the Hebrew priesthood—their descent, their equipment, their qualifications, their office. But the one all-pervading idea in these regulations was the inculcation of “holiness unto the Lord.” Under the new covenant the holiness prescribed is holiness of spirit and of life; not merely purity of vesture, separateness of function, etc. 3. The office of this priesthood is specified: spiritual sacrifices are to be offered. What these are is not here specified, but other passages of New Testament Scripture leave us in no doubt upon this; the Christian sacrifices are comprehended under these two headings—obedience and praise. 4. The acceptance of such service is assured through the intercession of the great High Priest, Jesus Christ.

Thus the apostle, at the expense of combining metaphors scarcely consistent, sets forth more fully the dignity and the duty, the fellowship and the happiness, belonging to all those who are faithful and consecrated members of the living Church of Christ.—J. R. T.

Ver. 4.—*Elect and precious.* Our Lord Jesus was both despised and rejected by men. But theirs was the judgment of the fallible and the conduct of the sinful. Very different was the esteem in which our Saviour was held by the Divine Father, and by those whom the Father enlightened to discern as he himself discerned. In the view of the Eternal, who “judgeth righteously,” Christ was and is “elect and precious.”

I. DECLARATIONS OF THIS ESTIMATION OF CHRIST. 1. *Prophetical* declarations, such as these: “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit at my right hand;” “I have set my King upon my holy hill;” and, “Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my soul delighteth.” 2. *Evangelical.* The Lord Jesus was conscious of the Father’s favour; he declared that “the Father loveth the Son,” and desires “that all men should honour the Son.” The forerunner received the witness concerning Jesus: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” The multitude were present when the voice came from heaven testifying from the Father: “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.” 3. *Apostolical.* When the inspired and commissioned

preachers of the gospel proclaimed Christ, they represented him as "approved of God," who had raised and exalted him, and had "set him at his own right hand." In the Epistles, as for example in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the approval and favour of the Father are mentioned with the view of inspiring a just conception of the dignity of the Divine Son.

II. GROUNDS OF THIS ESTIMATION OF CHRIST. 1. His Divine Sonship. 2. His sympathy with the Father's purposes of redemption. 3. His constant and perfect obedience to the Father's will. 4. His devotion to the Father's glory.

III. PROOFS OF THIS ESTIMATION OF CHRIST. These are in some instances intelligible to reason, but in other instances they are only to be apprehended by faith. 1. This accounts for the appointment of Jesus as the Founder and Head of the Church. 2. And for the supernatural indwelling of Christ by his Spirit in his Church. 3. And for the assurance that the kingdom of Christ, in contrast to all others, shall be universal and everlasting. 4. And also for the appointment of Christ as the one great Judge of all mankind.

IV. PRACTICAL INFERENCES FROM THIS ESTIMATION OF CHRIST. It is not a matter of doctrine only. All hearers of the gospel and all sincere and faithful Christians have reason to rejoice that their Saviour Jesus is "elect and precious." 1. There is on this account hope for the future of humanity. If God the Father sets such honour upon Christ, there is encouragement to believe that Christ's work shall not fail. 2. There is for each friend and follower of the Saviour a sure prospect of individual salvation. God, who loves and honours the Shepherd, will not suffer the sheep of his flock, for whom he died, to suffer death and destruction. Their security, dignity, and happiness are assured. They are chosen in the Chosen; they are precious for the sake of the Precious. 3. Most obvious are the sin and the peril of those who despise and reject the Elect and Chosen One, the Honoured of God himself. If Christ be what he is here declared to be, how clear and cogent is the statement of inspiration, "Neither is there salvation in any other"—J. R. T.

Vers. 13—15.—*The Christian citizen.* The religion of the Lord Jesus entered practically into all the relations and interests of human life. The condition of the world, politically regarded, when the Roman empire exercised universal sway, was indeed very different from that which obtains at the present time. But the principles inculcated in the first century of our era are adapted to guide and govern the conduct of Christ's people through all time.

I. THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT. 1. Regarded in itself, it is a human institution, but it is nevertheless ordained by God. In this respect it is in the same case as the family. To believe in a Divine Ruler and a divinely appointed order, is to accept the state and its ordinances as appointed by the wisdom of God himself. 2. The Christian recognizes the Divine principle of government as personified in civil rulers. These are supreme—as kings; or persons commissioned, and exercising delegated power, as governors. 3. The Christian perceives the necessity of those functions which rulers are bound to discharge. There is no government worthy of the name which does not punish evil-doers, and protect, favour, and praise those who do well.

II. THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY TOWARDS CIVIL GOVERNMENT. 1. Generally speaking, that duty is *submission, loyalty, and cheerful obedience.* When laws are promulgated, the Christian respects and observes them; when taxes are levied, the Christian pays them; when service is required, the Christian renders it. 2. He acknowledges that this course of conduct is supported alike by the example and by the teaching of Christ. 3. Yet this obedience is within certain limits, and is subject to certain reservations. No man is under obligation to obey an ordinance of the civil power which is contradictory to the express and unmistakable law of God. And when the ruler himself is disloyal, and violates the constitution to which ruler and subject alike are subject, there are cases in which even resistance is allowable, if not binding.

III. THE CHRISTIAN'S MOTIVES TO OBEY THE CIVIL GOVERNMENT. He does not act simply in his own interest, to avoid penalties, to secure place. 1. He obeys for the Lord's sake, *i.e.* with a Christian aim before him. 2. He obeys because such is the will of God himself. 3. He obeys in order to remove hindrances from the way of the progress of Christianity among men. Scandals are avoided, prejudices are over-

come, good will is conciliated; and the path is made clear for the progress of the gospel. Loyalty to the state and to the sovereign is loyalty to Christ, to God.—J. R. T.

Ver. 16.—*True freedom.* The change was great which even an enlightened and pious Jew passed through when he received Jesus as the Messiah. Finding in Christian doctrine and privilege the substance of which he had so long been conversant with the shadow, his mind expanded and his best feelings were touched with a brightness of joy and hope. The moral horizon widened around him. Human life must have seemed a grander and more glorious thing. Much more must this have been the case with a heathen, who, if sincere, had been encompassed with the chains of a ceremonial religion. Both to the Jewish and the Gentile convert the predominant experience in Christian faith and fellowship must have been an experience of liberty. It was a justly founded delight which they thus came to share. Yet it was not without its dangers, as the Apostle Peter well knew. Hence his admonition to his readers to take and practically to adopt a fair and balanced view of the new liberty upon which they had entered.

I. THE CHRISTIAN'S SPIRITUAL FREEDOM. 1. He enjoys freedom in relation to God. Apart from the great redemption, man is, as sinful, exposed to the Divine displeasure and righteous condemnation. From this he is *delivered*, i.e. set free; and that by an act of God's own clemency and interposition. 2. He is emancipated from the slavery to which sin formerly subjected him. The Scriptures everywhere represent the service of sin as serfdom, not as honourable and worthy of such a being as man. And experience shows that this view is just, that the servant of sin is the slave of sin. Now, from this bondage Christ liberates his people. Sin has not dominion over them. No created power could effect this great enfranchisement; it is the work of the Divine Saviour clothed with the omnipotence of Heaven. 3. He is also freed from subjection to the authority of man. As the soul recognizes the right of Deity, the power claimed by humanity recedes and diminishes. Another and a higher standard than human authority claims profoundest reverence; and, where there is a conflict, the Christian spirit realizes freedom from the created yoke.

II. THE CHRISTIAN'S RENUNCIATION OF THE COUNTERFEIT OF LIBERTY. No doubt many, under the guise of Christianity, have adopted antinomian principles; it was so in apostolic days; it is so now. Against this error Peter faithfully warns those lately emancipated from bondage to sin and death. We are warned in this language: (1) that it is possible for men nominally Christian to be in bondage in respects in which they ought to be free; and (2) to be exercising freedom where they ought to submit to restraint. The history of Christendom assures us that there is a tendency, on the part of those who realize their new and sacred privileges, to despise the safe way of scrupulous and watchful obedience. And on the other hand, it is found that traditional chains are retained and cherished which should be cast off with indignation and hatred.

III. THE CHRISTIAN'S SPIRITUAL BONDAGE. All the while that he is free, the Christian is the true servant and bondman of the Lord Christ. Of this service it may be said that it is: 1. *Voluntary*, because adopted and accepted deliberately, upon a consideration of the claims of Christ, and the true duty and interest of his emancipated ones. 2. *Practical*, being the service not only of the heart, but of the bodily nature and outward life. 3. *Honourable*. In the slavery of sin is disgrace; but to serve Christ is higher honour than for a minister of state to serve a good and mighty king, than for a pupil to serve a master of power and genius. 4. *Happy and advantageous*. The Christian does not serve for the sake of the reward; but he does not serve without a reward. Christ has it in his power to recompense, and he exercises this power for the benefit of his faithful adherents and friends. There is no joy like that of serving Christ, and no recompense such as that which he does and will confer. In a word, it is the experience of the Christian that true service and true liberty are united in his life, and in his life alone.—J. R. T.

Ver. 17.—“*Honour all men.*” The common tendency of mankind is towards rendering honour to the great, those possessing political power, those endowed with signal gifts of body or mind, those possessed of vast wealth. Much of baseness in human character, of meanness in human conduct, may be attributed to this tendency.

Christianity sets itself to oppose this current of opinion and action, as is most remarkably proved by this inspired admonition, "Honour all men."

I. THE GROUNDS UPON WHICH HUMANITY IS TO BE HONoured. 1. Natural grounds. All men are creatures of God's almighty power. Not only so; all are made in the image of God, however that image has been defiled and partially effaced by sin. Hence the capacity for great things, for a holy and self-denying life, for fellowship with God. 2. Supernatural grounds. The revelation of God's love and pity is for the benefit of mankind at large. God is "the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe." Christ died for all, and, as the Son of man, partook the common nature, lived the common life, died the death which is the common lot, that he might "draw all men unto himself." The provision of the gospel, the grace of the Holy Spirit, are for all, irrespective of nation, of rank, of any adventitious distinction. How, then, can the Christian do other than honour those for whom God himself, the Fountain of all honour, has done so great things?

II. THE WAYS IN WHICH HUMANITY IS TO BE HONoured. 1. By a watchful cherishing of a spirit respectful and considerate, and by the avoidance of a contemptuous disposition. 2. By a sympathetic demeanour towards fellow-Christians, whatever their position in society. 3. By efforts for the enlightenment and evangelization of men of every nation and every condition in life.—J. R. T.

Vers. 18—25.—*Servitude and subjection.* Writing to slaves, Peter, like Paul—who was himself a Roman citizen and a Christian freeman—exhorts to patient endurance of the ills and wrongs too often inflicted by irresponsible power upon the unprotected and despised. Beside the specially Christian motives to which the apostle here appealed, he knew that there were other and more obvious motives. There was *necessity*. The power lay with the master, and the bondsman must needs submit. There was *expediency*. Resistance and rebellion on the part of the slave would only bring upon him punishment and increase of suffering. But Paul relies upon the distinctively Christian motives to produce patience and submission.

I. CHRIST'S OWN EXAMPLE OF PATIENT ENDURANCE OF WRONG. Our Saviour, though sinless, suffered the contradiction and the contumely, the agonies and the death, inflicted by unjust and unfeeling men. And he did this without even reviling his enemies. The apostle, in vers. 21—24, paints in impressive colours the figure of the meek and much-enduring Redeemer, and holds up this incomparable figure for the admiration and imitation of the Redeemer's followers and friends.

II. CHRIST'S EXPRESS COMMAND THAT HIS PEOPLE SHOULD REFRAIN FROM RETALIATION. His precepts, preserved in the sermon on the mount, expressly forbade revenge, and inculcated brotherly kindness, and, more than this, the return of good for evil. And when Jesus himself was seized by the agents of those who plotted against his life, he forbade his friends to draw the sword in his defence.

III. THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF ENJOYING A HIGHER, A SPIRITUAL, LIBERTY. The meanest bondman who found Christ found freedom. He may have been treated with contempt and even harshness and cruelty; but he knew within himself that he was the Lord's freedman. He could endure bondage to an earthly master, for Christ had set him free from sin and spiritual slavery and death. Carrying this conviction in his breast, he could joyfully endure insults, injustice, and ill treatment.

IV. THE HOPE AND PROSPECT OF LIBERATION. His view might be gloomy as far as the earthly horizon extended. But he looked forward to "death, which sets the captive free." He was the free citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem, and his prospect in the life to come was bright. A Stoic slave, like Epictetus, was conscious of possessing, in the power of suicide, the means of freeing himself from a yoke which became insupportable. But this power extended only to release; the Christian bondman, forbidden self-destruction, had before him a brighter hope—a hope not only of release, but of liberty and glory.

V. THE DESIRE TO PRODUCE AN IMPRESSION FAVOURABLE TO THE CHRISTIAN FAITH. Submission was not only "thankworthy," and "acceptable with God;" it might well prove profitable to fellow-men. When masters met, not with a sullen acquiescence, not with a surly defiance, not with a stolid insensibility, but with uncomplaining, cheerful obedience, a favourable impression was produced upon their minds. They

could not but inquire into the cause which produced fruit so unusual and so admirable. And they could not but, in many instances, examine into the religion which introduced into human society an element so new, so impressive, and so beneficial.—J. R. T.

Vers. 21—24.—*The purpose of the Saviour's sufferings.* One thing must be observed and admired in the religious life and the religious teaching of the inspired apostles—everything they did and everything they said led their minds to the Lord Jesus. If Christ be the Son of God and the Saviour of mankind, this is not to be wondered at. He is not only the central figure of human history; he is at the core of each Christian's heart, at the spring of each Christian's life. The Christianity which is apart from men's thinking and duty and interest has no likeness to the Christianity of the apostles. Every subject they treated was, in their view, related to the Lord Jesus. Especially did they look at every relationship of society, and every duty of man, in the light of Christ's Deity, Christ's humanity, Christ's cross! It was natural to them to think thus. Their hearts were full of Christ, and whatever path of inquiry, instruction, or action they took, it was sure to lead them to him. And this was not vain enthusiasm; it was most reasonable and right. We, too, cannot see things as they are in God's sight, we cannot act as he would have us, unless we connect all our experience and all our duty with him who has brought God to us, who has brought us to God. Peter was a very *practical* man. When he wrote his Epistle, he wrote it to actual living men and women. God be praised that we are taught our doctrines, not in theological treatises, but in letters which were the outpouring of soul to soul. Certain superfine religionists think the real occupations and relations of life as something quite beneath their notice. So did not the apostle. For instance, he knew that some of the Christian people who would read his letter were *slaves*; and accordingly he wrote to them as to slaves. There is no doubt that Christianity introduced among mankind principles which first ameliorated, and then abolished, slavery. But Peter had to deal with facts as they were. Christianity was to help men, not only to rise above slavery, but—whilst slavery still endured as an institution—to make the best of it. So Peter told these slaves that there was a work for them to do, a witness for them to offer, whilst they were still slaves. He bade them remember how their *Master* Christ, who was at the same time their *Redeemer*, had borne himself amidst injustice, false accusation, contumely, and suffering. And he brought to bear the willing sacrifice of Christ for them upon their hearts, as a Divine motive to endurance and patience. They were not so ill treated as their great Saviour had been; and, whilst he was perfectly innocent and good, they were not free from human infirmities. It was certainly their duty to display the spirit of their Lord, to do what he had done, to endure as he had endured. Thus they should honour him. Thus they should be in the way of reaping some wholesome fruit of blessing for themselves. Thus they should win others to the faith which none could help admiring. And thus they should secure for themselves a sure recompense of reward.

I. LOOK AT THE FACT OF CHRIST'S SUFFERING. That the Founder of our religion should suffer is itself an astonishing and instructive fact. Suffering and shame, submission to violence and cruelty,—these are not usually associated with power and victory. Yet the Author of the religion which has the greatest influence over mankind, and is moulding the history of the world, was pre-eminently a Sufferer. We believe that this was foretold. It cannot be questioned that the first Christian preachers and writers proclaimed, without any reserve, the humiliation and the woe of their great Lord. They even gloried in the cross. Peter was, perhaps better than any man, able to witness to the sufferings and to the demeanour of Jesus Christ. He was "with him in the garden;" and although he fell asleep, yet, on waking, he saw on his Master's brow the "bloody sweat," and read upon his Master's features the agony of soul through which he had passed, with no human sympathy, with none to share his awful watch. Peter was there when Judas betrayed the Lord with a kiss, and beheld the meekness with which he yielded himself into the hands of his foes. It was Peter who drew the sword in defence of his Master, and who heard that Master's rebuke, and his language of pathetic resignation, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" The same Peter followed Jesus into the judgment-hall, and saw the Lord whom he loved bound and reviled, and witnessed his meekness under insult and

injustice. Upon himself Jesus had turned the glance of affectionate reproach, which smote him to the heart, and opened the fountain of his tears. It was Peter who entered the empty grave of the risen Immanuel. It was Peter who, when forgiven his faithlessness and fear, was assured by the Lord of a share in the humiliation and agony of the cross. Who, then, so fit as Simon Peter—both by his opportunities of observing the Lord's sorrow and anguish, and by his warm and tender love for Christ—to speak of the Redeemer's woes, and to testify of his bearing and his spirit, when he "endured the contradiction of sinners against himself"? The witness of this companion and friend of Christ Jesus is that he suffered. That our Lord endured weariness, hunger, and thirst; that acutest pain was suffered by him in the closing hours of his life;—this the whole record abundantly proves. And his mental sufferings were made evident by the tears he shed, the sighs he heaved, the groans and cries he uttered. His soul was "exceeding sorrowful;" it was "troubled." Keenly susceptible to human emotions, he was distressed at his rejection by his countrymen, at his desertion by his friends, at his betrayal by one disciple, his denial by another. A yet further and a more mysterious woe was that which he endured when he bore the burden of the sins and sorrows of mankind, and "tasted death for every man." As the Son of man, the Head and Representative of the race whose nature he assumed, Christ Jesus shared our lot in more than all its grief and anguish. Great stress is laid upon the fact that Jesus was *reviled*. It was woe enough, so it might be thought, to suffer in our stead; but what shall be said of the endurance of the taunts and mockery of those for whom he came to die, whom he came to save? This was the bitterest earthly ingredient in the bitter cup which Jesus drank. Now, all these sufferings were *undeserved*. The apostle observes upon Christ's innocence. He "did no sin." With a reference to Isaiah's prediction, he boldly proclaims his Master's guilelessness. Whatever afflictions befall us in this life, candour constrains us to admit that we deserve all, and more than all, that we endure. If they are punishment, the strokes inflicted are lighter than the guilt they chasten. But nothing of this kind can be said of our Saviour's pains. His very enemies could substantiate no charge against him, and in this their testimony supports the assertions of his friends. And Paul says, "He *knew* no sin." "In him is no sin," says John. And Peter's witness is in the text, "He *did* no sin." To complete the picture, we must observe the *demeanour* of our Saviour when enduring these afflictions. Men too often complain and murmur, whilst some rebel against the trials appointed for them. No one here is perfected in patience. But we are well reminded of the *meekness* and the *patience* of Christ. He endured more than we are ever called upon to suffer, yet he uttered no word of impatience. He endured his sufferings at the hands of injustice, and was cruelly and unpardonably wronged; yet he had only submission—no resentment—to return to his injurers, and a prayer to offer for their forgiveness. "He was reviled, but he reviled not again." The impenitent malefactor by his side joined in the jeers of the rulers and the people around the cross. But Jesus held his peace. When his sufferings were acute, he gave way to no impulse of revenge against his persecutors. Although he might have come down from the cross, or have summoned legions of angels to his rescue, "he threatened not." He was content that the will of God should be done. Men might judge unjustly. God is he who judgeth righteously. To him, accordingly, the Lord Jesus committed all—himself and his cause. What a picture is this of superhuman self-forgetfulness and self-sacrifice! As we contemplate the sinless Sufferer, first in the garden, then before his judges, and finally upon the cross, we are constrained to acknowledge with the centurion, "Certainly this was a righteous man! Truly this was the Son of God!" The scene surpasses all that man has invented. The character exhibited is one beyond the attainment of human virtue. We cannot wonder that the name of Jesus has become, and must ever remain, the symbol of love and meekness, patience and long-suffering, submission and self-restraint and self-denial.

II. The apostle, however, does more than state a fact—HE EXHIBITS THE PURPOSE for which our Saviour thus suffered. It was "*for us*"—for our advantage, on our behalf. It was certainly not for his own sake. Jesus neither deserved to suffer, for he was faultless, blameless; nor did he stand in need, as we do, of the discipline of affliction, for there was no dross to purge away, and no gain could accrue to the pure gold by its being cast into the furnace. The end for which our blessed Redeemer consented to

endure the humiliations of his life and the agonies of his death was no personal end; he suffered "for our sake." There were *two* distinct and yet closely related purposes which the Saviour had before him in his sufferings. Both are stated in this passage very explicitly. There are some minds that look only at the one of these purposes; there are different minds that regard only the other. But the sober and attentive student of Scripture cannot fail to recognize the necessity of both, and their harmony with each other. Christ's endurance of sufferings, being exemplary, furnishes us with the *model* of our patience and submission; and the same endurance of sufferings, being sacrificial and substitutionary, supply us with our highest *motive*. That Christ is *an Example for our imitation* is not only taught in Scripture; it is a truth seized upon by every Christian whose Christianity is not merely nominal—who is by the Holy Spirit awakened to spiritual life. When he said, "Learn of me," "Follow me," Jesus sanctioned this view of the religious endeavour and prayerful aim of his disciples. And the apostles frequently admonish their converts to imitate the conduct, to share and display the spirit, of the Divine Leader and Lord. His obedience to the Father, his holy life, his benevolent disposition, his self-denying labours, are all put before us as a model which we are to study and to copy. In this passage the especial point selected for imitation is the meekness and long-suffering of our Lord. This is represented as a "copy" which he has left behind, that we may place it before our eyes, and try to produce a good, correct, well-studied imitation of it. We are told to follow in his steps; he is the Guide, to whom we entrust our way, in whose wisdom we have confidence; where he treads it is for us to follow, placing our feet in the footmarks he has left behind him. By these two simple and beautiful figures it is shown how we should lay to heart the perfect example of our Lord, and seek to make it ours. Human examples are so faulty, and human characters, even when noble, so lacking in sympathy, that hero-worship (as it has been called) is a very perilous proceeding. The young are more likely to emulate the questionable side of a great man's character, if that side be dazzling. Thankful should we be that our Creator, who has implanted within us the principle of imitation, has made provision for calling out that principle, and giving it full scope. The imitation of Christ is the lifelong practice and discipline of every pupil and learner in the spiritual school of God. The Divine Spirit must be the Teacher, revealing and applying the lesson to the scholar's heart, firing that heart with a holy ambition to be conformed to the sacred likeness of the Lord. But this is no such easy matter. Our gracious God and Father, who knows our nature perfectly, knows that it would be vain to set before men a perfect example of holiness and of patience, and then bid them and leave them to aspire to conformity thereto. Hence the further purpose of the Saviour's sufferings. We are happily familiar with the great and precious truth, so strikingly exhibited in the twenty-fourth verse, "who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." When Christ suffered as he did, it was not simply as an illustration of the grace of patience. It was both to *secure to us the pardon of our sins, and to provide us with a motive of holiness*, in the experience of his sacrificial grace. Without himself becoming a sinner, he nevertheless took the sinner's place, entered into the case of the sinner, and took upon him the sinner's burden, dying the death of the cross—appropriate, indeed, to the sinner, but only appropriate to the holy Christ as the sinner's *Representative and Saviour*. By "bearing our sins" we are to understand a sacrificial, and therefore a redemptive, act. Whilst many popular teachers are insisting that sin can never be forgiven, and that every man must bear to the uttermost the consequences of his sins, the gospel comes with the good news of the remission of sins, and the favour of God for those who receive the Christ as their Mediator and Redeemer, in humility, faith, and penitence.

III. The apostle traces the OPERATION OF THIS DIVINE PRINCIPLE. It is not enough to tell that Jesus died, and died for us sinners. We need to show what is the result of Christ's sacrifice—that is, upon the heart and life of Christians. For whilst it has a relation to God and his government, it has also a relation—and one naturally more comprehensible by us—to our own moral life and conduct. "That we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness." Now, you need not to be told that these poor Galatian and Cappadocian bondmen must have been, before their conversion, in a position very unfavourable for the formation of a just and pure character, for living a blameless and benevolent life. They must have been alive to sin and dead to

righteousness. No power but that of the cross could be "the power of God unto salvation" to such men. And in this they were representatives of mankind. The gospel of Christ both kills and makes alive. It slays the principle of sin; it quickens the principle of obedience to God. Those who are pardoned and justified by the grace of God, and through faith in that Christ who "loved us, and gave himself for us," are brought under the power of new and spiritual motives—the motives of gratitude, devotion, and love. Righteousness thus becomes the atmosphere the Christian breathes, the element in which he lives. It is for Christ's sake that he aspires to participation in Christ's character. And by fellowship with Christ he grows into what his Lord would have him be. The two motives thus coalesce. Believing in Jesus, the Christian comes to live, as a ransomed being, a life of devotion to his Redeemer and Liberator. Honouring Jesus, pondering his character, studying his will, he is "changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Thus is verified the exquisite and figurative language of Peter, "By whose stripes ye were healed." He walked in darkness, that you might walk in the light. He was vanquished, that you might conquer. He suffered and stooped, that you might reign. He tasted the gall and the wormwood of the crucified, that you might drink the wine of the kingdom and share the banquet of the blessed. He entered the prison-house, that you might go forth into glorious liberty. He died, that you might live. He gave himself up to the blows and stripes of the smiter, that your wounds might be healed, that you might come to spiritual strength and soundness. Christian people! the practical lesson of the text is plain for you to read. Whether by persecution, or by opposition and enmity, or by misunderstanding or calumny, you must needs have something to bear in this world of probation and discipline. Remember what this Apostle Peter says, "This is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully." "If when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called." When distressed by the treatment you receive from wicked, unjust, or unreasonable men, forget not this. Then is the time to prove the reality of your religious principles. Flee to the mediation and sympathy of Christ. Ponder the example, and cultivate the spirit of Christ. Act as a friend, a slave, of Christ. Revile not again. Commit yourselves to him that judgeth righteously. Fret not yourselves because of evil-doers. Trust in the Lord. He shall bring out your righteousness as the light, and your judgment as the noonday. Hearers of the gospel! the principles of life now unfolded must appear to you the noblest, the purest, and the best in the universe of God. Yet, as sinners, you have not acted under the influence of those principles. Understand that you are in need of the blessings of that redemption which Jesus wrought, in order that you may die unto sin, and live unto righteousness. It is good news for you that Christ died for you, that the past of sin and anger and hatred may be slain, and that yours may be the new creation, which is the incorruptible seed of the new, spiritual, and endless life.—J. R. T.

Ver. 25.—*The strayed sheep recovered.* For the inspired apostle, and for every Christian teacher, no duty or relation of life is too low to be considered; and at the same time, no motive is too high to be urged. Peter is urging bondservants to submission and patience. Their character and conduct were not beneath his regard. In order to influence them aright, he reminds them of the spirit and the example of Christ himself, and exhorts them, remembering their indebtedness to his humility and self-denial, to imitate his conduct.

I. A PICTURE OF THE FLOCK. 1. What *were* those for whom the good Shepherd suffered and died? They were strayed sheep, who had wandered from the pastures of obedience in different directions, but all into positions of danger and beyond power of return. 2. What *are* they now that God's mercy has in Christ followed and found them? They have returned from their wanderings, and have re-entered the enclosure of safety; they are enjoying the favour of the Shepherd, the abundance of the pasture, the security of the fold. How true was this of Peter himself, of those to whom he wrote, of every Church gathered, whether from Judaism or from heathenism, to the love and care and fellowship of Christ!

II. A PICTURE OF THE SHEPHERD AND OVERSEER OF THE FLOCK. 1. He is represented as seeking and recovering the lost. Thus early Christian art delighted to depict

him—as on the walls of the catacombs. Christ not only pitied the lost sheep, he actively interposed on their behalf, to save them from destruction. In carrying out his purpose of mercy he suffered on their behalf and in their stead; he laid down his life for his sheep. 2. He is represented as the Overseer of those whom he has recovered. As such, he controls and governs them; he guides them into green pastures and paths of righteousness; he supplies their wants from the abundance of his bounty; he delivers and protects them from all their foes.—J. R. T.

Vers. 1-3.—*The possession of Christian life summoning to spiritual growth.* The argument so far is as follows: Redemption; this issuing on holiness; that leading to the fear that they should prove to be without redemption; that fear being excited, the test of love is suggested. They are regarded as bearing that test, and proving their possession of life. The next idea is obviously that of growth.

I. WE HAVE HERE THE IDEA OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH. 1. *That implies life.* Only living things can grow. Peter can speak of growth because he calls them "new-born babes." Spiritual life is not a mere change or reformation, but an entirely new principle of being. Not only is that implied in such words as, "Ye must be born again;" "If any man be in Christ Jesus, it is a new creation;" "You hath he quickened who were dead;" but entire arguments are based on the use of those words in this sense. It is as impossible for the natural heart, which is enmity against God, to bear fruit to God, as for grapes to grow on thorns; for Divine fruit there must be a Divine nature. This is implanted by the Holy Spirit through the Divine Word. The cry, "Father, Father!" is the birth-cry of a new life; from that moment we are of God's family. 2. *Also that this life is immature.* That truth is helpful to those who have followed the apostle so far, to their discouragement, and are inclined to say, "If holiness is the proof of salvation, and holiness is measured by Christian love, and I have so little of this, is it possible that I am a Christian at all?" These words, however, assume that there may be life without perfection. We are all born babes, and have to reach a full-grown manhood stage by stage. Only Adam came from God's hand perfect. "A babe" is equivalent to weakness, helplessness, ignorance, rudimentariness. Who could guess what a babe could become, or see in the new-born child of God the perfected spirit bowing in the eternal glory before his throne? 3. *Also that it is natural for the life to progress.* It never occurs to us to wonder if a child will grow; we know it will unless it dies. Disease may retard growth, only death can permanently stop it till maturity is reached. Growth is part of life; naturally, silently, steadily, the babe increases in stature and strength. Then, since spirituality is a life, it only needs that we fulfil the ordinary conditions of life to ensure that it advances from strength to strength. Growth is spontaneous; no man by anxious thought can add to his stature one cubit; give it but the right conditions, and life cannot help growing. Moreover, growth should naturally affect all parts of our spiritual nature, as of our physical; it is only by disuse that some faculties advance alone—faith, or hope, or patience, etc. There is provision in what we are for growth up to him who is the Head "in all things."

II. THE MEANS BY WHICH SPIRITUAL GROWTH IS SECURED. Is not this simpler—not easier, but simpler—more reasonable and possible than many suppose? How do we treat a babe that it may grow? let us treat the spiritual babe-life in the same way. 1. *There must be the avoidance of what is antagonistic to life.* "Laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil-speaking." These are but a selection of the evils that are hurtful to the Divine nature; they are probably mentioned here rather than others, because, judging from the frequent exhortations in the Epistle to love, to subjection to one another, etc., they represent a class of sins to which these Christians were specially prone; these were the sins which most easily beset them. As in homes where there are children, there are many devices to keep them from harm, so the spiritual life of the young believer must be jealously guarded from what would check its progress. 2. *And there must be the partaking of suitable food.* "Desire the sincere [pure, unadulterated] milk of the Word." It is the invariable teaching of Scripture that Christian growth depends on the proper use of the Word of God (Ps. i. 2, 3; xxxvii. 31; John vi. 63; xvii. 17; Acts xx. 32; 1 Tim. iv. 6; 2 Tim. iii. 17). Christ is the food of the soul, but he is imparted through his Word. The Word of God has for its substance God the Word. Spiritual feebleness is probably spiritual starvation.

III. THE ARGUMENT BY WHICH THE SOUL IS PERSUADED TO USE THESE MEANS. "If so be ye have tasted," etc., that is, seek this spiritual growth: 1. *Because your experience of Divine grace has been only a taste of what is possible.* We are predestined to be conformed to the image of God's Son. Think what that involves of character and blessedness; and of this most of us have as yet had only a taste! But that taste makes us long for more. 2. *Because, also, by growth you prove your reception of Divine grace.* "If so be." Then is there doubt about it? Let spiritual growth destroy that doubt. Growth is a sure proof of life. A deeper sense of sin; a more earnest desire for holiness; a greater joy in God, his presence, service, will;—are the clear proof that we have tasted of Divine grace. But if there be no growth, if the means of grace are no more useful to us than rain is to a rock, Divine life within us is not yet.—C. N.

Vers. 4—10.—*Christian life crowned with wonderful honour.* This is the last paragraph of the doctrinal section of the Epistle. (Peter's doctrinal teaching covers much less ground than that of Paul, and confines itself here to personal Christian life.) The key-words of the argument so far (see preceding homilies) have been "redemption," "holiness," "fear," "love," "growth," each of which comes in natural sequence. Now, what remains to be said may be gathered up in the word "honour." The central statement of this paragraph is in ver. 7, "Unto you therefore who believe [is] the preciousness." But "preciousness" does not harmonize with the tenor of the passage. And as the Greek word equally means "honour," and is often so rendered ("No man taketh this honour unto himself;" "Hath not the potter power to make one vessel unto honour?") "Hold such in reputation [*i.e.* 'honour'] because," etc.), we so read it here. The apostle contrasts their position in Christ, first with theirs who reject him, and then with their own former position out of him, both of these being positions of shame, the contrast to which is honour. Shame out of Christ, honour in Christ—that is the idea: "Unto you who believe there is honour."

I. CONSIDER THE HIGH HONOUR OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD. Not unnatural for this to be emphasized to the "sojourners of the dispersion," who were exposed to suffering and shame for the gospel. There are many illustrations in the Acts of the bitterness of the unbelieving Jews to their Christian brethren; from the Gentile world, moreover, the first mutterings of Nero's persecution of the Church were beginning to be heard. The Epistle contains several references to a condition of reproach (vers. 12, 15, 19—23; ch. iii. 9, 16; iv. 13—16). Peter, therefore, reminds them that, though scorned by men, they are crowned with great honour by God. And mark how he illustrates that. As a Jew, writing mainly to Jews, he fixes on what was most honoured in Judaism—the temple with its priesthood and sacrifices. Then he turns to their Scriptures, and shows that God's Elect One, who should come, and who would be despised of the people, would be for a Foundation-stone of a spiritual temple, on and into which all who believe should be built; the honour of the Jewish temple was to pass over to the Christian Church. For instance: 1. *The Church is God's chosen dwelling-place.* Of the temple it was said, "This is my rest for ever. Here will I dwell, for I have desired it." The symbol of his presence was there. But of the Church founded on Jesus, he said, "Ye are the temple of the Holy Ghost, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you;" "Where two or three are gathered together," etc. God's dwelling! the place of his most glorious manifestation! Elsewhere we see him as Creator, Sovereign, Judge; here he is at home. 2. *The Church is God's peculiar possession.* Over the portal of the temple the eye instinctively reads the unwritten inscription, "Holiness unto the Lord." "My Father's house," said Jesus. But so the Church: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a people peculiarly his own." The Church is his as nothing else is—his peculiar treasure; the object of his delight, thought, care, on which he lavishes himself so that it shows forth, as the text says, "the excellences of God." 3. *The Church is God's means of making himself known to the world.* Like the temple, the depository of sacred truth and influence, which therefrom are to stream into the world's darkness like the light of day. Ye Christians are "the light of the world." Think what a Church is in a city—that to which the weary, the tempted, the dark, the sorrowful, come for healing; to which, through the weekly toil, tired hearts look with longing, and in which men with all their

wants find God. Such a sanctuary is the Church of Christ, the world's one temple, through which alone can flow from God the healing for its woes. The Church is the fulfilment of the ancient predictions of the temple that should rise on Zion in the latter days, to which all nations should flow, and from which all should be blessed. Well may Peter write to the Church, "Unto you who believe there is honour."

II. THE MEANS BY WHICH THIS HONOUR BECOMES THEIRS. "Unto whom, coming as unto a living Stone, ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house"—the Church a fabric of "living" souls. 1. *By coming to Christ as a Foundation.* Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Christ answered, "Upon this rock will I build my Church." Rome speaks of Peter as the foundation of the Church, but this same Peter speaks of Christ. The Church, thus, are all those who have come to Christ as God's Foundation-stone. And what is that but to come to Christ, to build on him—all our hopes on Jesus, Sacrifice, Revealer of the Father, Intercessor, Lord; not on personal experiences, etc., but on him? 2. *That is coming to Christ as the Foundation of a holy temple.* For many build on him who do not build to this end. Just to rest on Christ as an insurance against penalty, or to satisfy conscience whilst still belonging to the world, is not to be of the Church; for that we must so build on him as to become part of that spiritual house in which God lives, and walks, and reveals himself, and works. 3. *And this coming to Christ as a Foundation of a holy temple, of which all his people form a part.* Not to be isolated stones, but to be firmly knit together with the whole. Only thus is the idea of the temple fulfilled. God requires "the building up of the body of Christ, till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, . . . unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, . . . from whom the whole body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love."

III. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THIS HONOUR AND THEIR FORMER SHAME. The apostle heightens the honour of the Church by reminding them of their once different position, of theirs who still have no part in him. This gives a rare impulse to joy, gratitude, and service. "Unto you who believe there is honour, but for such as disbelieve, the Stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the chief of the corner [not 'head,' as though topstone, but foundation-stone], and a Stone of stumbling, and a Rock of offence; for they stumble at the Word, being disbelieving [same word as ver. 7], whereunto also they were appointed"—appointed not to disbelief, but to find him a Stone of stumbling and Rock of offence if they refused to believe. Hurt, maiming, destruction, are the appointed consequences of rejecting Christ, as salvation is for those who believe on him. Brethren, build on Christ, Peter seems to say, "Remember what you were, what you have escaped, and what you are.—C. N."

Vers. 11, 12.—*The demand for a life becoming the Christian name.* The doctrinal part of the Epistle is now followed by a series of practical exhortations on the working out of the redemption of which it has spoken. And the apostle here begins these as close as can be to the man's own self; he has to speak about right citizenship, and neighbourliness, etc.; but before he comes to these he starts with the man's own self. "Fleshly lusts;" not to be understood of desires for physical gratification only. "Fleshly" is, in Scripture, the opposite of "spiritual." "Works of the flesh" are the antithesis of "works of the Spirit." "Now the works of the flesh are these," etc., and the list includes "idolatry, hatred, wrath, strife, envyings"—not physical qualities at all. So the expression refers to all desires that are wrong. "Having your conversation honest"—"Having your behaviour seemly" (Revised Version). "The day of visitation." Any crisis in which God draws near to a man with a view to his redemption, and which results in grace or judgment—the apostle thinks here of that. So the idea of the paragraph is, "You Christians, so regulate your desires that your life will be becoming, and thus the heathen around you, prejudiced against Christ, will be prepared to receive the gospel when it is urged upon them." This is a timely subject when the Church wonders at the little power of the gospel, and seeks new means to "evangelize the masses." Gospel-preaching must be supported by gospel-living. Next to the inborn ungodliness of the natural heart, the great hindrance to Christ's kingdom is the Church's own ungodliness.

I. THE DEMAND FOR A BECOMING LIFE ON THE PART OF THE CHURCH. There is a certain behaviour which becomes God's people, if only because they are closely observed by the ungodly; the world has a standard of character it expects the Church to reach. We may discourage ourselves by overestimating that standard (probably they do not look for perfection), but we must beware lest we underrate it. What is this character? (Let us remember that it is character; that they care nothing for creed, nor for habits of devotion, nor for our statements as to religious experience, but demand a certain life from the people of God, and watch for it as with an eagle's glance.)

1. *It must be an exemplification of righteousness.* Straightforward, above-board, strictly upright action, come what may—nothing less becomes the children of the Holy One. Social and commercial morality are not enough. Christian morality, which the world has a right to expect in us, is action from right principle at any cost. 2. *It must be an exhibition of peace.* The Christian says, "God loves and cares for me; he is my Father; for me he laid down his life; to me he has given all blessing in his Son; and I trust him." Then the world looks in him for that rest of soul which writes itself on the face, silences impatient utterance, and restrains the hasty deed. Nothing less becomes such profession. 3. *It must be animated by kind consideration for others.* Even righteousness will not satisfy the world; there must be also love. Less cannot become those who have his Spirit of whom it is said, "And God is Love." On the top of the pillars of uprightness there must be the lily work of love; yea, those pillars, hard and cold, must be wreathed from base to capital with love's sweet flowers and fruit, or onlookers will refuse to believe they are pillars of God's temple.

II. THE REASON FOR THIS DEMAND. Three powerful reasons are suggested here.

1. *The Christian is essentially different from the world.* "Strangers [in another place translated 'foreigners'] and pilgrims." "Ye are not of the world;" "Ye are come to the heavenly Jerusalem;" citizens of another country, subjects of another King, passing through this world to that to which the Heaven-born nature aspires. We are more than others (we are born again); we have more than others (the all-sufficient grace of the Spirit); we owe more than others (redeemed with the precious blood of Christ); then we ought to be more than others. 2. *The world regards the Christian with some prejudice.* "They speak against you as evil-doers." The history of the period confirms that; Christian writings of the second century constantly refute false charges of the immorality of Christianity. These false charges are likely to be perpetual; for "if they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub," etc., then so much the more reason for becoming conduct on our part. We cannot reason, but we can live down, this prejudice. Each line of life is credited with certain evils; by living above those evils the Christian must roll this prejudice against Christianity away. 3. *The influence of Christian character on the world is incalculable.* "By your good works which they shall behold, they may glorify God in the day of visitation." An unspeakably solemn word. It implies that, when they are visited by God's mercy, their acceptance of that mercy depends largely on the previous influence of the lives of God's people. Before Lazarus could come forth from his grave at Christ's word, men must roll away the stone. So the stone of prejudice against Christ. By unbecoming conduct we may harden men in sin and unbelief; by becoming conduct we may prepare the way of the Lord.

III. THE MEANS OF FULFILLING THIS DEMAND. "Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." 1. *Becoming character begins with the heart.* "Out of the heart are the issues of life." Only that can come from us which is first put in us. Christian lives are not produced by laying aside this blemish or taking up that excellence, but by prolonged and secret heart-work. "As a man's heart is, so is he." 2. *This heart-work requires abstinence from whatever wars against the soul.* Not necessarily bad things, but anything that militates against spiritual life. Every wish must be crucified which may be a hindrance to me or to others. 3. *This abstinence comes from a remembrance of our obligation to God.* Some trees only lose their leaves when new ones come and push them off; thus only by the incoming of new desires and affections do we lose the old ones. The eleventh verse follows the ninth and tenth verses. Abstinence from evil desires follows as a matter of course a remembrance of what God has done for us, and an appropriation of the sublime blessings it gives.

—C. N.

Vers. 13—17.—*The Christian's duty to the state.* We might regard vers. 11 and 12 as the text of which the rest of the Epistle is the sermon. The apostle first writes at length on their possession of personal redemption, and then says, "Now for the life that becomes it." And he begins with that citizenship which becomes the Christian. Very striking is it that the heavenly and the earthly citizenship should be brought here into such close connection; it is when the apostle has the highest conception of our relation to the spiritual kingdom (as in vers. 9, 10) that he proceeds to speak of the lofty position we are to take as citizens of earth. Probably there was special reason for emphasis on this; he was writing to Jews, who had rather lax ideas of their obligations to human institutions in the Gentile world, and were charged by the empire with being "bad subjects;" that, for example, was the ostensible reason for the persecution by Nero. The subject is timely. Christians are often in doubt as to the part they should take in public affairs. Here we have Divine teaching respecting this.

I. THE DUTY OF CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP. "Submit yourselves to every human institution, . . . whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well"—that includes all human institutions for the well-being of the nation at large, whether in the wider circle of imperial, or the narrower circle of local, matters, and, says the apostle, "Submit yourselves to that." 1. *What, then, is the submission which the Christian owes to the state?* The only submission possible to those to whom Peter wrote was that of tribute and obedience; under the despotic policy of the empire they could do no more; they had no power to ameliorate the laws nor to choose their rulers. With us it is not so. If we only pay the taxes and obey the authorities, we do not submit ourselves. "Submit yourselves unto God" means "give yourselves." So read the word "submit" here. The Christian is bound to give not only his substance and doings to these, but himself. As Christians, nothing ought to be alien to us which concerns the world our Lord loved and died for. 2. *What are the limits of this submission?* We must read this with the limitation everywhere implied. "Fearing God" comes before "honouring the king." Peter was himself an illustration of that, when he told the rulers "We must obey God rather than man." But the text refers to submission of ourselves; we must do that as far as we are to do all else that is right—that is, as far as our opportunities and talents permit. Opportunity and talent are the limit of duty. Health, home-claims, higher claims, natural aptitude, etc.,—these show us where and how far we may go. God's barriers are always plain to him who fears God. 3. *What, then, is the objection to this submission?* We are told that Christians are citizens of another world, and should have no part in this. But it is mean to get all the good out of the world we can, and refuse to do it all the good we can. We are told that Christ lived in the midst of political corruption, and did not raise his voice against it. But he was ever propagating those principles which undermine corruption, and his healing miracles show that his heart was set on ameliorating physical woe. We are told that we should come out of the world, and be separate. But that cannot mean that the Christian—the Christian physician, say—is to refuse to help the world. If the world chooses to help me to do a good work, I know no command which, because of their co-operation, bids me stand aloof.

II. THE LOFTY PRINCIPLES ON WHICH THIS DUTY IS TO BE FULFILLED. What is wanted is, not so much that Christians should take these things up, as that they should do so from sacred conviction, and "as becomes the gospel of Christ." 1. *This must be done "for the Lord's sake."* "The earth is the Lord's . . . the world and they that dwell therein." How much does he care for men, who for them became incarnate, and endured the death of the cross! Then everything that tends to their development and enfranchisement is dear to him. 2. *This must be done that "with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."* If the world come to regard Christianity as having to do mostly with beliefs and emotions, they will look upon it as unreal and worthless. It is not by fighting "more or less extinct Satans" that we secure the world's respect for Christ, but by earnestly grappling, for his sake, with the real evils of the day. 3. *This must be done "as servants of God."* This duty is not without peril to personal spiritual life; it often calls the Christian to associate with those who have no fear of God, and work accordingly, and exposes him to the danger of falling to their level. The political atmosphere is often morally deadening

Our safety is in going into this deliberately as God's servants, to do his will, and that at any cost, wearing heaven's livery, and making heavenly influences tell upon our fellows.

III. THE DIVINE WARNING AGAINST THE DANGER IN THE FULFILMENT OF THIS DUTY. "As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of evil [*κακία*, equivalent to 'evil of any kind']" The Christian public man needs anxiously to look beneath his activity, and see if any evil thing is concealed and fostered there. 1. *There is the evil of self-seeking.* Of doing this unconsciously, not for Christ, but for personal ends. 2. *And there is the evil of love of the world.* Public life has a terrible tendency to foster a spirit of worldliness, and to counteract this we need plenty of heart and closet work. There is no peril in this if we put "fear of God" before the "honour of the king"—if, whilst we "render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," we "render to God the things that are God's;" if, whilst submitting ourselves "to every human institution," etc., we maintain the lofty feeling and character of "the chosen generation, the royal priesthood, the people peculiarly God's own."—C. N.

Vers. 18—25.—*Servants urged to patient endurance of undeserved suffering.* Having dealt with the character becoming the Christian citizen, he passes to that becoming the Christian servant. Probably the Churches addressed were composed largely of that class, who, however, were scarcely above the rank of slaves; and these are here called mainly to endurance because, probably, they were exposed to considerable oppression. Paul gives a more complete teaching on the duty of the Christian servant. Peter here contemplates him rather as a sufferer—from overwork, unreasonable demands, the jealousy of fellow-servants, misrepresentation, cruelty; and he says in effect, "As to work, your master's treatment of you is to make no difference to your fidelity;" as to suffering, "this is thankworthy;" etc. This passage is characteristic of Peter. Compare what he records in his own Gospel (Mark xiv. 53—66). Are not both these events hidden beneath the text? The events of that solemn night when he heard Jesus say, "I have given you an example," were burned into his memory. Uppermost in his thought of Jesus would be that of patient endurance, as when he answered the high priest nothing, and his servant's denial by a look.

I. THE PERSONS ADDRESSED. "Servants." That is: 1. *In lowly life there may be the working out of noblest principles.* Remember that the apostle has taken ver. 12 for his text in this second section of the Epistle. What more could the cultured and influential do than he there requires, but which he urges here on slaves? At any rate, it ranks high in Christian service. The greatest principles of grace can be exemplified in the humblest position. As the Son of God was in the Babe of Bethlehem as truly as he is on the eternal throne, the love of God may inspire us, the will of God be done by us, and the glory of God secured by us, in the humblest ranks and tasks as in the highest. 2. *Where no great deed is apparent, there may be the greatest victories.* These servants were not called to prominent places in Church life, nor to activity in public events, nor to anything the world counts great, but to patient endurance. Yet is anything harder, and therefore, greater? It requires greater force of Christian character to suffer than to act; many eyes are fixed on action, in suffering we are cast almost wholly on the unseen. Was not Christ's power in his sufferings? Not before his miracles, but before his cross, the world bows with awe. Just as his own nine beatitudes reach their highest point in "Blessed are ye when men shall revile," etc. Let the sufferer, him with few talents, him who is oppressed, know that in enduring well he may rank with Jesus Christ's nobility. 3. *Untoward circumstances may be used to the highest results.* It seems a misfortune to be oppressed, but these verses show how much is possible by endurance. Then we can exemplify Divine grace, "for this is grace, if a man for," etc.; we can constrain others to "glorify God in the day of visitation;" we can in this important point follow Christ; and we can secure much of that personal godliness which was the end for which he died—"that we might live unto righteousness." There is no abiding satisfaction without travail of soul; life's storms may cast up rare treasure to our feet.

II. THE DUTY ENFORCED. Patient endurance of undeserved suffering. 1. Notice that the endurance must be undeserved. Scripture consolations are often taken by sufferers who have no right to them. Much of our suffering is deserved—e.g. bad

treatment from others, which is often due to our moral unloveliness. The apostle, however, thinks of that which is unmerited—suffering, e.g., for right doing. There is a mystery in this, but it is something that Scripture recognizes this, yea, even says it is this “whereunto ye are called.” 2. *This endurance is due to a consciousness of God.* “This is grace, if a man for conscience toward God,” etc. All endurance is not Christian. We may endure because we are not sensitive, or because we are stoical. That is not the endurance that needs Christianity for its existence, or that is followed by Christian blessing. Aim at the endurance which is only possible through taking God into account: “God is in my trouble, and God is with me in my trouble.” “He endured as seeing him who is invisible.” 3. *This is the endurance which is fulfilled after the manner of Christ.* It is possible to endure, but with impatience and repining. Christian endurance is of a higher order; it is like Christ’s, who had no unkind feeling for his persecutors. At the feast they said he had a devil, but, nothing daunted, he stood and cried, “If any man thirst,” etc.; he rejected the suggestion to call down fire on the inhospitable village; he called Judas in the moment of his treason, “Friend;” he healed Malchus’s ear who was binding him; he forgave Peter’s denial; he prayed for his murderers. We are here summoned to endurance like that (vers. 22, 23).

III. THE MOTIVES APPLIED. How can we rise to endurance like this? Three motives are suggested here. 1. *This patient endurance is pleasing to God.* “If, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable [literally, ‘grace’] with God.” He regards it as grace, or, if you will, as thanks. It is the utterance of the submissive spirit which says, “Not my will, but thine be done.” It is wonderful that we can give pleasure to God; yet every token of loving, trustful, obedient submission must please the Father. Think of him saying, “For my Name’s sake thou hast borne,” etc. 2. *This patient endurance is following Christ.* “Leaving us an example.” There is much comfort in knowing we put our feet into his footprints, and that he knows what we suffer, since he has experienced it first. It is much to have indications that we are on the right track. “If any man will come after me, let him take up his cross, and follow me;” “If ye were of the world, the world would love its own, but,” etc. But best of all, to follow him is to ensure his presence. His servants serve at his side, as Peter did. To follow is to follow him close. “To go forth without the camp, bearing his reproach,” is to go forth “to him.” 3. *This patient endurance is a working out of redemption.* “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being,” etc. Since Christ by his sacrifice has freed us from sin’s condemnation that we might become righteous, it becomes us to welcome anything by which that righteousness may be attained. If for our righteousness he would endure the cross, we may not shrink from the discipline of his love to that end.—C. N.

Vers. 1—3.—*Spiritual childhood.* In this “therefore” (Revised Version) our apostle gathers up the argument, perhaps, of all the preceding part of the letter, certainly of the passage immediately preceding this; viz. if we as Christians have begun to live this higher life, how will its early stage manifest itself? So we naturally note—

I. SOME OF THE SIGNS OF SPIRITUAL CHILDHOOD. One of the signs that Christian men and women are, what Peter had heard the Lord say they ought to be, like little children—growing children—is in what they lack. This whole group of evils are most unchildlike evils. “Putting away” implies that they had been wrapped in them, swaddled as it were in them. “Wickedness,” or malice. Perhaps the wider meaning of wickedness is intended here. Leighton says, “All is one garment, or parts of one, for sometimes some are mentioned, and sometimes others.” “Guile,” “hypocrisies”—the first being the spirit of deceit, the second the acting a part as on a stage. “Envy;” “evil-speakings.” Here again the first describes the malign spirit, the second the speech that spirit inspires.

II. THE CHIEF NOURISHMENT OF SPIRITUAL CHILDHOOD. “Spiritual milk.” Milk is a good standard of all food; it contains all the constituents of food. So does the Word of God contain all elements of spiritual nutrition. “There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.” Similarly, there is a natural aliment, and there is a spiritual aliment. “Without guile;” that food is to be simple, unadulterated. Milk when impure is a terrible source of disease; so the Word of God, when mixed with error, works deadly mischief. “Long for;” have a keen appetite for the Word of God, not

for the sugar-plums of sentiment or the stimulants of sensationalism, but the milk of the Word. A true appetite is at once a sign of health and a means to health.

III. THE TRUE DEVELOPMENT OF SPIRITUAL CHILDHOOD. "Grow." The bud that does not become a flower is a failure. So the Christian that does not grow is a failure. Piety is the art of right growing. "Unto salvation." That is the ideal—not mere rescue from guilt, but attainment of holiness; not mere emancipation, but citizenship. "If ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." This implies that the Christian character is developed, even in its early stages, from a solid experience. Only tasted, but surely tasted. Luther puts it well for us: "To them who with the heart believe the word, 'Christ has been sent for me and is become mine own; my miseries are his; his life is mine,'—that word is sweet."—U. R. T.

Vers. 4-8.—*The soul-temple, and soul-service.* The critic may read these verses and simply complain that he finds here a confusion of metaphors—that Christian souls are here described as builders and a building. But in truth these figures illustrate two sides of one great fact, namely, that the worth of life, whether it be life in its progress or in its result, depends upon its relationship to Christ.

I. THE BUILDER A TYPE OF MAN. Paul in detail uses the same figure as Peter, and doubtless Peter learned its use as he listened to his Lord's parable of the mere hearer and doer. These verses remind us: 1. That every man is incessantly building. He is placing stone on stone, layer on layer, in the structure of his character. 2. That character (the thing he is building) has at once an outward aspect and an inward relation. In the first, i.e. his reputation, it is a monument; in the second, i.e. actual character, it is a habitation. 3. Man builds well or ill as he regards or disregards the Divine Architect. "Coming to," i.e. having close, constant contact with "a living Stone," i.e. Christ, who is a Foundation that is more than the stone on which all rests; he is the Foundation out of which life proceeds, and the Corner-stone by which that life is held together and manifested.

II. THE TEMPLE A TYPE OF THE CHRISTIAN MAN. He is a structure as well as a builder. And what a structure! All characters are structures—some are markets, some but pig-sties; the Christly are temples. He is a temple: (1) on the right Foundation; (2) with glory of completeness; (3) destined to permanence; (4) and this strength and beauty not according to man's standard, but God's.

III. THE PRIESTHOOD IS ALSO A TYPE OF CHRISTIAN MEN. Here is further change of figure; but the truth taught is the same. Is he builder? he must build according to God's plan. Is he temple? he must be dedicated by God's presence. Is he worshipper? he must be utterly consecrated to God's service. All Christians are part of the temple; all Christians are part of the priesthood. For all we turn to Christ for Model, Motive, and Merit.—U. R. T.

Vers. 9, 10.—*The glory of the Church as a commonwealth.* To the apostle's vision the Church was a whole. Its unity did not depend upon geography, or upon chronology, but on character, temper, spirit.

I. The glory of the Christian commonwealth in ITS CHARACTERISTICS. "An elect race;" "a race," i.e. descendants from one stock and kindred one to another. "Elect;" that is, at once choice and chosen. Chosen to be blessed, and to be made a blessing. "A royal priesthood." A kingdom of priests. "Thou hast made us kings and priests." What is the true conception of a king or of a priest? One who lives for others; the king, if you will, in open field; the priest in sacred retirement. We are both. "A holy nation;" i.e. consecrated to religion. Rome may be a martial nation, Greece a cultured nation, Babylon a commercial nation. Israel was nothing if not religious. The Christian commonwealth is to be the Israel of to-day. "A people for God's own possession," or for special reservation. "Peculiar," a word used to describe the earnings of the slave in his overtime—his "very own." We are the "very own" of God. "He gave himself for us, that he might redeem," etc.; "bought with blood."

II. The glory of the Christian commonwealth in ITS MISSION. "That ye may," etc. This throws us back on the word "elect." We are chosen for this purpose. "Ye may show forth;" tell out to those without what has taken place within. "The excellences of him"—virtues, glories, of God. What a boundless theme! "Who hath called you

out of darkness into his marvellous light." God's call, by his Spirit, through his Word, through the conscience, through the ministry, through the sacraments, through providential events, reaches all of us. But "the called" usually denotes those who have responded to the call. The call is from "darkness," i.e. ignorance, error, misery, sin, helplessness, to "light," truth, joy, purity, activity; from the sepulchre to the garden, from the dungeon to the temple, from midnight to noon.

III. These glories of the Christian commonwealth are in STRIKING CONTRAST WITH THE PAST HISTORY OF ITS MEMBERS. "Which in time past." The reference is doubtless (1) to quicken humility; (2) to kindle gratitude; (3) to awaken watchfulness. "Were no people;" isolated, each self-centred; a chaos, not a commonwealth. "But are now the people of God;" not merely a commonwealth, but a sacred commonwealth, a theocracy. "Which had not obtained mercy," etc.; had not realized it as their own. Pity is care for the weak. Compassion is care for the suffering. Mercy is care for the undeserving. And it is mercy that has met the Christian man, and made him what he is.—U. R. T.

Vers. 11, 12.—*The threefold plea against disorderly passions.* What is meant here by "fleshly lusts"? Not alone the desires and appetites that are gratified through the flesh—"sensuality," as we sometimes say. No; for three reasons. 1. The flesh in itself is neither good nor bad; it has no moral qualities. 2. The category of evils here enumerated includes envying, pride, heresies. 3. The "flesh" is used figuratively, and is a symbol of the old and lower nature of man. The phrase points to the disorganized, disproportioned, disordered desires of man, and so includes intemperance, gluttony, voluptuousness, bad temper, false ambitions, covetousness, all of which are included in the accursed trinity of St. John, "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the vain-glory of life." We are here taught that—

I. INDULGENCE IN THESE DISORDERLY PASSIONS IS BECOMING NEITHER TO OUR PRESENT CONDITION NOR TO OUR DESTINY. We are "sojourners;" foreigners, not staying here. But more, we are "pilgrims," bent on a higher destination. "Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest."

II. THE INFLUENCE OF THESE DISORDERLY PASSIONS IS HOSTILE TO OUR OWN INWARD LIFE. "Which war against the soul;" war against all the garrison and inmates of the soul—against reason, defying and dishonouring it; against memory, burdening and crushing it; against hope, darkening it and turning it into terror; against imagination, polluting and degrading it; against conscience, cutting and maiming, though they cannot kill it; against the affections, ravaging and spoiling them; in a word, against "the soul."

III. FREEDOM FROM THESE DISORDERLY PASSIONS, BESIDES DELIVERING FROM INTERNAL STRIFE, WILL MAKE OUR OUTWARD LIFE A SOCIAL BLESSING. Four facts are here suggested on this point. 1. Outward life *scrutinized*. They "behold" it. 2. Outward life readily *calumniated*. "They speak evil of you." Slanders brought against early Christians were many, foul, and baseless. It was a king who said, "It is kingly to do good, and to be evil spoken of is kingly." Paul, James, Peter, and our Lord teach that to do good and be evil spoken of was the lot of a Christian. 3. Outward life *should be beautiful*. "Good works;" i.e. beautiful works. No scenery can be or should be so fascinating, so awe-inspiring, as the scenery of souls. They may show forth most of the beauties of holiness, the beauty of God. 4. Such outward life *leads to God being glorified*. "They may glorify God." Many a man has found some noble or gracious life of kinsman, or of friend, or of hero to be "the gate Beautiful," by which he has gone into the temple of the fellowship and service of God.—U. R. T.

Vers. 13, 14.—*The highest motive for a loyal life.* This passage teaches—

I. THE NECESSITY OF LOYALTY. In our present condition there must be the ruled and rulers. It may be well to seek a change of rulers; it certainly is often well to seek a change of laws; but while rulers, whether "kings or governors," are for "vengeance on evil-doers, and a praise to them that do well," it is the duty of the true citizen to be loyal.

II. THE FREQUENT CHARGE OF DISLOYALTY BROUGHT BY THE FOOLISH AGAINST

REFORMERS. Such men as St. Paul was addressing were, as Christians are, of necessity, reformers. There was all the more need that they should, by fitting loyalty, put to shame the ignorance of foolish men who calumniated them. Even their very freedom, as being under a higher than mere human law, might seem to be used as "a cloke of wickedness." Therefore they were to be the very bondservants of God.

III. LOYALTY IS INCOMPLETE UNLESS IT INCLUDES HONOUR FOR ALL MEN, LOVE FOR THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD, AS WELL AS Obedience TO THE RULER. The true loyalist is no recluse, but a philanthropist and a Church-member.

IV. THE SUFFICIENT AND ABIDING MOTIVE FOR SUCH LOYALTY IS DIVINE. "For the Lord's sake,"—U. R. T.

Vers. 18-25.—*The Christian as a servant.* As the sun extracts no sweeter odours than when its rays fall on the tiny lily of the valley or the modest violet, so the truth of Christ never fills the air with more fragrance than when, as here, it is addressed to men and women of lowly station and occupation—to "bondmen."

I. THE DUTY OF THE CHRISTIAN AS A SERVANT. "Be in subjection." Obedience is the essential virtue of servitude. Fulfil commands. Discharge tasks. "With all fear." Not terror, but proper awe. The craven is not the product of Christianity, but the respectful man is. Widen the application to all *employés*. How this teaching oils the wheels of the social machine!

II. THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE CHRISTIAN AS A SUFFERING SERVANT. There is no one-sided view of social duty here. It is implied: 1. Difficulties often arise from the character of employers. There is an exquisite ideal for masters here—"good and gentle." But many a servant "endureth griefs, suffering wrongfully." Some masters are "froward," i.e. like a crooked stick you do not know how to hold. Some are rough. Their servants are buffeted—tongue, fist, temper, strike. 2. Such difficulties, when rightly met, bring honour and Divine praise. This leads to—

III. THE DIGNITY OF THE CHRISTIAN AS A SUFFERING SERVANT. 1. Dignity, inasmuch as a suffering servant may resemble the blessed Saviour. Follow his steps who was (1) perfect, yet wronged; (2) reviled, yet unreviling; (3) suffering, yet not vindictive. 2. Dignity, because inasmuch as for our salvation our Lord became a suffering Servant. *Burdened*, we are relieved by him; *dead*, we are quickened by him; *diseased*, we are healed by him; *wandering*, we are restored by him; and that by his being burdened and dying.—U. R. T.

Vers. 1-10.—*Newborn babes and the higher Israel.* I. NEWBORN BABES. 1. *Duty conditioning appetite for the Word.* "Putting away therefore all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil-speakingings." This duty is connected with the foregoing ("therefore"), as coming under it. As the regenerate, we are to put away all dispositions and manifestations that offend against good brotherhood. We are to put away first, as being the radical vice, *all malice* (as we should read, with the old translation), i.e. the desire to hurt, from the slightest beginnings up to the most deadly passion. We are also to put away *all guile*, i.e. want of openness, of straightforwardness, also in the whole compass of the idea. With all guile we are to put away its manifestations in *hypocrisies*, i.e. all attempts to personate, especially to make ourselves appear better than we really are. We are also to put away *envies*, i.e. pinings on account of the good estate of others. Finally, we are to put away manifestations of envy in *all evil-speakingings*, i.e. attempts to injure the good name of others. From the way in which this duty is brought in, it is evident that it has a bearing on what follows, which is probably this—that unbrotherliness is a bar to our life being properly sustained. 2. *Appetite for the Word.* "As newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation." The apostle seizes upon the fact of his readers having been lately regenerated, and calls them "newborn babes" in relation to God. Babes have suitable nourishment provided for them in their mother's milk; as (whether lately or long ago regenerated) we have suitable nourishment provided for us in what in the spiritual sphere is milk, viz. the Word (without any reference to the distinction of weaker or stronger in it). Babes have a pure provision ("without guile" is another unhappy change); so what is provided for us in the Word is pure as mother's milk. Babes have a strong natural

craving for milk; so we are to have a strong craving for the Word. Babes are constituted with a strong craving for milk, that their growth may go forward; so we are to have a strong craving for the Word, that our higher development may go forward, which is to issue in salvation (both the elimination of all evil elements and the acquisition of all good elements). From the connection the teaching is that we are thus to see to our individual development for the sake of the society to which we belong. We owe it to Christians *collectively* that we grow *individually*. 3. *Appetite for the Word encouraged*. "If ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." The language is based on Ps. xxxiv. 8. It is to be observed that "the Lord" of the psalmist is here taken to be Christ (as appears from the following verse). There is kindness displayed in the nourishment that is provided for babes; so there is the kindness of Christ displayed in what is provided for us in the Word. As the Word, or Divine Revealer, Christ is also the Divine Nourisher. Christians are those who know this, not merely by report, but by experience. They have "tasted that the Lord is gracious." And Peter goes upon the supposition that those who have tasted once will desire to taste again, and will not be easily satisfied.

II. THE HIGHER ISRAEL. 1. *Characterization under temple imagery in relation to Christ*. (1) *Way in which we are related to Christ*. "Unto whom coming." With this there is transition to new imagery. The language is general; yet it was frequently associated with the going up of worshippers to the temple. We are to make our approach to Christ for union to him and communion with him; and our approach to him is to be habitual, that with stronger union there may be closer communion. (2) *Representation that is given of Christ*. "A living Stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious." This is a very striking though homely image applied to the most wonderful event or series of events in history. Let us call up the scene from which the language is taken. A building is being erected amid dust and rubbish and confused noises. The builders are ever wanting stones for each new place as it arises in the building, and search about among what are laid down for them. One stone they all pass by because of some defect or blemish that it has in their eyes. You can see, from the way in which they treat it, that it is not deemed worthy to have even an obscure place in the building. But the architect comes and sees to this stone, which was to have no place, being put into the place of honour. It becomes, as we shall see afterwards from its designation, the most important stone in the building. Now, the great archetypal building which is being erected—that of which every building, common or sacred, is a type, that of which the Jewish temple was in a special manner a type—is the Church. The Jewish rulers were employed by God in carrying out his purposes of love and mercy toward the race. They were the builders, having subordinately the selecting and preparing of the stones and the putting them into their places. In this first introduction of the imagery they are not directly referred to; it is simply *men* that are mentioned. But in accordance with Ps. cxviii. 22, afterwards quoted, we must think of men *representatively*, i.e. in the builders. Christ was a *living Stone*, i.e. he was absolutely in living significance all that a stone can be in a building. He came before the eyes of the builders with extraordinary claims, with most exalted ideas, with a most wonderful manifestation of love. He was as a stone laid down for them, and they could not but pass some judgment upon him. What they did (and not merely in their own name, but as representing men) was to reject him even to crucifying him. We see him the "despised and rejected of men" in being a Stone rejected of the builders. He was to be of no use in the Church or theocracy with which these had to do. Ay, they thought that they were relegating him in God's name to a different fate altogether. But what was despised among men was highly esteemed with God. So in striking contrast with the human judgment, it is said here—"with God elect; precious," i.e. he was the great Object of electing love, and had all the qualities on which the Divine approbation could rest. And God, having allowed men to go so far, takes things out of their hands, and, in accordance with his ancient design as to the ordering of things in his Church, instates Christ in the place of highest honour and serviceableness, making him, as we are now to see, the Stone in which we are built up. (3) *What we are in relation to Christ*. "Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." Very beautiful is the way in which we are called "living stones" along with Christ. We

also are living stones, only with this difference, that we derive all our living consequence in the building from Christ. A stone, according to the general idea, is not meant to be by itself; it is meant to be placed along with others in a building. So we rise to the idea of our being as living stones *built up a spiritual house*. Ancient Israel *had* a temple; the heightening consideration is that we as Christians *are* the temple. Whereas also material elements (such as in the Jewish temple) can only in a very restricted way be used for the glorifying of God, there is far greater freedom and capability when we come to the spiritual elements that exist in the Church. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known *through the Church* the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. iii. 10). But that is not all; for ancient Israel the complete conception was broken up. They had a temple, and they had also, distinct from it, a priesthood. The heightening consideration is that we combine the two ideas. We are the temple and the priesthood in one. The Jewish priests had a *sacred* character. "Once a priest, always a priest." They could not take to trading; God's service required their undivided attention. So even in trading we are to have a sacred character, abjuring self and referring all to God. Our feet are always to be found in the path of God's commandments—which cover things both temporal and spiritual. The Jewish priests offered up fruits, animals; the heightening consideration is that we offer up *spiritual sacrifices*. These are only *acceptable to God through Jesus Christ*; and therefore we require to remember that his sacrifice comes first. After it, founded upon it, and deriving all their virtue from it, come our *sacrifices*, which are distinctively *eucharistic*, i.e. they are forms of giving thanks. They are this even when we begin, as we must do, by offering up *ourselves*. Gratitude, especially for what has been done for us in redemption, prompts us first to offer up ourselves, and then ourselves in good thoughts, in earnest prayers, in loving deeds.

2. *Scriptural foundation for the characterization*. "Because it is contained in Scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief Corner-stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be put to shame." This is a free quotation from Isa. xxviii. 16. Attention is called to the declaration of the eternal counsel. It is "the Lord God" who says, "I lay;" but there is not excluded laying by human agents. From the temple in Zion we are to pass in thought to the Church. The chief corner-stone is the most important stone in the building, both combining as being in the corner, and supporting as being the foundation-stone; such is Christ to the Church, with the epithets formerly applied to him. The prophet goes beyond this to the *consequence* of believing. As it stands in the prophecy, the language is, "He that believeth shall not make haste," i.e. shall go on his way calmly. As altered here, it is, "He that believeth on him [Christ as the Stone] shall not be put to shame." Believing, in builders' language, is taking Christ as the Foundation. If Christ is the Foundation, it must be designed that stones should be laid upon him or in relation to him. That is the design of any foundation—the design, then, of Christ as the Foundation. If we are laid upon Christ as the Foundation, we shall never be put to shame; i.e. shall never have the shame connected with the foundation proving insufficient.

3. *Consequence of believing*. "For you therefore which believe is the preciousness." It is better to translate, "is the honour." This is the positive side of the conception that we have just noticed. Laid upon Christ as the "chief Corner-stone, elect, precious," there is the *corresponding* honour; i.e. the honour of having a definite, abiding place in the building, with a share in the glory that is communicated to it by Christ.

4. *Consequence of not believing*. "But for such as disbelieve, The Stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the head of the corner; and, A Stone of stumbling, and a Rock of offence; for they stumble at the Word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed." The statement of consequence is preceded by a statement of wonderful fact from Ps. cxviii. 22, which by our Lord himself, and by Peter in his speech before the Sanhedrin, is connected with the action of the Jewish rulers. *The blindness of the builders*. The position which these Jewish rulers occupied was a very honourable one. They were appointed to *build*. It is of the greatest importance that those who lead the thought or action in any way should be really builders, clearly and boldly grasping the principles, and earnestly and vigorously carrying forward the work. It is an incalculable evil when any take advantage of their gifts or position to promulgate opinions which are fitted to sap the foundations—to do the work of him who has been a destroyer from the beginning. There are some, not only in other

countries, but in this country, who do not see that it is necessary to build. They are levellers, not builders. They would pull down, not merely the wrongs of past centuries, but the rights of all centuries; not merely church establishments, but the Church itself; not merely human speculations, but the everlasting truths of the Bible. It is a gigantic mistake. A nation's greatness will soon be shown to be hollow, if there is no building up in family piety; no just and generous dealing, as between all classes, and toward other nations. A sad havoc some of our destructives would make, if there were not some honourable public men, and many who are quietly building away in their own homes and in their own neighbourhoods, as they see to be right before God. But those Jewish rulers were further appointed to build up *the Church*. They had to deliberate and to devise regarding all that greatly pertained to the ecclesiastical life of the nation. And the honourableness of their position at that time appears in this, that they might have had the placing of Christ in the building. It was something more honourable than had fallen to Moses, who merely introduced the types of Christ. It fell to them, as the representatives of the Church at the time, to single out and introduce Christ himself. But there, also, lay their great responsibility. They might do a great service, putting Christ into the place intended for him; or they might do a great disservice, setting him aside, and putting him in a false light before the nation—who were appointed to lead when the times were becoming full of most profound interest. It depended on how they used their responsibility. It unhappily turned out in the latter way. Their crime is represented as a refusing of him whom God meant to be chief Corner-stone. What made their conduct so criminal was that they acted against the light. True, there were others who rose up about that time claiming to be the Messiah. But they were there, as the appointed, trained representatives of the nation, to sift the evidence. And the damaging circumstance was that they had evidence more than enough, as full as the conditions allowed, presented to them by Christ; and yet they rejected him. He had a wonder-working power greater than was possessed by their great ancestor Moses—which was a clear mark of God on him. And as remarkable as his forth-putting of power was his range of knowledge, extending beyond earth to the things which he had seen with the Father—which was another mark of God. And then the whole tone of his life was in keeping, and fitted to remove all honest doubt. But these builders were blind. They could not distinguish Messiahship when they saw it. They would not even give him credit for ordinary goodness. They could have got as much from the old as would have enabled them to slide easily into the new. Had they truly appreciated the types, they would have known the Antitype. Had they been apt students of prophecy, they would have known him to whom prophecy bears witness. But they had not even the right Old Testament point of view. They were falsely *conservative*. They had substituted authorized but outward and temporary forms and ceremonies for the living, eternal ideas, and rabbinical traditions for the decisive words of inspiration. And their conservatism would have been most destructive. If they had got their way, they would have kept Christ from having his proper place or any place in the building. And thus there would have been no salvation for man, but black, terrible destruction. No temple would have risen up in this world, each stone a saved soul. That would have been the consequence of the conservatism of those Jewish leaders. What they thought was building up, and keeping to the truth, and resisting innovation, would have been in its results the pulling down of all to the depths of ruin. So blind were these builders. They are not the only destroyers who would raze to the foundation; but those also are making work for destruction who build narrowly, who do not take the breadth of the Word of God for themselves, nor will allow it for others. Had these Jewish builders been loyal to the truth, reverencing the old which had fairly stood the test, and welcoming also the new which seemed to promise larger development, they would not have made the mistake which they did. Had they even had some spiritual affinity to the Messiah, they would have been carried out beyond their narrowness. Israelites indeed, in whom there was no guile, they would have been carried on from a glorious living past to a more glorious and widening, living future. But this is their condemnation, that light came into the world; and they loved the darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. Let us beware of self-deception. These rulers thought they were doing God service in what they did to Christ. If they could so far deceive themselves who occupied so pro-

minent a position in the Church, have we not reason to be on our guard? *The builders as overruled by the great Architect.* It has always been matter for surprise, how bad men get into power. Job makes it matter of complaint in his day, that the earth was given over into the hand of the wicked. There are some who go great lengths in sin without having much in their power. But when men get a long line, as it were, and go the whole length of it, cruelly trampling on the most sacred rights and tenderest feelings of their fellow-men, the evil seems so great as to call loudly for Divine interference. Think of Nero, for his amusement setting fire to Rome, and then, to screen himself, glutting his soul with the slaughter of God's saints. But never did God allow men to go such lengths, while sitting by and refusing to interfere, as when he allowed those builders to refuse him on whom the whole building up of a Church in this world depended. Never was human liberty brought into such antagonism to the Divine sovereignty. Those who were in power at the time, finding Christ troublesome, were permitted to crucify him. They laid his dead body in a tomb, and rolled a stone against the mouth of it, and sealed the stone, and set a watch, and thought they had done with him. It would have been a sad thing if their conduct had prevented the building up of a Church in the world. That, we know, could never be. This may be put on the ground of the Divine purpose. Christ was the living Stone, elect. He was linked to the Divine purpose, the great object of the Divine election. And we are accustomed to think that the purposes of God must travel on securely through all to their accomplishment. In the place that God intended for Christ must he unfailingly be. But deeper than the purpose itself is the ground of the purpose in the character of God, and the fitness of the Stone for the place. Divine love struggled for gratification in the building of us up out of the ruins of sin; that was the deepest ground of the purpose. It must, however, have been for ever pent up, if no path had been found for its egress. But when God really formed the purpose, he must have seen his way to the desired end all clear. To begin to build without knowing how to finish is foolishness, with which only man is chargeable. "Every house is built by some man; he who built all things is God." He must have had the conception of this universe in his mind before he brought forth those worlds and this earth of ours in all their wonderful order; he had the conception beforehand of the tabernacle (Exod. xxv. 40), and also of the temple (1 Chron. xxviii. 11—19). So when the great Architect had planned the Church from all eternity, and had for ages been making preparations for it, and directing stones to be put into it, he must have known how the Foundation-stone was to be laid. Christ was a fitting Stone for the place. He was not chosen blindly without regard to qualifications. He was not only elect, but also a tried Stone; and, what is the same idea, precious, proved to be precious by trial. One great strain there was that made trial of him, occasioned by our sin; but he stood the test, he was shown to be a precious Stone, sufficient for the purpose of God, and so he was put into the foundation-place. Those builders had not the placing of him there. He was a Stone refused, disallowed by them. But God was independent of them, and got others more humble than they, but more in sympathy with the purpose, and to do what they should have done. Ay, even they were taken up into the purpose as unconscious, involuntary instruments. For it was in the very refusing of him in his death that he became chief Corner-stone. They were thus doing what they did not intend to do. And he rose triumphant out of their hands when they thought they had effectually secured him in the tomb. Let us admire the placing of Christ as chief Corner-stone. "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes." The Lord had his purpose of mercy to men and of honour to Christ carried out notwithstanding the criminal conduct of the builders. And in the history of these latter times the same triumph will be repeated. All schemes that leave out Christ will prove abortive, and those that build by them will be left behind an advancing tide of Christianity. And at last it will be shown, by a clear and abundant induction of facts, that Christ is the only Stone in whom men can be built up into a glorious temple of God. What, then, is the *consequence* to them that disbelieve, i.e. refuse to believe? The Stone so honoured of God becomes, in the language of another prophecy (Isa. viii. 14), "a Stone of stumbling, and a Rock of offence;" i.e., in accordance with our Lord's comment on Ps. cxviii. 22 (Matt. xxi. 44), on which they are broken. They who disbelieve are broken in their spiritual nature; that is their shame. The Foundation-stone which is honour to believers, becomes to them the stone of punish-

ment, the stone of vengeance. They are broken, as if you took a pillar of the temple, and broke it into a thousand pieces. They thus stumble to their hurt and shame, because they disbelieve the Word (as we should translate), *i.e.* refuse to believe what God says about the Stone. It is God's appointment that they who thus disbelieve should in their fall be broken. 5. *Further characterization under Old Testament designations in relation to God.* (1) *God's elect.* "But ye are an elect race." This is after Isa. xliii. 20. We are not to lay stress upon ancient Israel being of one stone (*race*), but upon their Divine election, as being the reason of their existence. We owe our existence as the successors of Israel to the fact that we have been chosen by God out of the world. (2) *God's ministers.* "A royal priesthood." This is after Exod. xix. 6, where the expression is "kingdom of priests." This language, applied to ancient Israel, pointed to all being priests (in token of which the heads of families acted personally as priests in the yearly offering up of the Paschal lamb); it also pointed to their being priests under a great King. The idea was only fully exhibited in the separate yet representative priestly class. They, in a special manner, acted as priests, and had a royal character as belonging to the royal household. This full idea is taken up by us as Christians. We have sacred offices to perform, and we have the honour which comes from our being even here in the "King's palace." (3) *God's saints.* "A holy nation." This is also after Exod. xix. 6. The leading word is here again the second in the original—*holy*. "This had to be filled and coined afresh with a new meaning, and thus is one of the words wherein the radical influence, the transforming and newly fashioning power, of revealed religion is most clearly shown" (Cremer). As to the Homeric age, Nägelsbach says, "Holiness, as a constituent element of the Divine viewed in itself, or only perceived in the intercourse of the gods among themselves, is never mentioned. Never is there a title given to the godhead indicating a consciousness similar to that in which the Bible speaks of the true God." According to the conception of ancient Israel, we are to be a community permeated with Bible ideas of God's holiness, and conformed to it in our customs. (4) *God's possession. His right in us.* "A people for God's own possession." The idea is contained in Exod. xix. 5, "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people." The language is after Isa. xliii. 21 (following, or *race-elect*). We are already *acquired* by God; only not fully redeemed (Eph. i. 14). In so far as the thought of *peculiarity* is to be associated with the language, it is to be referred to God's right in us, which is peculiar in being *supreme*. *What his right in us involves.* "That ye may show forth the excellences of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." It involves that we have been *redeemed*. We became the objects of an effectual and glorious calling. We were at the *pole of darkness*—away from God in the darkness and chill of our own thoughts. We are now at the *opposite pole of light*—near to God in the marvellous light and exhilaration of what he is and what he thinks especially about us in redemption. It involves that, as redeemed by God, we *show forth his praises, or excellences*. Steiger is wrong in saying that the object of this is the conversion of those who still disbelieve. The thought is rather of what has been *gained* by God. Having effected for us a change of state, the thought of which is oppressive in its vastness, he has gained this, that we show forth his excellences; *i.e.* as our tribute to God, we *tell out* from the depths of our heart the excellences which he has displayed in our blessed experience. Huther remarks that the word is for the most part employed without definite application to *telling abroad what happens indoors*. Doxology comes in similarly in Eph. i. 14. *Heightening of doxology.* "Which in time past were no people, but now are the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." This is after Hos. ii. 23. The words here, as in Rom. ix. 25, seem to be applied to the calling of the heathen. Before their conversion they had no true corporate life. Rome could not give them that; they were *no people*. Now they were *the people of God*, with a unity of life in Christ, and inheriting all the titles and privileges of ancient Israel. They had a special call, then, to tell out the excellences of God. What were they to tell out? His excellent power, his excellent wisdom, his excellent righteousness. Yes, these, but especially his excellent *mercy*. Once not in the possession of mercy, that condition was now ended. By circumstances over which they had no control, the gospel had been brought to them in their heathen state. The message of Divine love had touched

their hearts. By God's mercy they were numbered among his people—pardoned and cleansed. Well, then, did it become them to pay their highest tribute of praise to the excellence of that mercy that had found them in their forlorn heathenism. And have we not all reason to praise the mercy that has ordered our circumstances, that has broken down the hardness of our hearts, that has admitted us to glorious privileges? —R. F.

Vers. 11, 12.—*Christians in the world.* I. ASPECT UNDER WHICH THEY ARE ADDRESSED. "Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims." There is here a well-marked transition to a new section. It is introduced by a word which gives an earnest, affectionate tone to his exhortation. He addresses them under the aspect of "sojourners and pilgrims." The language is based on Ps. xxxix. 12, "For I am a stranger with thee and a sojourner, as all my fathers were," where, in the Greek translation, the same two words are used as here. The two words strengthen the idea; there is very little difference in sense. The first word points to our *not being at home*; the second word points to our *not being among our own people*. We are not at home on earth where there is so much evil, where especially we have not the immediate presence of our Father. To this is added that we do not live among our own people; for, though we have our own circle, yet the men of the world are as those that speak a strange language and do not follow our customs.

II. DUTY PRESENTED. 1. *Negatively.* (1) *Form.* "To abstain from fleshly lusts." We are not to understand "fleshly" in the narrow sense, but as including all the desires of sinful human nature. The context suggests lusts that have to do with insubordination; and there are not excluded drunkenness, gluttony, and what is called lust. They agree in being irregular; they are the desires belonging to our nature going beyond the order appointed for them. The call is to *abstain* from them. This is a Christian word with a wider range than is sometimes given to it in the present day. It defines the movement we have to make against our lusts. (2) *Reason.* "Which war against the soul." There is reason for our moving against fleshly lusts in this, that they move against us. They are not only antagonistic, but are *actively aggressive*. They move against us in our highest nature, viz. the *soul*—that by which we are capable of a higher destiny than is to be got on earth. As sojourners and pilgrims, we are looking forward to "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven;" we must not, by giving ourselves into the power of lusts, unfit ourselves for our noble destiny. "Abstain" is the word for those who would have their souls saved. 2. *Positively.* (1) *Form.* "Having your behaviour seemly among the Gentiles." The whole of Christian duty is not contained in the word "abstain." There must be, on the positive side, the having our behaviour *seemly*. The usual translation of the word is "beautiful," "fair." Mere strictness is often repellent; there must be what is *attractive* about our conduct, especially if we take into account those who are yet unfriendly to Christianity. (2) *Christian motive.* "That wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." There is often a very loose way of classifying men. The Christians were classed with evil-doers. Those who had the highest conception of God were spoken against as atheists, simply because they rejected the objects of heathen worship. Those who were called by their religion to live most holy lives were spoken against as anarchists, and even as introducing abominations, the only foundation for it being that they had necessarily to put themselves in opposition to many heathen ways. How, then, were they to act before the heathen? They were to see well to the seemliness of their behaviour. Peter might have urged that they were to do this, that they might not come into collision with heathen authorities. He goes a point beyond that, and urges that by good works (*beautiful* works, being the same word that is translated "seemly") they were to aim at the conversion of the heathen. We can understand, from what follows, that he had in his mind exemplariness in the different relations of life, and not returning evil for evil; but we can also think of the deeds for which Tertullian praises the Christians. "When the pagans deserted their nearest relatives in a plague, Christians ministered to the sick and dying. When the pagans left their dead unburied after a battle, and cast their wounded into the streets, the Christians hastened to relieve the suffering." By

such *fair* deeds as these they could hope to break down prejudice. 'The heathen beholding them might be led to change their mind about them as irreligious in their faith and life, might be led to think favourably of their God, and thus to be converted to Christianity. Such a result would be *glorifying* to God, and it was only in keeping with his procedure. It was a day of visitation from God (in the coming of the missionaries) that accounted for their deliverance from heathenism; what was to hinder a similar day of visitation in the conversion even of their defamers?—R. F.

Vers. 13—17.—*Relation of Christians to civil authorities.* I. CATEGORY UNDER WHICH THE DUTY IN THE RELATION COMES. "Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake." There are various *ordinances of man*; i.e. Divine appointments for human relations which are subject to human moulding. With reference to every such ordinance our duty is *subjection*, i.e. deference, even when we cannot give our approval. We are to be subject to the ordinance *for the Lord's sake*. There is here the Pauline thought that it is *Christ* who is represented in the position of authority, and we are to be subject to those in authority for the sake of him whose representatives they are. There is thus the placing of society, not only on a religious, but on a distinctively *Christian* basis. "The relation of superiority and subordination which permeates the whole of human society, and excludes all abstract liberty and equality,—this pervading relation of contrast, tending nevertheless to unity between authority and liberty, authority and obedience, authority and filial piety—in its original source, in its inmost foundation, and in its actual essence, is not of man, cannot be deduced from the right of the stronger or the more able, nor from the common consent, but rests on God's *will* and *appointment*, and is subject to his *guidance*. This implies that, in honouring his parents and obeying the laws, one obeys not only man, but also God. It implies that, whilst superiors and subordinates are mutually bound to each other, both are engaged to a higher third party, whose servants they both are, whose laws they must both obey, and to whom both must render an account. It implies, in one word, that the whole order of human society in its ultimate resort rests on the Divine will as its foundation" (Martensen).

II. PARTICULAR DUTY OF SUBJECTION TO CIVIL AUTHORITIES. "Whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as sent by him." There is here specified the ordinance of civil government. It is viewed *concretely* in the persons in whom it has reality. The highest authority is vested in the king; he is represented as *sending* governors, i.e. giving authority to magistrates under him. There is no determination here of the best form of civil government; that is left to human moulding. The duty of being subject is not made dependent on the government under which we are placed being the *best*, nor is it made dependent on *legitimacy*; we have simply to do with the government in fact, and its acting head as representing to us, however imperfectly in the civil sphere, the government of Christ. Our subjection takes the form of obeying the laws, paying taxes, lending our influence on the side of authority. What we render to our civil rulers should be all the more satisfactory that we render it to them for the sake of that Lord in whose Name we regard them as acting.

III. JUSTIFICATION OF THE ORDINANCE OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT. "For vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well." This language is connected with the under-magistrates, but with them as sent by the supreme magistrate. It therefore puts before us the idea of civil government. It is the employment of force, but for moral ends. It is *for vengeance on evil-doers*; i.e. it sets itself to repress evil-doing (such as it takes notice of) by proportionate punishments. It is also *for praise to them that do well*; i.e. it sets itself to encourage law-keeping and industrial enterprise by adequate protection to life and property. This is no human conception; it is the bodying forth (however imperfectly) of the Divine love for order, for settled institutions. "God is not the Author of confusion, but of order, and as in all the Churches of the saints," so also in the states great and small.

IV. MOTIVE INFLUENCING SUBJECTION. "For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." It is implied that there was an impression abroad that the Christians were evil-doers, or elements of disorder in the state. That impression was not founded on fact; the apostle sets it down to the ignorance of foolish men, i.e. their self-caused inability in their ignorance to under-

stand the Christian position (rather than to malice). It was not the quiet voice of wisdom, but rather the loud voice of foolishness. The Christians were really the greatest friends of order, and it was not only their interest but their recognized duty to occupy no doubtful position toward the Roman state. It was a direction to ancient Israel in captivity in Babylon, "Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace." Paul gives directions even to give thanks for kings and for all that are in authority. So it is here declared to be not good policy, but the will of God (which should have the highest power to influence), that by well-doing, *i.e.* specially by the greatest exemplariness in keeping the laws, they should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

V. PRINCIPLE CONDITIONING LIBERTY. "As free, and not using your freedom for a cloke of wickedness, but as bondservants of God." We should rather read "malice" and "servants." It is against good interpretation to bring in here Christian freedom in general. We are free specially in relation to the state. We are free to obey, or not to obey, the laws of the land. We are free to aspire after better conditions for the state. But we are not to allow our freedom to degenerate into licence. We are not to use it as a pretext for gratifying our private revenge. We are not to use it as a cloke underneath which we strike at established authority. How, then, are we to find the right course? It is by this consideration, that we are servants of God, and bound by his laws. And if the laws of the land require what his laws forbid, or forbid what his laws require, our duty is to refuse obedience to them. We have an example of the latter in the refusal of the apostles to cease teaching in the name of Christ. When brought before the authorities for breaking the laws, they said, "We ought to obey God rather than man." They were willing to take the consequences, but they would not cease preaching Christ. However much we are in love with order, are willing to be subject to the ordinance for the Lord's sake, there is limitation. If a government were to seek to impose on us a form of religion of which in our conscience we did not approve, our choice would lie between suffering and exercising such power as we had. And if we as citizens had the power we believe that it would only be according to the mind of God that we should use it to overthrow the tyranny—the higher consideration in this, as in many cases, overruling the lower.

VI. SURROUNDINGS OF THE DUTY OF SUBJECTION. 1. *All men.* "Honour all men." We must understand the *worst* of men as included. The ground of the honour is the worth which essentially belongs to humanity by its Divine constitution. We are made in the image of God, made to think of God and to do the will of God, made for God and immortality. The form in which Kant puts it is the following: "No man can be employed, neither by others nor by himself, as a mere instrument, but is always to be regarded as an end. And as he cannot dispose of himself for any price (which would be subversive of his own self-reverence), neither is he at liberty to derogate from the equally necessary self-reverence of others as men; *i.e.* he is obliged practically to recognize the dignity of every other man's humanity, and so stands under a duty based on that reverential observance which is necessarily to be demonstrated towards every other person." Besides this essential worth, there is *superadded* worth in the fact of the Incarnation. "The religion of Christ is a testimony to the worth of man in the sight of God, to the importance of human nature, to the infinite purposes for which we were framed. God is there set forth as sending to the succour of the human family his Beloved Son, the bright image and representation of his own perfections; and sending him, not simply to roll away a burden of pain and punishment, but to create man after the Divine image, to purify the soul from every stain, to communicate to it power over evil, to open before it immortality as its aim and destination. And these blessings it proffers, not to the few, not to the educated, not to the eminent, but to all human beings, to the poorest and the most fallen. Honour, then, man from the beginning to the end of his earthly course. Honour the child. Welcome into being the infant, with a feeling of its mysterious grandeur, with the feeling that an immortal existence has begun, that a spirit has been kindled which is never to be quenched. Honour the child. On this principle all good education rests. Never shall we learn to train up the child till we take it in our arms, as Jesus did, and feel distinctly that 'of such is the kingdom of heaven.' Honour the poor. This sentiment of respect

is essential to improving the connection between the more and the less prosperous conditions of society. Till Christianity shall have breathed into us this spirit of respect for our nature, wherever it is found, we shall not know how to raise the fallen. Perhaps none of us have yet heard or can comprehend the tone of voice in which a man thoroughly impressed with this sentiment would speak to a fellow-creature" (Channing). This duty is fittingly made the basis; for when we have learned to honour all men for the worth of their nature, we shall come more readily to being subject to what God has appointed for man—including civil government. 2. *The brotherhood.* "Love the brotherhood." We are to understand all that truly belong to the Christian circle. We are to love men beyond the brotherhood, but compassionately with a view to their being brought within the brotherhood. It is only within the brotherhood that we can get outlet for our brotherly feelings, because it is there only that there is community of life, that there are excellences on which we can rest with complacency. "In its true idea, or regarded as the union of those who partake in the spirit of Jesus Christ, I revere it as the noblest of all associations. Our common social unions are poor by its side. In the world we form ties of interest, pleasure, and ambition. We come together as creatures of time and sense for transient amusement or display. In the Church we meet as God's children; we recognize in ourselves something higher than animal and worldly life. We come, that holy feelings may spread from heart to heart. The Church, in its true idea, is a retreat from the world. We meet in it that by union with the holy we may get strength to withstand our common intercourse with the impure. We meet to adore God, to open our souls to his Spirit, and, by recognition of the common Father, to forget all distinctions among ourselves. This spiritual union with the holy is to survive all ties; the union of the virtuous friends of God is as eternal as virtue; and this union is the essence of the true Church." Let us, then, value the brotherhood as meeting the social side of our spiritual life; let our love go out towards all who have the reality of life in Christ, however much they may differ from us; let our love go out towards them even in proportion to the depth of their life; let us rejoice in the progress they are making; let us seek also the better realization of the brotherhood, including many conquests for it from the world. Stress was to be laid on this in connection with subjection to civil authorities; for if the brotherhood was dear to them as Zion of old to the captives (Ps. cxxxvii.), great care was to be taken that there was no unnecessary collision with these authorities. 3. *God.* "Fear God." This is the feeling of reverence which we are to entertain towards God as infinitely exalted above us. We are to fear God because of the far-reaching power, wisdom, even goodness, which he has displayed in his works. Even in the contemplation of a little flower, Linnæus said, "God eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, I saw him as he was passing by from behind, and I was amazed." We are to fear him because he gave us being, because he has bound us by natural law, because he has especially bound us as free responsible beings by moral law. We are to fear him who is the absolutely holy Lawgiver, and especially when he commands from Calvary. It is evident that this fear to God has to do with subjection to civil authorities. It will keep us from over-estimating the ruler, as though his word were simply to be obeyed, his example to be followed. We have first to inquire whether no injury is done thereby to Divine law. It will keep us, on the other hand, from under-estimating the ruler. As placed over us under God, he has (with the necessary reservation that has been pointed to) a right to our obedience. 4. *The king.* "Honour the king." We may esteem the king because of his personal excellence, and we may be attached to his rule because of the advantages connected with it; but we honour him because of the office which he holds. Without this feeling animating us, we cannot give subjection so as to enjoy the approval of our God.—R. F.

Vers. 18—25.—*Subjection of servants to their masters.* I. THE GENERAL NATURE OF THE SUBJECTION TO MASTERS. "Servants, be in subjection to your masters with all fear." The word for "servants" here is more courteous than in Ephesians and Colossians. It is literally "domestics," and includes free servants and bondservants. From the strain of the exhortation it would seem that the latter are principally addressed. It belongs to the present constitution of things (and for ends of training) that some are in the position of requiring service, others are in the position of render-

ing service. It is proper that the will of the former should regulate the service, that the will of the latter should be subjected in the service. This is the Divine foundation on which mastership and servitude rest. The feeling proper to servants in the relation is fear. Paul uses stronger language when he says, "with fear and trembling" (Eph. vi. 5). Peter strengthens, too, but it is not by an additional substantive, but by an adjective, "with all fear." That cannot mean "all that fear can be," but rather "all that fear should be in the relation." There is fear in the sense of reverence to be shown towards the regulator of service (not diminishing or exaggerating what there is in that); and this will be accompanied by another fear, viz. anxious solicitude about coming up to all that is due in the service. There is a higher setting of the duty, which is not to be left out of view. There is fear in the sense of reverence to be shown towards him who (to our greater freedom and comfort in service) is over the earthly regulator of service; and this will be accompanied by another fearing, anxious solicitude about coming up to all the Divine requirements in the service. In this there is the condemnation of *bad compliance*, i.e. doing what is wrong because the master requires it. According to Roman jurists, such bad compliance was the *duty* of freedmen, the *necessity* of slaves. We can understand that Peter intended to guard against bad compliance when he does not state the duty of subjection absolutely, but with modification.

II. SUBJECTION EVEN TO MASTERS THAT ARE FROWARD. "Not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward." We cannot but admire the great *sobriety* that there is in apostolic teaching. There are masters that are *good*, i.e. amiable, and that are also *gentle*, i.e. showing their amiability in exacting nothing but what is reasonable. In the case of such masters there can be no question of the obligation of service. Unless the servant is ill-grained, the service is rendered freely and without any sense of burdensomeness. But what about masters that are *froward*, or *awry*, i.e. ill-dispositioned, and that show their ill disposition by making unreasonable demands of their servants, and (when they can do it with impunity) abusing them? Is there any obligation of service there? "Yes," say the apostles, with the sobriety characteristic of them, "the obligation *remains*, and remains the *same*."

III. CONSIDERATION DRAWN FROM THE PRAISEWORTHY CHARACTER OF SUBJECTION TO MASTERS THAT ARE FROWARD. "For this is acceptable, if for conscience toward God a man endureth griefs, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye sin, and are buffeted for it, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye shall take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." It was the slave especially that *suffered wrongfully*. There was a great wrong in his being a slave, and there were many wrongs connected with his state of slavery. He was at the mercy of his owner; if he did not get justice, he had no redress. Was his position, then, *unendurable*? By no means; the apostle contrives even to throw a *halo* around it. He does so by bringing God into the question. If a man has the *consciousness* of God, i.e. of him as recognizing not only his rights of humanity but also his sonship in Christ; of him also as able to right all matters between him and his master, and to see to all fidelity receiving its reward at last; of him especially as appointing *griefs* for his earthly lot;—then he can *endure* those griefs, whatever they are. And if he thus encourages himself in endurance, then there is that which is *acceptable*. It is difficult to catch the precise shade of meaning. One way of it is "there is grace." But we must not run into the Roman Catholic error of *supererogatory merit*, which can be communicated to others. Another way of it is "there is loveliness." That readily passes into the meaning "there is that which, coming out into beauty, calls for praise." This meaning seems to be caught up in the following word, "glory." In enduring griefs from a bad master there is something like martyrdom. But let a man be on his guard here. If he commits a fault and is buffeted (receives a blow) for it, and takes this patiently, there is no halo attaching to that. It is when a man does well in the matter of service, and suffers for it, and then takes it patiently, that he has praise in the highest sphere (whatever men may think of it), viz. praise with God for conduct that rises into loveliness.

IV. CONSIDERATION DRAWN FROM THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST. 1. *Their exemplary character*. (1) *Reason for their being presented as an example*. "For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps." Servants were called to endure suffering. When they were called

to be Christians like others, they were called to the proper bearing of all hardships appointed for them. There was One whose example was to be studied by them. It will not be thought that Christ is unworthy of imitation. It may, however, be thought that he is too great for imitation—that he is only for admiration. The word translated “example” suggests a *great picture* left us in the life of Christ: how are we to copy it line for line? Christ is also put before us here as *Leader of the way*: how are we to follow him step for step? The solution of this is that his example is singularly imitable, that he is a Leader whom it is singularly easy to follow. There is a vulgar greatness which is full of self-importance, which is imprisoned in private interests, which multiplies distinctions. But true greatness is forgetful of self, covets nothing which it cannot communicate, goes down in hope of raising up. We are told here that Christ suffered *as well as the slaves*. We are told also that he suffered *for the slaves* (the meaning of which is afterwards brought out). He thus, on the one hand, brought excellence near to us; we do not think of his teaching *theoretically* as from a chair of learning. On the other hand, by the *great advantage* conferred on us, he obtained the right to be our Example, power over us to make us follow him. (2) *The innocence of Christ in his sufferings*. “Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.” Did slaves suffer innocently? Christ suffered innocently too. It is to be noted that the idea of sinlessness entered into the Old Testament conception of the Messiah. The language here, with a slight exception, is taken from the Septuagint Version of Isa. liii. 9, “He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.” The Servant of God (in this a pattern to servants) *did no sin*, i.e. brought no suffering upon himself by his own faults. This sinlessness extended to faultlessness in *speech*, especially to freedom from a common fault in slaves connected with the frequent use of force. *Guile was not found in his mouth*, i.e. there never passed from him, even inadvertently, an expression that was fitted to convey a false impression (with the escaping of suffering or anything else as his end). For completeness we must give this sinlessness a positive aspect. He did always what the truth required in act, and spake always what the truth required in speech. What we have here in a general statement is given in detail in the portraiture of Christ in the Gospels. It is interesting to notice the impression produced on the apostles by what they saw. “The idea of sinlessness was by no means so common an idea that all that was necessary to lead men like the apostles to apply it to Christ was an accident or some insufficient occasion. Quite the contrary: this idea was never thought of, nor had it ever entered into the heart of man to conceive it, until it appeared, not as an idea merely, but as a reality, in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Even now to believe in the realizing of the idea of sinlessness in an individual is not so very easy a thing for human nature in its present state. Men are not in general much addicted to the weakness of believing too easily in the existence of purity of heart and true greatness; it is a fact that they are only too prone to doubt them when they really exist. It appears as something marvellous and extraordinary in the extreme, that once, and only once, in the world’s history (and that, too, in a time of great moral degradation) the impression could be produced upon the minds of a number of men, that a character was unfolding itself before their very eyes, of perfect purity and sinless holiness, and that the consequence of its manifestation was to produce in them a faith for which they lived and in which they died. But once does this fact occur in the history of mankind” (Ullmann). (3) *The patience of Christ in his sufferings*. “Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.” There is here an echo of Isa. liii. 7, “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.” When he was *reviled*, i.e. was injured in what was *said* against him, he *reviled not again*; i.e. did not resent the injury by any injurious word in return. When he *suffered*, i.e. was injured in what was *done* to him, he *threatened not*; i.e. though conscious of power, he was not provoked by the injury to exercise his power, or even to threaten the exercise of it, against his enemies. The words have special but not exclusive reference to the judgment-scene followed by the crucifixion-scene. When reviled as a sabbath-breaker, he calmly answered that his Father worked on the sabbath day as well as himself. When reviled as casting out devils by the prince of the devils, he met the wicked suggestion by calmly showing how Satan could not cast

out Satan. When reviled as a blasphemer, he simply vindicated himself by pointing to his works. When he was brought before the Sanhedrin on charges which were clearly unfounded and prompted by malice, he was silent under them; and it was only when he was appealed to by oath that he lifted his eyes to his judges, and said, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." When, again, he was brought before Pilate on a charge of sedition which his judge knew to be unfounded and malicious, he maintained the same silent demeanour; and it was only when he was appealed to that he fearlessly asserted his claim of Kingship. He silently submitted to the rudest mockings, to the most cruel scourgings. He silently carried his cross, and when, nailed to it, he looked round on his murderers, the prayer which rose to his lips was, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." He was able to endure all this unjust treatment without being hurried into a wrong word, without any disturbing influence on his mind, because he *committed himself to him that judgeth righteously*, i.e. in the consciousness of his rectitude he left himself and all his interests to him whose judgment was different from and of a higher order than the judgment of the Sanhedrin and the judgment of the Roman governor. And what a powerful argument (how touching, too, to be brought in for the sake of the slaves!) to induce them to bear patiently all their wrongs which, however great, were small in comparison with the wrongs which were heaped on Christ!

2. *Their vicarious character.* (1) *Punishment for our sins.* "Who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree." The language is still suggested by Isa. liii. "Tree" is the word which Peter uses in his sermons for the cross. The simple statement here is that Christ carried the burden of sins. An expansion of it is that *he* carried the burden of sins to whom they did not belong. A further expansion of it is that he carried the burden of our sins *in his body*, i.e. on the ground of human nature in its completeness (body as well as soul). The statement fully expanded is that he carried the burden of our sins in his body *on to the tree*, i.e. to the place where death was inflicted on him for them. He carried the burden of the Divine displeasure against our sins so as to carry them away into forgetfulness. (2) *Salvation intended by them.* "That we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness." 'This death unto sins is death not merely unto their condemnation, but unto their power. The life unto righteousness is life not merely in the possession of the favour of God, but in the possession of power to do the will of God. In the state in which Christ found us it was natural for us to seek to revenge ourselves for injuries. In the state which Christ intends for us it becomes natural for us to be placable, to be silent under injuries, and to seek by our gentleness to overcome the evil that is manifested against us. And that is part, only part, of the Divine life which Christ died to secure for us. (3) *Salvation experienced through them.* (a) *Restoration to health.* "By whose stripes ye were healed." The language is from Isa. liii. 5. Having changed to "we" in the previous parts of this verse, he now returns to "ye." It is implied that in their former state they were *sick*. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." There was an irregular action of their powers, with languor, feverishness, loss of appetite, and other distressing symptoms. But the time came when healing was experienced, giving the powers their regular action and bringing back tone, endurance, keenness, and all healthful symptoms. The remarkable thing is that the healing is ascribed to the Saviour's *stripes*. The word is literally *weal* (in the singular number), i.e. the mark of a stripe. It is a word with which slaves were familiar, as they were also with buffeting formerly used (to which, as well as to stripes, Christ was subjected). *Weal* is taken here as the symbol of Christ's atoning death; and the *slaves* are told, in a way that was fitted to go home to them in the remembrance of bitter experiences, that from the mark of the lash on our Lord healing had gone forth on them. (b) *Return to the fold.* "For ye were going astray like sheep; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." The language is based on Isa. liii. 6, "All we like sheep have gone astray," the metaphor being abruptly changed, as in Isaiah. In their former state they were like sheep without any one to care for them, or keep his eye on them. Sheep, left to themselves, *wander* from the fold. So we, left to ourselves, wander from God who is our Home, *our Fold*, where we have shelter

and abundance. They were now in the happy condition of having a *Shepherd* and *Bishop* for their souls. The words refer to Christ. The first points rather to the actual bestowal of care; the second points rather to observation that leads to care being bestowed. Christ leads us to rich thoughts; and he does not lead us to rich thoughts without keenly observing our condition. If we would have this Shepherd and Bishop for our souls, we must, like those whom Peter addresses, be *turned toward* him. The words would seem to indicate the action that is needed on our part. We have nothing to do but to turn ourselves toward Christ. We are to turn ourselves from our sins which have been atoned for, and no longer constitute a hindrance; and we are to turn ourselves toward Christ to have his affection in the form of care and oversight, with which our souls can lack nothing.—R. F.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER III.

Ver. 1.—*Likewise, ye wives.* St. Peter has spoken of the duties of servants: why does he omit those of masters? There must have been Christian masters in Asia Minor, as is plain from Eph. vi. 9; Col. iv. 1. But we notice that St. Paul, though he has a few words for masters, addresses slaves at much greater length. Probably Christian masters were comparatively few, while large numbers of slaves had embraced the religion which could do so much to comfort and elevate the oppressed. Again, the immediate purpose of the apostle is to inculcate submission to authority; therefore, having enforced upon Christian servants the example of their Lord, he proceeds to speak of the duty of Christian wives. Christianity was in its infancy; it was to be the means of abolishing slavery, and of raising woman to her proper place in society; but as yet slaves were cruelly oppressed, and women were ill treated and despised. Aristotle tells us that among the barbarians (and a large proportion of the population in the greater part of Asia Minor was barbarian, i.e. non-Greek) the woman and the slave hold the same rank ('Pol,' I. ii. 4). In Greek communities the case was different; but even among the Greeks women occupied a very subordinate position. Christianity would introduce a great and sweeping change in the relations of the sexes, as well as in the relations of master and slave. But the change must be gradual, not violent; it must be brought about by the softening and purifying influences of religion, not by revolt against recognized customs and established authority. Indeed, Christianity would introduce an element of division—the Lord had said so (Luke xii. 51—53); families would be divided. It could not be otherwise; Christians must not set even family ties above the love of Christ. But Christian wives must be peacemakers; they must, as far as possible, live at peace even with unbelieving husbands. They would often have much ill

treatment to endure in those coarse, cruel days; they must bear it with the quiet strength of gentleness. Be in subjection to your own husbands; literally, *submitting yourselves*. The participle, as in ch. ii. 13, seems to look back to the imperative, "submit yourselves," in ch. ii. 13. The present participle implies that this voluntary submission is to be habitual. The adjective "your own" (*ιδίους*) emphasizes the duty. That, if any obey not the Word, they also may without the Word be won by the conversation of the wives. There is a well-supported reading, "Even if any." Husband and wife would often be converted together; but if this should not be the case, and if the unbelieving husband should set himself in direct opposition to the Word of God (for the words "believe not" have more than a negative meaning, as in ch. ii. 7), still Christian wives must submit themselves. They must do this for the glory of God, and with the hope of saving their husbands' souls; that those unbelieving husbands may be won to Christ and to everlasting life by the silent eloquence of the quiet self-restraint and holy behaviour of their wives, without argument or preaching on the wives' part. A self-denying holy life will do more to win those with whom we live in close intercourse than even holy words, and much more than debate and controversy. This seems to be the meaning of *ἐνευ λόγου* rather than the other possible interpretation, "without the preaching of the Word." *Be won*; literally, *be gained*. Each soul converted is a gain to Christ, to the kingdom of heaven, to itself, in this case also to the wife who is the happy instrument of saving her husband (comp. 1 Cor. ix. 19, 20). The word rendered "conversation" here, as elsewhere, means "conduct, behaviour." (Compare, on the whole subject, the teaching of St. Paul, Eph. v. 22—24; Col. iii. 18; 1 Tim. ii. 9—11.)

Ver. 2.—While they behold (see note on ch. ii. 12, where the same verb occurs) *your chaste conversation coupled with fear*; literally, *your chaste behaviour in fear*.

Bengel and others understand the fear of God. Certainly the holy fear of God is the sphere in which true Christians must always live. But the close connection with the word "chaste" (*τὴν ἐν φόβῳ ἀγνήν ἀναστροφὴν ἑμῶν*), and the parallel passage, Eph. v. 33 (in the Greek), make it probable that the fear here inculcated is reverence for the husband—an anxious avoidance of anything that might even seem to interfere with his conjugal rights and authority.

Ver. 3.—**Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair.** A common Hebraism, like our Lord's injunction in John vi. 27, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." St. Peter does not forbid the moderate use of ornaments, but asserts their utter worthlessness compared with Christian graces. The ladies of the time seem often to have had their hair dressed in a very fantastic and extravagant manner. And of wearing of gold; rather, *golden ornaments*. Or of putting on of apparel. This verse shows that, although the mass of believers at this time belonged to the poorer classes, yet there must have been a proportion of persons of rank and wealth among the Christians of Asia Minor (comp. 1 Tim. ii. 9; Rev. iii. 17).

Ver. 4.—**But let it be the hidden man of the heart.** The "hidden" is here equivalent to the "inward man" of Rom. vii. 22; 2 Cor. iv. 16; Eph. iii. 16. It is that life which is "hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 2), the life of Christ ("the Second Man") in the heart, fashioning that heart after the likeness of Christ, forming in it "the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. iii. 10). This is hidden; it does not display itself like those conspicuous ornaments mentioned in the last verse. In that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit; literally, *in the incorruptibility of the meek and quiet spirit*. This ornament is incorruptible; not like those corruptible things (comp. ch. i. 18). The meek spirit does not flash into anger, does not answer again, takes harsh words gently and humbly. The quiet spirit is calm and tranquil; peaceful in itself, it spreads peace around (comp. 1 Tim. ii. 2). Which is in the sight of God of great price. The adjective *πολυτελής* is used in Mark xiv. 3 of the ointment with which Mary anointed our Lord, and in 1 Tim. ii. 9 of the "array" which St. Paul discourages for Christian women. Those adornments are costly in the sight of the world; the meek and quiet spirit is precious in the sight of God.

Ver. 5.—**For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in**

God; rather, *who hoped in God (εἰς Θεόν)*; whose hope was set toward God and rested in God. Bengel says, "Vera sanctitas, spes in Deum." St. Peter is the apostle of hope. Adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands. The apostle bids Christian women to consider the example of the saintly women of the Old Testament. With their hope resting upon God, they could not care for finery and costly jewels. They adorned themselves with the more costly ornament of a meek and quiet spirit: they showed their meekness by living in subjection to their husbands. Submission to authority is the key-note of this part of the Epistle.

Ver. 6.—**Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.** St. Peter singles out Sarah, as the mother of the chosen people. She obeyed her husband habitually (the imperfect *ὑπήκουεν* is the reading of some of the oldest manuscripts; the aorist, also well supported, would represent her obedience as a whole, the character of her life now past); she called him lord (comp. Gen. xviii. 12, *ὁ δὲ κύριός μου πρεσβύτερος*). **Whose daughters ye are;** literally, *whom children ye became*. This is another indication that the Epistle is addressed, not only to Jewish Christians, but also, and that in large measure, to Gentile converts. Gentile women became by faith the daughters of Sarah; just as we read in St. Paul's Epistles that "they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham" (Gal. iii. 7); and that Abraham is "the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised" (Rom. iv. 11); comp. Gal. iv. 22—31, where St. Paul tells us that we, like Isaac, are the children of promise; children, "not of the bondwoman, but of the free." **As long as ye do well.** This clause represents one Greek word *ἀγαθοποιῶσαι* ("doing good"). Some commentators regard the words from "even as Sara" to "whose daughters ye are" as a parenthesis, and refer the participle to "the holy women" mentioned in ver. 5. This does not seem natural. It is better to regard the second half of this verse as a continuous sentence, and to understand the participle as meaning "if ye do well." The doing well, etc., is a mark that Christian women have become children of Sarah by faith. And are not afraid with any amazement. The Greek word for "amazement" (*πτόσησις*) does not occur in any other place of the New Testament, though we meet with the corresponding verb in Luke xxi. 9; xxiv. 37. There seems to be a reference to Prov. iii. 25, "Be not afraid of sudden fear" (*καὶ οὐ φοβηθήσῃ πτόσησιν ἐπελθοῦσιν*). *Πτόσησις* is "dismay, scared terrified excitement," very different from the calm thoughtful *φόβος*, the fear lest they should fail in proper

respect for their husbands, and that out of the holy fear of God, which St. Peter inculcates upon wives (ver. 2). The Christian wife might often experience cruel treatment from an unbelieving husband, but she was not to live in a flutter of excited terror; she was to be calm and quiet, trusting in God. As to the construction, the accusative may be cognate, as the Authorized Version takes it; or the accusative of the object, as in Prov. iii. 25. The last view is, perhaps, the most suitable: "And are not afraid of any sudden terror."

Ver. 7.—**Likewise, ye husbands.** As wives are exhorted to be in subjection to their own husbands, so husbands also must do their duty to their wives. The construction (participial, as in ver. 1) seems, like ver. 1, to look back to ch. ii. 13. The relation, indeed, is no longer directly one of subjection, and marriage is an ordinance of God; but Christian husbands must submit themselves to the duties arising out of the marriage tie; and marriage involves a civil contract, though to us Christians it is a holy estate instituted of God, and a parable of the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church. St. Peter, we observe, does not consider the case of a Christian husband with an unbelieving wife; probably that would be very uncommon. *Dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel; literally, living together with the feminine as with the weaker vessel.* This connection seems best suited to the balance of the sentence, and also to the sense. The apostle bids the husband, first, to give due consideration to his partner on the ground of her comparative weakness; and, secondly, to give her due honour as being an heir, like himself, of the grace of life. The disparity of the sexes was the cause of the degradation of woman among the heathen; Christianity makes it the ground of tender consideration. Christian love should abound in knowledge (Phil. i. 9); it should throw its softening light upon all the relations of life. Man and woman are alike vessels—vessels made by God for his service (comp. Isa. lxiv. 8; Jer. xviii. 6, etc.; also 1 Thess. iv. 4, 5); the woman is the weaker, and must, for that very reason, be treated with gentleness. For "according to knowledge," comp. 2 Pet. i. 5. Christians must be thoughtful; they must consider what becomes them in all the relations of life; not act carelessly and at random. **And as being heirs together of the grace of life; rather, rendering honour as to those who are also fellow-heirs, or, according to another well-supported reading, rendering honour (to them) as being also fellow-heirs (with them).** The sense is not materially affected: husband and wife are

joint-heirs of the grace of life, that is, of God's gracious gift of everlasting life. **That your prayers be not hindered; or, according to another reading, be not cut off.** If husband and wife live together without mutual reverence and affection, there can be no sympathy in united prayer; the promise made by Christ in Matt. xviii. 19 cannot be realized. Nor can either pray acceptably if they live at variance; jealousies and bickerings are opposed to the spirit of prayer; they hinder the free flow of prayer, and mar its earnestness and devotion.

Ver. 8.—**Finally.** St. Peter is bringing to a close the exhortations to submission, which depend on the imperative in ch. ii. 13. He turns from particular classes and relations to the whole Christian community, and describes what they ought to be in five Greek words, the first three of which are found nowhere else in the Greek Scriptures. **Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; literally, sympathizing; feeling with others, rejoicing with them that do rejoice, and weeping with them that weep. Love as brethren.** An adjective (φιλάδελφος) in the Greek; the corresponding substantive occurs in ch. i. 22. **Be pitiful.** This word (εὐσπλαγχνος) has undergone a remarkable change of meaning. In Hippocrates, quoted by Huther, it is used literally of one whose viscera are healthy; it is also sometimes used figuratively, as equivalent to εὐκάρδιος, ἀνδρείος; "goodhearted" with the heathen would mean "brave;" with Christian writers "tender," "pitiful." **Be courteous.** This represents a reading (φιλόφρωνες) which has very little support. The true reading is ταπεινόφρωνες, humble-minded.

Ver. 9.—**Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing.** St. Peter, like St. Paul (Rom. xii. 17; 1 Thess. v. 15), repeats his Master's teaching in the sermon on the mount (Matt. v. 39). He forbids revenge in word, as well as in deed. **But contrariwise blessing.** The word "blessing" is not the substantive, but the participle (εὐλογοῦντες), and thus corresponds with the participle "rendering" (comp. Matt. v. 44, "Bless them that curse you"). **Knowing that ye are thereunto called; rather, as in the Revised Version, for hereunto were ye called.** The word "knowing" is omitted in the best manuscripts (comp. ch. ii. 21). Some commentators take these words with the preceding: "Ye were called to bless others, that so ye may inherit a blessing." But, on the whole, it seems better to connect them with the following clause: **That ye should inherit a blessing.** Christians bless others, not in order that they should inherit a blessing, but because it is God's will and their duty; and that duty follows

from the fact that God has made them inheritors of his blessing. "Benedictionem eternam," says Bengel, "cujus primitias jam nunc pii habent." God has blessed them; therefore they must bless others.

Ver. 10.—For he that will love life; literally, *he that willeth to love life*. St. Peter deviates somewhat from the Septuagint Version of Ps. xxxiv. 12-16, which he is quoting. The literal rendering of it is, "What man is he that desireth life, loving good days?" His connection of the participle *θέλων* with *ἀγαθὰν* is remarkable. Perhaps the meaning is best given by Bengel, "Qui vult ita vivere, ut ipsum non tædeat vitæ"—"Who wishes to live so that he will not weary of life;" so that he may love it, so that he may have a life really worth living. There is a love of life which can only lead to the loss of the true life (John xii. 25). St. Peter is teaching us to love life wisely, not with that selfish love which Christ condemns. And see good days. Not necessarily in outward prosperity, but in the favour of God; days of suffering may be good days in the truest sense. Let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile. We have here the usual parallelism of Hebrew poetry. The word "refrain" (*παυσάτω*, literally, "let him make it cease") implies a natural tendency to sins against charity.

Ver. 11.—Let him eschew evil, and do good; literally, *let him turn away from evil*. Let him seek peace, and ensue it. Let him seek it as a hidden treasure, and pursue it as if it might escape from him.

Ver. 12.—For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers. The apostle adds the conjunction "for" (*ὅτι*, because) to mark the connection. God's people must turn away from evil and do good, because the all-seeing eye is upon them; they will find strength to do so, because God heareth prayer. Perhaps when the apostle was writing those words he remembered how once "the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter." But the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. The preposition in the two clauses is the same (*ἐνί*, over, or upon). The Lord's eye is upon the good and the evil. The apostle omits the words that follow in the psalm, "to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth," perhaps because he wishes us to regard the spiritual rather than the temporal consequences of our actions.

Ver. 13.—And who is he that will harm you? The apostle, as he began his quotation from Ps. xxxiv. without marks of citation, so adds at once his inference from it in the form of a question. The conjunction "and" connects the question with the quo-

tation. If God's eye is over the righteous, and his ear open to their prayers, who shall harm them? St. Peter does not mean—Who will have the heart to harm you? He knew the temper of Jews and heathens; he knew also the Saviour's prophecies of coming persecution too well to say that. The words remind us of the Septuagint rendering of Isa. l. 9, *Κύριος βοηθήσει μοι, τίς κακώσει με*; None can do real harm to the Lord's people; they may persecute them, but he will make all things work together for their good. If ye be followers of that which is good; rather, *if ye become zealous of that which is good*, with the oldest manuscripts. The Authorized Version adopts the reading *μιμηταί*, followers or imitators, which is not so well supported. The genitive *τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ* admits the masculine translation, "of him that is good," but it is probably neuter in this place (comp. ver. 11). With the masculine rendering, comp. Acts xxii. 3, "and was zealous toward God (*ζηλωτὴς ὑπάρχων τοῦ Θεοῦ*)."

Ver. 14.—But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye; better, *but although ye should suffer*. St. Peter knew that persecution was coming; he wished to prepare his readers for it. He recalls to their thoughts the eighth beatitude, almost reproducing the Lord's words (Matt. v. 10). Such suffering (*"πάσχειν*, lenius verbum quam *κακοῦσθαι*, Bengel) would do them no real harm; nay, it would bring with it a true and deep blessing. "Righteousness" here seems synonymous with "that which is good" in the last verse. Christians had often to suffer, not only because of their confession of Christ, but because of the purity of their lives, which was a standing reproach to the heathen. Compare St. Augustine's well-known saying, "Martyrem facit non poena, sed causa." And be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled. From Isa. viii. 12. The genitive may be taken as objective: "Be not afraid of the terror which they cause;" or as subjective, "with the terror which they feel." The former view is more suitable here.

Ver. 15.—But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts. From Isa. viii. 13. The reading of the best and oldest manuscripts here is *Κύριον ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ*, "Sanctify the Lord Christ," or, "Sanctify the Christ as Lord." The absence of the article with *Κύριον* is in favour of the second translation; but the first seems more natural, more in accordance with the original passage in Isaiah, and the common expression, *Κύριος ὁ Θεός*, is in its favour. Whichever translation is adopted, St. Peter here substitutes the Saviour's Name where the prophet wrote, "the Lord of hosts, Jehovah Sabaoth"—a change which would be nothing less than impious if the

Lord Jesus Christ were not truly God. "Sanctify him," the apostle says (as the Lord himself teaches us to say, in the first words of the Lord's Prayer); that is, regard him as most holy, awful in sanctity; serve him with reverence and godly fear; so you will not "be afraid of their terror." The holy fear of God will lift you above the fear of man. "Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread" (Isa. viii. 13; see also Lev. x. 3; Isa. xxix. 23; Ezek. xxxviii. 23). St. Peter adds the words, "in your hearts," to teach us that this reverence, this hallowing of the Name of God, must be inward and spiritual, in our inmost being. And be ready always to give an answer to every man; literally, *ready always for an apology to every man*. The word *ἀπολογία* is often used of a formal answer before a magistrate, or of a written defence of the faith; but here the addition, "to every man," shows that St. Peter is thinking of informal answers on any suitable occasion. That asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you; literally, *an account concerning the hope*. Hope is the grace on which St. Peter lays most stress; it lives in the hearts of Christians. Christians ought to be able to give an account of their hope when asked, both for the defence of the truth and for the good of the asker. That account may be very simple; it may be the mere recital of personal experience—often the most convincing of arguments; it may be, in the case of instructed Christians, profound and closely reasoned. Some answer every Christian ought to be able to give. With meekness and fear. The best manuscripts read, "but with meekness and fear." The word *ἁπλῶς* (*ἀπλῶς*) is emphatic; argument always involves danger of weakening the spiritual life through pride or bitterness. We must sometimes "contend earnestly for the faith;" but it must be with gentleness and awe. We should fear lest we injure our own souls by arrogant and angry controversy; we should seek the spiritual good of our opponents; and we should entertain a solemn awe of the presence of God, with a trembling anxiety to think and to say only what is acceptable unto him.

Ver. 16.—**Having a good conscience.** This word "conscience" (*συμείθεσις*) is one of the many links between this Epistle and the writings of St. Paul. St. Peter uses it three times; St. Paul, very frequently. There is a close connection between this clause and the preceding verse. A good conscience is the best reason of the hope that is in us. An apology may be learned, well-expressed, eloquent; but it will not be convincing unless it comes from the heart, and is backed up by the life. Calvin

(quoted by Huther) says, "*Quia parum auctoritatis habet sermo absque vita.*" That, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers. The Revised Version follows the Sinaitic Manuscript in reading, "Wherein ye are spoken against," and omitting "as of evil-doers." It is possible that the received reading may have been interpolated from ch. ii. 12, where the same words occur; except that there the mood is indicative, here, conjunctive, "wherein they may possibly speak evil of you." They may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ; rather, as the Revised Version, *they may be put to shame*; that is, "proved to be liars" (comp. 2 Cor. vii. 14). The word translated "falsely accuse" is that which is rendered "despitefully use" in Matt. v. 44; Luke vi. 28. It is a strong word. Aristotle defines the corresponding substantive as a thwarting of the wishes of others out of gratuitous malice ('Rhet.' ii. 2). For "good conversation," see ch. i. 15, 18. The Christian's life is in Christ, in the sphere of his presence, he dwelling in us, and we in him (comp. 2 Cor. v. 17, etc.).

Ver. 17.—**For it is better.** St. Peter meets the common objection that suffering could be borne more easily if it were deserved; the Christian must take the cross, if it comes, as from God, sent for his good (comp. ch. ii. 19, 20). *If the will of God be so*; literally, *if the will of God should so will*. *Θέλημα* denotes the will in itself; *θέλειν*, its active operation (Winer, iii. 65. β). *That ye suffer for well-doing, than for evil-doing.* The construction is participial, as in ch. ii. 20. As there, the participle expresses, not merely the circumstances, but the cause of the suffering; they would have to suffer, not simply while they were doing well, but because they did well.

Ver. 18.—**For Christ also hath once suffered for sins**; rather, *because Christ also once suffered*. Two of the oldest manuscripts read "died;" but "suffered" corresponds best with the previous verse. The connexion is—It must be better to suffer for well-doing, because Christ himself, the All-innocent One, thus suffered, and they who so suffer are made most like unto him. The apostle refers us again to that transcendent Example which was ever before his eyes (compare the close parallel in Heb. ix. 26—28). Christ suffered once for all (*ἅπασι*); so the sufferings of the Christian are soon over—"but for a moment." *For sins* (*ἁμαρτίαι*); concerning sins, on account of sins; he, himself sinless, suffered concerning the sins of others. The preposition *ὑπὲρ* is constantly used in connection with the sin offering in the Septuagint (see Lev. vi. 25, *ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν*; comp. Lev. v. 8—11, etc.; also

Heb. x. 6, 8, 18, 26). The *Just* for the unjust; literally, *just for unjust*. There is no article. The apostle began to speak of the death of Christ, both here and in ch. ii., as an example; in both places he seems to be led on by an instinctive feeling that it is scarcely seemly for the Christian to mention that stupendous event without dwelling on its deeper and more mysterious meaning. The preposition used in this clause (*ἐν*) does not necessarily convey the idea of vicarious suffering, as *ἀντὶ* (Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45; comp. also 1 Tim. ii. 6) does; it means simply "in behalf of," leaving the character of the relation undetermined; here the context implies the particular relation of substitution (comp. Rom. v. 6; also St. Peter's description of our Lord as "the Just," in Acts iii. 14). That he might bring us to God. The Vatican and other manuscripts read "you." St. Peter opens out one of the deeper aspects of the death of Christ. The veil that hid the Holiest was then rent in twain, and believers were invited and encouraged to draw near into the immediate presence of God. The verb used here is *προσάγειν*; the corresponding substantive (*προσαγωγή*) occurs in Eph. ii. 18; iii. 12; also in Rom. v. 2. In those places it is rendered "access"—we have access to the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ. Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit. The Greeks words are, *θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ ζωοποιήθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι*, the article *τῷ* inserted before *πνεύματι* in the received text being without authority. We observe the absence of any article or preposition, and the exact balance and correspondence of the two clauses. The two datives must be taken in the same sense; it is impossible to regard one as the dative of the sphere, and the other as the dative of the instrument; both are evidently datives of "the sphere to which a general predicate is to be limited" (Winer, xxxi. 6. a); they limit the extent of the participles (comp. 1 Cor. vii. 34; Col. ii. 5). Thus the literal translation is, "Being put to death in flesh, but quickened in spirit." For the antithesis of "flesh" and "spirit," common in the New Testament, comp. Rom. i. 3, 4, "Made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness;" and 1 Tim. iii. 16, "Manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit;" see especially the close parallel in ch. iv. 6, "That they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." It seems to follow, from the opposition of flesh and spirit, and from a comparison of the passages quoted above, that by *πνεῦμα* in this verse we are to understand, not God the Holy Ghost, but the holy human spirit of Christ. In his

flesh he was put to death, but in his spirit he was quickened. When the Lord had said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit;" when he bowed his head, and gave up the spirit;—then that spirit passed into a new life. So Bengel excellently says, "*Christus, vitam in semet ipso habens, et ipse vita, spiritu vivere neque desiit, neque iterum coepit; sed simulatque per mortificationem involucro infirmitatis in carne solutus erat, statim vitæ solvi nesciæ virtus modis novis et multo expeditissimis sese exercere coepit.*" Christ, being delivered from the burden of that suffering flesh which he had graciously taken for our salvation, was quickened in his holy human spirit—quickened to new energies, new and blessed activities. So it shall be with those who suffer for well-doing; they may even be put to death in the flesh, but "if we die with him, we shall also live with him." It is far better (*πολλῷ μᾶλλον κρεῖσσον*) to depart and to be with Christ, to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. They that are Christ's shall, like their Master, be quickened in the spirit; they pass at once into the new life of Paradise; their works follow them thither; it may be, we cannot tell, they will be employed in blessed work for Christ, being made like unto him not only in some degree during their earthly life, but also in the intermediate state of rest and hope.

Ver. 19.—By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; rather, *in which* (*ἐν ᾧ*). The Lord was no longer in the flesh; the component parts of his human nature were separated by death; his flesh lay in the grave. As he had gone about doing good in the flesh, so now he went in the spirit—in his holy human spirit. *He went*. The Greek word (*πορευθεὶς*) occurs again in ver. 22, "who is gone into heaven." It must have the same meaning in both places; in ver. 22 it asserts a change of locality; it must do the like here. There it is used of the ascent into heaven; it can scarcely mean here that, without any such change of place, Christ preached, not in his own Person, but through Noah or the apostles. Compare St. Paul's words in Eph. iv. 9 (the Epistle which seems to have been so much in St. Peter's thoughts), "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?" And preached (*ἐκήρυξεν*). It is the word constantly used of the Lord from the time when "Jesus began to preach (*κηρύσσειν*), and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. iv. 17). Then, himself in our human flesh, he preached to men living in the flesh—to a few of his own age and country. Now the range of his preaching was extended; him-

self in the spirit, he preached to spirits: "Πνεύματι, πνεύμασι; spiritu, spiritibus," says Bengel; "congruens sermo." He preached *also* to the spirits; not only once to living men, but now also to spirits, even to them. The *καὶ* calls for attention; it implies a new and additional fact; it emphasizes the substantive (καὶ τοῖς πνεύμασιν). The preaching and the condition of the hearers are mentioned together; they were spirits when they heard the preaching. It seems impossible to understand these words of preaching through Noah or the apostles to men who passed afterwards into the state of disembodied spirits. And he preached in the spirit. The words seem to limit the preaching to the time when the Lord's soul was left in Hades (Acts ii. 27). Huther, indeed, says that "as both expressions (θανάτωσις and ζωοποιήσις) apply to Christ in his entire Person, consisting of body and soul, what follows must not be conceived as an activity which he exercised in his spirit only, and whilst separated from his body." But does θανάτωσις apply to body and soul? Men "are not able to kill the soul." And is it true, as Huther continues, that the first words of this verse are not opposed to the view that Christ preached in his glorified body, "inasmuch as in *this* body the Lord is no longer ἐν σαρκί, but entirely ἐν πνεύματι"? Indeed, we are taught that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God;" and that that which "is sown a natural body is raised a spiritual body" (σῶμα πνευματικόν); but Christ himself said of his resurrection-body, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Luke xxiv. 39). He preached to "the spirits in prison (ἐν φυλακῇ)." (For φυλακή, comp. Rev. xx. 7; Matt. v. 25, etc.). It cannot mean the whole realm of the dead, but only that part of Hades in which the souls of the ungodly are reserved unto the day of judgment. Bengel says, "In carcere puniuntur santes: in custodia servantur, dum experiantur quid facturus sit iudex." But it seems doubtful whether this distinction between φυλακή and δεσμότηριον can be pressed; in Rev. xx. 7 φυλακή is used of the prison of Satan, though, indeed, that prison is not the ἔβυσσος into which he will be cast at the last.

Ver. 20.—Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a-preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. Omit the word "once" (ἀπαρ), which is without authority. *Wherein*; literally, *into which*; they were saved by entering into it. The last words may mean, "they were carried safely through the water," or, "they were saved by water;" that is, the water bore up the

ark (Gen. vii. 17. 18). The argument of ver. 21 makes the second interpretation the more probable. The verse now before us limits the area of the Lord's preaching: without it we might have supposed that he preached to the whole multitude of the dead, or at least to all the ungodly dead whose spirits were in prison. Why does St. Peter specify the generation that was swept away by the Flood? Did they need the preaching of the Christ more than other sinful souls? or was there any special reason why that grace should be vouchsafed to them rather than to others? The fact must have been revealed to the apostle; but evidently we are in the presence of a mystery into which we can see only a little way. Those antediluvians were a conspicuous instance of men who suffered for evil-doing (see ver. 17); as Christ is the transcendent Example of one who suffered for well-doing. It is better to suffer with him than with them: they are in prison. His chosen are with him in Paradise. But St. Peter cannot rest in the contemplation of the Lord's death as an example; he must pass on to the deeper, the more mysterious aspects of that most stupendous of events. The Lord suffered concerning sins, for the sake of unrighteous men; not only did he die for them, he did not rest from his holy work even while his sacred body lay in the grave; he went and preached to some whose sins had been most notorious, and most signally punished. The judgment had been one of unexampled awfulness; eight souls only were saved in the ark, many thousands perished. It may be that St. Peter mentions the fewness of the saved to indicate one reason for this gracious visit. It seems that the awful destruction of the Deluge had made a deep impression upon his mind; he mentions it twice in his Second Epistle (ii. 5; iii. 6); he saw in it a solemn anticipation of the last tremendous judgment. Doubtless he remembered well how the Lord, in his great prophetic discourse upon the Mount of Olives, had compared the days of Noah to the coming of the Son of man (Matt. xxiv. 37—39); those words seem to give a special character to the Deluge, separating it from other lesser judgments, and investing it with a peculiar awfulness. It may be that the apostle's thoughts had dwelt much upon the many mysterious problems (such as the great destruction of infant life) connected with it; and that a special revelation was vouchsafed to him to clear up some of his difficulties. These spirits, in prison at the time of the descent into Hades, had aforetime been disobedient. The Greek word (ἀπειθήσαν) means literally "disbelieving;" but here, as in ch. ii. 7 and elsewhere, it stands for that

wilful unbelief which sets itself in direct opposition to the will of God. They were guilty of unbelief, and of the disobedience which results from unbelief. Noah was a "preacher of righteousness" (2 Pet. ii. 5, where the Greek word is *κηρυξ*, the substantive corresponding with the verb *κηρύσσειν* here); the vast structure of the ark was a standing warning as it rose slowly before their eyes. The long-suffering of God waited all those hundred and twenty years (Gen. vi. 3), as now the Lord is "long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. iii. 9). But they heeded neither the preaching of Noah nor the long-suffering of God; and at last "the Flood came, and took them all away. So shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Eight only were saved then; they doubtless suffered for well-doing; they had to endure much scorn and derision, perhaps persecution. But they were not disobedient. "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house." The eight were brought safe through (*διεσώθησαν*); they were saved through the water; the water bore them up, possibly rescued them from persecution. But the rest perished; the destruction of life was tremendous; we know not how many thousands perished: they suffered for evil-doing. But the degrees of guilt must have varied greatly from open profanity and hostility to silent doubt; while there were many children and very young persons; and it may be that many repented at the last moment. It is better to suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing; but even suffering for evil-doing is sometimes blessed to the salvation of the soul; and it may be that some of these, having been "judged according to men in the flesh," now "live according to God in the spirit" (ch. iv. 6). For it is impossible to believe that the Lord's preaching was a "concoction of damnatoria." The Lord spoke sternly sometimes in the days of his flesh, but it was the warning voice of love; even that sternest denunciation of the concentrated guilt and hypocrisy of the Pharisees ended in a piteous wail of loving sorrow. It cannot be that the most merciful Saviour would have visited souls irretrievably lost merely to upbraid them and to enhance their misery. He had just suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust: is it not possible that one of the effects of that suffering might have been "to bring unto God" some souls who once had been alienated from God by wicked works, but had not wholly hardened their hearts; who, like the men of Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah, had not the opportunities which we enjoy, who had not

been once enlightened and made partakers of the heavenly gift and the powers of the world to come? Is it not possible that in those words, "which *sometime* were disobedient," there may be a hint that that disobedience of theirs was not the "eternal sin" which, according to the reading of the two most ancient manuscripts in Mark iii. 29, is the awful lot of those who have never forgiveness? The Lord *preached* to the spirits in prison; that word (*ἐκφύσειν*) is commonly used of the heralds of salvation, and St. Peter himself, in the next chapter, tells us that "the gospel was preached (*εὐγγelizέσθην*) to them that are dead." The gospel is the good tidings of salvation through the cross of Christ. The Lord had just died upon the cross: is it not possible that, in the moment of victory, he announced the saving power of the cross to some who had greatly sinned; as at the time of his resurrection "many bodies of the saints who slept arose"? There is one more question which forces itself upon us—What was the result of this preaching? Did the spirits in prison listen to the Saviour's voice? Were they delivered from that prison where they had been so long confined? Here Scripture is almost silent; yet we read the words of hope in ch. iv. 6, "For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." The good news was announced to them that they might live; then may we not dare to hope that some at least listened to that gracious preaching, and were saved even out of that prison by the power of the Saviour's cross? May we not venture to believe, with the author of the 'Christian Year,' that even in that dreary scene the Saviour's eye reached the thronging band of souls, and that his cross and Passion, his agony and bloody sweat, might (we know not how or in what measure) "set the shadowy realms from sin and sorrow free"?

It seems desirable to add a brief summary of the history of opinion on this much-controverted passage. The early Greek Fathers appear to have held, with one consent, that St. Peter is here speaking of that descent into Hades of which he had spoken in his first great sermon (Acts ii. 31). Justin Martyr, in his 'Dialogue with Trypho' (sect. 72), accuses the Jews of having erased from the prophecies of Jeremiah the following words: "The Lord God of Israel remembered his dead who slept in the land of the tomb, and descended to them to preach to them the good news of his salvation." Irenæus quotes the same passage, attributing it in one place to Isaiah, in another to Jeremiah, and adds

that the Lord's purpose was to deliver them and to save them (*extrahere eos et salvare eos*). Tertullian says that the Lord descended into the lower parts of the earth, to make the patriarchs partakers of himself (*compotes sui*; 'De Anima,' c. 55). Clement of Alexandria quotes Hermas as saying that "the apostles and teachers who had preached the Name of the Son of God and had fallen asleep, preached by his power and faith to those who had fallen asleep before them" ('Strom.,' ii. 9). "And then," Bishop Pearson, from whose notes on the Creed these quotations are taken, continues, "Clement supplies that authority with a reason of his own, that as the apostles were to imitate Christ while they lived, so did they also imitate him after death, and therefore preached to the souls in Hades, as Christ did before them." The earliest writers do not seem to have thought that any change in the condition of the dead was produced by Christ's descent into Hades. The Lord announced the gospel to the dead; the departed saints rejoiced to hear the glad tidings, as now the angels rejoice over each repentant sinner. Origen, in his second homily on 1 Kings, taught that the Lord, descending into Hades, brought the souls of the holy dead, the patriarchs and prophets, out of Hades into Paradise; no souls could pass the flaming sword till he had led the way; but now, through his grace and power, the blessed dead who die in the Lord enter at once into the rest of Paradise—not yet heaven, but an intermediate place of rest, far better than that from which the saints of the old covenant were delivered. In this view Origen was followed by many of the later Fathers. But St. Peter says nothing of any preaching to departed saints. Christ "went and preached," he says, "unto the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient." Hence Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, and others were led to suppose that the Lord not only raised the holy dead to a higher state of blessedness, but preached also to the disobedient, and that some of these believed, and were by his grace delivered from "prison." Some few, as Cyril of Alexandria, held that the Lord spoiled the house of the strong man armed (*σεσάλητο τῶν πνευμάτων ὁ ᾄδης*), and released all his captives. This Augustine reckoned as a heresy. But in his epistle to Euodius (Ep. 99 and 164) Augustine, much exercised (as he says, "vehementissime commotus") by the difficulties of the question, propounded the interpretation which became general in the Western Church, being adopted by Bede, Thomas Aquinas, De Lyra, and later by Beza, Hammond, Leighton, Pearson, etc. "The spirits in prison," he says, "are the

unbelieving who lived in the days of Noah, whose spirits, i.e. souls, had been shut up in the flesh and in the darkness of ignorance, as in a prison [comp. 'Paradise Lost,' xi. 723]. Christ preached to them, not in the flesh, inasmuch as he was not yet incarnate, but in the spirit, i.e. according to his Divine nature (*secundum divinitatem*)." But this interpretation does not satisfy St. Peter's words. The hypothesis that Christ preached through the instrumentality of Noah does not adequately represent the participle *προεβήλεις*; the word *φυλακή* cannot be taken metaphorically of the flesh in which the soul is confined. If, with Beza, we understand it as meaning "who are now in prison," we escape one difficulty, but another is introduced; for it is surely forced and unnatural to make the time of the verb and that of the dative clause different. The words *ἐν φυλακῇ* must describe the condition of the spirits at the time of the Saviour's preaching. Some commentators, as Socinus and Grotius, refer St. Peter's words to the preaching of Christ through the apostles. These writers understand *φυλακή* of the prison of the body, or the prison of sin; and explain St. Peter as meaning that Christ preached through the apostles to the Jews who were under the yoke of the Law, and to the Gentiles who lay under the power of the devil; and they regard the disobedient in the time of Noah as a sample of sinners in any age. But this interpretation is altogether arbitrary, and cannot be reconciled with the apostle's words. Other views are—that our Lord descended into hell to triumph over Satan (on which see Pearson on the Creed, art. v.); that his preaching was a *concio damnatoria*—an announcement of condemnation, not of salvation (which is disproved by ch. iv. 6); that the spirits in prison were holy souls waiting for Christ, the prison being (according to Calvin) "*specula, sive ipse excubandi actus*;" that they were heathens, who lived according to their light, but in idolatry. We may mention, in conclusion, the monstrous explanation of the heretic Marcion, that they were those who in the Old Testament are called ungodly, but were really better than those whom the Old Testament regards as saints.

Ver. 21.—*The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us.* The reading of the Textus Receptus *φ*, represented by "whereunto," is without authority; all the uncial manuscripts have *δ*, "which," in the nominative case. The oldest manuscripts also read "you" instead of "us." The antecedent of the relative *δ* must be the word immediately preceding, *ἵδμενος*, water; the word "baptism" is added in apposition, to define more clearly the apostle's meaning;

the water which saves is the water of baptism. Thus the literal translation will be, "Which (as) antitype is saving you also, (namely) baptism;" that is, the water which is saving you is the antitype of the water of the Flood. That water was made the means of saving a few; it bore up the ark in which they were. It saved them, perhaps, from the malice of the ungodly; it saved them from that corruption which was almost universal; it was the means of saving the race of men as by a new birth through death into a new life, a new beginning; it washed away the evil, those who suffered for evil-doing, and so saved those who had doubtless been suffering for well-doing. Thus it is the figure (τύπος) of the antitype (ἀντίτυπον) baptism; the two (the water of the Flood and the water of baptism) correspond as type and antitype. The ἀντίτυπον is the counterpart of the τύπος; and as τύπος sometimes means the original, sometimes the figure, there is a correspondent variation in the meaning of ἀντίτυπον. Delitzsch says, on Heb. ix. 24, "We have found τύπος at ch. viii. 5 used in the sense of an original figure—a model from which a copy is made; such copy from an original (or archetype) is that designated as ἀντίτυπα here. Τύπος again (as at Rom. v. 14) is used in the sense of a prophetic foretype, of which the accomplishment is reserved for the future (τύπος τῶν μελλόντων); and that accomplishment is again called ἀντίτυπον (antitype); e.g. baptism, at 1 Pet. iii. 21, is in this sense an ἀντίτυπον of the Deluge. The earthly reflection of the heavenly archetype, and the actual fulfilment of the prophetic τύπος, are each called ἀντίτυπον." Here the water of the Flood is the prophetic foretype; baptism is the accomplishment. "Baptism," St. Peter says, "is saving you," the few Christians, separating you from the vast number of Gentiles, whom in some sense it condemns through their rejection of God's offered mercy (comp. Heb. xi. 7), saving you from the corruption of their evil example, bringing you into the ark of Christ's Church, bearing up that ark through the grace of the new birth. The apostle says, "Baptism is saving you;" he does not say, "has saved;" he is using the present tense in its proper sense of an incomplete action; it brings us into a state of salvation, into covenant with God. But it is only the beginning, the birth; the growth must follow; the death unto sin, the new birth unto righteousness, must be realized in actual life; otherwise, alas! we shall have received the grace of God in vain (comp. Titus iii. 5). (Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God.) St. Peter

hastens to explain his statement. Baptism doth save us, but not the mere outward ceremony; you may "make clean the outside" with the most scrupulous care; you may be very careful in putting away the filth of the flesh (or, if the genitive is to be regarded as subjective, with Bengel, the flesh may put away its filth); but more is needed than the old Jewish washings, the frequent purifications. Comp. Justin Martyr, 'Dial. cum Trypho,' p. 331 (quoted by Huther), Τί γὰρ ὄφελος κείνου τοῦ βαπτίσματος (the Jewish washing) ὃ τὴν σάρκα καὶ μόνον τὸ σῶμα φαιδρύνει; βαπτίσθητε τὴν ψυχὴν. Observe that St. Peter uses the word here rendered "putting away" (ἀπόθεσις) again in the Second Epistle (i. 14) of putting off the earthly tabernacle (comp. also ch. ii. 1, where he uses the corresponding participle, ἀποθέμενοι). The next clause (ἀλλὰ συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς Θεόν) presents great difficulty. Is the genitive subjective or objective? What is the meaning of ἐπερώτημα? The word ἐπερώτημα occurs only in one other place in the Greek Scriptures (Dan. iv. 14 [in the Authorized Version, iv. 17]), where it is translated "demand;" the corresponding verb is of frequent occurrence; as in Rom. x. 20, "them that asked not after me;" and 2 Kings xi. 7 (2 Sam. xi. 7, in the Authorized Version), where it is joined with the preposition εἰς, as in this verse. Thus ἐπερώτημα seems to mean an "inquiry," and the genitive is probably subjective. The inner meaning of baptism is not that the flesh puts away its filth, but that a good conscience inquires after God. The outward and visible sign doth not save if separated from the inward and spiritual grace. The first is necessary, for it is an outward sign appointed by Christ; but it will not save without the second; those who draw near to God must have their bodies washed with pure water, but also their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience (Heb. x. 22). The inner cleansing of the soul results in a good conscience, a consciousness of sincerity, of good intentions and desires, which will instinctively seek after God. And that good conscience is the effect of baptism, when baptism has its perfect work, when those who have once been grafted into the true Vine abide in Christ, when those who have once been baptized in one Spirit into one body keep the unity of the Spirit, Christ dwelling in them, and they in Christ. Archbishop Leighton explains the word ἐπερώτημα as "the whole correspondence of the conscience with God, and with itself as towards God, or in the sight of God." If the genitive is regarded as objective, the meaning will be, "an inquiry addressed to God for a good

conscience;" the soul, once awakened, seeks continually fuller purification, hungers and thirsts after righteousness. This gives a good sense, but seems less suitable in this context. It is possible also to join the preposition *eis* with *συνείδησις* in the sense of a good conscience in relation to God; but it seems much more natural to connect it with *ἐπερώτημα*. Some commentators follow Eusebius in paraphrasing *ἐπερώτημα* by *ἀπαθάν*, *ἐνέχυρον*, *ἀπόδειξις*; they take the ground that, in legal language, the word was used in the sense of a contract, and they see in St. Peter's words a reference to the covenant made with God in baptism, and to the questions and answers in which, from the earliest times, that covenant was expressed; *ἐπερώτημα* being used in a general sense so as to cover answers as well as questions. This is a possible alternative, but the word seems to have acquired this meaning in later times. By the resurrection of Jesus Christ. These words refer back to "baptism doth also now save us." Baptism derives its saving effect from the resurrection of our Lord; without that resurrection it would be an empty form (see note on ch. i. 3).

Ver. 22.—Who is gone into heaven. The word here rendered "gone" is that used in

ver. 19, "he went and preached (*προεβόη*)" (comp. Eph. iv. 9, "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?"). And is on the right hand of God (comp. Ps. ex. 1; Rom. viii. 34; Col. iii. 1; Eph. i. 20; Heb. i. 3). It is better to suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing, for he who is the signal Example, who suffered, the Just for the unjust, is now exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high; and "is able to save them to the uttermost that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him. God "hath set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." All the angels of God, in the various grades of the heavenly hierarchy, are made subject to Christ. The words seem to include, especially when read in comparison with Col. ii. 15, the evil angels also; they are made subject against their will to Christ; they asked him once if he was come to torment them before the time. He can restrain their malice and save his people from their power.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—7.—*Duties of husbands and wives.* I. DUTIES OF WIVES. 1. *Obedience.* Holy matrimony is a very sacred thing. It is not a mere human ordinance (*ἀνθρωπογενής κτίσις*, ch. ii. 13); it is not a creation of human law. Human law, indeed, surrounds it with its sanctions, regarding it as a civil contract; but it was instituted of God in the time of man's innocency; it is an image of the mystical union between Christ and his Church. It is a school of holy love, a discipline of sweet self-denials for the loved one's sake, which ought to help Christian people greatly in the pursuit of holiness. But it is Christianity that has restored wedlock to what it was at the first, and given it a yet deeper and a far holier meaning. The frequency of divorce among both Jews and heathens; the dislike of marriage, which had become so serious at Rome; the Greek habit of regarding the wife as the mistress of her husband's house, the mother of his children, but not as the helpmeet, the partner of his cares, the sharer of his joys and sorrows; the depreciation of woman;—all this had made the ordinary view of marriage very different from what God had intended it to be, from what it now is in Christian families. It is to Christianity, not to civilization (for the Greeks and Romans were as civilized as we are), that we owe the sweet sanctities of wedded life and the quiet happiness of home. But at first Christianity introduced a fresh element of division. From time to time one member of a family circle would have to put the constraining love of Christ above the love due to father or mother, husband, wife, or child. The case of a Christian wife with an unbelieving husband would be one of especial difficulty. She would probably have to bear her religion derided, her Saviour insulted; she would have to endure constant reproaches and sarcasms, often hardships, and even brutal cruelty. St. Paul had considered the case in 1 Cor. vii. 13—17. St. Peter here counsels submission; the power of gentleness might succeed in winning those who could be won in no other way. Let Christian wives be very careful to respect their husband's authority; let them fear to give them so much as the shadow of a reason to suspect their purity. Let the holy fear of God lead them to regard even the unbelieving

husband with due reverence; let them carefully avoid giving any unnecessary offence, or unduly putting forward the differences, great and fundamental as they were, which separated them from one another. Thus let them hope and pray for their husbands' conversion. The silent eloquence of a holy, self-denying life will generally be more powerful than argument and controversy. Thus they would have the best hope of winning their husbands to Christ, of "gaining them," as the word literally means. Compare Archbishop Leighton, "A soul converted is gained to itself, gained to the pastor, or friend, or wife, or husband who sought it, and gained to Jesus Christ; added to his treasury, who thought not his own precious blood too dear to lay out for this gain." The earnest words of Christian men and women are sometimes greatly blessed, but a humble holy life will often win souls which no eloquence could touch. 2. *Simplicity in dress.* Christian women should be quiet and modest in their attire. St. Peter's language is, of course, comparative, like Hosea's words, twice quoted by our Lord, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." He does not mean to forbid all plaiting of hair or wearing of gold any more than putting on of apparel; he means that these are poor and contemptible compared with the costlier ornaments which he recommends in their stead. Christian women should be simple and unaffected in dress as in behaviour. In general, the best rule is to avoid singularity. "There may be," Leighton says, "in some an affected pride in the meanness of apparel, and in others, under either neat or rich attire, a very humble, unaffected mind. . . . *Magnus qui fictilibus utitur tanquam argento, nec ille minor qui argento tanquam fictilibus,*" says Seneca. "Great is he who enjoys his earthenware as if it were plate, and not less great is the man to whom all his plate is no more than earthenware." In this, as in other aspects of Christian duty, the enlightened conscience is the best guide. But Christians must never allow their thoughts to dwell on these things; they must learn not to care for finery, not to love display. To quote Leighton again, "Far more comfort shalt thou have on thy death-bed to remember that at such a time, instead of putting lace on my own clothes, I helped a naked back to clothing, I abated somewhat of my former superfluities to supply the poor man's necessities; far sweeter will this be than to remember that I could needlessly cast away many pounds to serve my pride, rather than give a penny to relieve the poor." 3. *The true adorning.* The soul is far more precious than the body. It is of far greater importance to adorn the soul than to decorate the body. The soul is unseen, so is its garniture; it is hidden from the eye of man, but seen of God. The proper ornament of Christian women is "the hidden man of the heart"—the hidden life of the regenerate soul. It is hidden; it will not always be asserting itself; it is retiring in its modest beauty. But that inner man is very fair and lovely, for it is renewed after the image of the Saviour; its beauty lieth in the incorruptibleness of a meek and quiet spirit. The beauty of the Christian life consists in these softer graces rather than in self-assertion and denunciation of the faults of others. Christian women should be meek and calm, not angry, not fretful; they should bear their daily cross quietly and submissively; they should not allow the unkind words or deeds of others to excite them to wrath. This true adorning of the soul is incorruptible; it is not lost by death, it will follow the holy dead into the paradise of God; and it is of great price in the sight of God. The world admires rich dress and costly jewels; God prizes the meek and quiet spirit. Which of the two should Christians seek to please—God or the world? 4. *The example of holy women.* They hoped in God. They who have that high and holy hope cannot care for the pomps and vanities of this sinful world. They adorned themselves with the more precious ornaments, meekness and humility and wifely obedience. Such a one was Sarah, the wife of the father of the faithful. Christian women are her daughters in the faith, while they persevere in the way of holiness, and preserve a calm unruffled spirit, not easily excited, not terrified by every sudden scare, but resting in the Lord.

II. THE DUTIES OF HUSBANDS. 1. *Arising from the greater weakness of the wife.* Husband and wife are both vessels: they should be "vessels unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work." But both are weak; the woman, as a rule, is the weaker. The weaker vessel the more tenderly it should be treated. The husband must dwell with his wife according to knowledge; he must treat her with thoughtful consideration. True love (and marriage without love is a profanation of God's holy ordinance), especially if refined by religion, will

give him tact and discernment; he will care for his wife, nourish and cherish her, "even as the Lord the Church" (Eph. v. 29). 2. *Arising from their mutual hope of heaven.* Husband and wife are fellow-heirs of the grace of life; each must honour the other. There is no true love which is not founded in mutual respect, and that respect will be truest and deepest when each regards the other as a Christian soul, living in the faith of Christ, looking for the blessed hope of eternal life with God. Then husbands and wives love one another best when they love God first of all. "That love which is cemented by youth and beauty, when these moulder and decay, as soon they do, fades too. That is somewhat purer, and so more lasting, which holds in a natural or moral harmony of minds; yet these likewise may alter and change by some great accident. But the most refined, most spiritual, and most indissoluble, is that which is knit with the highest and purest spirit. And the ignorance or disregard of this is the great cause of so much bitterness, or so little true sweetness, in the life of most married persons; because God is left out, because they meet not as one in him" (Leighton). 3. *Danger of neglecting these duties.* Their prayers would be hindered. The apostle takes it for granted that the Christian man and wife live in constant prayer. The heirs of the grace of life must pray; they must hold frequent converse with him who gives that life, on whom all their hopes depend. He takes it for granted that they know something of the sweetness and blessedness of prayer. Knowing this, as they do, they must be very jealous of anything that can make their prayers less acceptable, less earnest. Then let them live together in holy love. Jars and bickerings disquiet the soul, disturb its communion with God, put it out of harmony with the spirit of prayer. They cannot pray aright who sin against the law of love. God hath made husband and wife one by holy matrimony. They must not allow misunderstandings and jealousies to put them asunder even for a season, lest they sin not only against one another, but also against God, and so their prayers should be hindered, and be unable to reach the throne of grace.

LESSONS. 1. Let Christian wives remember their promise of obedience. If their husbands are not living in the faith of Christ, let them try to win them by holy example and the quiet strength of gentleness. 2. Let them study simplicity in dress and ornament, seeking to adorn their souls rather than their bodies. 3. Let them be followers of holy matrons, not of the gay and thoughtless. 4. Let Christian husbands be tender and loving. 5. Let husband and wife live together in the fear of God and in constant prayer.

Vers. 8—17.—*General exhortations.* I. THE GREAT DUTY OF CHRISTIAN LOVE. 1. *Among the brethren.* "This one verse" (eighth), Leighton says, "hath a cluster of five Christian graces or virtues. That which is in the middle, as the stalk or root of the rest, love; and the others growing out of it, two on each side—unanimity and sympathy on the one, and pity and courtesy (or humility) on the other." (1) "Be ye all of one mind." Christians should be united, they should mind the same thing. Divisions, St. Paul says, mean that we are still carnal (2 Cor. iii. 4): "While one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" The Church would still be one, one body in Christ, if all her members were spiritual, if very many had not grieved or even quenched the Spirit by pride and unbelief and many forms of sin. The Christian must long and pray for that unity for which the blessed Lord prayed in his great high-priestly prayer. And the best means for promoting that unity is that each individual Christian should strive to live in the fellowship of the Spirit. The more that one Spirit fills all the members of the Church, the nearer will they be drawn to one another, and to the one Lord who is the Head of the body which is the Church. (2) "Have compassion one of another." The Church should be one, not only in thought and doctrine, but also in feeling; there should be a true sympathy among its members. They should be able to rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. We should rejoice in the comforts and happiness of others, but especially in their spiritual advancement, in the lustre of their graces: envy and jealousy rend the body of Christ and destroy individual souls. We should weep for the misfortunes and distresses of others, and especially, like the psalmist, "because men keep not thy Law." We should feel a keen and lively sympathy with the Church as a whole: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem." We should rejoice in its triumphs, and

sorrow in its trials. A holy sympathy should pervade all the members of the one body. (3) "Love as brethren." This is the central duty of Christians towards one another; all other duties are so many forms of love. "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the Law." St. Peter has already exhorted us to an unfeigned love of the brethren (ch. i. 22); he reminded us then that Christians are brethren, not only as creatures of the same God, but also in virtue of that new birth which has made them children of the heavenly Father in a deeper and holier sense. There must be no variance among the children of God; they must "love as brethren," "endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (4) "Be pitiful." Love cannot lie dormant in the heart; it shows itself in tenderness and pity. There is much sorrow in the world, far more sorrow than joy; hence there is much room for the exercise of tenderness. Christian tenderness is not a weak thing; it is strong and manly; the strongest are often the most tender. The very word here rendered "pitiful," or "tender-hearted," means, in classical Greek, "courageous." The change of meaning is instructive, and marks a characteristic difference between Christian and heathen ethics. (5) "Be courteous." True religion softens the roughest natures, and produces a sweetness and spiritual refinement far more beautiful and attractive than that superficial polish which comes only of education and habit. The best Christian is ever the truest gentleman. But in this place the true reading is, be "humble-minded." Courtesy, indeed, and humility have a near connection; he thinks most of the feelings of others who thinks least of himself. True Christians must be lowly; their Lord set them the example; only humble-minded men can follow the steps of the lowly Saviour. 2. *Towards enemies.* Christians must remember the Master's teaching. With the heathen revenge was regarded as manly, as a duty to one's self; to submit calmly to injury was reckoned as slavish, unworthy of a free-born man. The Lord reversed this. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy," was the old rule; "But I say unto you," the Lord said with that authority which astonished the listening multitude, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." St. Peter echoes the teaching which had so much struck him; he remembered, it may be, his own passionate vehemence, the blow which he had struck in the Lord's defence, and the Lord's gentle rebuke. He knew how hard it was for human nature to learn that holy lesson, how instinctively railing rises to our lips when men rail at us. Christians have not learned that lesson in eighteen centuries and more; each man has to learn it for himself. St. Peter repeats and enforces it: "Ye are called to inherit a blessing," he says; "ye hope one day to hear those words of welcome, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father.' Then learn yourselves to bless others; render not evil for evil, but remember your daily prayer, 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.'"

II. THIS DUTY ENFORCED BY THE SCRIPTURES. 1. *The precept.* If we would make our life a thing to be loved, a life worth living; if we would see each day as it passes blessed with peace and calm satisfaction;—then, the psalmist says, we must (1) be careful to govern the tongue. The tongue is "a world of iniquity." A very large proportion of the sins of our daily life arise from an unbridled tongue. There are the grosser sins of the tongue, profane and impious words, filthy and impure language, falsehood and guile; and besides these, there are other forms of sin, not so coarse and revolting, but far more common—sins against the law of Christian charity; slander and evil-speaking; and all that light, careless, unprofitable talk which fills up so much of our time. The Christian must refrain his lips from these things; his mouth must speak wisdom. (2) We must do good. The Lord went about doing good. His servants must follow his holy example. They must turn aside from every form of evil; they must follow peace with all men. The Lord is the Prince of Peace. "Peace on earth" was the celestial anthem that celebrated his birth. His followers must love peace; they must seek it amid the discord of opposing wills, though it seem hidden from them: they must pursue it, though it may seem to flee before them through the strifes and envies of men. Among murmurings, among jealousies, among angry words and party animosities, the Christian must carefully seek for peace, and eagerly pursue it. 2. *The sanction.* We are in the sight of God; his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men. If we can only realize that great truth—the eye of the Lord is upon us—we

must try to please him and to do his will. His will is that we should love one another, that we should speak no guile, that we should follow after peace. Let those who would live a godly life try daily to bring home to their hearts the thought that the eye of God is reading their souls; that thought will make us humble and contented, will save us from the countless temptations that surround us, will keep us from breaking, by word or deed, the holy law of love. That searching eye is upon the righteous and the wicked; it found among the crowd of guests the one unhappy man who had not on a wedding garment; it pierces through the outside of pretence and hypocrisy down into the very heart. Let us not shrink from bringing this great truth to bear upon our lives; let us walk before God, as Abraham did, knowing that our whole inward life of thought, as well as the outward life of word and action, lies mapped out clear and plain to his all-seeing eye. That thought will give solemn meaning, depth of purpose, dignity to the most commonplace life. And it will give strength; for the Lord's ear is open to the prayer of the righteous; he hears those who come before him in that righteousness which is through faith in Christ; in answer to their prayer he gives his Holy Spirit, and with that Holy Spirit comes the gift of a higher life, the gift of strength and energy, and that best gift of all, holy heavenly love.

III. THE DUTY OF PATIENCE IN SUFFERING. 1. *The true Christian cannot be really hurt by external troubles.* If we are zealous of what is good, no one can harm us. In truth a man can be really hurt only by himself, through his own consent; for those who suffer for righteousness' sake are blessed; their suffering does them no real harm; it is turned by the grace of God into a blessing. Suffering is a test of our religion; it shows what it is worth. The mere outward semblance of religion fails under it; deep spiritual religion grows brighter and more refined in the furnace of affliction. But only true religion can endure that searching fire. True religion is zealous, fervent, growing; it cannot be lukewarm; it zealously seeks everything that is really good, zealously supports every good work. The true Christian cannot be hurt by external troubles, for they will only deepen and purify that religion which is the life of his soul, the joy of his heart. Sickness, pain, poverty—any trouble meekly borne, is blessed to the soul's inward happiness; but especially blessed is that suffering which is borne for righteousness' sake. When a man is content to suffer voluntarily in the cause of truth and righteousness, he is brought very near to Christ the Lord, for he is imitating his example, sharing his cross. The kingdom of heaven is his, for he is very near to the King; and the King dwelleth in his heart, filling him with his sacred presence.

2. *Advice to suffering Christians.* (1) In their relations to God. They must not fear, they must not allow themselves to be distressed and agitated by surrounding troubles. Restless excitement is destructive of that tranquillity which is the characteristic Christian temper. And the antidote to anxious fear is the hallowing presence of the Lord within us. The apostle bids us, especially in times of trouble and anxiety, to sanctify the Lord Christ in our hearts. The Christian heart should be a sanctuary, cleansed and purified for his indwelling by the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit. There Christ dwelleth enthroned; doubts and fear vanish when the Christian soul falls down and worships him, crying, "My Lord, and my God!" Therefore we are bidden to sanctify him, to regard him as alone holy, the Most Holy One, holiest of holies; to hallow his holy Name, to reverence his most sacred presence within us, and in all awe and love and thankfulness to offer unto him the deepest adoration of our hearts. Outward worship is not enough; outward forms of reverence have their value when they are the expression of the inward reverence of the heart; but it is in the heart that we must sanctify the Lord Christ, if we are to be blessed with that holy tranquillity of spirit which results from his sacred presence. As we sanctify him, he sanctifieth us; the more we learn to regard him with a deep, awful, loving reverence, the more does he shed his sanctifying grace throughout our soul, cleansing it from all that is unworthy, and creating it anew after his own image. When our heart is his sanctuary, "he shall be for a sanctuary" to us; he dwelling in us and we in him; and then we need not fear. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death," said David, "I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." He who fears God aright fears nothing else but God; he who sanctifieth the Lord Christ in his heart hath a sacred presence there which keeps him calm and tranquil amid dangers and anticipations of coming troubles.

(2) In their relations to men. As they must live for Christ, so they must, when

occasion serves, speak for him. The best evidence of the power of religion is the holy lives of Christians. But men will sometimes ask for a reason of the hope that is in them. That hope seemed a strange thing in the days of persecution and unbelief; men thought it wild folly, fanaticism. Christians had often to speak or to write in defence of their faith. We should be ready to do so still both for the glory of God and for the sake of the inquirer's soul. Therefore we should imitate the Bereans, who "searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so." We should take care that our faith is established on the holy Word of God; those who are able should pursue such other studies as may assist us in the defence of the faith. "*But*," the apostle adds (the conjunction is emphatic), "with meekness and fear." There is always danger in theological controversy—danger lest, in heated argument, we transgress the law of love and truth; and danger lest we tread irreverently on holy ground, and speak thoughtlessly of holy things. There must be a mingling of awe and sweetness and wisdom in the temper of him who would by his words win souls to God and the truth. And he must have a good conscience. A good conscience is the consciousness of good thoughts, motives, desires; the Christian must exercise himself, like St. Paul, "to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men." Such an inner consciousness will give warmth, reality, energy, to his words when he is contending for the faith. Words will not convince if they are out of harmony with the life; unreality will soon betray itself. A good life without words is a better defence of religion than the most learned apology without a godly life. The good life puts to shame the false accusations of the enemies of Christianity; it proves the truth and the strength of Christian motives. But the good life must flow from the good conscience. Men sometimes begin at the wrong end; they try first to reform the outward life; they should begin with the mind and conscience. "If Christians in their progress in grace would eye this the most, that the conscience be growing purer, the heart more spiritual, the affections more regular and heavenly, their outward carriage would be holier; whereas the outward work of performing duties, and being much exercised in religion, may, by the neglect of this, be labour in vain, and amend nothing soundly. To set the outward actions right, though with an honest intention, and not so to find out and regard the inner disorder of the heart, whence that in the actions flows, is but to be still putting the index of a clock right with your finger, while it is foul or out of order within, which is a continual business, and does no good. Oh! but a purified conscience, a soul renewed and refined in its temper and affections, will make things go right without, in all the duties and acts of our callings" (Leighton).

3. *Christians have comfort in their sufferings.* For (1) they know, if they are called to suffer, that it is the will of God, and that his will is better than our will. He willeth that we should be saved, that we should come to repentance and live; he willeth our sanctification; and he makes our earthly afflictions, if we bear them patiently, work together for our souls' good. And (2) it is better to suffer while well-doing and (as was once the case often, and is sometimes the case now) for well-doing than for evil-doing. The world thinks otherwise; people often say that they could bear this or that trouble better if they had deserved it. But those who say that seldom bear deserved afflictions well; and the Christian knows that suffering for well-doing, when it comes, is the highest form of suffering, for it makes the suffering Christian most like unto the suffering Lord. If only he has a good conscience, if his conversation (his life and conduct) is in Christ, in the sphere of his presence,—he can look inward and find Christ, he can look upward and see by faith the prize of the high calling; and then he can say, even in the midst of suffering, "Blessed be the Name of the Lord."

LESSONS. 1. Let us love the brethren; then we shall be of one mind and one heart; we shall be pitiful, courteous, humble. 2. Remember the Lord's words, "Vengeance is mine;" "Love your enemies." 3. The eye of the Lord is upon you; speak and do only what is acceptable to him. 4. Make your heart a temple of God; reverence his presence there. 5. Be very careful, when it is your duty to contend for the faith, to speak with meekness and reverence.

Vers. 18—22.—*Consider Christ.* I. HIS SUFFERINGS. 1. *Their cause.* Even he suffered. The universality of suffering is a common topic of consolation. "Man is born to trouble." But the thought of the suffering Saviour is a source of sweeter comfort

and holier patience. A great saint has said, "They feel not their own wounds who contemplate the wounds of Christ." He endured the cross, despising the shame, for the joy that was set before him. If we, in our sufferings, look unto Jesus, sacred thoughts of his cross will fill our heart more and more, and prevent us from dwelling overmuch on our own afflictions. He is the transcendent Example of suffering for well-doing. But his death is unique; it stands alone in its unapproachable glory; it is surrounded with an atmosphere of awful and yet most blessed mystery. He is not simply a martyr for the truth; he suffered, indeed, for well-doing, but he suffered also on account of sins. Sin was the cause of his death, but not his sin; he was absolutely sinless. He was just, the Just One; but he gave himself in his wondrous love to suffer for the unjust, for their sake, in their behalf, that he might do them good. Their sin caused his death; if man had not sinned, there had been no need that the Son of God should die. The sin of the world was a burden that none but he could bear; he took it upon him. As the high priest bore the names of the tribes of Israel on his shoulders and on his breast, so Christ the great High Priest bore the names of his chosen in his heart, and the tremendous burden of the world's sin upon his innocent head. And this he did of his own free will, in his own generous love; we must think of him when we are called to suffer, especially when we suffer for well-doing. 2. *Their purpose.* It was "that he might bring us to God." Our sin had separated us from God; we were afar off from him. "But now hath he reconciled us by his cross, having slain the enmity thereby." He has suffered our punishment; therefore, if we are his, we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. Apart from God there can be no holiness, no happiness, no true life. Separation from God means darkness, misery, spiritual death. Christ suffered that he might bring us to God; then we must follow him by the way which he trod, the way of the cross. He himself is the Way; and we can walk in that way only by imitating him; if, then, we would come to the Father by the new and living Way, which is Christ himself, we must learn to imitate Christ, always in patient submission to the will of God, sometimes in patient suffering for the truth's sake. 3. *Their extent.* Christ's sufferings extended even unto death; they could reach no further. "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." It was his own free act; he laid down his life of himself; none could take it from him. The heathen thought it a good omen when the victim came quietly to the altar. No victim ever came with such entire consent of will as the Lord Jesus Christ; for he knew with perfect foreknowledge all the circumstances of his bitter Passion, and at each moment of that long agony he submitted himself of his own will to the tortures inflicted by those poor weak creatures whom he might by one word have swept into utter death. He set us the example of obedience unto death. Let us learn of him. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." The Lord was quickened in the spirit; so shall it be with his chosen. From the moment of death they are blessed; for they shall be with him in Paradise. From that moment they are quickened in the spirit; the spirit is filled with a new life, with new powers and energies; the life of departed saints is "far better" than this earthly life; indeed, they are absent from the body; they have not yet reached that perfect consummation and bliss both in body and soul, which can be realized only in God's everlasting glory; but they are with the Lord; they rest from the labours of this anxious, restless life; their works do follow them; they are quickened in the spirit to a new life of love and blessedness, and, it may be, of holy work for Christ. That work will be full of happiness; there will be no more suffering, no more weariness. The natural tendency of goodness is to produce happiness; those tendencies are marred and impeded here; there they will have their perfect work; perfected holiness will issue in perfected happiness.

II. *HIS WORK OF PREACHING.* 1. *The Preacher.* It was the Lord himself, the Word of the Father. He is the Word: "God has spoken to us by his Son." He preaches the Word, the Word of eternal life. He preached all the years of his earthly ministry; and when his holy body lay in the grave, after he had been put to death in the flesh, still he preached in the spirit. The ministers of God's holy Word and sacraments must learn of the great Preacher; they must preach faithfully, diligently, for his sake, for the love of the souls whom he loved; they must count it not a labour, but a high and holy privilege, to preach the gospel of salvation. He preached in the spirit; then

we may be sure that the spirits and souls of the righteous do not sleep idly in the intermediate state. Even Dives in torment prayed for his five brethren; can we doubt but that departed saints pray still for those whom they loved on earth, for whom they were wont to pray? It is full of sweetness to believe that they still think of us; that they are witnesses (Heb. xii. 1) of our heavenward course; that they help us with their prayers; that as the number of the blessed who have died in the Lord increases in ever vaster multitude, so a fuller volume of prayer rises from Paradise up to the glory-throne. They pray, we may be sure; it may be (for St. Peter throughout this passage is speaking of Christ as our Example) they also spread the glad news of the gospel among the kingdoms of the dead. 2. *The listeners.* They too were absent from the body; but they were not in Paradise, on the happy sides of Hades; they were in prison. They were in some dreary place, apart from the souls of the blessed; for they had once been disobedient through unbelief. There had been a preacher among them then—Noah, “a preacher of righteousness;” but they heeded him not. They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the very day that Noah entered into the ark. Noah and his sons ate and drank too; but his main work was to preach righteousness, and to build the ark according to the word of God. Still God’s ministers preach; still the Church, which is the ark, bears witness to the mercy and long-suffering of God, and bids the world to escape from the wrath to come. And still, alas! vast multitudes live on in unbelief, eating and drinking and spending their whole time in worldly pursuits, as if eating and drinking were the end of life, as if this world with its vain pomp and glory were to abide for ever. So it was with these unhappy men; the long-suffering of God waited many years while the ark was a-preparing; as, blessed be his holy Name, it is waiting now till the number of his elect is complete. Then few only were saved; now, alas! it is the few who find the strait and narrow path. The “prison” must be the end of unbelief and disobedience; the word suggests fearful thoughts and dark unsatisfied questions. The Lord preached even there; he brought, we may be sure, the glad tidings of salvation: may we not venture to trust, in humble hope, that some who had not listened to Noah, the preacher of righteousness, listened then to Christ, the Preacher of salvation?

III. *THE BAPTISM WHICH HE OBTAINED.* 1. *The outward and visible sign.* It is water — “water wherein a person is baptized.” Water once saved the world, water cleansed it from that wickedness which was bringing down the wrath of God; the world passed then through a baptism of water which was death unto sin, but a new birth unto righteousness; there was a new beginning, new possibilities, new hopes. And water saved the few that had entered into the ark; it bore up the ark, and saved those in it from the wrath of men and from the contagion of surrounding pollution. Yet one of those few brought upon himself his father’s curse. So baptism, the antitype of the water of the Flood, is now saving those who by it are admitted into the ark of Christ’s Church. It is saving us, for it is the beginning of our salvation, bringing us, as it does, into covenant with God. But it is only the beginning; still the Lord adds daily to the Church those who are being saved (*τοὺς σωζόμενους*, Acts ii. 47). But that salvation has to be worked out by the grace of God who worketh within his chosen. 2. *The inward and spiritual grace.* Ananias said to St. Paul, “Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.” But mere outward washing cannot cleanse the soul. The conscience must be good, the heart must be sprinkled from an evil conscience. The inward and spiritual grace is a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness; the conscience will bear witness whether this, the inner meaning of our baptism, is realized in our life. Conscience, Leighton says, is God’s deputy in the soul: “Its business is to sit and examine and judge within; to hold courts in the soul. . . . Not a day ought to pass without a session of conscience within; for daily disorders arise in the soul, which, if they pass on, will grow and gather more, and so breed more difficulty in their trial and redress.” The good conscience will inquire after God, will be ever seeking God. If we have not that good conscience, we are not abiding in the grace of our baptism, and then the holy sacrament ordained for our salvation loses its saving power. 3. *The connection between them.* Baptism becomes a means of grace through the appointment of the risen Saviour. His people could not rise with him in baptism save through the power of his resurrection; that resurrection is the pledge of new life, new energies, new hopes, to all who are baptized in one Spirit into the one mystical body of Christ. Hu

can give grace through the sacraments, for all power is given unto him; he is at the right hand of God, ever interceding for us, able to save us to the uttermost. There is no guardian, no helper, like unto him, for all the highest spiritual intelligences are made subject unto him; the elect angels are his ministers; he gives them charge over his chosen; the evil angels are under his control; he can restrain their malice, he can baffle their devices.

LESSONS. 1. Christ suffered in his flesh; let us take suffering patiently. 2. He suffered, "the Just for the unjust." Sometimes God's holiest servants are called to the greatest suffering; they will not complain; they are being made, in their poor measure, like their Lord. 3. He suffered to bring us to God; let us come in faith and love and gratitude. 4. He preached to the spirits in prison; may we listen while we are in the flesh, on the earth! 5. Let us strive by his grace to realize the deep meaning of our baptism, the death unto sin, the new birth unto righteousness.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 13.—*The armour of righteousness.* This is a promise in the shape of a question, which makes the affirmation stronger, not weaker. It is the question of triumphant faith, a trumpet-blast of confident defiance of all foes, like the wonderful series of similar challenges in the Epistle to the Romans (viii. 31—35), or that in Isaiah (i. 9), the Septuagint Version of which is evidently the basis of our text. We have probably here a consideration additional to that preceding, in order to confirm the conclusion of the blessedness of holiness. The apostle has been quoting, with evident delight in the flowing periods, the assurance of the psalm, that God's watchful eye is upon the righteous. Here he as it were says—and, besides, it is the general experience of the world—lovers of good get good from men. As Christ said, "Sinners also love those that love them."

I. THE SORT OF MEN THAT GENERALLY GO UNHARMED. The Revised Version reads "zealous" instead of "followers," and probably is right in the substitution. If "followers," or more literally, "imitators," were retained, it would be most natural to translate "him who is" instead of "that which is" good. But the antithesis with the previous verse ("them that do evil") and with the word translated "harm," which is from the same root as that rendered "evil," makes the neuter more probable. If, then, we take "zealous for that which is good" as the description of the kind of men to whom the promise implied in our text is made, we may say that it is not the actual possession of purity and virtue which draws men's affections, so much as a certain enthusiasm for goodness and aspiration after it. It is possible to be good in a very disagreeable fashion—to be pure as the eternal snows on the Alps, and cold and forbidding as they. And it is possible to have the whiteness of even an austere morality lit up with a rosy gleam of ardour and emotion which shall make it lovely as that same snow as it blushes in the rising sun. The morality which casts, for the most part, a shield around its possessor is "morality touched by emotion," in which good is evidently loved as well as practised, and practised because it is loved. It is precisely there that so much goodness presents an unlovely face to the world. The doer does not seem to find delight in it himself, and so the onlookers have little in him. If our practice of purity be obviously reluctant and constrained it will not dispose men to look on us with respect or favour. We must be "zealous of good" if we are to claim the benefit of this promise. And it is extremely improbable that such zeal or enthusiastic emotion shall be continuously cherished towards a mere neuter abstract—that which is good. A living Person is needed to evoke it. If the abstract "good" be the personal God our Father; if it be incarnated in Jesus Christ our Brother who loves us, and to whom as their conscious and responsive Object our hearts may turn;—then there may be such zeal, but scarcely if we have to be zealous only for that cold and vague impersonal idea—goodness. It is very hard to keep up enthusiasm for anything ending in "-ness." Men must have a person to love, and their desire after purity is deepened and changed into a more ardent earnestness when "that which is good" takes human form and becomes "him who is good, the perfect Christ, the Image of God, the only Good." All earnest seeking after moral excellence leads the seeker at last

to Jesus Christ, and the merchantman's quest for many goodly pearls ends in the finding of one entire and perfect chrysolite in which all fragmentary preciousnesses are sphered.

II. THE SAFETY OF THESE ENTHUSIASTS FOR THE GOOD. There is an antithesis in the original which is lost in our versions, but may be represented by some such rendering, "Who is he that will do bad things to you, if you be zealous of the good?" That principle thus forcibly put, by the triumphant challenge of the question and by this sharp antithesis, may be illustrated by several considerations which are linked together in such a way that each comes into play where the preceding ceases or fails.

1. The first of these is that, as a rule, *a character of obvious single-minded enthusiasm for goodness conciliates*. Men are not so bad but that there is a place in their hearts and consciences which can be touched by goodness, especially if it is accompanied with that self-forgetfulness and consciousness of imperfection which zeal for goodness will always bring. When good men are disliked it is very often not for their goodness but for some accompaniment of it which would be better away, such as their want of tact or of sympathy, their apparent sense of superiority, or the like. But even if men are not won to love purity, or even to be at ease in the presence of good men, they will very seldom go so far as to put dislike into action and do harm to one who does good to them. The traveller without a revolver is safest. Fire at the gaping crowd on the banks, and they will overwhelm you. Meet them with a smile and a handful of gifts, and you will almost always make friends. Gentleness and patience, sympathy and love, clear a path for their possessors. It is not vinegar, as the old legend has it, which will split the rocks. "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." Of course, this is not true without exception, as the whole history of good men shows, and as Peter goes on to admit. Sometimes, righteousness excites men's enmity, and, when it fails, then the second consideration comes in.

2. That is, that *God will protect those who for righteousness' sake suffer*. The grand promises which Peter has been quoting from the thirty-fourth psalm come into play. A tacit comparison is suggested between the good man's enemies and his defences. "The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous," and that being so, though deadly foes prowl round him with their cruel eyes gleaming like a lion greedy of his prey, the question of our text rings out the same assurance as Paul's proud challenge, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Many a time the persecutor has had to confess that just as he seemed to have the prey in his power—

"The man sprang to his feet,
Stood erect, caught at God's skirts and prayed!
So I was afraid."

The man whom an angel had brought out of prison when the morning of his martyrdom was dawning might well preach that God would take care of his children even when man's wrath was hottest.

3. But *that Divine protection is not always granted*. Peter had indeed experienced deliverance at the eleventh hour, but his Lord had told him that one day the putting off of his tabernacle was to come by violence; and more, one of the apostles had already trod that brief and bloody path of martyrdom which he knew lay before him and before many of those to whom his writings would come. What, in such extreme case, should be the worth of such a saying? Is it not grimly contradicted by the scaffold and the fire? No; for even if these two outer walls of defence are carried by the enemy, and men's malice is not softened but rather embittered by goodness, and God's love does not see fit to shield us from the blow, the inner line of fortification remains impregnable. In the utmost extremity of outward suffering, ay, even from the midst of the fire, the Christian may ring out the triumphant words of our text; for no real harm can touch us if we be zealous of that which is good. The evil in the evil will be averted. The bitter will be changed into sweet, as in the old legend the shower of burning coals became a shower of rubies. The poison will be wiped from the arrow. The loving heart that cleaves to Christ and desires most to be united to him will not count that an evil which brings it nearer its home and its joy, nor think the wildest storm a calamity which blows it to Christ's breast. The same events may be quite different in their character to different men. Two men may be drowned in one shipwreck. To the one it may be the opening of the door of his

Father's house to the weary pilgrim and the very crown of God's mercies. To the other it may be misery and truly a sinking in a boundless sea of death. All depends on our relation to God, who is the Source of all good. If we love him in Christ, and are seeking as our highest aim amid the illusory and fleeting good of earth to press closer to him, then he will deliver us from all real evil; and "who is he that will harm you, if ye be zealous of that which is good?" "All things work together for good to them who love God."—A. M.

Vers. 3, 4.—*Woman's true apparel and ornament.* That attention to dress and personal decoration is natural to woman, is obvious from an observation of the customs of every nation in every age. The Apostle Peter must not be understood as in this place censuring such attention, but as pointing out that there is apparel, that there is ornament, far preferable to any bodily costume and jewellery that taste can devise and wealth can purchase. Christian women of every position in life are exhorted to provide themselves with these precious and incomparable recommendations; to cultivate, above all things, "a meek and quiet spirit."

I. SUCH APPAREL AND ORNAMENTATION COMMAND THE ADMIRATION OF ALL WHOSE ADMIRATION IS DESIRABLE. Empty fools may admire as supremely admirable in woman the outward display of riches and of fashion, with which the worldly sometimes seek to dazzle and captivate those who are as worldly as themselves. To men of sense such things are utterly indifferent; to men of discernment and character gentle and virtuous dispositions and habits are in a woman beyond all price. Such qualities as Jesus found in the sisters of the home at Bethany won his friendship, and similar qualities will never cease to elicit the approval and appreciation of the upright and the pure.

II. SUCH APPAREL AND ORNAMENTATION ARE INSEPARABLE FROM THE CHARACTER THEY ADORN, AND ARE IMPERISHABLE. Poverty may deprive a woman of the power to dress with expensiveness; advancing years may make the adventitious attractions excused in youth unseemly and ridiculous. But "the meek and quiet spirit" remains unchanged with changing time. Often does it happen that the feminine character, refined and sweetened by the experience of life and by ministrations of pity and of self-denial, shines with a fairer lustre with advancing years.

III. SUCH APPAREL AND ORNAMENTATION ARE ACCEPTABLE AND PRECIOUS IN THE SIGHT OF GOD HIMSELF. The approval of our fellow-creatures may be sought with too earnest diligence, and their attachment may be valued beyond its true value. But the qualities which are commended by him who alone judgeth with perfect justice are qualities which cannot be cultivated with too great assiduity and care. Our Lord has spoken with severity of those who seek honour from men in preference to that honour which cometh from God. Of the "meek and quiet spirit" we are told that it is "of great price in the sight of God." What greater inducement than this could be offered to Christian women to look with comparative unconcern upon all those social and external recommendations which are so often over-estimated, and to cultivate with all diligence and devotedness the graces of the Christian character and the charities of the Christian life?—J. B. T.

Ver. 7.—*The twofold claim of womanhood.* In Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female; the man and the woman, as possessors alike of our common humanity, participate alike in the privileges of Christianity, and come alike under the law of Christian principle and motive. And if this is so in the Church, it is the case in ordinary social life, that, whilst the man and the woman have their several and distinct places to fill and services to render, in their relations to each other duty is reciprocal. The New Testament is altogether opposed to the too common notion that the rights are all on the side of the man, and the duties all on the side of the woman. St. Peter is no more stringent in laying down the obligations of wives, than in prescribing the treatment due to them from their husbands. Himself a married man, as the Marriage Service in our Prayer-book reminds us, he writes explicitly and wisely to husbands as to the spirit and tone which should be apparent in their domestic life. The grounds upon which he here bases his injunctions are very different from each other, and yet thoroughly harmonious.

I. THE CLAIM OF WOMAN TO JUST AND CONSIDERATE TREATMENT IS BASED UPON

HER PHYSICAL WEAKNESS. The fact is unquestionable that woman is less robust in constitution, less powerful muscularly, and of more delicate nervous organization, than man. Now, this fact is often made a reason for overbearing demeanour, contemptuous language, unjust dealing, and even brutal abuse, on the part of the man towards the woman. This is so, not only in savage communities, but not unfrequently even among civilized nations. Irresponsible power and selfishness concur in leading to feminine degradation. But the apostle brings forward the fact that woman is the weaker vessel as a reason why husbands should live with their wives in a reasonable and kindly manner, and should render to them all due respect. 1. Human sympathy requires that this should be so. There is a natural principle within leading us to cherish kindness towards the weak and defenceless; and this principle is to be encouraged as against selfishness and brutal indifference and injustice. 2. In addition to this natural feeling, there is a cultivated habit of chivalry which tends to the exaltation of woman in human society. Not simply of the young and beautiful, the highborn and accomplished, but of all who are stamped with the seal of true, gentle, and virtuous womanhood. It is in this sense only that we can speak approvingly of sentiments of chivalry.

II. THE CLAIM OF WOMAN TO JUST AND CONSIDERATE TREATMENT IS BASED UPON HER SPIRITUAL EQUALITY. Granted that there is on the average physical inferiority in the one point of strength, it must be maintained that, in a higher plane, inferiority vanishes. Husbands are reminded that their wives, being Christians like themselves, are joint-heirs with them of the grace of life. If, then, the former motive was addressed to compassion, this appeals to reverence. God himself acknowledges "the weaker sex" as appointed unto immortal blessedness through his Son, our Redeemer. How justly, then, are men required to give all honour to those who are fellow-inheritors with themselves of a domain and a dominion so unspeakably glorious! 1. The woman is by the Father of the spirits of all flesh regarded with the same interest as the man. Womanhood is God's own creation, and the feminine characteristics and graces are revelations of God's own thoughts and purposes. Humanity without the feminine element would be incomplete, one-sided, and lacking in the harmony of "perfect music set to noble words." 2. The woman is equally with the man redeemed by the Friend and Saviour of mankind. Our Lord's ministry upon earth was a ministry to both sexes. He counted holy women among his friends; he comforted sorrowful women in their distress; he saved sinful women from their debasement. And his death was for all mankind; his mediation brings near to God all who were afar off—woman as well as man. 3. The woman is appointed with the man to share the happiness and the service of heaven. The grace which bestows eternal life is extended to the wife as well as to the husband. As there is a place for woman in God's gracious heart, so is there a place for her in God's glorious and blessed home.

Such are the high considerations which hallow and dignify the Christian home!—
J. R. T.

Ver. 13.—Christian zeal. Zeal is a habit of feeling and purpose. It supposes that a certain cause, a certain end of action, is apprehended by the understanding and approved by the judgment. As the etymology of the word implies, this quality is one characterized by warmth, fervour, ardour, in the pursuit of the object approved. It manifests itself in effort, in endurance, in perseverance. Zeal is in itself neither good nor bad; but it is always powerful, giving efficiency to toil, and an impetus to the cause which calls it into activity. In a bad project zeal does harm, for it assists in diffusing error and immorality. In a holy enterprise zeal does good; no great and worthy cause was ever brought to success and victory without zealous labours. There are cases in which abundant zeal compensates slender abilities and mean position. Yet it is possible for zeal to outrun judgment and discretion.

I. IN WHAT DOES CHRISTIAN ZEAL CONSIST? 1. Its spring, its source, is grateful love and ardent consecration to God as revealed in Jesus Christ. Here no fanaticism is possible. There is the best reason and ground for such emotions; the danger is in the direction of indifference and coldness. Interest in Divine truth cannot be too keen; consecration to Divine service cannot be too complete. 2. Its tokens and evidences are these—earnestness in devotion, in praise and prayer, both public and private; earnestness in the discharge of daily duty, however secular, yet sanctified by

the Christian motive and spirit; earnestness in discouraging and repressing all sin; earnestness in exerting social influence for the spread of truth and righteousness.

II. WHY SHOULD CHRISTIANS BE ZEALOUS? 1. The Scriptures expressly enjoin and encourage zeal. "Be zealous!" is the admonition the ascended Saviour addresses to his Church. "It is good always to be zealously affected in a good cause," is the assertion of an apostle. 2. Our Lord Christ was supremely zealous. He was "clothed with zeal as with a cloak." In his conduct was a fulfilment of the words, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." Zealous in love, he loved to the end; zealous in labour, he finished the work given him to do. 3. The best and most useful men have been zealous. This is true of the apostles, of the great thinkers and scholars of the Church, of the Reformers, of leaders in benevolent effort and missionary enterprise. 4. The presence or absence of zeal affects the character beneficially or injuriously. Its absence is accompanied by spiritual declension; its presence promotes the true prosperity of the Church and the advance of the gospel; and these in turn react upon the individual character and further its higher development and everlasting well-being.—J. R. T.

Vers. 14—17.—*Sufferers fortified.* There were providential reasons why the early Christians should have been exposed to many trials of faith, purity, and patience. This reason is obvious to us—that thus opportunity was afforded for the administration of such fortifying and consolatory principles as are serviceable to the afflicted and the tempted in every age.

I. THE TRIALS AND SUFFERINGS CHRISTIANS SHOULD EXPECT. These, of course, are many and various; but it is instructive to notice what those are which are here singled out and placed in prominence, doubtless by the wisdom of the inspired apostle. 1. Christians may expect to suffer for well-doing. That is, they will have to endure injustice from the world, which will not appreciate their character and their efforts for its good. 2. They may expect to be evil spoken of, as if evil-doers. That is, they will have to endure calumny from those who will take pleasure in detracting from their merits, magnifying their faults, misrepresenting their motives, and traducing their life.

II. THE REFLECTIONS BY WHICH IN SUCH CASES CHRISTIANS MAY BE COMFORTED. 1. They should not forget that it is the will of God that his people should suffer, even wrongfully. 2. They should cherish the assurance that none can really harm them. 3. They should consider that their lot is compatible with happiness. 4. And they may even believe that some who have ill treated and slandered them may come to be ashamed of their sinful conduct.

III. THE PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES BY WHICH CHRISTIANS MAY IN SUCH CASES FORTIFY THEMSELVES. 1. Let them sanctify in their hearts Christ as Lord. 2. Let them be prepared with a reasonable account of their hope, the hope which sustains and cheers the afflicted follower of Christ. 3. Let them discard all fear of their sinful adversaries, and confront them with boldness and cheerfulness.—J. R. T.

Ver. 18.—*Sacrificial sufferings.* To Peter, the memory of his Lord's Passion must have been peculiarly pathetic and peculiarly precious. He could not but connect the Master's constancy with the servant's unfaithfulness, and the servant's penitence with the Master's grace and pardoning favour. The woe he had witnessed could never be long absent from his recollection. And the bearing of Christ's sufferings upon human redemption and upon Christian consecration must have constantly occurred to him when communicating Divine truth, and inspiring his fellow-believers to devotion and endurance. In this verse, compact with precious fact and doctrine, we have set before us—

I. THE FACT OF CHRIST'S SUFFERING.

II. THE CHARACTER IN WHICH CHRIST SUFFERED. It is here that the mystery of the fact is to be found. The Sufferer was the Righteous One, blameless in character, upright in conduct, beneficent in ministry. Yet he suffered, notwithstanding all this. That the unrighteous should suffer, this appears to us natural; they eat of the fruit of their doings; they reap as they have sown. But in the agony and death of Jesus of Nazareth we see the undeserved sufferings of "the Holy One and the Just."

III. THE PERSONS FOR WHOM CHRIST SUFFERED. This consideration increases the

mystery and enhances the interest of the Passion of our Redeemer. At first sight it seems as though, if undeserved sufferings are to be endured, this must be at least on behalf of the virtuous, the meritorious, the pious. But it was otherwise, it was exactly contrary, with the sufferings of Christ. He died for the unrighteous, for those who had violated the laws of God and the laws of man!

IV. THE CAUSE BY AND FOR WHICH CHRIST SUFFERED. He was brought to the cross by the *sins* of men; and it was on account of those sins that he deliberately and graciously consented to die. The connection between sin and suffering is obvious in God's providential treatment of men; it is equally obvious in God's merciful redemption of men by his Son Jesus Christ.

V. THE INTENT AND AIM WITH WHICH CHRIST SUFFERED. Nothing more sublime in itself, or more welcome to the sinner's ear, can be found than the statement in this verse of the purpose for which our Lord Jesus accepted the death of humiliation and shame—it was “that he might bring us to God.” Surely the simplest and yet the grandest statement of Immanuel's voluntary and sacrificial death!

VI. CHRIST'S SUFFERING OUR EXAMPLE AND MOTIVE. Let Christians see to it that, if they suffer, it be not for ill-doing, but (like their Lord) for well-doing. Such endurance may be wholesome discipline for them, and it may be the means of good to others.—J. R. T.

Vers. 1—6.—*The Christian wife called to heart-culture as the means of winning the unconverted husband.* The subject of this section is the necessity for a life becoming the Christian name; this is applied to Christian citizens and to Christian servants, and, here, to Christian wives. The reason for the conspicuous place here assigned to wives is obvious. The writer is addressing Churches in pagan countries, many of whose members were wives of heathen husbands. What were these to do? were they to continue in that relationship, or did their Christianity sever the marriage bond? That question occurred more than once; it was brought before Paul by the Church at Corinth, and he deals with it in 1 Cor. vii. There was probably another reason for this. Dr. John Brown says, “When we reflect on the character of the conjugal relation among heathens, how much there was of the harshness of the tyrant in the husband, and of the baseness of the slave in the wife, and how much pollution and cruelty prevailed in the home, few things were more calculated to strike heathen observers favourably than the power of Christianity in introducing an order and purity and enjoyment into the domestic circle beyond what heathen philosophy had ever dreamt of.” Peter's words are often applicable still. Two hearts, two lives, are often bound together by the closest human ties, one devoted to Christianity, the other not. The case here, however, is not of those who had been united after one had become a Christian; the nature of spiritual life and the direct Word of God forbid union of that kind, and there is no consolation here for the trouble that comes from disobedience in this respect. Here the wife is supposed to have become a Christian since she gave herself to the ungodly husband. The Divine finger is laid on the secret of many a troubled life, when husbands are here spoken of that “obey not the Word;” but the hand that pains is that which heals, for there is hope and strength and comfort for the wounded spirit in “Ye wives, be in subjection,” etc.

I. THE CHRISTIAN WIFE IS HERE CALLED TO CONSISTENT CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. 1. And the first point included is *faithful fulfilment of the duties of her relationship*. “Be in subjection to your husbands;” equivalent to a summary of the various duties of the position. The expression is harsh at first, but the harshness wears off as we think of it, for love is always in subjection. He whose life was the embodiment of love came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. Love cannot help serving. This word lays no burden on love but what she lays on herself. Nor is this a one-sided requirement; for the same Word says, “Husbands, love your wives”—so that the subjection is mutual—“submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.” Yet, though the harshness be removed, the command remains and means something, and it is remarkable that in the three instances in the Epistles where the duties of wives are referred to, the same idea of subjection occurs (Eph. v. 22; Col. iii. 18; and here). Woman was made for a “helpmeet for man;” “Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee;” “Man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the man.”

The subjection, therefore, was to be real, yet not that of a servant, but of a companion; man's other self, yet still subject. 2. *Possession of that pure character which springs from the fear of God.* "Chaste conversation;" equivalent to pure manner of life, a character unsullied, and this arising from the fear of God in the heart. The godly wife of an ungodly man is exposed to great difficulty; the husband, troubled by no scruples, will often expect of her what her conscience condemns; and that position is as perilous as it is painful. Now, this word requires no swerving a hair-breadth from righteousness, not even under pressure of the husband's love and plans. "Whoso loveth . . . husband . . . more than," etc. 3. *Manifestation of the graces of spirituality.* "Whose adorning," etc. This does not necessarily condemn what is simply ornamental. Did we only use what is necessary for bare existence, many of our fellow-creatures could not live. God's works also are marked by beauty, needless but for gratification, and we may well copy him within his own lines. But do not let these be your adornment, do not let these be what men think of first when they see you, nor find in them your attraction; but let your adornment be the graces of the inner life. Let Christian women set themselves against the dress curse, one of the greatest curses of the day, and put character first, as God does.

II. THIS IS SET FORTH AS THE MEANS OF WINNING THE UNCONVERTED HUSBAND. These heathen husbands did not frequent the sanctuary, nor listen to the Word, and thus their case seemed hopeless. But the Divine Word may be carried to heart and mind as much by a Divine life as by a Divine book. Feeding on this book, we become its embodiment, living Epistles of Christ, read of all; and the promise is as true of the Word lived as of the Word spoken, "My Word shall not return unto me void." Vers. 5 and 6: not simply the hope to win the husband should lead to living thus, but not otherwise could the wife prove herself a daughter of Abraham, a member of the true Israel. The membership of the Christian wife in God's family is of itself the ground of her doing what is here required; all this is owed to God as your Master; but there is an additional motive for this in its effect on the husband. See how this operates. 1. *A true Christian life is a standing proof of the Divinity of Christianity.* How can the doubting husband be undeceived? By the life of the wife. 2. *An exemplification of the beauties of holiness is a constant persuasion.* Acts of forgiveness, endurance, sacrifice, adherence to right, etc., gradually tell even on the hardened, and often loudly plead for Christ. 3. *Conquest by the passive virtues is God's own method.* Men dislike direct assaults on their moral nature, but often open their hearts spontaneously to what seems to make no onset. God recognizes that in his dealings with us. The meaning of his cross is, in fact, that he expects to subdue us by suffering for us and bearing with us. We may expect to win by the same means.

III. THIS IS ONLY ACCOMPLISHED BY PERSONAL HEART-CULTURE. How can we gain this becoming character? The passage answers, "By heart-work." Christian character grows from within. 1. *Life is a reflex of faith.* "What a man believes, that is he." Love, peace, purity, power, etc., are the proper fruits of trust in God; therefore strengthen your faith. 2. *Character is according to companionship.* We become like those with whom we associate. They take knowledge of those who have been with Jesus. God impresses his image on the soul that is much with him.—C. N.

Ver. 7.—*The Christian husband called to enjoy spiritual blessings with the Christian wife.* A happier case is supposed than the preceding. The husband is "won;" they are "heirs together of the grace of life;" and there opens before them the possibility of blessing they have never known. But even this has a touch of sadness in it. If it be painful for the one member in this relationship having a piety in which the other has no share, it is only one degree less so when they share it equally, but live as though they did not. Sharing in all else, but units and solitary in things eternal. Two fellow-travellers walking to Emmaus, each talking with Jesus as they go, but neither with the other—that is the case supposed here. ("According to knowledge;" equivalent to knowledge of what is possible and due to two hearts bound together, first by natural relationship, and then by common love to God.)

I. THE BLESSEDNESS OF MUTUAL PIETY IN HUSBAND AND WIFE. They are both "heirs of the grace of life;" but the fear is that they do not dwell with one another as "heirs together." Two persons may make the same journey, and never speak. How

different that from two who go in every respect together, having common interest in all that happens! The one is far less blessed than the other. Peter here urges the greater blessedness. Think how much it involves. 1. *It produces the closest possible union.* For that there must be no secrets, nothing reserved. Thus we can get nearer to God than to any other; we can never lose ourselves but in the heavenly Father. But those we love best on earth may come closer to us in this respect than they sometimes do; and some Christian husbands and wives may thus be more to each other than they are, sharing not only temporal, but spiritual affairs. In this way there may be a union unutterably more intense, precious, and fruitful, than before. 2. *It provides much powerful support.* Our deepest spiritual experiences cannot be told; many others should not be. In some things God would have us for himself. But there is much also of the spiritual life whose utterance to a fellow-creature is a distinct need of the soul; as our Lord himself, in taking the favoured three apart with him at some of the crises of his history—the Transfiguration, for instance, and Gethsemane—seemed to express the need of human sympathy, although in its highest degree he had the Divine. God, moreover, has given us our fellows to be a helpmeet to us, as well as himself, and we are only complete with both. It would lighten the spiritual burden and brighten the spiritual journey for husband and wife to commune together of the way they go. 3. *It gives the most blessed of all anticipations.* “Till death us do part” is only true of those whose union is not in the Lord. Absence for the day’s work, or across broad seas, does not part husband and wife; they are still one, still one another’s. No more does death rend in twain Christian spirits; the oneness remains, and there will be a meeting again soon; and that meeting will be heaven. If supreme love to God, which is required of us on earth, be consistent with profound and tender love to a fellow-creature, which is also required, they will be mutually consistent in the higher world. Yea, then God will be more to us, being shared with the other at our side, and the benediction of his presence will impart an added rapture because it is given to us both. Of those who are gone before it is said, “They without us are not yet made perfect.” “So”—i.e. “together”—“we shall ever be with the Lord.” That is our prospect. Then let us by a mutual piety anticipate heaven now.

II. THIS BLESSEDNESS DEMANDS MUTUAL PRAYER FOR ITS ENJOYMENT. In “that your prayers be not hindered,” is not the apostle thinking of mutual prayer? If mutual prayer be wanting, is not the blessedness of mutual piety also wanting as the result? Tertullian wrote, “What a union is that which exists between two believers, who have in common the same hope, the same desire, the same service! Like brother and sister, united both in spirit and in flesh, they kneel together, they pray and fast together, they teach and support each other with gentleness, they share one another’s trials, and conceal nothing from each other, and they rival each other in singing with their heart to God. Christ is pleased to see and hear these things. He sends down his peace upon them. Where two are thus met he is with them, and where he is the evil one cannot come.” That is, perhaps, Peter’s thought here. 1. *Mutual prayer is the first and most natural form of spiritual intercourse.* If we cannot break through our reserve so far as to pray together, it is unlikely that we have any communion on spiritual topics. It would seem the first instinct of a Christian man to ask her he loves best to kneel with him at the throne of grace. Probably this prayer is the door to spiritual intercourse, the removal of the barriers of timidity through which we must pass to the enjoyment of a mutual piety. 2. *The utterance before God of a common experience tends to conscious spiritual oneness.* We never know how much we are one with other saints till we join with them in prayer; then we find ourselves sorrowing, rejoicing, hoping, loving, fearing, trusting alike, and are thereby drawn closer together still. That principle operates even more certainly in the mutual prayer of husband and wife. 3. *The fact of mutual prayer tends to mutual spiritual fidelity.* Would not mutual prayer go far to be a remedy for the difficulty which it is to be of spiritual use to those nearest to us? The parent who prays with his household, the husband with his wife, will find it specially hard to sin against or with them. As the spirit of prayer prevails, the spirit of unkindness, indifference, evil example, etc., will lessen. “That your prayers be not hindered” is thus the warning to those who would be “heirs together of the grace of life.”

III. THIS PRAYER REQUIRES THE FULFILMENT OF MUTUAL DUTIES FOR ITS SUCCESS.

If prayer helps duty, so duty helps prayer. Is not the fact that some Christians in the same home seldom pray together, due to the fact of an inconsistent life—the life of a kind which makes the proposal to pray impossible? That seems to be the idea here: “Ye husbands, dwell with them, . . . giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers,” etc. 1. *The consideration of what we owe to one another will prevent the neglect of mutual prayer.* “Honour” is due to the wife on the physical ground—she is “weaker,” which brings corresponding duties to the stronger; and on the spiritual ground—she is partaker of the same immortal nature, with its great conflicts and high responsibilities, equally an heir of Divine grace, which brings corresponding duties to the fellow-heir. The consideration of that should lead to united prayer. 2. *The fulfilment of what we owe will afford the right spirit for prayer.* As long as the wife is defrauded of what she has a right to, mutual prayer, if not impossible, will be robbed of its sweetness and power. Unkindness and bitterness kill prayer. Mutual prayer can only flourish in the atmosphere of mutual love.—C. N.

Ver. 8.—*The conduct that becomes the Christian towards other Christians.* “Finally, be ye all like-minded, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.” Only a colon separates this passage from what follows: ought it not, therefore, to be taken with the subsequent verses? I think not. Peter is evidently thinking here of the mutual relation of believers; whilst in the next verse he passes to the thought of how Christians should treat their persecutors: “Not rendering railing for railing,” etc. Then why should there only be a colon between the two? Because the two are so closely connected. It is in fellowship with our brethren that we find much of the inspiration we need for facing and conquering persecution from without.

I. BROTHERLY LOVE THE IDEAL OF A CHRISTIAN CHURCH. Is it possible for a Christian to have no practical relationship with the Church? I do not say that it is not possible, but such a position is very unlikely. A Christian is he who is born into the family of God, and a certain close relationship to the Father's other children is, in the nature of the case, almost inevitable. 1. *By brotherly love we come nearest to the spirit of the Father.* The feelings which are classed under the term “love” vary considerably. Love may be due to admiration for the personal qualities of another, to a common interest in Church matters, to a sense of obligation, the fruit of gratitude; but there is nothing essentially Christian in all that. Brotherly love is to love another because he is our brother, and for no other reason; not because there is anything lovely in him, but just because we have a common father. Brotherly love towards God's children—that is Divine; that is to be of one spirit with the Father; that is to feel in measure as he does. 2. *By brotherly love we come nearest to the example of Christ.* The Church is to be a perpetual representation of Jesus—what he was and is. By his gracious Spirit he is embodied in his people; and they most truly approach his likeness who love those who are his. He loves the world; he died to save it; but he has a love of fellowship for those who come to him out of the world that he can have for no others. His love, his joy, his work, his life, his glory, all theirs; reaching the climax in the prayer, “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.” 3. *By brotherly love we come nearest to the fulfilment of our mission as a Church.* The Church has a mission to itself as well as to the world. Christians are banded together in fellowship for mutual help; they are united that they may build up one another; and this building up is to be done by love. What will not love do for the brethren? It will encourage the timid, help the weak, uphold the infirm, seek the wandering, give the vigour of joy to those who are strong, will stoop even to wash the disciples' feet. The Church, fulfilling her mission to herself in love, thereby begins her mission to the world.

II. WE HAVE HERE A WARNING AGAINST TWO HINDRANCES TO THIS IDEAL. 1. *Divergence of aim.* “Be ye all like-minded.” That does not mean unanimity of sentiment and action in all matters; for that is manifestly impossible. Variety of thought and feeling and action there must obviously be; but there is, of course, a limit to this variety. The Church cannot fulfil her calling as the “pillar and ground of the truth” unless there be a consent of opinion as to what that truth in its essential features is. We have different work, different positions in the Church, and sometimes different

views as to the best things to do; but if Christian love is to be maintained, as the different colours into which the prism diverges the light—red, and purple, and orange, and the rest—all blend and are lost in the pure white ray they form, so we must learn the secret of blending our differences in a holy unanimity. Perhaps nothing is harder than to sink, and that gracefully, so that no one knows we are doing it, our personal feeling into the common feeling of the rest. How can all be like-minded? In the Revised Version the word “courteous” drops out, and in its place we have “humble-minded.” That is it; heart-culture, personal discipline, stern struggle, are needed if we are to be like-minded, laying a strong hand on self, and keeping it under when it wants to rise. 2. *Exclusiveness of feeling.* “Compassionate” (the Greek word is *συμπάσας*, our word, “sympathy,” fellow-feeling). Our Churches are not always conspicuous for that. They are often broken up into little sets, little bands of friends complete in themselves; then farewell to the reign of Christian love, with its benediction, and in its place expect hard thoughts, bitter feelings, wounded spirits, lonely lives, and the curse that means. But how can we get this compassion? The apostle adds, “tender-hearted” (as the same Greek word is rendered in Eph. iv. 32), and in that he may be showing us how to secure the like-heartedness. It comes from keeping the heart tender. We must live much with Christ; a tender heart will come from that, and a like tenderness with his people.

III. WE HAVE HERE THE INFLUENCE OF OUR ATTAINMENT OF THIS IDEAL (OF BROTHERLY LOVE) ON THE WORLD. The Church has a mission to those who are without; but that will not be fulfilled till her mission to herself is fulfilled. A Church building up herself in love will be the Church which compels the Gentiles to “glorify God in the day of visitation.” 1. *The Spirit works where love is.* Absence of love is to him an ungenial atmosphere; it grieves him and tempts him to depart, or to withhold his gracious influences. 2. *The beauty of piety reveals itself where love is.* Love which is independent of the restraints of natural affection, and loves men not because they are good, but because God loves them; love which is disinterested and strong to sustain and protect, and tender to make common cause with those who need it, and which sheds a holy grace over the life;—that love will at least constrain the world to acknowledge its Divinity, and we may expect to hear more frequently that welcome utterance, “I will go with you, for I perceive that God is with you.” And God himself will triumph over such, in the ancient words, “I drew them with cords of love.”—C. N.

Vers. 9—17.—*The conduct becoming the Christian towards his persecutors.* Peter's Epistles were written on the very eve of the persecution by Nero, who, anxious to divert the suspicions of the people who accused him of setting fire to Rome, charged the Christians with the crime, and caused them to be seized and tortured and slain. Some were crucified; some were clothed in the skins of wild beasts, that they might be torn by the dogs; some, having been rubbed over with pitch, were made to serve as torches to light up the imperial gardens,—this gratified at once sovereign and people. It is true that this severity was confined to the neighbourhood of Rome, but Rome was the centre of life to her provinces; the pulsations of the heart thrilled to the most distant parts of the empire. The words of our text have a new meaning as they rise before us on this dark background. Some may ask—What is the bearing of this on us? The answer is, that when Paul said, “They that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution,” he uttered what would be a fact to the end of the age. The fire, the rack, the headsman's axe, are gone; but in their place there are words that burn, looks that go like poisoned shafts to the soul, and treatment that stings like a scourge. As long as the truth which the Church is called to maintain and to live before a world that hates it is what it is, as long as our spiritual life needs trial for its cleansing and development, so long will Christ's people find how true it is that, because they are not of the world, but Christ hath chosen them out of the world, therefore the world hateth them. We can only glance at the bare outline of such a long passage as this. It contains three requirements, each of which has a benediction attached to it.

I. CALL TO BLESS THOSE WHO PERSECUTE US. From the ninth verse to the twelfth: you can hardly read these words without feeling you are listening to one who heard the sermon on the mount, and is inspired with its spirit; and we cannot help noting

the change they imply in Peter himself. But perhaps it was what he saw in his Lord, more than what he heard from him, to which the change was due; Christ's character carrying his words home with transfiguring force. We do not wonder that it was Peter who wrote, "Not rendering evil for evil," etc., and it is the word and example of the same gracious Lord that lays the same burden on us. And mark the blessing to ourselves that grows out of that. Never give place to evil in word, or act, or thought, let the provocation be what it may. Yea, not only so, return evil with good, recompense wrong with right, and your fidelity to Christ will make an open way through the skies, through which you shall see his smile and hear his "Well done!" and find for your prayers and spirit a clear path to his throne.

II. CALL TO BE FEARLESS ABOUT WHAT OUR PERSECUTORS CAN DO TO US. "And who is he that will harm you," etc.? Persecution need not harm us, brethren; it is only one of God's refining fires, that, when thus he has tried us, we may come forth as gold. And what is the remedy for this fear? Peter is thinking of a passage in Isaiah where Judah is called, instead of fearing idolatrous Syria and trusting in Sennacherib, to fear and trust in the Lord. "Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear." Now, with that Old Testament passage before us, the change which the Revisers have made here is very striking. Instead of "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts," it is, "Sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord." Peter, the Jew, who knew that perhaps the very highest title which could be ascribed to Jehovah was "the Lord of hosts," did not hesitate to give that title to Christ. Peter had known him in the humiliation of his human life; he had even washed Peter's feet, yet Peter uses his name and that of "the Lord of hosts" as convertible terms—speaks of these two as one. Peter, at least, had no doubt of the Deity of Jesus. And this attitude also has a blessing attached to it, "If ye suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed are ye."

III. CALL TO MAINTAIN A GOOD CONSCIENCE IN THOSE THINGS ABOUT WHICH OUR PERSECUTORS REPROACH US. "And be ready always to give an answer," etc. A good conscience, a good conduct, a good answer—I think that is the order here. A good conscience. Be sure that you are suffering for goodness and not for badness; be sure that you have an unclouded sky between you and God; be sure that, when your heart does not condemn you, you hear him saying, "Neither do I condemn thee." And out of that will come what Peter calls "your good conversation," *i.e.* conduct. For as the sunshine develops and perfects the hidden beauties of nature and the fruits of the earth, so does the light of God's favour resting upon the conscious soul draw forth into character the graces of the spiritual life. The clear conscience that catches Heaven's smile is always followed by a brave and beautiful piety, which is its own justification against those who speak evil of it. And see the blessing attached to that! There is a broad sense, no doubt, in which we might apply these words to the Christian hope generally, and the duty of being able to give an intelligent and satisfactory reason for its possession; but their meaning here seems to be more defined. The good conduct that issues from the good conscience and puts to shame the evil speakers, leads them to question us about the hope which they see hidden within us and sustaining us, and they come to envy it, and secretly to want to know what it is. Now, says Peter, "be ready to tell them; let them know that it is the grace of Christ which renews and sanctifies." One of the benedictions of persecution endured and triumphed over is that it may bring the very persecutors themselves to the feet of Jesus. Then, brethren, can we not endorse the truth in the verse which closes this long passage, "It is good, if the will of the Lord be so, that ye suffer for well-doing"? It is good in its purifying efficacy on ourselves; it is good in its tendency to glorify God; it is good as a saving power on our fellow-men.—C. N.

Vers. 18—22.—*The remembrance of our Lord's atonement a help to persecuted Christians.* We omit for the present the clause in the nineteenth verse, and will consider that afterwards. "For Christ hath once suffered for sins," etc. The death of Christ is not only the purchase of our redemption, it is also the power by which we enter into what redemption means. Christ's cross is not only the secret of pardon, but also of holiness. Christ alone will not avail us; it must be Christ crucified, every step of the way, till what has been the inspiration of our spiritual life down here, of every duty, every conflict, every joy, every hope, will be the inspiration of our song

up there: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." Let us see how Christ's sufferings bear on the conduct of his persecuted people.

I. THE SUBSTITUTIONARY SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST. "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." 1. *A plain statement of the substitutionary character of our Lord's sacrifice.* How does Christ save? By substitution. In that word is the explanation of our Lord's sacrifice and of his sufferings; they were endured by him as our Substitute, in our stead. They were undoubtedly the expression of his perfect consecration to the Father, the great proof of his obedience; they were also the great revelation of God's love and mercy to the sinful, of his yearning for the restoration of the lost; but they were this, without which they would have been in every other respect unavailing, they were the endurance in the stead of the sinner, of that which alone makes his righteous forgiveness possible. But it is said that Jesus was simply revealing what God was willing to bear for man's redemption, and that it is by this revelation of love he saves us. That is not what Scripture says. "God made him to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him;" "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree [or, 'to the tree,' and left them there]." But, says another, "Christ saves by his holy example, leading us to holiness, and not by his cruel sufferings. So far from that, the apostles, in their teaching, gave weight to the death of Christ as the world's hope. "In him we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins," "We are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ;" "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." Others say that this was a mere Jewish mode of expression; the apostles were only meeting Jewish prejudice when they spoke thus. But we find they use the same words in writing to the Gentiles—to the Churches at Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, etc. It is also said that there is an element of injustice in the idea of substitution. Is it not unjust to inflict the punishment incurred by one on another who is innocent? But that is not the case here. Jesus was God—this was God himself making the atonement necessary for our forgiveness by shedding his own blood. 2. *The necessity for such a sacrifice is implied in its design.* What was its design? "To bring to God," says the text. But there are two great obstacles to our coming back to God—one on his part, and one on ours. How can he receive us sinners? How can we dare to come? *How can God receive us?* "Cannot I," says a father, "forgive my child just because I will?" No, you cannot, if, like the great Father, you have been compelled to declare what the penalty of transgression must be. That is God's position. He can only forgive if he forgives righteously. How shall he do that? The substitution of Christ is the answer. Apart from that: *How could we dare to go to him?* Some say Christ saves by revealing God's love, by alluring us to follow his example of self-sacrifice. If that is all the gospel you have for me, I am condemned the more; for I am conscious of the unutterable distance between what Jesus was and what I am. I dare not go to God, and I must pass into the unseen hopeless. But when we follow the meaning of these words, "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God," we can go back to God then, and are welcomed for Christ's sake.

II. THE RESULT OF THIS TO HIMSELF. 1. *Quickened spiritual power.* "Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." It should read, "*in the spirit*," not "*by the Spirit*." There is no reference here to the work of God the Spirit, to whom elsewhere the resurrection of Christ is attributed; it is here simply a contrast between Christ's flesh and his spirit. His spirit did not die; it was raised by the death of the flesh into new energy, and he became able to do what before was impossible. He had often thought of this: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." 2. *Influence on spirits in prison.* This subject we will leave for the present. 3. *Ascension to heavenly authority.* "Who is gone into heaven," etc. What see we now? "I looked, and behold in the midst of the throne, a Lamb as it had been slain." Redemption enthroned. All things required to glorify redemption. Devils restrained by the Redeemer's will; angels his swift-winged messengers; providences, his servants; history, the unfolding of his purpose; the kingdoms of this world become his kingdom; and he ever living to secure this glorious consummation. But this had been impossible apart from the atonement; it was only through the cross that Jesus changed the throne of heaven from that of almightiness and mercy to that of redemption.

III. THE BEARING OF THIS ON PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS. 1. *It sets forth Christ's claim on our suffering for him.* There surely is nothing like a remembrance of his cross to constrain us to take up ours. 2. *It reminds the persecuted of the spiritual quickening that may come through the suffering.* For what was true of Jesus is to be as true of us: "Put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit." The storm which shakes us to the centre sends our roots down deeper, mooring us the faster to the Rock of Ages. Suffering has a rare tendency to send us down to the foundation of things, a rare tendency to send us home to the Life of all, and closer contact with him means more life from him. 3. *This points to the glorious end of the suffering of the saints.* First the cross, then the crown. Jesus once suffered, then heaven and the right hand of God, and "angels and authorities and powers subject unto him."—C. N.

Vers. 19, 21.—*The crucified Saviour quickened in spirit preaching to the spirits in prison.* We have already seen that through our Lord's sufferings he secured quickened spiritual power—influence over spirits in prison, and ascension to heavenly authority. This passage reveals him quickened in spirit, preaching to the "spirits in prison." Now, if that be the apostle's line of thought, the correct meaning of this passage, whatever it be, will fall in naturally with it. May I venture to show why I cannot accept either of two common explanations of these words? It is thought by some that after our Lord's death (possibly in the interval between his death and resurrection) his disembodied spirit passed into the unseen world, and preached the gospel to the disobedient dead. Now, if that be the proper meaning of the words, if they cannot mean anything else, we must accept it. That the words taken by themselves will bear that meaning cannot probably be denied: then why should we hesitate to adopt it? I might remind you that as far as those three days are concerned, we seem to be told that they were spent in Paradise with the Father and the redeemed. "This day," he said to the penitent thief, "thou shalt be with me in Paradise;" "Father," he said, "into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the spirit." Then, if this passage does mean that Christ preached to the dead, it only speaks of the dead in the days of Noah; it seems incredible that these comparative few should be singled out from the great mass of mankind for so great a blessing. I might remind you, too, that if these words mean that the impenitent dead have a second chance, they stand alone in Scripture, at least as far as I am aware. But weightier than all is the fact that the plain teaching of this book is to the contrary. I know the tenacity with which we cling to the hope that those who have never heard the gospel shall yet hear it, if not here, hereafter; and that many have cherished this hope, partly on the strength of these words. My hope of that is not less because I do not see it encouraged here. I know God well enough, and I know this book well enough, to know that no man will be condemned because of Adam's sin; through Christ every man stands on a fair footing; the condemning sin is rejection. Then the Saviour must be presented to each hereafter, if not here. I cling to the hope that the preaching of the Saviour on the other side of the grave will bring multitudes to heaven who died without a gospel. But for you who have the gospel now, this is your day of grace; with you, salvation is now or never. It has been supposed that these words refer to Christ, by his Spirit, preaching in the days of Noah to men who were then on earth, but who, when the apostle wrote, were in the unseen world—"spirits in prison." But there are two fatal objections to this meaning—one is, that there is nothing here about God the Spirit, as I have already shown; and the other is that such a meaning is foreign to the drift of thought in the chapter. It is not easy to see what room there is in that for the interjection of a reference to the Spirit of God striving with men nearly three thousand years before; it seems altogether irrelevant to the apostle's argument—that alone condemns it.

I. WHAT, THEN, IS THE MEANING OF THE PASSAGE? There is no necessity to refer the words, "spirits in prison," to those who have passed into the unseen world; for in Scripture the ungodly are constantly spoken of as in a state of imprisonment, bondage, captivity. "Spirits in prison" may then be said to be a frequent designation of the unredeemed on earth; indeed, the very word "redemption" carries this idea. Some may object that the context seems to imply that the spirits referred to are the spirits of the dead. Not necessarily so. If we refer the expression not to certain individuals,

but to the whole lost race, the difficulty vanishes. Christ did not preach to the same persons that were disobedient before the Flood, but to the same race, the same spiritual condition. But did Christ thus preach? Certainly, through his servants. It has been said that the more correct title of the Acts of the Apostles would be the Acts of the Risen Lord. But why this reference to the days of Noah? If you look through Peter's Epistles you will see that he seems to have regarded the Flood as a dividing-line between two worlds, which afford points of contrast. We have this contrast here. The power of God over "spirits in prison" was straitened formerly,—after all the years through which his long-suffering waited, only "few, that is eight souls, were saved;" but since Christ suffered for sins, this is the record, "The same day there were added to the Church about three thousand souls;" and the record ends with the great multitude which no man can number, standing before the throne, and before the Lamb.

II. THE DESIGNATION OF THOSE TO WHOM CHRIST PREACHED, "SPIRITS IN PRISON." "Spirits:" what are they? Ah! who can tell? Immortal natures, whose greatness is not hinted at in the frail tabernacle in which they dwell. Spirits never destined to find their home in the dust, or their joys on earth, but to rise in the free vast world of spirits to the Father of spirits, wearing his likeness, fulfilling his will, sharing his glory, standing before his throne. Think of these in prison, bound by the fetters of sin, groping in darkness, in the narrow chamber of an ever-narrowing life—bound, with Satan for the gaoler. *The power with which the crucified Christ preached to these.* The power over men and on men's behalf which our Lord possesses, he acquired through his cross; only if he were "lifted up" would he be able to draw all men unto him.

III. THE FREEDOM IN THE CLEANSING OF THE CONSCIENCE WHICH RESULTED FROM HIS PREACHING. The twenty-first verse is very complicated; the mixture of metaphor, too, is not in accord with modern ideas, but it is frequent in Scripture. Here there are two incongruous figures blended, but the idea is this: Peter had said that Noah was saved by water, and he adds as it were, "And by the way it is water that saves you, that which is typified in the water of baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience towards God, through the resurrection of Christ. Sin is the great bond that holds Satan's captives fast—sin in the conscience; there is no freedom for the soul till that is removed. Salvation, *i.e.* freedom, comes through cleansing (water); cleansing comes through a crucified Saviour; "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin." Brethren, therein lies Christ's delivering power.—C. N.

Vers. 8—12.—*Unity between Christian people.* Peter had, so this passage suggests, well learnt the lesson about forgiveness to which he had listened as he heard the sermon on the mount, and he had equally well drunk in the spirit of the great intercessory prayer he had heard in the upper room, "That ye all may be one." For he is here gathering up all his teaching about social life in the strong words now before us: "Finally," etc. He is enjoining, in simple detail and with a sublime motive, unity between Christian people.

I. WHEREIN DOES UNITY BETWEEN CHRISTIAN PEOPLE CONSIST? St. Peter, as Leighton suggests, here denotes five graces, of which "love" is the stalk, having two on either side. "Like-minded;" not simply what our word "mind" usually means—thought, opinion; but judgment, purpose, affection. "Compassionate," or sympathetic; *i.e.* feeling *with* others. "Loving as brethren." True family life is a model of Church life. "Tender-hearted;" insensitiveness disqualifies for Christian life. "Humble-minded;" the old version has "courtesy;" this is the genius or secret of courtesy. The lowly temperament makes little of itself and much of others: its possessor, and he alone, is the gentleman.

II. HOW IS UNITY BETWEEN CHRISTIAN PEOPLE MANIFESTED? The tone of social relationship here enjoined is pitched in a far higher key than the prevalent one, "retaliate," etc.; it is in harmony with the sermon on the mount. "Not rendering evil for evil, nor reviling for reviling." The first excluding all the actions, the second all the words, of resentment. "But contrariwise blessing." This is a distinct reminiscence of the sermon on the mount.

“The sandal tree perfumes, when riven,
The axe that laid it low.
Let him that hopes to be forgiven,
Forgive and bless his foe.”

III. WHAT IS THE METHOD FOR ATTAINING THIS CHRISTIAN UNITY? 1. There is first of all *a direction as to the detail of speech*. “Refrain,” etc. 2. There is then *a wide and deep precept applying to the whole of life*. “Turn away from evil, and do good.” The negative and the positive are here.

IV. WHAT ARE THE MOTIVES FOR DOING ALL AND BEING ALL THAT WILL ENSURE THIS UNITY? 1. The Christian man is called to *inherit blessing*. 2. The cultivation of the essential spirit of Christian unity *ensures the summum bonum of individual life*. “Love life; see good days.” 3. The relationship of God is *the great determining condition and motive* in all that leads to this Christian unity. “The eyes of the Lord . . . face,” etc.—U. R. T.

Vers. 13—18 (part).—*Suffering for righteousness*. I. THE FACT THAT GOOD MEN SUFFER, FOR THEIR GOODNESS, FROM THEIR FELLOW-MEN. Though Peter used the word “if,” it was not because such suffering was unlikely or infrequent, but because it was not universal, and because the reflections on which he had been dwelling seemed calculated to make such suffering impossible. 1. For it might seem as though the promised guardianship of God would have ensured the security of good men. But no. 2. Or it might have seemed that an upright benevolent life would have evoked nothing but kindness and gratitude from one’s fellow-men. But no. “Who is he that will harm you?” read in the lurid light of persecution, cannot mean, “Who is he that will have the will to harm you?” However mysterious it may be, it is an unquestioned and unquestionable fact that men suffer for righteousness’ sake. It was so from Daniel to Peter, from Moses to Paul. “If you would follow the Church’s history,” it has been too truly said, “it is by the track of her blood.”

II. THE INSPIRED DIRECTION FOR MEN IN SUCH WRONGFUL SUFFERING. “Fear not their fear;” that is, the fear their threats seek to awaken. “Sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord;” give him the shrine of worship. “Ready always to give a reason.” Be, in Newman’s sense, ready with an “apologia.” “Having a good conscience;” that is, one keenly alive and free from reproach. “That they may put to shame them that revile.” Wear the silver shield of innocent lives, so be “defenders of the faith.”

III. THE LOFTY PRIVILEGE OF THOSE WHO SUFFER FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS’ SAKE. “Blessed are ye.” Here, again, as often in this Epistle, is an echo of the sermon on the mount. All the Beatitudes pledge you blessing. “Better, if the will of God should so will, suffer for well-doing,” etc. God wills suffering. God wills suffering for well-doing. But there is no element of reproach in that, not to say of remorse. Suffering is of service, and it is “better” the suffering (which all need) should not come from our sin. “For Christ also suffered for sins, the Righteous for the unrighteous.” Fellowship with him is ensured.

IV. THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF MEN WHO SUFFER IN THIS SPIRIT BEING REALLY INJURED. “And who is he that can harm you?” Canon Mason says this form of inquiry, beginning “and,” has always in it a ring of scornful assurance. Here is the “charm” for Christians to wear—“a good conscience.” Then to all wrongful treatment of malign men you can say, “Strike! you cannot harm. Strike! you may embarrass my circumstances, undermine my health, maim my limbs, rob me of reputation, take away my life; but strike! you cannot harm *me*. Such a man

“Can the darkening universe defy
To quench his immortality,
Or shake his faith in God.”

U. R. T.

Vers. 18—20.—*The mission of our Saviour*. I. THE CHARACTER of the mission of the Saviour. 1. His mission was one of *suffering*. He “suffered.” Christianity is not the worship of sorrow, according to the cavil of some; but it is the worship of One who had much to do with sorrow, touched it at its every pore. 2. His mission was

one of *innocent* suffering. Many suffer wrongfully, he absolutely innocently. "The Righteous." 3. His mission was one of *vicarious* suffering; "for," i.e. on account of, the unrighteous. 4. His mission was one *unconquered* by suffering. "Being put to death in the flesh, he was quickened in the spirit."

II. THE PURPOSE of the mission of the Saviour. "That he might bring us to God." Implying: 1. *We are away from God*. Not (1) locally, but in (2) estrangement of heart. That is the "far country." 2. *We can be restored to God*. The great gulf is not fixed. The golden word of the gospel is "reconciliation." 3. *God himself brings us back by Christ*. No mutual quarrel; God always pitiful. "Long-suffering," etc. Guthrie well says, "The central truth of the Bible is not that God loves us because Christ died, but that Christ died because God loves."

III. THE EXTENT OF THE INFLUENCE of the Saviour's mission. The literature of ver. 19 is a library. But apart from any confusion created by that literature, is it not clearly taught?—1. That Christ had a *mission to disembodied spirits after his death*. Killed in the flesh, in the spirit he triumphed, and in the spirit went on that wider, deeper mission. 2. His mission to disembodied spirits *was in harmony with that of all his life*. He "preached." Some read it, "He sealed with the curse of damnation." Is it not rather, as everywhere, "proclaimed repentance, pardon," "heralded love and mercy and hope"? 3. This mission was to disembodied spirits *in a state or place of misery*. "Prison." Some change the word to "Paradise." Dare we do that? It is rather the abode of the guilty, the disobedient, of whom the apostle gives a dark specimen (ver. 20). Dean Alford says, "This throws a blessed light on one of the darkest enigmas of Divine justice." Yet mark, there is no light view of sin here. It is awful for spirits to be in prison, and in prison for twenty-four centuries.—U. R. T.

Vers. 1—7.—*Subjection of wives to their husbands, with subjoined injunction to husbands*. I. SUBJECTION OF WIVES TO THEIR HUSBANDS. 1. *Duty stated*. "In like manner, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands." The space which is here given to wives, especially in comparison with what is given to husbands, points to the great influence of women in the early Christian Church. The injunction to wives comes under the being subject to every ordinance of man (ch. ii. 13). Christianity was to be advanced by the subjection of Christians to magistrates placed over them. It was also to be advanced by the subjection of Christian slaves (who were comparatively numerous) to their masters. *In like manner* it was to be advanced by the subjection of Christian wives (who were comparatively numerous) to their husbands. The duty of subjection is here stated without limitation (which is only introduced in the following verse). It is, however, to be borne in mind that all the subjection enjoined is *for the Lord's sake* (ch. ii. 13), so that we have virtually here Paul's injunction in Eph. v. 22, "Wives, be in subjection unto your own husbands, *as unto the Lord*." The subjection of wives is founded on an appointed *superiority* of husbands to their wives. It is not that wives belong to their husbands; for husbands also belong to their wives (Eph. v. 28). There is a very great amount of equality between wives and their husbands; there is the closest of *companionships* in married life. But in the interest of order in family life, rule must be placed somewhere; and so it has been placed by God in the hands of those whose duty it is to provide for the maintenance and comfort of their wives. Where, then, there is a difference of judgment in connection with the joint management of a household (which ought not very often to occur), it is the duty of the wife to subject her will to the will of her husband. 2. *Wives in a special situation*. "That, even if any obey not the Word, they may without the Word be gained by the behaviour of their wives." Subjection is due in every case, *even* in so unfavourable a case as that which is now to be dealt with. This was the not unfrequent case (all the more, therefore, calling for apostolic legislation) of Christian wives having heathen husbands. We are not to understand that it was *open* for Christian women to take heathen husbands; but after marriage it might happen (more than the converse) that the wives were converted to Christianity, while their husbands remained in heathenism. The principle of the apostolic legislation is that, even in an unfavourable position, subjection is due. It is implied that wives, when converted, would seek to gain their husbands by *the Word*. That would be the prompting both of natural affection and of Christian compassion. They could not keep

Christ and their new-found joys to themselves. They must tell, in the first place, those in whom they had the deepest interest the gospel of Christ, viz. that as manifesting the Father's love, and impelled by love himself, the Son of God did not eschew human nature, but in it lived a perfect human life and died a death of atonement for sin, to bring men out of their sins to a glorious life with himself which is never to know an end. This had been a source of unparalleled joy to them; and they told their husbands about Christ, because they wished them to be sharers with themselves in their joy. The result might be the gaining of their husbands, i.e. first to Christ and the advancement of his kingdom, and then to themselves (to their deep and lasting satisfaction). It is one of Leighton's rich sayings, "A soul converted is gained to itself, gained to the pastor, or friend, or wife, or husband who sought it, and gained to Jesus Christ; added to his treasury [and, we may add, to his instrumentality], who thought not his own precious blood too dear to lay out for this gain." But the word of the gospel is not always obeyed. What if, with the telling and retelling of the Word (blessed and authoritative as it is), husbands do not obey the Word? What if the continued telling of the Word is only to be the occasion of domestic dispeace? Does the duty of subjection then cease? No; the duty of telling the Word then ceases, but not the duty of subjection. Another method is to be tried by them, which may result in the gaining of their husbands. This is *behaviour without the Word*; i.e. acting the gospel, or the silent influence of the life, especially the earnest endeavour to show what gospel subjection is. The hope is held out that this method may succeed where the other fails. If, then, a wife finds herself yoked to a husband who is not converted (whether she has been to blame for her position or not), her duty is with all earnestness to press the Word on him, but not to force it to no purpose but only to produce dispeace; her duty is to cease mentioning the disagreeable subject, and to try the method of the utmost excellence of Christian behaviour without the Word. The trial may be prolonged; but length will be forgotten if the Divine answer comes at last in the conversion of the husband.

3. *Rules of behaviour.* (1) *Rule of purity.* "Beholding your chaste behaviour coupled with fear." The feeling from which good wifely behaviour proceeds is *fear*. Wives are to have fear in the sense of *reverence* towards their husbands as placed over them in the Lord. They are also to have fear in the sense of *shrinking* from the not doing of all that is required in the relation. This *limits* the subjection in forbidding *bad compliance*, i.e. doing a wrong thing because the husband requires it. If a wife were required to give up her religion, it would be her duty not to obey out of regard to him to whom her husband is subject, and apart from whom he has no authority. But if wives feel that they are thus limited, they will be all the more anxious within the lawful sphere to do their duty. The quality of behaviour here fixed upon is *chastity*, which is to be understood in a certain wide sense. It is a word which is appropriate to wifely behaviour. Women are especially endowed with *feelings of modesty*. In the married relation, while they bestow all love and attention on their husbands, there will be nothing in word, in look, in dress, in act, inconsistent with what modesty requires. "Shamefacedness" is the word used by Paul. To this, then, Christian wives are directed in dealing with their heathen husbands after the Word has been ineffectual. Let their husbands behold, see with their own eyes from day to day, their modest behaviour, springing out of the feeling which belongs to subjection; and when the Word-method has failed, this (especially when contrasted with the behaviour of heathen wives) may succeed.

(2) *Rule of a meek and quiet spirit.* "Whose adorning let it not be the outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing jewels of gold, or of putting on apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." The rule is expressed positively in figurative language. The negative may seem to be too *literal*. What has religion to do with the style of putting up the hair, or with what is put on the person? It is a fallacy to suppose that there is any sphere from which religion is excluded. At the same time, religion does not do violence to any natural feeling. It is implied here that it is natural for women to love to adorn themselves. A wife who has not some regard for ornament in her house or person, who is *plainness*, if not a slattern, who has not a flower to delight the eye, is not likely to have much influence with her husband even for Christianity. We must, therefore, understand the apostle as forbidding the things mentioned without proper

subordination, or as ministering to womanly vanity. Especially are we to think of them as forbidden in this aspect, that as immodest, or as encroaching on time, or as heaping up expense, they form a temptation to a wife to be undutiful to her husband. If she would gain him for what is good, she must, without disregard of the lower ornamentation, show proper regard to the higher ornamentation. Let her adorning be not a conspicuous style of the hair, or conspicuous jewels, or conspicuous apparel; but let it be *the hidden man of the heart*—not that alone apart from moral characterization, but, while it has its seat in the heart, and is not attractive to the outward eye, let it be in and with *the incorruptible*. Plaited hair, jewels of gold, apparel, are subordinate as belonging to the category of the corruptible. The incorruptible in adorning that is singled out is *a meek and quiet spirit*. The first word points to *not being easily provoked*; the second word points to being *in love with a quiet life*. A Christian wife might have much to bear from her unenlightened husband, from his imperious temper, from his bad behaviour, from his neglect; she might have to bear from him on account of her religion; he might resent her choosing her own religion and (by implication) condemning his; but let her be meek under his wronging of her, and let her say or do nothing to cause displeasure. This in the sight of men may be a very poor ornament; she may seem to be regarding herself as no better than his slave. But God is also looking on the spirit which she is manifesting, and in his sight (which is its highest recommendation) it is of great price. The way God takes to overcome evil in us is, under our provocations, to heap goodness on us. If a Christian wife would conquer her unbelieving husband for Christ, she must in this imitate the Divine procedure.

4. *Models of behaviour.* (1) *The holy women of old time.* "For after this manner aforetime the holy women also, who hoped in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands." In heathen mythology, Penelope, Andromache, Alcestis, are regarded as models of wifely excellence. But Peter, saturated with Old Testament ideas, does not fall back on Greek *aforetime*, but only on *Old Testament* aforetime. He sets up as models to those whom he is addressing *the holy women*, i.e. those who were in covenant with God, and whose conduct was conditioned by the holiness of God. This implied their being believers, and as believers they are further described as those *who hoped in God*, i.e. raised their expectation from what they believed God to be, and from what they believed God to *promise*. They looked forward to the coming of the Messiah, and to a future beyond death to be made glorious through his mission to earth. We have not much information as to the facts upon which Peter proceeds; but he plainly certifies it of the holy women as a class, that they *adorned themselves after this manner*, i.e. with a meek and quiet spirit. They were kept from thinking about mere outward ornamentation, because they looked for something substantial from God. They did this as what was proper to them as subjected to their husbands. Instead of being *self-assertive*, they were *compliant*, under the impelling and also restraining of fear. The rule for the holy women of the New Testament time extending down to our day is not different from what was the rule for the holy women of the Old Testament time, resting as it does on a Divine appointment in the earthly constitution. To the models set up by Peter we must add *Christian* models—women who, saturated with gospel ideas, have been adorned with that which in the sight of God is of great price. (2) *Sarah.* "As Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose children ye now are, if ye do well, and are not put in fear by any terror." The words sounded on are to be found in Gen. xviii. 12. Sarah's calling Abraham her lord was not confined to the one occasion; it was characteristic of her, showed the habit of her mind toward her husband, and on that ground it is entitled to the weight which is here attached to it. The occasion was also closely connected with the history of redemption, bearing on the birth of Isaac. The apostle could not have found a better model; for Sarah was specially significant, even as Abraham was. If the one was *father* "of all them that believe though they be not circumcised," the other was *mother*. What constitutes *daughterhood* is here not faith, but the *evidencing* of faith. It is, on the one hand, *doing well*. Sarah did well in obeying Abraham, and also remarkably in that through faith "she received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised." It is, on the other hand, *not doing evil*, or, as it is here put in the way of consequence, *not being put in fear by any terror*. This was

what was to be avoided in Sarah as a model. On the occasion referred to she was made afraid by her evil-doing (laughing at the first mention of a child), and by her fear was led into more sin (in denying that she laughed), thus bringing shame not only on herself, but on her husband. Holy women will not thus compromise their husbands, but, mindful of what is due to them, will concur with them, where the blessing promised to faith is to be obtained.

II. SUBJOINED INJUNCTION TO HUSBANDS. 1. *Duty*. "Ye husbands, in like manner, dwell with your wives according to knowledge, giving honour unto the woman, as unto the weaker vessel, as being also joint-heirs of the grace of life." Having dwelt at length (in the interest of Christianity) on the subjection of wives, he feels it necessary to subjoin an injunction to husbands, which he did not feel it to be necessary in the case of magistrates and of masters (few of those being connected with the Christian Church). It is not said that husbands are *in like manner* to be subject; the likeness can only, therefore, refer to what lies over against the subjection. As subject, the woman is weak—the weaker vessel, not so strong as the man. In this lies a danger to the woman—the danger of being trampled upon. Hence the need of husbands being *enlightened* in their treatment of their wives. "Dwell with according to knowledge as with the weaker vessel the womanly," is the literal translation and the proper connection. *Weakness* in the woman calls for *knowledge* in the man. He is to *love*, says the Apostle Paul; and the idea is similar here. He is to act *according to knowledge*, i.e. of the Divine intention or order. He is to put his strength at the service of love, with his strength shielding her weakness and (generally) promoting her good. It is under this enlightenedness that *honour* comes. Honour is to be paid by husbands to their wives (both being regarded as Christians) on the ground that they are *also joint-heirs of the grace of life*. They are even, as we would seem to be taught here, to be honoured on the ground of nature. "God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked." But they are *also* to be honoured as heirs together of the grace of life, i.e. as honoured participators (for inheriting here points to honour) with their husbands in the grace that is needed for life or that makes life a blessing, both here and hereafter. It is only in the earthly sphere of things (which is also temporary) that there is not perfect equality; in the heavenly sphere there is no difference. Women stand in the same relation to God, have the same unction on their life, look forward to the same eternal home as their husbands, and by this consideration the honour otherwise due to them and to be *apportioned* to them must be regarded as greatly heightened. 2. *Motive*. "To the end that your prayers be not hindered." The duty enjoined must be attended to by husbands, that the prayers offered by them with their wives, and as heads of the household, be not hindered. There is a pointing to this that "the prayers of families are as often defeated by the want of any such concert in the aims, plans, tempers, works, and aspirations of the house, as are necessary to a common suit before God. The prayers should agree with as many other prayers and as many other circles of causes as possible; for God is working always towards the largest harmony, and will not favour, therefore, the prayer of words when everything else in the life is demanding something else, but will rather have respect to what has the widest reach of things and persons making suit with it. At this latter point it is that prayers most commonly fail, viz. that they are solitary and contrary, having nothing put in agreement with them; as if some one person should be praying for fair weather, when everybody else wants rain, and the gaping earth and thirsty animals and withering trees are all asking for it together. What is prayed for in the house by the father is—how commonly!—not prayed for by the mother in her family tastes and tempers, and is even prayed against, in fact, by all the instigations of appearance and pride and show which are raised by her motherly studies and cares. The father prays in the morning that his children may grow up in the Lord, and calls it even the principal good of their life that they are to be Christians, living to God and for the world to come. Then he goes out into the field, or the shop, or the house of trade, and his plans and works pull exactly contrary to the pull of his prayers and all his teaching in religion. What is wanted, therefore, is to put all the causes, all the prayers, into a common strain of endeavour, reaching after a common good in God and his friendship" (Bushnell).—R. F.

Vers. 8—22.—*Injunctions to all.* I. UNION AMONG THEMSELVES. “Finally, be ye all like-minded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tender-hearted, humble-minded.” “Finally” does not point to the close of the Epistle, but to the close of a particular series of injunctions. He has been addressing various classes represented in the Churches; he might have included others, but he will simply address *all*. He has it principally in his mind to address them on their attitude toward a hostile world; he is preparing the way in exhorting them to union among themselves. Let them all be *like-minded*, i.e. have the same exalted opinion of Christ and the same views as to the methods of advancing his cause. Let them also be *affected along with it* (as the literal translation is), i.e. have the same feelings—the same sympathy with truth and antipathy to error, the same feeling of gladness when the cause is triumphing, and the same feeling of depression when it receives a temporary check, yet of hope of its ultimate triumph. Let them also *love the brethren*, i.e. be drawn to them who have the same views and the same feelings. Let them also be *tender-hearted*, i.e. considerate of their brethren in distress. Kindness such as was exhibited by the Gentile Christians to the poor saints in Judæa has great influence in promoting unity. Let them be *humble-minded*, i.e. willing to sink, not the truth, but self; for there is nothing more destructive of unity than self-assertion. It is with a feeling of regret that we have to part with the precept, “Be courteous,” as being a distinct recognition of what are called by-works, or accessory virtues. “They are valid only as small coin, and yet conduce to strengthen man’s virtuous sentiments, were it even merely by awakening the endeavour to bring this outward form as near as possible to a reality, in rendering us accessible, conversible, polite, hospitable, and engaging in our daily intercourse; which things do promote the cause of virtue by making it *beloved*” (Kant).

II. BEARING TOWARD A HOSTILE WORLD. 1. *To bless because called to obtain a blessing.* (1) *To bless.* “Not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling, but contrariwise blessing.” There is a law of non-retaliation under which we are placed as laid down by the Master. The magistrate is warranted in proceeding on the principle of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth (administering punishment and administering it in proportion to the offence); and we may be warranted, as Paul was, in taking advantage of the law to shield us from wrong (where more good is not to be gained by waiving our rights). It does not belong to us to say authoritatively what justice demands; and certainly in any action we take or word we utter we are not simply to gratify vengeful feeling. When men emit their malice on us in evil or railing, we are not to reciprocate their feeling in rendering evil for evil or railing for railing; but, as standing on higher ground, and owning another Master (Luke vi. 27—29), we are to *bless* them, i.e. both in act and in word to study their good. (2) *Because called to obtain a blessing.* “For hereunto were ye called, that ye should inherit a blessing.” We may well study the good of those who injure us, when we think of the large blessing which on our conversion we were called to inherit. God did not then take justice out of us, deal with us according to our deserts, but acted in the most liberal, kindly manner; and should not we deal nobly with others? 2. *Citation from the thirty-fourth psalm.* (1) *How the blessing is viewed.* “For, He that would love life, and see good days.” This confirmatory citation (introduced without a formula) extends over three verses. The Septuagint rendering here is, “What man is he that desireth life, that loveth to see good days?” It is implied that it requires an effort to *love life*, i.e. to have it wisely loved. It requires an effort to *see good days*, i.e. days in which the blessing of God is enjoyed. The psalmist had probably in his mind *length* as one element; so “many” is introduced into the Old Testament translation. But it is to be remembered that days, however long or outwardly prosperous, are not *good* days without the Divine blessing. (2) *Conduct by which the blessing is conditioned.* (a) *Righteousness in speech.* “Let him refrain his tongue from evil and his lips that they speak no guile.” When tempted to use bitter or calumnious words, or to use honeyed words for evil ends, let him put a stop to it—holding back his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking guile. For evil feelings indulged in speech, or deceit in speech found out, may rob him of much of the pleasure of life, if not of life itself. (b) *Righteousness in act.* “And let him turn away from evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and pursue it.” When tempted to follow mischief which he has devised, or to declare a state of war, let him turn away his feet from the mischief and contrive well—

doing, let him make peace his object sought, and let his chase after it (as it were fleeing from him) be keen. For evil feelings indulged in act, peace once broken, may lead to the embittering or shortening of life. (3) *Reference to the Divine dealing.* "For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears unto their supplication: but the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil." The anthropomorphism is marked—the *eyes, ears, face*, of the Lord. God is no respecter of persons; but he is *favourable* to the righteous, i.e. the right-speaking and right acting. His sympathies are with them; his providence is in league with them. His *eyes are upon them*, i.e. to note their condition, to delight in their struggles after conformity to his will, and to send them tokens of his favour. His *ears are unto their supplication*, i.e. to mark it, to answer it, especially when it rises out of experience of wrong. On the other hand, God is *unfavourable* to them that do evil things, i.e. make a practice of it, refusing Divine mercy and paying no heed to Divine threatenings. There is not much expressed here; it is only the disjunctive word that *suggests* the face of God as not full of pleasure, but full of *displeasure*, upon them that do evil. "With the froward thou wilt show thyself froward." It is well that there should be a deep and widespread impression of the truth that God is contrary to them that are contrary to his laws, and forbids them in their contrariety to have what he promises to the righteous—life and good days. 3. *Application of the citation.* "And who is he that will harm you, if ye be zealous of that which is good?" The Septuagint rendering of Isa. l. 9 is, "Behold the Lord, the Lord will help me; *who is he that will harm me?*" There is a way in which we can be proof against harm, i.e. any real injury to our happiness. It is by being *zealots*, not unenlightened zealots, but zealots of the *good*, i.e. all that is prescribed by God. So long as the Israelites were zealous in their attachment to God and his ordinances they were *invulnerable*. 4. *Blessedness of suffering for righteousness' sake.* (1) *The pronouncing blessed.* "But and if ye should suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed are ye." While proof against harm, they might be called to suffer. In the event of their suffering for righteousness' sake they would come within the scope of the Saviour's beatitude, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The preaching of righteousness in the life is offensive to the world, and provokes its dislike and malice. But those who are persecuted because of the right ordering of their life are not to be commiserated: they are to be pronounced *blessed*. They have the satisfaction of being at peace with their conscience, the satisfaction of enjoying the approval of their God, who will not forget their faithfulness. (2) *Feeling accompanying the blessedness.* "And fear not their fear, neither be troubled." It is remarkable how much the apostle's thought runs in Old Testament language. The language here and in the beginning of the next verse is based on Isa. viii. 12, 13. Their persecutors would seek to inspire them with fear, to throw them into a state of perturbation; but let them not fear their fear, neither be troubled. "Should the empress determine to banish me, let her banish me; 'the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.' If she will cast me into the sea, let her cast me into the sea; I will remember Jonah. If she will throw me into a burning fiery furnace, the three children were there before me. If she will throw me to the wild beasts, I will remember that Daniel was in the den of lions. If she will condemn me to be stoned, I shall be the associate of Stephen, the proto-martyr. If she will have me beheaded, the Baptist submitted to the same punishment. If she will take away my substance, 'naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return to it'" (Chrysostom). (3) *Means of being undisturbed in the blessedness.* (a) *Adoration of Christ.* "But sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord." Peter gives a Christian colouring to the Old Testament language. Our hearts are our temple; there we are to *sanctify* Christ, i.e. to hold him as holy. We are to fear him as shown to be holy in his redemption-work, and also as by his redemption-work made our Lord. In the quiet of our hearts habitually fearing him as our Redeemer whose every word is to be obeyed, the fear of man will not find admission. (b) *Apology in presence of men.* *That we are to be ready with our apology.* "Being ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear." Peter begins, "Being ready always with an *apology*," i.e. answer, or defence. It is not intended that we should master Christian apologetics—be able to answer every objection which infidels may start. The apology which is contemplated

here is of a much more simple nature, viz. that we should be able to make a plain statement of the considerations that have had weight with us in leading us to be Christians. We are here regarded as having a hope in us, *i.e.* as a living, active principle. It is true that we belong more to the future than to the present. What is fulfilled is but small in comparison with what is yet to be fulfilled. This hope is rationally produced, and we ought to be able to give a rational account of it. Can we give a clear statement of its nature, and of the grounds on which it rests? It is the hope of *salvation*, *i.e.* of ultimate complete deliverance from the power of sin. It is the hope of *eternal life*, *i.e.* of the present life being perfected. It is the hope of a *resurrection*, *i.e.* of the body laid in the grave being raised. It is the hope of *glory*, *i.e.* of our whole nature having a shining form. It is the hope of the *glorious appearing of Christ*, *i.e.* to have his own glory fully manifested and to consummate ours. It is the hope of being *for ever with the Lord*, *i.e.* happy in his presence and fellowship. We rest our hope on the *work of Christ*. We feel that his righteousness is reason for the accusings of conscience being silenced, and for God bestowing on us all manifestations of his love. We rest our hope on the *promise of God in Christ*. We have not only fact to rest on, but the expression of fact in *word*, and to his word God has added his *oath*, "That by two immutable things [the word and the oath both based on fact] in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have a strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us." We further rest our hope on *our experience*. "Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and *experience, hope*." What we have already experienced of God does not discourage us; on the contrary, it is strong reason for our looking for the plenitude of the Divine blessing. We are to be *ready always* with our apology; that does not mean that we are to be always putting forward our apology, for we must use discretion. But we are to be ready with our apology whenever occasion offers. The occasion contemplated is any one *asking* us a reason concerning the hope that is in us. We are then to be equal to the occasion; we are not to let slip the opportunity of our commending our Master. Let us be silent through ensnaring fear; but let us come forward and tell what Christ has done for us, and what we expect from him. But let us put forward our apology with *meekness*. "Then must ye not answer with proud words, and bring out the matter with a defiance and with violence, as if ye would tear up trees" (Luther). Let us also put forward our apology with fear, *i.e.* the fear of damage being done to the cause by the weakness of our apology, leading us to make God our Counsellor. (c) *Way in which we are to be ready with our apology*. "Having a good conscience; that, wherein ye are spoken against, they may be put to shame who revile your good manner of life in Christ." We must have materials for our apology, else we shall never be ready with it. These materials are to be supplied from a good life, which is here viewed in connection with having a good conscience, *i.e.* habitually acting according to our convictions of duty. When spoken against, we shall best put our revilers to shame by recounting facts which can bear the light. In the absence of these, no amount of skill of speech will make us good apologists, whom fear cannot disturb. (4) *The blessedness brought out by contrast*. "For it is better, if the will of God should so will, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing." It is better, subject to the condition of the Divine willing of suffering. He does not say how it is better. His former thought was that in suffering for our faults there is not the noble element that there is in suffering for well-doing. Thus is he helped to rise to the sublime height of *Christ's suffering*. 5. *Blessedness of suffering for righteousness' sake illustrated by the example of Christ*. (1) *In bringing us to God Christ suffered not for his own sins*. "Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God." Stress is to be laid here, as at the close of the second chapter, on the *exemplary* character of Christ's sufferings. But Peter could not regard these in the lower aspect without also bringing in their higher aspect. The great object of Christ was to *bring us to God*, *i.e.* not merely into a state of reconciliation to God, but into a state of fellowship with God. His suffering was for this end. He suffered *for sins*; and so far he might seem to have the character of an evil-doer. But the sins were not his own; as it is added that he was the *Righteous One* (Peter's designation of Christ in Acts iii. 14) *for the unrighteous*, *i.e.* us who needed to be brought to God. The idea of substitution is not brought forward, but it is in the background. We are

rather to think of *advantage conferred* as giving Christ indisputable authority as example. Do we suffer for well-doing? Christ, it is said, *also* suffered, by whose well-doing (the thought is) we are so mightily advantaged. But the apostle has a look beyond this; of which he gives a hint in the word "once." Christ suffered *once*; i.e. suffered, and then passed into a state in which he suffers no more. So we are to understand that we have this to comfort us (Christ being our Example), that our suffering is only once; it is what comes after suffering that is permanent. (2) *His being put to death was followed by his being quickened.* "Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit." There is a resuming of the thought of suffering in connection with its worst and last phase. Though the Righteous One, he was treated as a malefactor, and *put to death* ("killed" is Peter's word in Acts iii. 15); he thus came within the scope of his own beatitude, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." His suffering in the interest of human well-being was followed, as has already been indicated, by his suffering no more. It is now declared that it was followed by his being quickened. It is further declared that it was followed by his resurrection and ascension; and before he leaves his theme, it is declared that it is yet to be followed by his coming to judgment. Thus no sooner did he suffer, than he came to be in the ascendant. The starting-point of his *after-suffering* career was his *being quickened*. His being put to death was *in the flesh*; i.e. on the side of his nature by which he was connected with earth and had a mortal existence. His being quickened is contrasted in being not in the flesh, but *in the spirit*; i.e. on the side of his nature by which he was above earth and had an immortal existence. At death there takes place a separation of soul and body. During the time Christ's body was in the grave his soul was in Hades. It was Peter who showed himself alive to this important fact in his comments on the words of the sixteenth psalm, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," in his sermon on the day of Pentecost. The expression of the fact in the Apostles' Creed is that he "descended into Hades." By "Hades" is denoted the *invisible world*, with the special association of *the world of the dead*. Between our death and the resurrection we are to be in an incomplete state in so far as soul and body are not to be united. Our Lord's identification with us extended to his being for a determined time in this incomplete state. At our death (if we are in Christ) we believe that there is to be a quickening of us in spirit in connection with our being placed under higher conditions. So we would seem to be taught here, regarding our Lord, that the extinguishing of his life in the flesh was immediately followed by a quickening in that which could not die, and had a separate existence. While his body was not yet quickened, there was a bursting forth of glorious activity in his spirit in the new sphere of things and altered conditions into which he passed. (3) *Being quickened, he was also active in Hades.* "In which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which aforetime were disobedient, when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a-preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water." In the spirit quickened, he was also active in a particular form. The congenial abode of Christ in Hades was Paradise, or the abode of the blessed dead. But he did not simply abide in Paradise; he *went* from it to the abode of the unsaved dead. This is here called a prison, being the place where there is meantime abridgment of liberty. He penetrated even to this department of Hades, and *preached*. This is a word of evangelical sense in the New Testament, and is to be interpreted in accordance with the reference to Christ's death going before, and also in accordance with the preaching of the gospel in ch. iv. 6. We may understand that in Paradise he not only manifested himself as the Incarnate One, but also announced his death and his soon-to-be accomplished resurrection. And we are not to think of other announcement than this in the place where spirits are imprisoned. It is not said that he preached unto all the spirits in prison, but only unto a section of them, viz. the spirits of them that perished in the Flood. It cannot be said of the antediluvians referred to that they were very unfavourably situated for trial. There was addressed to them a call to repentance; for Noah *preached*—preached what their sins would bring upon them (according to the revelation made to him), but also preached the means of deliverance. He preached not only by word, but by act. And God was not in haste to destroy. "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days

shall be an hundred and twenty years." During all the time the ark was a-preparing the long-suffering of God waited, *i.e.* not to destroy. But the men of Noah's time were disobedient, *i.e.* refused, made light of proffered deliverance; and as they were overtaken by an earthly judgment, which was so complete that only eight souls ("so few as eight") were saved by means of the water, with regard to which the others, to their destruction, were sceptical. And they are here represented in the next world as spirits in prison. And yet to them Christ went and announced his death and coming resurrection. There is a certain mystery resting upon this fact which it was not the purpose of God by Peter to remove. It was sufficient to emphasize the fact that, so far from being crushed by death, he was gloriously active, even in the world of the unsaved dead. Seeing that the full significance of the fact has not been disclosed, it would be wrong to be dogmatic; at the same time, we are bound not to let go the fact which is to be regarded as an important addition to the facts contained in the Gospels. What has been given as the interpretation was substantially what prevailed until the time of Augustine. The Augustinian interpretation, the influence of which is evident in our translation, starts from the assumption that Peter does not intend to bring out an antithesis between what was done to Christ *in the flesh* and what was done to Christ *in the spirit*. It also proceeds on the assumption that it was not Christ that preached, but Noah. There was not a proper going from one place to another, and after Christ's death. The preaching was not founded on Christ's death. It was addressed not properly to spirits, but to men in the flesh. These were not literally in prison, but in the prison of sin. They were not properly aforesaid disobedient, but disobedient when Noah preached. Thus does the long-prevailing Augustinian interpretation break down along the whole line. (4) *Not held in Hades, he reappeared in resurrection-form and with resurrection-power on earth.* "Which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Water saved the eight; so water saves us still, *i.e.* in the antitype, the type being now baptism. How does baptism save us? It may be said of the Flood that it was the baptism of the earth. It was associated with the washing away of the filth of the old world; it was also associated with the bringing forth of a renovated world. So baptism is associated with the putting away of the filth of the flesh; it is also associated (which is to the purpose here) with the *interrogation of a good conscience toward God*. At baptism there used to be transacting by question and answer such as this: "Dost thou renounce Satan?" "I do renounce him." "Dost thou believe in Christ?" "I do believe in him." "Dost thou take thy stand by Christ?" "I do take my stand by him." Of the new life thus entered on by explicit covenant the efficient cause was the *resurrection of Jesus Christ*. Thus the apostle gets back to his line of thought. So far from being crushed by death Christ was not held within the world of the dead. The quickening which pervaded his spirit extended also, and from his spirit, to his body. He reappeared for a time on earth in resurrection-form, bringing in glorious resurrection-power first for the souls of men—of which the earthly channel is baptism. (5) *Having risen from earth, he now reigns from the right hand of God in heaven.* "Who is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him." So far from being crushed by death, Christ is now established at the right hand of God. After having, as typified in baptism, efficiently left a channel of regenerating influence for men, he left earth. As he *went* from one department of Hades into another, so he *went* up from earth into heaven. In heaven he is at the right hand of God—gloriously reigning there, angels and authorities and powers, even all the orders of the heavenly hierarchy, being made subject unto him. If Christ, then, suffering for righteousness' sake, thus came to be in the ascendant, shall not we, suffering for righteousness' sake, come to be in the ascendant too, all the more that he is now in a position to bring this about for us?—R. F.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER IV.

Ver. 1.—**Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh.** St. Peter returns, after the digression of ch. iii. 19—22, to the great subject of Christ's example. The words "for us" are omitted in some ancient manuscripts; they express a great truth already dwelt upon in ch. ii. and iii. Here the apostle is insisting upon the example of Christ, not on the atoning efficacy of his death. **Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind.** The word rendered "mind" (*ἐννοια*) is more exactly "thought" (comp. Heb. iv. 12, the only other place where it occurs in the New Testament); but it certainly has sometimes the force of "intention, resolve." The Christian must be like his Master; he must arm himself with the great thought, the holy resolve, which was in the mind of Christ—the thought that suffering borne in faith frees us from the power of sin, the resolve to suffer patiently according to the will of God. That thought, which can be made our own only by faith, is the Christian's shield; we are to arm ourselves with it against the assaults of the evil one (comp. Rom. xiii. 12; 2 Cor. x. 4; Eph. vi. 11). **For he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.** The thought is that of Rom. vi. 6—11. Some translate the conjunction *ὅτι*, "that," and understand it as giving the content of the *ἐννοια*: "Arm yourselves with the thought that," etc.; but this does not give so good a sense, and would seem to require *ταύτην* rather than *τὴν αὐτήν*—"this thought," rather than "the same thought." Some, again, understand this clause of Christ; but this seems a mistake. The apostle spoke first of the Master; now he turns to the disciple. Take, he says, for your armour the thoughts which filled the sacred heart of Christ—the thought that suffering in the flesh is not, as the world counts it, an unmixed evil, but often a deep blessing; for, or because, he that suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin. If, when we are called to suffer, we offer up our sufferings to Christ who suffered for us, and unite our sufferings with his by faith in him, then those sufferings, thus sanctified, destroy the power of sin, and make us cease from sin (comp. Rom. vi. 10).

Ver. 2.—**That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh.** On the whole, it seems better to connect this clause with the imperative: "Arm yourselves with the same mind, that ye no longer should live the rest of your time," rather than with the clause immediately preceding: "He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that

he no longer should live," etc.; though both connections give a good sense. The Greek word for "live" (*βιάσαι*) occurs only here in the New Testament. Bengel says, "Aptum verbum, non dicitur de brutis." "In the flesh" here means simply "in the body," in this mortal life. "The rest of your time" suggests the solemn thought of the shortness of our earthly pilgrimage: live for eternity. **To the lusts of men, but to the will of God.** The datives are normal; they express the pattern or rule according to which our life ought to be fashioned. God's will is our sanctification (1 Thess. iv. 3). That will is ever the same, a fixed, unchanging rule; the lusts of men are shifting, uncertain, restless.

Ver. 3.—**For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles;** rather, as in the Revised Version, *the time past may suffice.* The words, "of our life" and "us," are not found in the best manuscripts. St. Peter could not include himself among those who wrought the will of the Gentiles. The Greek word for "will" here is, according to the best manuscripts, *βούλημα*; in ver. 2 "the will of God" is *θέλημα*. The general distinction is that *θέλω* implies choice and purpose, *βούλομαι* merely inclination (compare, in the Greek, Philom. 13, 14). The change of word seems to point to such a distinction here. God's will is a fixed, holy purpose; the will, or rather wish, of the Gentiles was uncertain inclination, turned this way or that way by changeful lusts. The perfect infinitive, "to have wrought," implies that that part of life ought to be regarded as a thing wholly past and gone. The whole sentence has a tone of solemn irony. "Fastidium peccati apud resipiscentes" (Bengel); comp. Rom. vi. 21. St. Peter is here addressing Gentile Christians. Frommüller's objection is peculiar: "Suppose that the readers of Peter's Epistle had formerly been heathens, his reproaching them with having formerly done the will of the Gentiles would surely be singular." They had done the will of the Gentiles; they were now, as Christians, to do the will of God. When we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries; better, as in the Revised Version, *and to have walked.* There is no pronoun. Lusts are the hidden sins of unclean thought, which lead to outbreaks of lasciviousness. The Greek word for "revellings" (*κῶμοι*) is one often used of drunken youths parading the streets, or of festal processions in honour of Bacchus. The word translated "banquetings" means rather "drinking-bouts." The word for "abominable" is *ἀθέμιτοις*, unlawful, nefarious, con-

trary to the eternal principles of the Divine Law; "quibus sanctissimum Dei jus violatur" (Bengel). St. Peter is probably referring, not only to the sin of idolatry in itself, but also to the many licentious practices connected with it. After the persecution of Nero, in which St. Peter perished, Christianity was regarded by the state as a *religio illicita*. Christianity was condemned by the law of Rome; idolatry is opposed to the eternal Law of God. This verse could not have been addressed to Hebrew Christians.

Ver. 4.—Wherein they think it strange. *Wherein*, in which course of life, in the fact that the Christians once lived like the Gentiles, but now are so wholly changed. The word *ξενισθεαι* means commonly to be a guest, to live as a stranger in another's house (Acts x. 6, 18; xxi. 16); here it means to be astonished, as at some strange sight, as such guests would no doubt sometimes be (comp. ver. 12 and Acts xvii. 20). That ye run not with them to the same excess of riot. The Greek words are very strong, "while ye run not with them," as if the Gentiles were running greedily in troops to riot and ruin. The word for "excess" (*ἀνὰχρως*) is found here only in the New Testament; it means "an overflowing;" the rendering *sentina* ("a sewer" or "cesspool") is doubtful. The word rendered "riot" (*ἀσωτία*) occurs also in Eph. v. 18 and Titus i. 6, and is used in the adverbial form in describing the recklessness of the prodigal son (Luke xv. 13). It means that lost state in which a man is given up to self-indulgence, and saves neither reputation, earthly position, nor his immortal soul. Speaking evil of you; better, perhaps, translated literally, *blaspheming*. The words "of you" are not in the original; they who revile Christians for well-doing are blasphemers, they speak really against God.

Ver. 5.—Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. The judgment is at hand; the Judge standeth before the door; all men, quick and dead alike, must give account to him. It is better to suffer now for well-doing than then for evil-doing. Men call you to give account now (ch. iii. 15); they themselves must give account to God.

Ver. 6.—For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead. The conjunction "for" seems to link this verse closely to ver. 5, while the *καί* ("also" or "even") gives an emphasis to "them that are dead" (*καὶ νεκροίς*). We naturally refer these last words to the *καὶ νεκροίς* of the preceding verse. The apostle seems to be meeting an objection. The Thessalonian Christians feared lest believers who fell asleep before the second advent should lose something

of the blessedness of those who should be alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord. On the other hand, some of St. Peter's readers may, perhaps, have thought that those who had passed away before the gospel times could not be justly judged in the same way as those who then were living. The two classes, the living and the dead, were separated by a great difference: the living had heard the gospel, the dead had not; the living had opportunities and privileges which had not been granted to the dead. But, St. Peter says, the gospel was preached also to the dead; they too heard the glad tidings of salvation (*καὶ νεκροῖς εὐ-ηγγελισθῆν*). Some have thought that the word "dead" is used metaphorically for the dead in trespasses and sins. But it seems scarcely possible to give the word a literal sense in ver. 5 and a metaphorical sense in ver. 6. Some understand the apostle as meaning that the gospel had been preached to those who then were dead, before their death; but it seems unnatural to assign different times to the verb and the substantive. The aorist *εὐηγγελισθῆν* directs our thoughts to some definite occasion. The absence of the article (*καὶ νεκροῖς*) should also be noticed; the words assert that the gospel was preached to dead persons—to some that were dead. These considerations lead us to connect the passage with ch. iii. 19, 20. There St. Peter tells us that Christ himself went and preached in the spirit "to the spirits in prison;" then the gospel was preached, the good news of salvation was announced, to some that were dead. The article is absent both here and in ver. 5 (*ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς*). All men, quick and dead alike, must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; so St. Peter may not have intended to limit the area of the Lord's preaching in Hades here, as he had done in ch. iii. There he mentioned one section only of the departed; partly because the Deluge furnished a conspicuous example of men who suffered for evil-doing, partly because he regarded it as a striking type of Christian baptism. Here, perhaps, he asserts the general fact—the gospel was preached to the dead; perhaps (we may not presume to dogmatize in a matter so mysterious, about which so little is revealed) to all the vast population of the underworld, who had passed away before the gospel times. Like the men of Tyre and Sidon, of Sodom and Gomorrah, they had not seen the works or heard the words of Christ during their life on the earth; now they heard from the Lord himself what he had done for the salvation of mankind. Therefore God was ready to judge the quick and the dead, for to both was the gospel preached. That they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live accord-

ing to God in the spirit. The gospel was preached to the dead for this end (*εις τούτο*), that they might be judged indeed (*ἵνα κριθῶσι μέν*), but nevertheless live (*ζῶσι δέ*). The last clause expresses the end and purpose of the preaching; the former clause, though grammatically dependent upon the conjunction *ἵνα*, states a necessity antecedent to the preaching (comp. Rom. vi. 17, "God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart;" and viii. 10, "If Christ be in you, the body indeed is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness"). The meaning seems to be—the gospel was preached to the dead, that, though they were judged, yet they might live. They had suffered the judgment of death, the punishment of human sin. Christ had been put to death in the flesh (ch. iii. 18) for the sins of others; the dead had suffered death in the flesh for their own sins. They had died before the manifestation of the Son of God, before the great work of atonement wrought by his death; but that atonement was retrospective—he "taketh away the sin of the world;" its saving influences extended even to the realm of the dead. The gospel was preached to the dead, that, though they were judged according to men (that is, after the fashion of men, as all men are judged), yet they might live in the spirit (comp. 1 Cor. v. 5, "To deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus"). The verb *κριθῶσι*, "might be judged," is aorist, as describing a single fact; the verb *ζῶσι*, "might live," is present, as describing a continual state. According to God. God is Spirit; and as they that worship him must worship in spirit, so they who believe in him shall live in spirit. The future life is a spiritual life; the resurrection-bodies of the saints will be spiritual bodies, for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." But *κατὰ θεόν* may also mean "according to the will of God" (as in Rom. viii. 27), according to his gracious purpose, and in that life which he giveth to his chosen, that eternal life which lieth in the knowledge of God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.

Ver. 7.—But the end of all things is at hand. The mention of the judgment turns St. Peter's thoughts into another channel. The end is at hand, not only the judgment of persecutors and slanderers, but the end of persecutions and sufferings, the end of our great conflict with sin, the end of our earthly probation; therefore prepare to meet your God. The end is at hand; it hath drawn near. St. Peter probably, like the other apostles, looked for the speedy coming of the Lord. It was not for him, as

it is not for us, "to know the times or the seasons" (Acts i. 7). It is enough to know that our own time is short. When St. Peter wrote these words, the end of the holy city, the centre of the ancient dispensation, was very near at hand; and behind that awful catastrophe lay the incomparably more tremendous judgment, of which the fall of Jerusalem was a figure. That judgment, we know now, was to be separated by a wide interval from the date of St. Peter's Epistle. But that interval is measured, in the prophetic outlook, not by months and years. We are now living in "the last times" (1 Tim. iv. 1; 1 John ii. 18). The coming of our Lord was the beginning of the last period in the development of God's dealings with mankind; there is no further dispensation to be looked for. "Not only is there nothing more between the Christian's present state of salvation and the end, but the former is itself already the end, i.e. the beginning of the end" (Schott, quoted by Huther). Be ye therefore sober; rather, *self-restrained, calm, thoughtful*. The thought of the nearness of the end should not lead to excitement and neglect of common duties, as it did in the case of the Thessalonian Christians, and again at the approach of the thousandth year of our era. And watch unto prayer; rather, *be sober unto prayers*. The word translated "watch" in the Authorized Version is not that which we read in our Lord's exhortation to "watch and pray." The word used here (*νήψατε*) rather points to temperance, abstinence from strong drinks, though it suggests also that wariness and cool thoughtfulness which are destroyed by excess. The Christian must be self-restrained and sober, and that with a view to perseverance in prayer. The aorist imperatives, perhaps, imply that St. Peter's readers needed to be stirred up (2 Pet. i. 13; iii. 1), to be aroused from that indifference into which men are so apt to fall. The exhortation to persevere in watchfulness would be expressed by the present.

Ver. 8.—And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves; more literally, *before all things, having your love towards one another intense*. The existence of charity is taken for granted. Christians must love one another; love is the very badge of their profession. The apostle urges his readers to keep that love intense, and that before all things; for charity is the first of Christian graces. (On the word "intense" (*ἐκτενής*), see note on ch. i. 22.) For charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Read and translate, with the Revised Version, *for love covereth a multitude of sins*. If St. Peter is directly quoting Prov. x. 12, he is not using the Septuagint,

as he commonly does, but translating from the Hebrew. The Septuagint rendering is quite different, πάντας δὲ τοὺς μὴ φιλονεκούντας καλύπτει φίλα. But it may be that the words had become proverbial. We find them also in Jas. v. 20, "He which converteth the sinner . . . shall hide a multitude of sins." St. James means that he will obtain God's forgiveness for the converted sinner; but in Prov. x. 12 the meaning (as is plain from the context) is that love covers the sins of others; does not stir up strifes, as hatred does, but promotes concord by concealing and forgiving sins. This is probably St. Peter's meaning here: "Take care that your charity is intense, for only thus can you forgive as you are bidden to forgive, as you hope to be forgiven." Perhaps he was thinking of the "seventy times seven," to which the Lord had told him that forgiveness was to extend. But his words may well be understood as implying more than this. Love shown in forgiving others will win forgiveness for yourselves: "Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven." Love manifested in converting others will cover their sins, and obtain God's forgiveness for them. In the deepest sense, it is only the love of Christ energizing in his atoning work which can cover sin; but true charity, Christian love, flows from that holiest love. "Love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." Therefore in some sense Christian love, flowing from the love of Christ, and bringing the Christian very near to Christ, covers sins; for it keeps the Christian close to the cross, within the immediate sphere of the blessed influences of the atonement, so that he becomes a centre of grace, a light kindled from the true Light, a well of living waters fed by the one fountain which is opened for sin and for uncleanness. The mutual love of Christians, their kindly words and deeds, check the work of sin; their prayers, their intercessions, call down the forgiveness of God. Therefore, in the view of the approaching end, charity is before all things precious for our own souls and for the souls of others.

Ver. 9.—*Use hospitality one to another; literally, being hospitable* (comp. Rom. xii. 13; 1 Tim. iii. 2; Heb. xiii. 2; 3 John 5). Hospitality must have been a necessary, and often a costly, duty in the early ages of the Church. There was no public provision for the poor. Christians travelling from place to place would find no suitable shelter except in the houses of Christians. They would be obliged to avoid the public houses of entertainment, where they would be exposed often to danger, always to temptation; only the private houses of Christians

would be safe for them. Hence the use of the "letters of commendation," mentioned by St. Paul (2 Cor. iii. 1). Those who brought such letters were to be received in Christian homes. The well-known 'Teaching of the Twelve Apostles' speaks of this right of hospitality, and gives cautions against its abuse. The apostle is not speaking of ordinary social gatherings; they have their place and their utility in the Christian life, but they do not, as a rule, afford scope for the higher self-denials of Christian charity (comp. Luke xiv. 12, 13). *Without grudging.* Such hospitality would be always costly, often inconvenient, sometimes attended with danger, as in the case of the first British martyr; but it was to be without murmuring. Murmuring would take from the hospitality all its beauty; it should be offered as a gift of love, and Christian love can never murmur (comp. 2 Cor. ix. 7).

Ver. 10.—*As every man hath received the gift; rather, according as each received a gift.* The aorist ἔλαβεν, "received," seems to point to a definite time, as baptism, or the laying on of hands (comp. Acts viii. 17; xix. 6; 1 Tim. iv. 14). For the gift (χάρισμα), comp. Rom. xii. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 4, "There are diversities of gifts." Even so minister the same one to another; literally, *ministering it towards one another.* The gifts of grace, whatever they may be, are talents entrusted to individual Christians for the good of the whole Church; those who have them must use them to minister to the wants of others (comp. ch. i. 12, where the same word, διακονεῖν, to minister, is used of the gift of prophecy). *As good stewards of the manifold grace of God.* We seem to see here a reference to the parable of the talents (comp. also 1 Cor. iv. 1; Titus i. 7). Christians must be "good stewards (καλοὶ οἰκονόμοι)." There should be not only exactness, but also grace and beauty in their stewardship—the beauty which belongs to holy love, and flows from the imitation of him who is "the good Shepherd (ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός)." The gifts (χαρίσματα) are the manifestations of the grace (χάρις) of God; that grace from which all gifts issue is called manifold (ποικίλη), because of the diversities of its gifts, the variety of its manifestations.

Ver. 11.—*If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.* St. Peter proceeds to give examples of the proper use of gifts. One of those gifts is utterance. The apostle means all Christian utterance, whether public in the Church, or private in Christian conversation or ministrations to the sick. The second clause may be also rendered, as in the Revised Version, "speaking as it were oracles of God." It is more

natural to supply the participle "speaking" than "let him speak," after the analogy of *διακονῶντες* ("ministering") in ver. 10. For the word *λόγια*, oracles, see Acts vii. 38; Rom. iii. 2; also Heb. v. 12, in which last place the Scriptures of the New Testament seem to be intended. The apostle's meaning may be either that the Christian teacher was to speak as do the oracles of God, that is, the Scriptures, or (and the absence of the article rather favours this view) that he was so to yield himself to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that his teaching should be the teaching of God; he was to seek no praise or reward for himself, but only the glory of God. Those who with single-hearted zeal seek God's glory do speak as it were oracles of God, for he speaketh by them (comp. Mark xiii. 11). If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth. Again it is better to supply the participle "ministering." Whatever a man's gifts may be, he must minister them for the good of the whole Church (see ver. 9; also Rom. xii. 8; 1 Cor. xii. 28). And this he must do as of the strength which God supplieth; the strength is not his—God giveth it. The verb *χορηγῇ*, rendered "giveth," is used in classical Greek first of supplying the expenses of a chorus, then of liberal giving generally; it occurs in 2 Cor. ix. 10. The compound, *ἐχορηγῇν*, is more common; St. Peter has it in the Second Epistle (i. 5, 11). That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ. The glory of God should be the one end of all Christian work. The Lord himself had said so in the sermon on the mount, in words doubtless well remembered by the apostle (Matt. v. 16; comp. 1 Cor. x. 31). To whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen; rather, as in the Revised Version, *whose is the glory and dominion for the ages of ages*. It is thought by some that St. Peter is here quoting from some ancient form of prayer; the use of the "Amen," and the resemblance to Rev. i. 6 and v. 13, seem to favour this supposition. It is uncertain whether this doxology is addressed to God the Father or to the Lord Jesus Christ; the order of the words is in favour of the latter view, and the doxology closely resembles that in Rev. i. 6.

Ver. 12.—Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; literally, *be not astonished at the burning among you, which is coming to you for a trial, as though a strange thing were happening to you*. St. Peter returns to the sufferings of his readers. The address, "beloved," as in ch. ii. 11, shows the depth of his sympathy with them. He

resumes the thought of ch. i. 7; the persecution is a burning, a fiery furnace, which is being kindled among them for a trial, to try the strength of their faith. The present participles imply that the persecution was already beginning; the word *πύρωσις*, a burning (see Rev. xviii. 9, 18), shows the severity. St. Peter tells them its meaning: it was to prove them; it would turn to their good. Persecution was not to be regarded as a strange thing. The Lord had foretold its coming. St. Paul, in his first visit to Asia Minor, had warned them that "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." (On the word *ἐνδοξασθαι*, see note on ver. 4.) The thing was not strange; they were not to count it as strange; they must learn, so to speak, to acclimatize themselves to it; it would brace their energies and strengthen their faith.

Ver. 13.—But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings. St. Peter speaks in stronger language; he repeats the Lord's words in Matt. v. 12. Christians should learn to rejoice in persecution; they must rejoice in so far as, in proportion as (*καθότι*), they are partakers of Christ's sufferings (see 2 Cor. iv. 10; Phil. iii. 10; Heb. xiii. 13). Suffering meekly borne draws the Christian nearer to Christ, lifts him, as on a cross, nearer to the crucified Lord; but this it does only when he looks to Jesus in his suffering, when the eye of faith is fixed upon the cross of Christ. Then faith unites the sufferings of the disciple with the sufferings of his Lord; he is made a partaker of Christ's sufferings; and so far as suffering has that blessed result, in such measure he must rejoice in his sufferings. That, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy; literally, *that in the revelation of his glory also ye may rejoice exulting*. The word for "exulting," *ἀγαλλίζμενοι*, corresponds with that used in ch. i. 6 and in Matt. v. 12 (*χαίρετε καὶ ἀγαλλιάσθε*). Joy in suffering now is the earnest of the great joy of the redeemed at the revelation of that glory which they now see through a glass darkly.

Ver. 14.—If ye be reproached for the Name of Christ, happy are ye; rather, *if ye are reviled in the Name of Christ, blessed are ye*. There is, again, a manifest quotation of our Lord's words in Matt. v. 11. The conjunction "if" does not imply any doubt; the words mean "when ye are reviled." For "in the Name of Christ," comp. Mark ix. 41, "Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my Name, because ye belong to Christ." So here the meaning is, "When ye are reviled because ye belong to Christ, because ye bear his Name, because ye are Christians" (comp. Acts v. 41). For

the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you. The form of the sentence in the Greek is unusual. Some regard the first clause, *τὸ ἅγιον δόξα*, as a periphrasis for *δόξα*, and translate, "For glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you." But there is no other instance of such a periphrasis in the New Testament (Winor, iii. 18. 3); it is better to supply *πνεῦμα*. Men revile them, but God glorifieth them. The Spirit of glory, the Spirit which hath the glorious attributes of God, the Spirit which proceedeth from the Father who dwelleth in the glory, in the Shechinah, —that Spirit resteth upon them, and sheds on them the glory of holy suffering, the glory which hung around the cross of Christ. Two of the most ancient manuscripts, with some others, insert the words *καὶ δυνάμεις*, "the Spirit of glory, and of power, and of God." The Spirit is power from on high (Luke xxiv. 49). (For "resteth," comp. Isa. xi. 2.) *Ἐν* with the accusative suggests the thought of the Spirit descending upon them and resting there (comp. John i. 32, 33). The Spirit abides upon those who patiently suffer for Christ. On their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. These words are not found in the most ancient manuscripts, and are probably a gloss, but a true one. Those who reviled the suffering Christians really blasphemed the Holy Spirit of God, by whom they were strengthened; the Holy Spirit was glorified by their patient endurance.

Ver. 15.—But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer; literally, *for let none of you*, etc. They are blessed who suffer in the Name of Christ, because they belong to Christ: for it is not the suffering which brings the blessedness, but the cause, the faith and patience with which the suffering is borne. The word for "evil-doer," *κακοποιός*, is used by St. Peter in two other places (ch. ii. 12 and 14). Christians were spoken against as evil-doers; they must be very careful to preserve their purity, and to suffer, if need be, not for evil-doing, but for well-doing (ch. iii. 17). Or as a busybody in other men's matters. This clause represents one Greek word, *ἀλλοτριεπισκόπος*; it means an *ἐπίσκοπος*, inspector, overseer ("bishop" is the modern form of the word), of other men's matters—of things that do not concern him. St. Peter uses the word *ἐπίσκοπος* only once (ch. ii. 25), where he describes Christ as the Bishop of our souls. It cannot be taken here in its ecclesiastical sense, "let no man suffer as a bishop in matters which do not concern him; but if as a Christian (bishop), let him not be ashamed." The Jews were often accused of constituting themselves judges and meddling in other men's matters; it may be that the con-

sciousness of spiritual knowledge and high spiritual dignity exposed Christians to the same temptation. Hilgenfeld sees here an allusion to Trajan's laws against informers, and uses it as an argument for his theory of the late date of this Epistle.

Ver. 16.—Yet if any man suffer as a Christian. The word "Christian" occurs only three times in the New Testament—twice in the Acts of the Apostles (xi. 26; xxvi. 28), and here. "The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." They were originally described amongst themselves as "the disciples," "the brethren," "the believers," "the elect," or "the saints;" by the Jews they were called "the Nazarenes" (Acts xxiv. 5), as still in Mohammedan countries. The name was probably invented by the heathen, and used at first as a term of derision; there is something of scorn in Agrippa's use of it. It did not at once become common among the disciples of the Lord. St. Peter (who preached at Antioch (Gal. ii. 11), and is said to have been Bishop of Antioch) is the only sacred writer who adopts it instead of the older names, and that only once, and in connection with threatened persecution. St. James may possibly allude to it in ii. 7. But it was not commonly used among believers till after New Testament times. Then they began to discern its admirable suitableness. It reminded them that the centre of their religion was not a system of doctrines, but a Person, and that Person the Messiah, the Anointed of God. The Hebrew origin of the word, the Greek dress, the Latin termination, seemed to point, like the threefold inscription on the cross, to the universality of Christ's religion—to its empire, first over all the civilized nations, and through them, by continually increasing triumphs, over the whole world. It reminded them that they too were anointed, that they had an unction from the Holy One. Its very corruption through heathen ignorance, *Christian* from *χρηστός*, good (the Sinaitic Manuscript has *χρηστιανός* in this place) had its lesson—it spoke of sweetness and of goodness. See the oft-quoted passage from Tertullian: "Sed quum et perperam Christiani nuncupamur a vobis (nam nec nominis certa est notitia penes vos) de suavitatis et benignitatis compositum est." Let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. The best-supported reading is *ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου*. This may be understood as an idiom, in the same sense as the reading of the Authorized Version; but it is better to translate it literally, *in this name*, i.e. either the name of Christ, or (more probably, perhaps) that of Christian. The heathen blasphemed that worthy Name; suffering Chris-

tians must not be ashamed of it, but, as the holy martyrs did, utter their "Christianus sum" with inward peace and thanksgiving, glorifying God that he had given them grace to bear that honoured Name and to suffer for Christ. Bengel says here, "Poterat Petrus dicere, honori sibi ducatur: sed honorem Deo resignandum esso docet."

Ver. 17.—For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God. The house of God is the Church (see 1 Tim. iii. 15; 1 Cor. iii. 16; and ch. ii. 5). The judgment must begin at the sanctuary (Ezek. ix. 6; see also Jer. xxv. 15—29). The beginning of judgment is the persecution of the Christians, as our Lord had taught (Matt. xxiv. 8, 9, and following verses); but that judgment is not unto condemnation: "When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. xi. 32); it is the fiery trial, "which is much more precious than of gold that perisheth," the refining fire of affliction. And if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? Compare the passage in Jeremiah already referred to: "Behold, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my Name, and should ye be utterly unpunished?" Compare also our Lord's question, "If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" Gerhard (quoted by Huther) rightly remarks, "Exaggeratio est in interrogatione." The question suggests answers too awful for words.

Ver. 18.—And if the righteous scarcely be saved. St. Peter is quoting the Septuagint Version of Prov. xi. 31. That version departs considerably from the Hebrew, which is accurately represented by the Authorized Version, "Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more the wicked and the sinner." Probably the word rendered "recompensed," which is neutral in its meaning, is best understood here, not of the good deeds of the righteous, but of the sin which still cleaves to all human righteousness. The righteous shall be requited in the earth, that is, chastised for his transgressions. So it would be now, St. Peter says; judgment must begin at the house of

God. He adopts the inexact Septuagint translation for its substantial truth, as we now sometimes use versions which are sufficient for practical purposes, though we know them to be critically inaccurate. We observe again the absence of marks of quotation, as often in St. Peter. Bengel well remarks that the awful "scarcely" (*μόλις σώ(ε)ται*) is softened by 2 Pet. i. 11. Where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? The "ungodly" are the impious, scoffers, and blasphemers; the "sinners" are men of profligate and dissolute lives. But the words are (probably) included under one article in the Greek; the men were the same; one form of evil led to the other (comp. Ps. i. 5; see also Matt. xix. 25).

Ver. 19.—Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God; rather, *let them also that suffer*. St. Peter sums up his exhortation; he returns to the thought of ch. iii. 17, "It is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing, than for evil-doing." In the hour of suffering, as well as in times of prosperity, we are in the hands of a merciful and loving Father; we are to learn submission, not because the suffering is inevitable, but because it is according to his will, and his will is our sanctification and salvation. Commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator; rather, as in the Revised Version, *commit their souls in well-doing unto a faithful Creator*. The conjunction "as" must be omitted, not being found in any of the best manuscripts. The word rendered "Creator" (*κτιστής*) occurs nowhere else in the Greek Testament. God is our Creator, the Father of spirits. He gave the spirit; to him it returneth. We must imitate our dying Lord, and, like him, commit our souls to the keeping of our heavenly Father as a deposit which may be left with perfect confidence in the hands of a faithful Creator (see 2 Tim. i. 12). There is an evident reference here to our Lord's words upon the cross (Luke xxiii. 46; Ps. xxxi. 5). St. Peter adds, "in well-doing." The Christian's faith must bring forth the fruits of holy living; even in the midst of suffering he must "be careful to maintain good works."

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—6.—*Exhortation to entire separation from sin.* I. BY UNION WITH CHRIST.

1. *Through suffering.* Suffering is the appointed discipline of the Christian soul. Gold is tried by fire, the Christian's faith by suffering. Christ himself suffered in the flesh, and while we are in the flesh we must also suffer. "In that he died, he died unto sin once;" his death separated him from sin, from the sight and hearing of sin, from that mysterious contact with human sin which he endured when "he was made sin for us, though he was without sin." Our suffering ought to have the like power—it ought to

remove us out of the dominion of those sins which have hitherto ruled over us. This is the end, the blessedness, of suffering. God sends it in love; he chastens us for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness. But suffering doth not always save. "The sorrow of the world worketh death;" it produces discontent and murmuring, and hardens the heart. To gain the blessed fruit of suffering, the eye of the suffering Christian must be fixed upon the suffering Lord. We must "arm ourselves with the same mind." "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." It must be our effort to think the same holy thoughts, to be animated by the same high resolve, which filled the sacred heart of Christ. Those thoughts, that resolve, are our spiritual armour. If we let our thoughts dwell on our troubles, if we fret ourselves, we are defenceless, we are exposed to the temptations which swarm around us. But we must look away from our own sufferings and keep the earnest gaze of faith fixed upon the cross. Thus by an act of faith we may unite our sufferings with the Saviour's sufferings, and then suffering sanctified by faith in Christ will have its blessed work in destroying the power of sin.

2. *Through the change of heart wrought by suffering.* "He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin." Suffering meekly borne is a great help in the daily conflict against sin; it shows us our own weakness and the emptiness of earthly comforts; it humbles us, and makes us less unwilling to submit ourselves to the holy will of God; it points our thoughts to the transitoriness of human life; it is miserable folly to waste that little life in following the wretched lusts of the flesh, when we ought to be doing the will of God. As the blessed angels do God's holy will in heaven, so we must strive to do it in earth; we shall never dwell with the angels unless we are really trying to learn that deep and holy lesson.

II. BY FORSAKING OLD SINS AND OLD COMPANIONS IN SIN. 1. *What we must forsake.* The will of the Gentiles. The Gentile world was very evil when the Lord Jesus came; sin reigned everywhere, open, rampant, unblushing. It was a shame for the heathen thus to live, for they had the light of conscience; it is a shame of far deeper guilt for us Christians, who have the full light of the gospel, to live as did the Gentiles. Converted men must cast off those old sins; the sins of the flesh, uncleanness, drunkenness, and such like, ruin body and soul. Men set up idols in their hearts—money, station, honour; they fall down and worship these things. Christians must forsake these unlawful idolatries. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God; him only shalt thou serve." Him only; Satan stands behind these idols—it is he whom men really worship when they give their hearts to this or that earthly idol. We have given too much time, far too much, to these idolatries. Let the time past suffice which we have miserably wasted: the residue may be very short. There is much to be done, let us take heed that we waste our time no more. 2. *Whom we must forsake.* Our old companions, it may be, think it strange that we no longer live as once, perhaps, we did; we were as bad as themselves once, they say. It may be so, but we are changed, and they, alas! are not; we have, we humbly trust, put on the new man; we are (God grant that it be so!) in Christ, abiding in vital union with him, as living branches in the true Vine; and old things must pass away—old desires, old pursuits, old hopes and fears; all things must become new, for we are new creatures in Christ. Men think us strange; they speak evil of us, perhaps; they call us hypocritical, sanctimonious; they exaggerate the inconsistencies which they see in us, and invent and eagerly propagate falsehoods. They cannot understand the Christian life; they cannot feel its hidden sweetness; it seems to them strange, hard, unattractive. We must not heed the vain talk of men; we must seek the praise that cometh from God; we must take patiently the accusations of evil tongues; in some degree, probably, we have deserved them; only let us labour more and more to please God in all things.

III. BY LOOKING FORWARD TO THE JUDGMENT. 1. *All must be judged.* All, believers and unbelievers, saints and sinners, persecuted and persecutors, slandered and slanderers,—all must give account of their deeds; for the Lord is at hand, ready to judge the quick and the dead; as soon as the number of his elect is complete, the judgment will be set, the books will be opened. This thought gives an awful solemnity to human life; the record of each day as it passes is entered in those mysterious books. Sufferings, slanders, can be patiently endured when we think of the coming judgment. The persecutors, the evil-speakers, must give account to the great Judge; the Christian should pity them, should pray for them. It seems sad now to be persecuted; then

it will be sadder far to have been persecutors. 2. *For all will have heard the gospel.* Quick and dead alike will have heard it. It was preached in Hades by the Lord himself to the dead who in life had not heard the glad tidings. It is a sweet and comforting thought that they were not left to perish uncared for. We know not the result of the Saviour's preaching; it is hidden from us; conjecture is vain, perhaps irreverent. But we have the fact—the gospel was preached to them, and the object was that they might live according to God in the spirit. Is it now preached to the dead who in life have had scanty opportunities and scanty knowledge? We are not told; but we know that God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance;" we know that the Lord Jesus Christ "tasted death for every man;" we know that the true Light "lighteth every man;" and we feel sure that none can be left to perish without the means of grace; we feel sure that, in some way, and at some time, the gracious offer of salvation comes to every man in life or in death, in ways known or unknown.

LESSONS. 1. Christ teaches how to suffer. Learn of him in this as in all things. 2. Make suffering a means for destroying the power of sin. It will be so, if in suffering you contemplate the suffering Lord, and arm yourselves with his holy resolve. 3. The time is short. Live a godly, righteous, and sober life. 4. Shun evil companions; when they would tempt you to sin, think of the coming judgment; take heed to yourselves, and pray for them.

Vers. 7—11.—*Exhortations based on the impending judgment.* I. THE NEED OF PREPARATION. 1. *The nearness of the end.* The end seemed near when St. Peter wrote, more than eighteen hundred years ago; by that great interval it is the nearer now. That long-expected end will be the end of all things—of sorrows, trials, suffering; of pleasures, pomps, and vanities; of all the pursuits of this life, the restless struggle after wealth, or fame, or earthly comforts. The end is at hand—how near, we cannot tell; but we know that to the Lord "a thousand years are as one day;" and to ourselves, when we look back, the years that are passed are as a watch in the night. All will be over then, all that men have toiled to build up—the empires, the civilizations, the philosophies; all will be over, save only the results of human action, the moral and spiritual consequences of human lives. Who can tell what will be the grand result of the many millions of lives that will then have been lived? Now each generation, as it passes, leaves its mark upon its successors: what will be the character of the great society, the vast multitude of souls, that will live on when the end of the world is come? To each individual the hour of death is the end, and that end is very near; each day, as it comes, ushers in the end of many lives. The time of that end, like the time of the end of all things, is unknown. God has hidden both from us in his wisdom and love. But certainly it is near; the end of this busy, toiling life, with all its hopes and fears, all its schemes and ambitions, all its disappointments and successes; the end, and yet not the end; for, if it were the end of our being, there would be no need of that careful preparation which St. Peter urges. The motto of the worldling would be sufficient for us all, "Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die." The nearness of the end gives the Christian a motive, not for self-indulgence, but for self-denial, not for neglect of duty, but for increasing zeal; for he has a work to do for his Master, and oh! whatever is left undone, whatever calls of earthly pleasure or ambition are disregarded, that work must at all costs be done. For he trusts in his poor humble way, by the help of God's Holy Spirit, to be able at the last to echo in some sense his Saviour's words, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do;" he hopes through the Lord's atonement to hear at last the joyful welcome, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" Therefore the thought of the nearness of the end must stimulate him continually to new energy, to active work for Christ. 2. *How the Christian should prepare himself.* (1) He must exercise self-restraint. The etymology of the Greek word points to the safeguard of the mind; the mind, with all its thoughts, must be kept safe, restrained within due limits. The fancies, aspirations, desires, must not be allowed to wander unrestrained. For "the end of all things is at hand," and the Christian must school himself into thoughtful preparation for that solemn hour. His mind should be filled, not with castles in the air, not with visions of earthly prosperity (a mischievous and enervating habit), but with thoughts of death, judgment, eternity.

To keep the end steadily in view requires much self-restraint; it implies a well-ordered mind, a life guided by the eternal law of God, not frittered away in trifles and idle pleasures, not spent in pursuits and ambitions which do not rise above the atmosphere of earth. This self-restraint is the sobriety, the soundness of mind which the apostle here inculcates upon us; it extends over all the relations and circumstances of life; in all his desires and actions the Christian must be thoughtful, calm, composed; for he lives in the anticipation of the coming end, and his aim is the glory of God and the salvation of souls. (2) He must be sober unto prayer. Excess in meat or drink or other pleasures of life unnerves the mind; excess weakens the body, brings misery into families, is the cause of poverty and squalor and wretchedness, fills our work-houses, our asylums, our prisons. And it ruins the soul; the drunkard, the glutton, the man of pleasure, cannot pray; his vices burden his soul and weigh it down to the earth, he cannot lift up his heart in prayer to God. For, indeed, prayer demands the exercise of all our highest powers; it requires concentration of thought, energy of desire, devout yearnings after God; it needs the gracious help of God the Holy Ghost, who maketh intercession in and for those who earnestly seek that sacred gift. He who lives in expectation of the end of all things, must live in prayer; for only by constant and faithful prayer can he prepare himself for that awful day; and he cannot pray aright unless he lives a godly, righteous, and sober life.

II. THE NECESSITY OF CHARITY IN ITS VARIOUS MANIFESTATIONS. 1. *In forgiveness.* In view of the coming judgment charity is necessary above all things; for it is they who love the brethren in Christ and for Christ who shall hear the joyful welcome, "Come, ye blessed of my Father." They see Christ in his people, and for the love of Christ love and care for those whom Christ loved. But "he that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love;" he cannot enter into heaven, which is the home of love; there is no room there for the selfish, unloving heart. Love is necessary above all other graces; it is the exceeding great love of our Master and only Saviour Jesus Christ which draws the hearts of men unto the cross; and those who come to the cross, which is the school of love, must learn of him who loved them even unto death to love all the brethren; for love is the very badge of our profession: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Love was the character of the Master; it must be the mark of the disciple. They must not only love one another; but that love, St. Peter says, must be earnest, intense; for it needs the strength of great love to forgive perfectly, and they who do not forgive cannot hope for forgiveness. True charity covers sins; it "believeth all things, hopeth all things;" it puts the fairest construction on the actions of others; it considers all possible extenuations of their errors—antecedents, circumstances, temptations; it does not willingly speak of faults and shortcomings; it hides them as far as may be. And if it is necessary for the good of the sinner, or of society, to uncover sins, charity does it with gentle, loving tact, seeking to win the sinner, to save his soul, forgiving him and seeking God's forgiveness for him. He who thus covers the sins of others, who forgives in the faith of Christ and in the love of the brethren, shall be himself forgiven; his sin shall be covered through the atonement once made upon the cross. 2. *In Christian hospitality.* It is not costly display and sumptuous entertainments that St. Peter recommends; these things are often sinful waste; men spend their money in selfish ostentation instead of holy and religious works. The Lord had said to his disciples, "He that receiveth you, receiveth me;" and again, "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." St. Peter re-echoes his Master's words. Christians must show hospitality to one another, and that freely, liberally; murmuring destroys the beauty of the gift. Christ hath received us into the kingdom of God; he feeds us with heavenly food, the Bread that came down from heaven; we must receive our brethren, and that gladly, for his sake. 3. *In the use of spiritual gifts.* They are given to individual Christians for the benefit of the whole Church. Whatever gifts we may possess, they are but what we once received; they were entrusted to us to be used in our Master's service; that service is the edification of his people. Christians are stewards of these spiritual gifts; they should be good stewards, not like the unjust steward, who wasted his master's goods, and showed foresight and worldly prudence only in providing for himself. They should discharge their stewardship with

unblemished honour, with a diligence and zeal which are beautiful in the sight of the truly good. The grace of God varies in its manifestations, in the diversities of gifts which issue from it, according to the needs of the Church, according to the capacity of the individual servant; it is like a piece of beautiful embroidery, various in colour and design, but combined in one harmonious whole. Every Christian, even the humblest, has some gift; each should contribute his part, however small, to the general welfare; charity will guide him in the use of his particular gift. The apostle proceeds to give instances. (1) The gift of utterance. St. Paul asks for the prayers of his converts, "that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel" (Eph. vi. 19). It is a great gift, often a powerful means of winning souls to Christ. The utterances of spiritual experience must flow out of a sanctified life. Words without heart have little power; they soon betray their unreality. The words of a real Christian must be as oracles of God; if they issue out of a heart cleansed by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, then they are his utterances. "It is not ye that speak," said our Lord to his apostles, "but the Spirit of my Father which speaketh in you." This should be our aim and constant desire—to live so near to God that we may be filled with the Holy Ghost, and so speak the words which the Spirit teacheth; only he can give the spiritual tact, the ready sympathy, the loving persuasiveness, which are so remarkable in some of his saints. But if our words are to be as oracles of God, we must be deeply versed in the oracles of God; our memories must be stored with precious words of Holy Scripture. The lessons which the blessed Spirit teaches now are in all things accordant with the sacred truths which holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (2) Gifts of ministering. St. Peter combines under one word all other ministrations, such as the gift of government, of teaching the little children; services to be rendered to the poor, the sick, the afflicted. All these are necessary for the well-being of the Church, and all must be performed in the strength which God giveth. All these ministrations require love, zeal, energy, self-denial; and these holy tempers come of God. We are weak, but his strength is made perfect in weakness; we are selfish, but his Spirit can kindle the fire of holy love in the heart that once was cold and dead. He supplies the strength which we need for the work which he has given us to do; he has appointed to every man his work, and will enable every man to do the work appointed him, if he seeks for that strength in faith and prayer; "I can do all things," said St. Paul, "through him that strengtheneth me." Then let us work in the strength of God, and let us ascribe any measure of success which may be granted to us wholly to that strength which God giveth. "Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents; behold, I have gained beside them five talents more." The faithful servant ascribes his gains to his Lord's original gift. (3) All gifts to be exercised to the glory of God. The Saviour said, "I have glorified thee on the earth." His disciples should imitate him, learning of him to seek the glory of God in all things and above all things. The love, the zeal, the energy, which true Christians exhibit in the use of the gifts given them by God show forth the glory of God; for that love and zeal can only come from his grace; weak, selfish creatures such as we are could not live holy, self-denying lives save by the help of God's gracious presence. Every act of Christian self-denial, every labour of love, is an additional proof of the reality of God's power and grace. Then God is glorified in his saints, and that through Jesus Christ; for it is the Lord Jesus who by his atonement hath brought us near to God, and enabled his true disciples to know and love and glorify their Father which is in heaven. The glory and the dominion are his, for all power is given to him in heaven and in earth; and with that gift of power he strengthens his chosen, enduing them with power from on high, enabling them to glorify God by a holy life and by a blessed death.

LESSONS. 1. "The end of all things is at hand." "Prepare to meet thy God." 2. Be self-restrained; be sober. Much prayer is needful for preparation against the hour of death; the self-indulgent cannot pray aright. 3. Above all things, follow after charity. 4. Make proof of your love in the forgiveness of injuries, in hospitality, in the use of spiritual gifts for the welfare of others. 5. Seek first the glory of God, and that through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Vers. 12—19.—*Suffering.* I. THE PORTION OF CHRISTIANS. 1. *Therefore they must not think it strange.* The Lord had foretold it; it must come; it was coming when

St. Peter was writing. It was a burning furnace, a fiery trial, the beginning of the cruel persecutions through which believers were to pass; the prison and the torture, the sword, the stake, the lion, were threatening the infant Church; the savage shout, "Christianos ad leones!" would soon be heard in the towns of Asia Minor. Hitherto the Roman magistrates had generally been on the side of justice; they had often protected the Christians from the violence of the Jews. But Christianity was about to be regarded as a *religio illicita*; the giant power of Rome was to be arrayed against it; emperors would attempt to blot out the very name of Christian. This frenzy of persecution was strange, unheard of; there had never been the like before; the rulers of the earth had never before banded together to root out a religion by fire and sword; conquered nations had been allowed to worship their own gods and to retain their ancient rites. But the Son of God had come to be the Saviour of the world; the malice of Satan was stirred to the utmost; he would make a mighty effort to crush the Church of Christ. St. Peter shows a deep sympathy with his suffering brethren; he speaks to them in the language of tenderness; he calls them "beloved." He does not depreciate the severity of the coming persecution; he calls it a fiery trial; he teaches us by his example how to deal with the afflicted. But he encourages them. It was to try them, to prove their faith. They must not think it strange. Indeed, this bitterness of persecution was a new thing now; but suffering would be the portion of Christians; they must regard it as belonging to their profession, and accustom themselves to patient endurance. 2. *They must even rejoice in it.* For it brings them near to Christ. He bore the cross; the cross is the badge of his chosen. The cross of knightly orders is reckoned a high honour now; but there is no cross of gold to be compared for true honour and for preciousness with that spiritual cross which makes the faithful Christian partake in the sufferings of Christ. For Christ is our King, and to be made like unto the King is of all honours the highest—far above all earthly distinctions. Leighton reminds us that Godfrey of Bouillon refused the royal crown when it was offered to him at Jerusalem: "Nolo auream, ubi Christus spineam"—"No crown of gold where Christ Jesus was crowned with thorns." But suffering does not only make the faithful Christian like unto his Lord; it does more, it brings him into communion with the sufferings of Christ. Suffering borne in faith helps the Christian to realize the sufferings of the Lord; it brings the cross into nearer view; it enables him to approach, to grasp, to cling to it, to take it into his heart. And suffering thus endured in the faith of Christ crucified is united by faith with his sufferings and becomes part of them, and by that mystical union is sanctified and blessed to the soul's salvation (Col. i. 24). 3. *It is the preparation for heaven.* Suffering weans the Christian from earthly enjoyments; it helps him to lift up his eyes from earth and to see by faith the glory which shall be revealed. Those who now suffer with Christ shall then rejoice, and that with a joy which the heart of man cannot conceive. Even now they are blessed; the blessedness of the eighth Beatitude is theirs; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon them. Men may revile them; they will do so; when other persecutions cease, these persecutions of the tongue continue; "when all other fires of martyrdom are put out, these burn still" (Leighton). But the spirit of glory resteth on those who for Christ's sake patiently endure. His presence is the foretaste and the pledge of the everlasting glory. He comes from the throne of glory; he brings with him the glory of holiness; he sheds the glory of a saintly life around the followers of Christ. And he resteth upon them; he came down from heaven on the great Day of Pentecost, not for a passing visit, but to abide for ever with the Church. He abode upon Christ (John i. 32); he abideth with his true disciples (John xiv. 16). Christ was anointed with the Holy Ghost (Acts x. 38). Christians too partake in that Divine anointing; it abideth in them (1 John ii. 27). The Holy Dove resteth on the meek and patient Christian, preparing him by its sanctifying influences for the everlasting glory of heaven. Such men are truly blessed. Men may revile them, and, reviling them, revile the Holy Spirit who abideth in them; but they glorify him by the light which shines around from their holy lives—the light which was kindled by the sacred fire of his presence.

II. NOT ALL SUFFERING IS BLESSED. 1. *Let Christians not suffer for evil-doing.* They must be very careful to set a good example, and to give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. They must not suffer as evil-doers; nor even as

busybodies. They must imitate the Lord Jesus, who said, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" (Luke xii. 14). "Be much at home," says Leighton, "setting things at rights within your own breast, where there is so much work, and such daily need of diligence, and then you will find no leisure for unnecessary idle prying into the ways and affairs of others; and further than your calling and the rules of Christian charity engage you, you will not interpose in any matters without you, nor be found proud and censorious, as the world is ready to call you." 2. *It is suffering for well-doing that is blessed.* Suffering in itself has no spiritual value; it softens some, it hardens others; it saves some, to others it worketh death. But suffering for Christ's sake is always blessed. If any man is called to suffer as a Christian, he must not be ashamed; for the Son of man will be ashamed in the last day of those who now are ashamed of him before men. We must confess him openly in the world; and if in any way we are called to suffer because we belong to Christ and own him as our Master, we must glorify God because we are counted worthy to suffer shame for his Name.

III. THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRISTIANS POINT ONWARDS TO THE JUDGMENT. 1. *Judgment must begin at the house of God.* God hates sin; he hates it most in those who are nearest to him; he would have those on whom his love rests clean from its defiling touch. Therefore "whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth;" therefore he says, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (Amos iii. 2). Sometimes the Church passes through seasons of great affliction; one such season was at hand when St. Peter wrote. It would be a fiery trial, but the fire was a refining fire. It was kindled in a sense by the malice of Satan and the wickedness of evil men; but in a true and higher sense it came by the overruling will of God. Therefore it must be sent in love, in fatherly care for their souls. This thought sweetens suffering to the believer; it is our Father who sends it, and he sends it in mercy. "Judgment must begin at the house of God;" partly, indeed, because the sins of Christians, committed against light and against knowledge, are more grievous than the sins of those who know not the gospel; but mainly because the love of God is a wise and holy love, and though "he doth not willingly afflict nor grieve the children of men," yet he chastens us for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness. Judgment begins with the house of God; even the righteous are "scarcely saved." Not that their salvation is for a moment doubtful; Christ is able to save even to the uttermost all who come to God by him. But salvation is a great and difficult work; we are bidden to work out our salvation with fear and trembling; and, work as we may, we could not work it out for ourselves, were it not that God worketh in us "both to will and to do of his good pleasure." The righteous is scarcely saved, because his enemies are so many and so strong, and he so weak and sinful; temptations swarm around him, and there are sinful lusts within his heart to which those temptations address themselves. He needs all the armour of light—the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation, the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit; he must fight the good fight of faith; he must watch and pray; he must quit himself like a man, "enduring hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." But if the righteous is scarcely saved, what hope of salvation have the careless and the slothful? If men are *indifferent*, listless in their religious exercises, without zeal, without enthusiasm, without self-denial, can they be walking in the narrow way? And there is no other way that leads to heaven. 2. *It ends with the disobedient.* When God's people are judged, they are chastened of the Lord, that they should not be condemned with the world. Judgment in their case is transitory; it soon makes room for mercy; it was sent in mercy, and it issues in mercy. But it rests upon the disobedient. They will not listen to the gospel of God, the good news of salvation sent from heaven. God is not willing that any should perish; he sought to save them; they would not accept the terms of salvation. He gave his blessed Son to die for them; they "counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing." Where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear in the awful day? 3. *Believers have no cause for terror.* They are judged now that they should be saved at the last. Their sufferings are according to the will of God, and that will is their sanctification now, their salvation hereafter. He is their Creator; he will not despise the work of his own hands. He hath begotten them again to a lively hope; his saints are right dear to him; he is faithful; his truth abideth;

his promise is sure. Let his chosen live in obedience, in well-doing, and then let them commit their souls to him. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," were the dying words of Christ. Let these words be our daily prayer; let us commit our souls to him in life and in death. We need his gracious keeping every day to keep those souls of ours safe from the evil one and pure from sin; and oh, how shall we need that holy keeping in the hour of our death! May we have grace, then, to trust ourselves to him in humble confidence and Christian hope, learning of our blessed Lord, not only how to live, but also how to die!

LESSONS. 1. The Christian should not count suffering strange; it must come sooner or later: "Ye must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." 2. He should rejoice, for suffering brings him nearer to the cross. 3. After the cross cometh the crown; even now the Holy Spirit of God rests upon his suffering children. 4. The judgment is at hand: prepare for it. 5. The righteous are "scarcely saved;" "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." 6. "Where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" "Flee from the wrath to come."

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 10.—*Gifts and service.* If we may venture to connect these words with the preceding injunction as well as with the following, the power of rendering simple hospitality is as truly a gift of God's grace for the use of which a man is responsible as is the loftiest endowment of eloquent speech or eminent service. The large principles embodied in these simple words would revolutionize the Church, and go far to regenerate the world, if they were honestly carried out. All powers are gifts. All gifts are trusts. What simplicity, what power, what unselfishness, what diligence, what regard for others' work, what humility as to one's own, would fill the life which was wholly moulded by these convictions.

I. THE UNIVERSALITY OF GIFT. "Every man hath received," says Peter, and builds upon it as a well-recognized fact. All these poor ignorant Asiatics, picked from the filth of idolatry, slaves and outcasts as some of them had been, rude and uncultured and lowly of station and imperfectly Christianized as many of them were,—they each had some Divine gift which needed only to be burnished and shown to shine afar with heavenly brightness. Every Christian man to-day, in like manner, is endowed with some gift; for every Christian has the Spirit of God dwelling in him, and that Spirit never comes empty-handed. Whatever subordination there may be in the Church, as in all organized communities, its very life depends on the fact that all its members possess the Divine Spirit, and no claim of authority to rule nor prerogative of teaching, which does not recognize that fact, can stand for a moment. The aspiration of Moses has been fulfilled (Numb. xi. 29), "All the Lord's people" are "prophets," and "the Lord" has "put his Spirit upon them." Miraculous powers were widely diffused in the early Church, and, with the gift of tongues, constituted the most conspicuous tokens of the gift of the Pentecostal Spirit. But even then these were not "the best gifts." The graces of faith, hope, and charity, those fruits of the Spirit which consist of a holy character and a heart transparent for the heavenly light which burns within it, as a light fed by perfumed oil in an alabaster lamp,—these are better gifts of an indwelling Spirit than all supernatural endowments. The natural faculties, of course, are gifts. To each man the question may be addressed concerning these, "What hast thou which thou hast not received?" But the natural faculties of the Christian, reinforced, quickened, directed by the indwelling Spirit, are still more emphatically gifts. The power of brain or tongue, the spirit of counsel or of might, which he received from the creative breath of God, is intensified by the Spirit, which brings the breath of a new Divine life, as a lamp burns brighter when plunged into a jar of oxygen. And besides the new graces and heightened action of native power, all ability or opportunity dependent on outward circumstances is *gift*. Health, any skill of hand or eye, wealth, position,—everything must come into this category. All which we have is gift. In that sense the gift is universal. And we all have the gift. In that sense, too, it is universal.

II. THE VARIETY OF GIFTS. The apostle speaks here of the "manifold"—literally, the

"variegated" or "many-coloured" grace; and exhorts to variety of service based upon dissimilarity of gifts. It cannot but be that the fulness of God passing into the limits of created minds should manifest itself in an infinite variety. The light flashed at different angles from a million dewdrops twinkles and glitters from their tiny spheres in all differing tints of green and purple and gold. The unlimited variety of innumerable recipients growing in the measure of their possessions through eternity is the only adequate manifestation of the infinite God. Such variety is essential, too, to the existence of a community. "If the whole were an eye, where were the body?" The homely proverb says, "It takes all sorts to make a world." With diversity comes room for mutual help and mutual tolerance. Every man has some gift; no man has all. Therefore they are bound together by reciprocal wants and supplies, and convexities here and concavities there fit in to one another and make a solid whole. The same life works, but variously, in the different organs of the one body, so that there should be no schism in the body. This variety constitutes an imperative call to service. Each man has something which some of his brethren want.

"The least flower with a brimming cup may stand,
And share its dewdrop with another near."

The concert will not be complete, though the roll of the great ocean of praise that surges round the throne be as the noise of many waters, without the tinkle of the little rill of my praise. And some poor soul, which God meant to go shares with me, will have to starve if I do not part my portion among the needy. It constitutes, too, an authoritative prescription of the manner of service. "As every one hath received, so minister the same." Do not minister anything else, but that very thing which you have received. God shows you what he intends you to do by what he gives you. Do not copy other people; do not try to be anybody else. Be true to yourself. If your gifts impel you to a special mode of service, follow them. Find out what you are fit for, and do it in your own fashion. Take your directions at first hand from God, and don't spoil your own little gift by trying to bend it into the shape of somebody else's. Flutes cannot be made to sound like drums. Be content to give out your own note, and leave the care of the harmony to God. And, on the other hand, beware of interfering with your brother's equal liberty. Do not hastily condemn modes of action because they are not yours. A Salvation Army captain and a philosophical theologian may not understand each other's dialect; but there is room for them both, and they should not hinder each other. There are many vessels of different materials and shapes for different uses in Christ's great house. The widest tolerance of the diversities of operation is the truest recognition of the one Spirit which worketh all in all.

III. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF GIFTS. "As good stewards." Peter is probably here repeating the thought which he had learned from his Master's parables. The thought of stewardship is no doubt a natural one, even apart from the reminiscence of our Lord's teaching; but we can scarcely suppose that Christ's words did not suggest it here. All gifts are trusts, Peter thinks; that is to say, no Christian gets his natural endowments, nor his material possessions, and still less his spiritual graces, for himself alone. We all admit that in theory about the two former, and in some degree about the latter. But Christian men do not sufficiently consider that God gives them even salvation for the sake of others as well as for their own. No creature is so small but that its well-being is a worthy end for God's gifts and care. No being is so great that its well-being is worthy to be an exclusive end of God's gifts and care. We are saved "that we may show forth the praises of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light." The joy of forgiveness, the peace of conscience, the blessed assurance of the Father's love, the hopes of an immortal heaven,—these are not given us for self-absorbed and solitary enjoyment, but that, saved, we may glorify and proclaim the Saviour, and bring to others the unspeakable gift. So with all the lesser gifts which flow from that greatest—all spiritual endowments, natural capacities heightened by the Spirit's indwelling, or outward endowments and possessions—they are our Lord's goods put into our hands to administer for him. They were his before they became ours. They are his while they are called ours. They are ours that we may have the joy of bringing him somewhat, and may not only know the blessedness of receiving, but the greater blessedness of giving, even though we have to say, while we bring our

gifts, "Of thine own have we given thee." If Christian men really believed what they say they do, that they are stewards, not owners, trustees and not possessors, the whole face of Christianity would be altered. There would be men and money for all noble service, and the world would be bright with unselfish and various ministries, worthily representing "the manifold grace of God."—A. M.

Ver. 19.—*The sufferer's wisdom and peace. "Wherefore."* The word carries us back to the whole series of thoughts on persecution and sorrow in the preceding verses, and, as it were, binds them all together, as a man might bind a bundle of twigs to make a standing-ground for himself and his companions on a black bog. The fagot is made up of these truths, namely—sorrow is no extraordinary anomaly; we share in the great Sufferer's afflictions; the purpose of them is our participation in the great King's glory, and that a joy exceeding the sorrow may be ours; that sorrow and shame will bring the Divine Spirit to overshadow us with his peaceful, dove-like wing, and to fill our souls with the radiance of a present God; that by it we may glorify the God who in it glorifies us; that the sharpest sorrows are but a light portion of the judgments which are to come upon all the earth, and are meant, not to destroy, but to purify and to separate from those on whom the final and fatal judgment of condemnation shall fall. Wherefore, for all this closely knit structure of calming and courage-giving truths, quiet confidence and uninterrupted diligence in holy deeds is the sorrowful heart's wisdom.

I. THE TRUE TEMPER OF THE CHRISTIAN SUFFERER. We can scarcely fail to hear in the words one more echo of the gospel story. Peter remembers, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," and bids us all, in our lighter sorrows, in like manner commit our souls to God. The word is the same, and, though our Lord spoke of the act of death, and the apostle of the surrender in life, the temper and disposition are the same. Absolute confidence and complete submission were exhibited on the cross. Nothing less is our duty and privilege. When sorrow comes, and not only in joy when it is so easy, we are to give up ourselves to God in the full abandonment of trust, as a man who has been fighting for hours against the storm reaches home at last, and, with muscles relieved from strain, gratefully flings himself down to rest. We are to put ourselves in God's care, as people in war flock into the forts, or as a householder will deposit his valuables in the hands of his banker, and then sleep careless of thieves or fire. God will take good care of all that is deposited in his custody. No violence can force his safe where his jewels are kept. If we recognize our own importance, and, abandoning all self-reliance, trust wholly to him, we shall suffer no harm and fear no foe; but if we will live in the open country, and refuse the shelter of his stronghold, because we either do not believe the peril, or think we can keep ourselves safe by our own arms, some night or other we shall be roused from dreams to see the faces of the savage foes all about our bed, and shall know the sharpness of their arrows and the implacableness of their hearts. These two things, which are but the positive and the negative sides of one—self-distrust and reliance on God—are the secret of all tranquillity as well as of all safety. That heart may well be at rest which has shifted the responsibility of its defence from its own weak self to God. If we once can come to feel that it is more his business than ours to take care of us, a whole cloud of cares falls like some black precipitate to the bottom, and leaves the heart clear. Confidence is not enough without submission. To commit our souls to God includes "Do what thou wilt," as well as "Thou wilt do lovingly and well." Only when the will yields, and, though it may be with tears bitter as death, and lasting as life, accepts and conforms itself to God's will, do we really know the blessedness of faith. That which we no longer kick against no longer pricks us. The cell out of which we do not wish to go ceases to be a prison, and becomes an oratory or a study. The horse that plunges feels the restraint of his harness, which would not gall if he went quietly. "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good," is a talisman which changes bitter into sweet, darkness into light, sorrow into content, and death into life.

II. THE PRACTICAL ACCOMPANIMENT OF THIS TEMPER. "In well-doing." There are many important truths suggested by that significant addition. 1. The familiar truth is suggested that our committing our souls to God does not mean that we are to fold

our hands in indolence, which we misname trust. Neither are we to be so much engaged with cultivating the inward graces of faith and submission as to neglect the practice of common deeds of kindness. Our religion may become transcendental, a thing of spiritual experiences and emotions, and may be in danger of soaring so high as to forget the work which has to be done here. But it must have hands to toil as well as wings to mount. Peter was foolish when he desired to stay on the Mount of Transfiguration, for there was a poor devil-ridden boy waiting in the plain to be healed. 2. Here is a warning against giving up work because of sorrow. Ages of persecution have seldom been ages of service. All the strength of the Church has been absorbed in simple endurance. And in our private sorrows we are too apt to fling aside our tools in order to sit down, and brood, and remember, and weep. We hold ourselves excused from tasks which otherwise seem plain duties, because our hearts are heavy. There is no greater mistake than to give up work because of trouble. Next to God's Spirit, it is the best comforter. We feel our own burdens less when we try to help some heavy-laden brother to carry his. Our sorrow will be less and our faith more if we honestly set ourselves to the tasks, and especially to the tasks of doing good to others which lie at our hands. 3. All sin kills faith. "Well-doing" here may either mean beneficence or pure moral conduct. If the former, the remarks just made apply. If the latter, the principle is presented that such conduct must be associated with our committing of our souls to God, because every breach of the solemn law of right will weaken our power of faith and make a barrier between us and God. A small grain of sin will blind us; a little sin will prevent us from seeing God. A thin film of air hinders two bodies from uniting; a thin layer of sin keeps the soul from touching God. Any transgression will disturb our faith, and make it close its opening buds, as a bright cloud crossing the sun folds together the petals of some plants. There must be pure and noble deeds if there is to be any completeness and continuity of peaceful confidence; for, though faith is the parent of righteousness, righteousness reacts on faith, and a hand foul with evil is lamed thereby, so that it cannot firmly grasp the outstretched hand of Christ.

III. THE GROUND OF THIS CONFIDENCE IN THE ACTS AND CHARACTER OF GOD. He to whom we entrust our souls is their Creator. Therefore he is strong to preserve no less than to make, and therefore, too, he knows how much tension and strain the soul can bear, and will not overweight it, nor test it up to the breaking-point. As St. Paul says, he will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able. Where better can some precious work be put for safe keeping than in the maker's hands? Where can my soul be so secure and well than confided to the care of him who fashioned me, and measures my sorrows, knowing my frame and remembering that I am dust? He is a faithful Creator. The act of creation constitutes a relation between God and us, which imposes on him obligations and gives us claims on him. He has made a covenant with his creatures in the hour when he created them, which he keeps for ever. He is faithful, in that he ever remains true to himself, to his own past, and to his articulate promises. What he has been we can rely on, and be sure that, as we have heard, so shall we see, and that every act of mercy and succour in the past binds him to extend the same mercy and succour to-day and for ever. So all the old history flashes up into new meaning for every poor sorrowful, trusting soul. What he has spoken he will adhere to, and there are promises enough for us to build absolute confidence upon. No man shall ever be able to quote an assurance of his which turned out a rotten support, a rind without a kernel. He is a faithful Creator. Therefore, if we "commit the keeping of our souls to him in well-doing," with the ancient prayer, "Forsake not the work of thine own hands," we too shall be blessed with the answer given to a hundred generations, and fulfilled to every soul that rested upon it, "I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."—A. M.

Ver. 3.—"*The time past:*" a sermon for the last day of the year. Every day and every moment closes and commences a year; yet the artificial arrangement by which it is agreed that a year shall close at one certain fixed moment of a certain fixed day is an arrangement both convenient and contributive in many ways to our moral and religious advantage. The review of the closing year is a very proper, and may be a very profitable, exercise. The newspapers review the events of the year which are of

political, financial, or commercial interest. Man has, however, higher interests—those which are moral and spiritual. It is desirable that we should take a retrospect of “the time past,” with a view of tracing God’s providential dealings with us, with a view of estimating our own spiritual progress, and of learning lessons of wisdom and of helpfulness.

I. WHAT DOES REFLECTION SUGGEST TO US CONCERNING TIME PAST IN ITSELF? 1. Its passage has been rapid, yet it has been filled with events of great importance. 2. It is perfectly irrecoverable; we cannot live the expiring year over again. 3. It has left ineffaceable traces upon our character. We are all changed by its influences, its occupations, its lessons—some for the better, some for the worse. 4. It is not forgotten by the Lord and Judge of all. In this sense he “requireth that which is past.”

II. IN WHAT SPIRIT SHOULD THE CHRISTIAN CONSIDER THE TIME PAST? 1. His first and most prominent thought should be of the mercy and loving-kindness of God revealed to him as the days and weeks have passed by. 2. Especially should he remember the long-suffering and forbearance which has been displayed towards him by his heavenly Father upon repeated occasions, when such consideration has been called for by failures in duty and by forgetfulness of Divine love. 3. He should remember with regret and repentance the opportunities of obedience and usefulness which he has neglected. 4. Nor should he lose sight of the discipline which he may have been called upon to endure, and which he should remember, not with a rebellious, but with a submissive spirit.

III. IN WHAT SPIRIT SHOULD THE IRRELIGIOUS AND UNDECIDED REVIEW THE TIME PAST? 1. He should remember with humiliation and shame that he has broken the Law of God, and rejected the gospel of Christ. 2. He should reflect upon the evil influence which his example of religion has exercised over his fellow-men, especially over those within his family and social circle. 3. He should consider that he is the worse at the end of the year than at its beginning, because of his delay to repent and to commence by God’s grace a new and better life.

IV. HOW SHOULD THE MEMORY OF THE TIME PAST AFFECT THE TIME TO COME? 1. We may be helped to realize the brevity of life, and the uncertainty and probable brevity especially of what of life yet remains. 2. We may be induced to turn away from the evil which has been indulged in during bygone years, and to enter upon the holier life and more consecrated service which our conscience approves and enjoins. The sands are fast falling; the tide is fast ebbing; the light is fast fading. Let the future see our vows fulfilled, our hopes realized, our aims achieved!—J. R. T.

Ver. 7.—*Waiting for the end.* Like his brother apostle, St. Paul, St. Peter lived in constant anticipation of “the end.” This attitude of mind was no doubt encouraged by the discourses of our Lord Jesus, to which Simon Peter had undoubtedly listened. And it must have been confirmed by the state of society both in the Jewish and the Christian world; changes were imminent, and none could say what form these changes might take. In some respects such statements and admonitions as those of the text are even more pressingly appropriate in our times than when they were first penned.

I. THE VIEW WHICH CHRISTIANS ARE TAUGHT TO TAKE OF THEIR EARTHLY CONDITION. The New Testament impresses upon us the transitory and temporary nature of all things earthly. Sound understanding will seek to verify this, not by prophetic and historical dates, but by moral and unquestionably significant facts. 1. There may well have been in the apostle’s mind a foresight of the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, the dispersion of the Jewish race, and the abrogation of the Hebrew religion. 2. Yet a larger reference is probable; “the end of all things” can scarcely be limited to the catastrophe which befell the Israelitish people. There is no permanence on earth. The Christian, like the Jewish dispensation, must pass away. When this world has served its purpose—the purpose centring in the moral history of mankind—it will be dissolved. The visible and tangible are not the real, are not the lasting. Moral results will outlast the material framework of their development. 3. Every individual who reflects must feel that his own brief life-history gives point and pathos to the end of all things.

II. THE CONSEQUENT SPIRIT AND DUTY OF CHRISTIANS CHERISHING SUCH CONVICTIONS

AND EXPECTATIONS. A superficial observer might suppose that the result of such beliefs must needs be excitement and distress, or, if not distress, solicitude. But this is not the effect designed by our Lord and his apostles. Quite the contrary; for St. Peter, in view of the approaching end, admonishes to (1) soundness of mind; (2) sobriety; and (3) prayers. Such great and solemn realities as religion unfolds before the mind are fitted to strengthen, steady, and mature the character; and at the same time to inspire with pious desires and petitions. A spirit such as that here enjoined may justly be said both to qualify for this present probation and to prepare for future fruition. For "the end of all things" does not involve the end of God's government, or the end of man's life and spiritual progress.—J. R. T.

Ver. 8.—*Fervent love*. Because St. John was emphatically the apostle of love, it must not be supposed that the inculcation of this virtue was left to him alone. The eloquent panegyric of charity in St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians is a proof of that apostle's sense of the importance of this virtue. And this passage in St. Peter's Epistle shows that the Lord's companionship had not failed to produce upon the mind of "the prince of the apostles" an impression of the Divine beauty and of the supreme excellence of love.

I. THE DIVINE FOUNDATION OF LOVE AS A CHRISTIAN VIRTUE. 1. The Divine nature is love; this is the pre-eminent attribute of the Eternal Father. 2. The spirit and example of our Lord Jesus are the supreme revelation of this grace; and such a revelation was only possible because Jesus was the Son of God.

II. THE PEEPLESS EXCELLENCE OF LOVE AS A CHRISTIAN VIRTUE. St. Paul tells us, "the greatest of these is charity." And Peter here enjoins Christians to be "above all things fervent in their love."

III. THE SOCIAL BENEFITS OF LOVE. In the Christian society there is no place for those lower principles of union which have force in some relations of human life, as *e.g.* a common interest. But where love is, there joy and peace, fellowship and sympathy and material helpfulness, will assuredly prevail. Love covers sins; it hides those that exist, prevents those that in its absence might make their appearance, and secures by intercession the pardon of those which have been committed.

IV. THE FERVOUR OF CHRISTIAN LOVE. Love may be in name only; it may exist in a state of feebleness. But in such cases it is of little service. The love which Christ approves is that which "many waters cannot quench," and which is "stronger than death."—J. R. T.

Ver. 10.—*Stewardship*. It is too common for men to pride themselves upon their advantages, the strength of body, the gifts of intellect, the bestowments of fortune, which they call their own. But the spirit of Christianity is altogether opposed to such a habit of mind. Peter as well as Paul took occasion to remind Christians that their advantages should be estimated and employed in a very different manner.

I. THE CHRISTIAN'S ENDOWMENTS, ACQUISITIONS, AND POSSESSIONS ARE THE FREE GIFT OF GOD'S KINDNESS. Those who do not believe in a Divine Giver cannot regard their possessions as a gift. But many who do not deny that they are the creatures of God's power and the dependents upon God's bounty, nevertheless think and act as if they had only themselves to thank for their advantages. We are therefore again and again reminded that we owe all that we have to the unmerited favour of Heaven. "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?"

II. THE CHRISTIAN'S ENDOWMENTS, ACQUISITIONS, AND POSSESSIONS ARE A TRUST WHICH HE HOLDS FROM GOD, AND FOR WHICH HE MUST GIVE ACCOUNT. We are called to be "good stewards." Now, a steward is not an owner of the property; he is the responsible administrator of a trust. Why have our various advantages been conferred? Certainly not that we may use them for our personal pleasure or ornament or aggrandizement, but that by their means we may be serviceable to others. The former course would be an abuse of the trust reposed in us. The conferring of such a trust is a personal probation. He who has five talents is expected so to use them as to increase his means and powers of usefulness, and to offer to the Judge the interest which accrues to him who faithfully employs his deposit.

III. THE CHRISTIAN'S ENDOWMENTS, ACQUISITIONS, AND POSSESSIONS ARE DESIGNED

FOR THE SERVICE AND BENEFIT OF HIS FELLOW-MEN. The expression of St. Peter is noticeable in its definiteness and graphic force: "ministering it among yourselves." 1. This, then, is an appointed service. 2. A beneficial service. 3. A mutual service. In the Church of Christ no one is wholly and only a giver, or wholly and only a receiver. Every one has some gift, and every one has some need. It is by mutual ministration that the general welfare is secured. 4. A service acceptable to Christ. He who gave not only his gifts, but himself, for men, cannot but take pleasure in every manifestation of sympathy, in every ministration of helpfulness, to be met with in his Church.—J. R. T.

Ver. 11.—*Christian speech.* The language of the apostle here need not be taken as referring to the heathen oracles. The New Testament makes use of the expression "oracles" to designate divinely authorized utterances intended to instruct and benefit men. Thus Moses is said by Stephen to have received "living oracles" to give unto the Jews; and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews describes the elements of Christian doctrine as "first principles of the oracles of God."

I. THE SEVERAL KINDS OF CHRISTIAN SPEECH. 1. In the primitive Church there were those who were inspired to utter forth with authority doctrines and precepts of religion. This was a special and supernatural "gift" bestowed upon the apostles, but by no means confined to them, and a gift the exercise of which must have been especially serviceable when Christianity was young, when some of the books of the New Testament were not yet written, and the canon was not yet complete. With how deep a sense of responsibility such gifted persons must have addressed Christian congregations one can easily understand. 2. There were also those who were entrusted with the gift of tongues. Whatever differences of opinion may prevail with regard to the character of this gift, one thing is clear, and that is that it was supernaturally adapted for making a deep and signal impression in favour of the Christian faith. The singular nature of this power must have led its possessors to deem themselves "oracles" of God. 3. But there seems no reason for confining the reference of this admonition within limits so narrow. In the Church of Christ were those who, as pastors, teachers, and evangelists, were wont to employ the gift of speech from Christian motives and to Christian ends. This is a function which men of God have through all the Christian centuries been called to discharge, for the edification of the body of Christ, and for the spread of the gospel among men. Often have such experienced the restraining and inspiring influence of the apostolic direction given in this passage. When tempted to use their gift of speech for the purpose of advancing their own interests or displaying their own powers, such men have been checked by the recollection of this just and holy requirement, that they should speak as God's oracles. 4. Further, the reference of this language may be enlarged so as to include all speech of Christian men. There is a sense in which he who is filled with the Spirit of Christ must needs speak, whenever he opens his lips, as the oracles of God; for his speech is sincere and true, wise, just, and kind.

II. THE HOLY AND BENEFICENT INTENTION OF CHRISTIAN SPEECH. 1. It should be a revelation from God—not, indeed, in the narrower and more proper meaning of that word, but in a sense justifiable and defensible. The oracle declares the mind and will of the Divinity. The Christian's speech brings the holy and gracious God near to those who listen and understand. 2. It should serve for the guidance of those to whom it is addressed. It may not be didactic in form, but substantially it possesses a directing virtue. Christian speech may, and constantly does, preserve men from error and from sin, and guide them into truth and righteousness. It is used to this end by the Spirit of wisdom and of grace, who not only influences the mind and heart of him who speaks, but also the conscience, affections, and will of those who hear.—J. R. T.

Vers. 12, 13.—*Trials.* The word "trials" is one which is often upon the lips of persons who apparently give little heed to the spiritual meaning which is implied in it. People use the term as equivalent to "sufferings," "calamities," losing sight of the fact that it suggests great truths concerning our moral discipline and probation. In this passage the Apostle Peter, who was doubtless by Divine inspiration writing out of his own experience, expounds the Christian doctrine of earthly "trials."

I. THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH TRIALS ARE PERMITTED. To many minds the trials which befall the good and the bad alike seem hardly consistent with the benevolent character of God. But it is forgotten that the end of the Divine government is not to secure to all men the greatest possible amount of enjoyment, but to place every man in a position of moral discipline, to give him an opportunity to resist temptation, to cultivate virtuous habits, to live an obedient and submissive and truly religious life. Not as if God were indifferent to the issue of such probation; on the contrary, he watches its process with interest, and delights to see the gold purified in the furnace, the wheat winnowed from the chaff. The hearer of the Word is put upon his trial, and events prove whether he will hear or forbear. The believer in Christ is put upon his probation, and it is seen whether his faith is strong and his love sincere. Time tries all.

II. THE SPIRIT IN WHICH TRIALS ARE TO BE ENDURED BY THE CHRISTIAN. St. Peter shows us that the true Christian temper under trials is that which regards all such afflictions as participation in the Master's sufferings. He who is one with Christ finds his satisfaction in being "as his Master, his Lord." He does not ask to be exempt from the experiences Jesus submitted to pass through before him. And he is sustained and cheered to know that, even in the heated furnace, there is One with him whose form is as the Son of God. Here is the true remedy for human restlessness and for human discontent. What we share with Christ we may accept with submission and gratitude.

III. THE ISSUE TO WHICH TRIALS ARE TO TEND. We are not left without light upon the future. As our Lord himself, even in his humiliation and woe, saw of the travail of his soul, and was satisfied; so are his followers justified in anticipating, not merely deliverance, but exaltation. The glory of the triumphant Redeemer shall be revealed, and they who have shared his cross shall then with joy sit down with him upon his throne.—J. R. T.

Vers. 1—7.—*The persecuted Christian reminded of the necessity of suffering for righteousness.* This passage is the most difficult in the entire Epistle. We can see a meaning in each of its sentences taken separately, but when we take them together their meaning, as a whole, is obscure. As far, however, as I can understand it, I would entitle the paragraph, *The persecuted Christian reminded of the necessity of suffering for righteousness.* Peter here states the fact that suffering for righteousness is no strange thing, but what Christians must reasonably look for.

I. CHRIST'S SUFFERING BIDS HIS PEOPLE BE READY TO SUFFER. The sufferings of our Lord alluded to here are not his substitutionary sufferings—they are referred to in the eighteenth verse; of them, to the world's last moment, it will be true, "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me." But there is another class of our Lord's sufferings in which his people can, and according to their likeness to him must, share—the suffering he bore in the maintenance of holiness in an evil world; of this he could say, "The disciple is not above his Master." There is sometimes confusion in Christian minds, in finding that Christ is said to suffer for us, and yet that in many places we are called to suffer with him. Let us be clear on this point, we are "redeemed by the precious blood of Christ;" God requires nothing from us for our redemption, but, when thus redeemed, much of Christ's suffering becomes the pattern of ours; and of that he says, "He that taketh not up his cross and cometh after me cannot be my disciple." 1. *Christ's experience would lead us to expect that holiness must suffer on earth.* For three and thirty years he, the Embodiment of perfect love to God and man, lived and moved upon this earth, and what was the result? He was "despised and rejected of men;" the longer he lived, the more he wrought, the wider he was known, the wilder and louder and fiercer became the cry, "Away with him! Crucify him!" Goodness condemns wickedness when the lips say nothing; the very presence of a good man in an ungodly circle is a protest against evil. On one side at least there will always be enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman; and the nearer his people approach conformity to their Lord's character, the more may they be sure of conformity to their Lord's death. 2. *What Christ's sufferings have made possible to us should lead us to be willing to suffer for its attainment.* Our Lord's sufferings had no other end than our sanctification, to secure God-likeness in us. How great a boon must this be, when it could be

purchased at no less a price than what comes to mind, when we speak of our Lord as "the Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;" and for which he did not regard that price as too great to pay! And if we find, when we try to secure and maintain this great blessing, that it can only be done at much cost to ourselves, how impossible it is for us to shrink from it, when we remember the greater cost of this to him! It were a solemn thing to refuse through cowardice to "fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ." 3. *The claims of Christ should lead us to resolve to suffer if need be for him.* Where Christ's sacrifice is present to the mind, there is no room for self left; the "I" in us is destroyed; the blood of Christ, when rightly apprehended, not only blots out our sin, but also our self. We come now to the difficult part of this passage, but I think it brings before us this truth—

II. THE SUFFERING OF CHRIST'S PEOPLE NECESSARILY ARISES FROM THREE CAUSES.

1. *Suffering through mortification of the flesh.* It seems natural to suppose that when, having said, "Christ hath suffered in the flesh," the apostle goes on to say, "For he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin," he is still referring to Christ. But it cannot be so, for of him "who did no sin" it cannot be said that he hath "ceased from sin;" it must refer to us. Yet how can it be said of them whom he has called to arm themselves with the same suffering mind as Christ, that they have "ceased from sin"? I think we have here a parallel to what we read in Rom. vi. 6—11, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him," etc. That contains a priceless truth, which we do not half realize. It speaks of a death in us, corresponding to our Lord's death; that this is to be the sublime result of his death—the death of sin in his people; and it is this which Peter here holds up to us, "He that hath suffered in the flesh [hath put to death the flesh], hath ceased from sin," etc. But that destroying the flesh is suffering, to take our natural desires and passions and nail them to the cross is crucifixion—a slow, lingering death, which involves unutterable pain till it is complete. 2. *Suffering through difference from the world.* "For the time past may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles," etc. We have here a true picture of the pagan character, and it is hardly possible for us to imagine the contrast which was manifest when such a one became converted to Christ. Glaring evils had to be renounced at once, lifelong associations had to be severed at a blow. That was the case here; and what was the result? They were evil spoken of, and that is where the suffering always comes in when we break with wrong associations. We shall be thought strange by others, and shall seem to be condemning them, assuming that we are better than they. And to be misjudged, misrepresented, reviled, is suffering; but, as Christians, there is no help for it, we must sever ourselves from what is worldly. 3. *Suffering through spiritual discipline.* "For unto this end was the gospel preached even to the dead," etc. The word "dead" here must be taken to mean those who are dead whilst they live. But even with that alteration, it is difficult to see clearly what the verse means. Now it is said that the construction of the Greek allows of the insertion of the word "although;" just as in a passage in Rom. vi. 17, which we never read without mentally inserting the word "although." If that be so, the meaning is evident: "For to this end was the gospel preached even to them who were dead in sins, that [although] they might be judged, condemned, persecuted, put to death according to men in the flesh, they might live according to God in the spirit." Spiritual life is God's end with us, let men do with us what they may. And the spiritual life is often developed by means of what men do to us. Every act of persecution is to be followed by a deeper peace, a holier purity, a higher power.

III. THE COMING END ASSISTS CHRIST'S PEOPLE TO BEAR SUFFERING IN A RIGHT SPIRIT. Looking at this superficially, some might think this a hard gospel; the follower of Christ is to arm himself with the expectation of suffering. But look what comes before, and what follows after this. What comes before? "Forasmuch as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh." What follows it? "The end of all things is at hand." This hard demand stands between the cross and the crown; that makes all the difference. 1. *The coming end calls us to estimate reasonably the extent of the suffering.* Read it as it is in the Revised Version. "Be ye therefore of sound mind." The apostle is here calling the persecuted to regard their sufferings reasonably, in connection with the fact that "the end of all things is at hand." The earth-trials of God's people are, after all, but the momentary cloud in the day of heavenly sunshine, which shall have no evening, of

which now in Christ we have the dawn. 2. *The coming end calls us to vigilance lest we lose the coming blessing.* That "coming end" will be the beginning of the glorified life—that life in which what we have sown here we shall reap; that life in which we may have "an entrance ministered to us abundantly," or in which we may be "saved yet so as by fire." Beware lest under the pressure of temptation you conform to the world, you be ashamed of Jesus, you refuse your cross, and thereby lose your crown. Suffering there must be; look to the end, anticipate the glory which it begins, and against all that would rob you of the fulness of that glory, watch unto prayer.—C. N.

Vers. 8—11.—*The persecuted Christian reminded of the help of brotherly love* "Above all things have fervent love among yourselves." You will remember how this expression, "above all things," corresponds with other Scripture. Paul says, "Now abideth faith, hope, love; but the greatest of these is love." "Now the end of the commandment is love unfeigned." James calls this "the royal law;" and our Lord himself says, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." The introduction of this theme in addressing the persecuted Church is very natural. Next to the support of the sympathy and help of God in trial, is the grasp of a brother's hand of whose heart we are sure. Love sustains individual weakness; it unites the Church, and makes it impregnable to the common foe. This is one end of Church-fellowship; no life can be so strong as it might that stands alone, or, even if it would, alone it can do nothing (as it ought) to shelter the weakness of others. Strength comes with union, therefore let there be union. But the union is only a name, Church-fellowship is only a mockery, and its promise of strength a deception, unless it be the union and fellowship of sacred love.

I. THE DEMAND FOR FERVENT LOVE IN THE CHURCH. We sometimes excuse ourselves for not feeling as we should towards the brethren by saying we cannot make ourselves love. But that cannot be right, for our very text lays on us the responsibility of having fervent love, and everywhere it is the subject of command. What, then, can we do to this end? There are three duties we can fulfil which tend to it. 1. *The cultivation of what would foster brotherly love.* Love of the brethren springs from love to the Father. Natural love is born in us, spiritual love is not. That comes with the new birth, and is fostered and developed only by fellowship with God. Know God, dwell in God, love God, and the Scripture says brotherly love will be the result. Cherish love to God, and we shall find ourselves, without setting out to do it, loving those he loves for his sake. 2. *Watchfulness against what would hinder brotherly love.* If certain evils are allowed to spring up in a Church, farewell to a spirit of love then. One great danger of these evils is that they are subtle and dwell mostly out of sight. The Church as a Church, therefore, cannot deal with them; its safety depends on its individual members jealously watching their approach, and unsparingly destroying them at the moment of contact. A disputatious spirit is one of these evils. Some minds are never known to agree with anything; there is always something to criticize adversely everywhere. That spirit is contagious, and kills love. There is also a jealous spirit; half the troubles of Church-life are due to jealousy, which often has no ground but that of suspicion. There is a tale-bearing spirit. If you see a man or woman going from ear to ear with some mischief-making story, some gossip which tends to wound or discredit another, suspect that person's own character, regard him as an emissary of Satan. There is also a self-assertive spirit which forgets the claims of others. We are all terribly apt to be overcome by that spirit, and love falls a speedy victim to it. Every spirit in the Church that is hostile to love we must destroy. 3. *A refusal to be repulsed by a lack of love.* An unloving Christian can only harm himself if others refuse to be influenced by him. There are two ways of treating such—either as he treats you, which makes two wrong-doers instead of one; or to refuse to be overcome of evil, and to overcome evil with good. It is impossible that fervent love can long widely exist in a community, unless there be a general individual determination, in the strength of God, first, not to provoke, then if provoked, not to "render evil for evil, . . . but contrariwise blessing."

II. THE MANIFESTATION OF CHRISTIAN LOVE. 1. *It expresses itself in different ways.* Love speaks evil of no man, and thinketh no evil. Love is the "advocate of the absent." Love gives; the homes of the persecuted were but slenderly stocked, they had often to

endure the "spoiling of their goods;" but there was to be a place at the table and a room for the stranger who needed food and rest. Love speaks—not always, does not obtrude itself, but where there is an erring step or a listening ear, love speaks. 2. *It is reciprocal.* Each has his own gift, his own power of doing good; there is not a single member of Christ's Church who is to be receptive only; for every gift each receives from another there is another he can give. This is the law, "By love serve one another;" "Edifying one another in love;" "We being many are one body, and every one members one of another." All receiving, all bestowing, and doing both in love, that is God's ideal of the Church on earth. 3. *It recognizes that it holds all as stewards for God.* "As good stewards of the manifold grace of God." That raises our thoughts from the human to the Divine obligation; it calls us to the duty of love of the brethren, by reminding us of the claims of a higher love still. Sometimes our love to the brethren is not enough to constrain us to these tasks; self-love is strong within us, and sometimes our effort may be repulsed and our desire chilled by a cold response. It is unspeakably hard to get over the feeling, if one will not love he shall not be loved. But here is the antidote to that—the apostle says we are to exercise our gifts with a view to God; service we could not render to others for their own sakes we can render for him.

III. THE END OF CHRISTIAN LOVE IS THE GLORIFYING OF GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST. The possession and manifestation of Christian love glorifies God, and in so many ways. 1. *In the manifestation of what most honours him amongst men.* We think of 1 Cor. xiii. as the creed of the Church; it is the creed of the world, it is what the world believes in, what the world when it sees it recognizes as Divine. It cares nothing for our doctrines or systems; what it believes in is a manly, faithful loving-kindness; where that is it feels the power of God. 2. *In the power with which it supplies others to glorify him.* Probably to absence of love in the Church is due, more than to anything else, the defections from the Church. It is largely in the power of love to make others what they should be, to draw them into the Church if they are not in, and when they are, the quick eye of love should detect the first signs of wandering, and the gentle power of love restrain. The atmosphere of heaven is love, and when that is the atmosphere of the Church, God will be honoured in the beauty of a piety which otherwise he seeks in vain. 3. *In the opportunity it gives him of glorifying himself.* Discord silences his voice and grieves his Spirit, and he needs to chasten us, and his Word becomes vain, and our labour vain. Brethren, "live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you."—C. N.

Vers. 12—19.—*The joyous aspect of suffering for Christ a help to persecuted Christians.* The apostle is writing on the eve of the dreadful persecution of the Church by Nero, which was already beginning to be felt. The increased bitterness of those around them, and probably dark intimations from their teachers that the evil times predicted by Christ were nigh, tended to awaken very gloomy forebodings in the hearts of the converts. No wonder if they thought the trial strange; even to us with our larger knowledge it always seems strange that the good should suffer, and often so severely. Yet God says, "Think it not strange, but rejoice," and that word "rejoice" is the keyword to the passage. There are three reasons here for this rejoicing.

I. THERE IS THE JOY OF FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST IN SUFFERING. Suffering for righteousness brings us into fellowship with Christ. 1. *It is suffering for his sake.* The persecuted partake of Christ's sufferings. Some of our Lord's sufferings were peculiarly his own, and could not be shared; but we participate in his sufferings when we suffer in the interests of his Church, the interests of righteousness, for the spread of his kingdom. Suffering is always suffering, but when we know it is for that for which our Lord suffered, and on which his heart is set, it is suffering glorified. 2. *It is suffering by his side.* We are never more conscious of his presence and sympathy than in suffering voluntarily endured for his cause. None ever suffered for Christ without loving him more. 3. *It is suffering preparatory to his glory.* Some of Christ's servants do not think much of his coming again. That may be due to their not having fulfilled the tasks he gave them. His servants know when they have really tried to please him, and he knows it too, and this gives them confidence towards him, and makes them eager for his appearing.

II. THERE IS THE JOY OF GLORIFYING THE SPIRIT IN SUFFERING. 1. *Be sure that yours is really Christian suffering.* "Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as a busybody." (Strange company that, by the way, for busybodies!) Is it not strange that Peter should suggest that Church-members might be guilty of such things? The fact is that the early Church contained many from the criminal classes, and some of them were too easily admitted to fellowship; their adhesion to Christ being simply an endeavour to atone for a life of misdeeds while the misdeeds secretly remained. Let us see to it that we do not take to ourselves the comforts of those who suffer for Christ's sake, when we really suffer for our sins' sake. It is not the suffering that makes the martyr, but the cause of it. 2. *If ours be Christian suffering, its endurance glorifies the Spirit.* "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you." The word "resteth" here is the same word our Lord uses when he says, "Come unto me and rest." On the seventh day God rested from his works, but he also rested in them: "He saw all that he had made, and behold it was very good." God in his works was satisfied. So the Spirit of God rests on the Christian martyr, for he sees his work there—the fruit of the sacred love he has inspired, of the sustaining grace he has imparted; and the gracious Spirit reposes in the glorious result of his mission. 3. *Reproach becomes our glory rather than our shame.* "If any man suffer as a Christian," etc. Christian was a name of scorn at first, and Peter says, "Be not ashamed, glorify God in this name; respond to the reproach of earth by praise to heaven." Why should we do this? Because in us at that moment the Spirit of God finds a resting-place. Do we not often forget the claims that gracious Spirit has on our service and our love? We owe all that Christ is to us, and all that the Father is to us, to him.

III. THERE IS THE JOY OF TRUSTING THE FATHER. "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator." "The time is come that judgment," etc. We understand these words when we remember that the Epistle was written before the awful judgment which terminated in the destruction of the ecclesiastical and civil polity of the Jews, which our Lord had foretold: "wars, rumours of wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes," as "the beginning of sorrows;" and added to his people, "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you, and ye shall be hated of all men for my Name's sake." "And if the righteous scarcely [with difficulty] be saved," etc. What fires of discipline, and what deep waters of sorrow, they have to go through to enter the kingdom! If this is what God's children endure, what of those who are not his? If so heavy is the hand of chastening, educating love, what will the hand of judgment and wrath be! Christian, shrinking under the one, remember that you are delivered from the other. *Trustfully acquiesce in the endurance of Christian suffering.* This suffering is according to God's will, the other is not, and can only be unmingled curse; but that of his people in the way of righteousness is his choice, he selects that, presides over it, tempers it, and leads it on to unmingled blessing. Here, then, is a fresh possibility of joy in suffering for Christ—the joy of resting in the will of the Father. Do we know anything of suffering for righteousness' sake? Other sufferings we are each familiar with, but have we suffered for Christ? do we live a life of voluntary suffering for him? If not, I might say we have reason in that to wonder whether we are his followers at all. If we are strangers to Christian suffering, we are strangers to the deepest Christian joy. Christian joy is a flower which bears its fairest blossoms only when it grows on the grave where self lies buried.—C. N.

Vers. 3—6.—*Living to the will of God.* We have seen that the apostle—the large-hearted, sympathetic, experienced apostle—is showing the scattered Christians he is addressing how to fortify themselves against the persecution that in stormful violence had fallen upon them here and there, before and since they became fugitives or exiles. This is part of a long paragraph beginning at the thirteenth verse of the last chapter, in which he is teaching that amid such persecution a good conscience is the only charm; that whatever befalls their circumstances or their bodily life, a consistent

character will be as an asbestos robe enwrapping their spirits. Nothing can violate the charm of that good conscience, nothing burn or even singe the asbestos robe of that true character. Remember his defiant inquiry, "Who is he that can harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" This he has been showing in many verses; and the possession of that charm, the possession of that character is the burden of his exhortation here. The key-note of this chapter is—*Live to the will of God.*

I. LIVE TO THE WILL OF GOD. This is the lesson of man's past evil life. St. Peter urges that "the *time past* may suffice to have wrought the *desire of the Gentiles.*" What was the *desire of the Gentiles in time past*? What they desired for themselves and others. The life of that century throughout the Roman empire, where these scattered Christians were, has never, perhaps, been equalled in the hideousness of its private and public vices. The names of the Emperors Tiberius, Gaius, and Claudius Nero are so many symbols of cruelty, lust, and buffoonery. The walls of Pompeii, the pages of the poets, the annals of the historian, all testify how voluptuous, how debased, how heinously immoral, were the desires of the Gentiles. 1. *Lasciviousness*; outrageous debauchery in general, including all that follow—wine-swillings, roysterings, revels, and the filthy festivals of idolatry. So many forms—alas! scarcely exaggerated—of selfishism prevalent in cultured and Christian England to-day. The apostle says, "The *time past* may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles." There is deep sadness in the irony here about *time past*. And yet there is deeper hope, for the past is past, and need not return. 2. *Sadness.* *Enough sin!* and such sin as we have been gazing at! Enough; for such time past—hour, or day, or year, or years—was simply (1) A time of *degradation* to self. Men in such indulgences become coarse, vulgar, low, bestial. (2) A time of *imperiousness* to others. Such a life was the breathing out of pollution into the social atmosphere; the opening up of fetid and poisonous fountains that pour forth disease and death. (3) A time of *rebellion*. The human misery in scenes of riot and shame tell of Divine anger. Enough; let not the wheels of time bring back an hour of such life as that to you, my brother. 3. *Hope.* Time past may be left behind. (1) There is *forgiveness* for time past. "Depths of the sea;" not shallow river, not near shore, where the tide may wash on to the beach. (2) There is *deliverance* for time past. The charm of evil can be broken; the spell of wrong-doing can be dissolved. With all the energy you have, get away from that past time. The pirate bears down upon the vessel and captures her when her sails are down and she is making no headway. Oh, press on! "Escape for thy life!"

"Let the dead past bury its dead.

Act, act in the living present—
Heart within, and God o'erhead."

II. LIVE TO THE WILL OF GOD, NOTWITHSTANDING BAD MEN'S WONDER AT GOOD MEN'S CONDUCT. St. Peter said, nearly two thousand years ago, what can be truly said to-day, that worldly men, sinful men, sensual men, *think it strange* that Christian men do not run with them into the same excess of riot. Dissimilar characters often find it difficult to understand each other; the thoroughly corrupt man seems to find it impossible to understand the Christian. 1. He thinks his conduct *strange*, and so perhaps he *ignores him altogether*. He does not invite him to his carousals; he does not know him in society; still less is he on visiting or calling terms with him. He is an enigma he does not care to understand. 2. Or he thinks his conduct *strange*, and he is *aggravated by it*. He is contemptuous; he sneers; he tempts. He says about him, or to him, with curled lip, as he declines the wine-party, or gaming-table, or clubs of voluptuous pleasure. "Oh, you are 'green;' you are 'soft;' you are 'melancholy;' you're not 'half a man.'" And soon their irritation makes them scandal-mongers and slanderers, as were the pagan scandal-mongers and slanderers of the early Christians. 3. Or, better far, he thinks his conduct *strange*, and it *leads him to inquire*. Wonder ends in respect, and respect in admiration, and admiration in imitation. Not a few of the men who have been reclaimed from lives of silly, not to say sensual, self-indulgence, began to climb the higher path and to breathe the purer air of Christian manhood because they saw a change come over some old companion that they at first thought strange, but soon found to be fascinating and ennobling. Who of you would not wish so to live that men should say, "We will go with you, for we have seen that God is with you?"

III. LIVE TO THE WILL OF GOD, FOR BOTH CHRIST'S JUDGMENT AND CHRIST'S GOSPEL ARE FOR ALL. The point the apostle is here pressing is that these bad men—these Gentiles and pagans of that day, who find their counterpart and succession in all worldly, sensual, selfish men of to-day—will have to give account to him who will judge quick and dead. The last time he mentioned Christ it was as having ascended to the right hand of God; just before that, as having suffered and died and gone to Hades; now, as in the very order in which the Apostles' Creed enshrines the great biography, he mentions him as *judging the quick and the dead*. All the living and all the dead shall stand at that tribunal. "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." But if *all* are to be *judged*, all must have the gospel preached to them; or the judgment would be partial, unjust, unrighteous. "Unto this end," that is, that all may be righteously judged, all have the gospel preached to them. The gates of mercy are as vast as the seat of judgment; the cross of Christ is as stupendous as the great white throne. Hence the good tidings had been preached "to the dead." "Spirits in prison" were visited by the Redeemer; to the dead Christ goes with his boundless gospel of righteousness and mercy. The myriads in the Roman empire in Peter's day who died without a single note of the evangel falling on their ears—died in gross corruption and bewildering superstitions of heathenism, are yet to be met with the offers of mercy, with the provisions of the gospel, and with the love of Jesus Christ. So that though according to the flesh—their life on earth—they were judged by men, and rightly judged, as evil and wicked men, they may, if they will yet receive the gospel preached to them, if they will read its blessed writing in the lurid light of the very flames of hell, yet be trophies of its unspeakable grace, and live to God in the spirit. Their life in the flesh was a ruin and a wreck, a scourge and a curse;—so they are judged according to men. But, wondrous ray of hope! their life in the spirit may, after the purgings of those terrific fires, and through the influence of the gospel of our blessed Lord, yet become a life unto God.

That is the object and only sufficient end of the preaching of the good tidings of Christ anywhere and at any time—now and here, or then and yonder. Has it led us to live unto God, as the flower lives to the sun, turning to it to paint its petals and to distil its odours and to nourish its exquisite life; as the subject lives to his sovereign, in unflinching and loyal fidelity; as the child lives unto his parent, in loving, watchful, eager obedience? Some men are alive to *pleasure*, or *gain*, or *ambition*, or *friendship*, and no more. Are we alive unto God?—U. R. T.

Vers. 7, 8.—*A solemn fact and urgent duty*. "But the end of all things is at hand," etc. These words, which are part of the paragraph that ends with the eleventh verse, naturally follow the exhortation on vers. 3-6—an exhortation to *pure living*, and *this* because our past life is long enough for sin and its vanities; notwithstanding that sinful men think your separation from them in spirit and conduct strange; and to pure living, because Christ's judgment and Christ's gospel are for all. The exact point in the argument is this—that even to the dead was the gospel preached; and this is a deep fathomless mystery of *justice* and of *grace*. But however that may be, you are to remember and to realize, that "the end of all things is at hand," etc. Here we note—

I. THE PREDICTION OF A SOLEMN FACT. "The end of all things is at hand." There are, as every student of the New Testament Epistles knows, great diversities of opinion as to the aspect of the *transitoriness* of all things on which Peter was now dwelling, and from which he was enforcing great lessons. It is clear that not only here, but all through his Epistles, he was deeply impressed with the *transitoriness* of all things. Glance back at the first chapter, and on: *Sojourners*—"a little while;" "time of your sojourning;" "All flesh is grass," etc. "Sojourners and pilgrims in the day of visitation." Peter seems to have expected now a termination of human history—at least an approaching end of the age. He was *old* now, nearly seventy. He came to Rome on the eve of the conflagration of the city by Nero. He felt himself growing old—a prisoner hounded on to the death of martyrdom like the Master who preceded him; and, getting to the end of all things, discerns in the corruptions of the Roman empire indications of ruin—"the end of all things." He discerns, too, the end of Judaism, of ceremonial, of institutions; germs perishing; and the scattering of Christians; the end of all things to the Church—personally, in the empire, in systems. Whether "the

end" be "the end of the world" or "the end of the age," that is approaching, so far as we and all with whom we daily have to do are concerned, "the end of all things is at hand." In our persons, homes, institutions, in the world itself, are elements of decay, indications of transitoriness. Yesterday, honours, old age, are carried to the grave; to-morrow, youth and hope—one shadow on all households; one and another and another join the majority. "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?"

II. THE CONSEQUENT CALL TO THE HIGHEST PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DUTY. The thought of the termination of our connection with all things produces different impressions on different minds. Epicureans both ancient and modern, as represented by Athens and England, have said, "Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die!" "A short life, and a merry one," is the maxim some formulate from their impression of all things passing away. Wiser, deeper, Heaven-taught natures draw an altogether other lesson. Here it is: 1. *Personal*. "Be of sound mind and sober," etc.—an echo (especially as the old version puts it) of what Peter had heard from his Lord on the last evening of his life, and in discourses in which he portrays the great days of judgment. A memory which saddened him; for he had not watched "one hour" which he would give worlds to have back. The bitter experience of his fall had taught him his deepest need. "*Sound mind*;" not volatile and fickle, and perhaps impulsive and fanatic. "*Sober*." Another word than that which clears gluttony and drunkenness from the experiences of the Christian life; all temperance, all self-control, free from the intoxication of all inordinate excitement, whether the cause be alcohol or gold, appetite or ambition. "*Unto prayer*." This is the point to be touched, the focus through which life shall pass—the *concert-pitch* note of prayerfulness. Prayer is both a means and an end. Here it is an end. Such nearness to Heaven is the secret of confidence in and submission to God. 2. *Social*. "Above all things." This is all-comprehending and crowning social duty. *Love* alone—all alone. John, Paul, Peter, James. (1) *The character of love*. Fervent or ardent. The cordial grasp of the hand; the tried and steady gaze of the eye; the eager step of the foot. Unservile, unremitting; to mix and mingle with men whose vices jar, tastes annoy, cannot watch, nor yet love. (2) *The effect of love*. "*Covereth*." Some thought the text "justification by love," covers a man's own sin—*atones* for it. No such teaching; though "forgive as we forgive" shows that the condition of enjoying forgiveness is a true test of forgiveness—*covers* the sins of others. (1) *Overlooks*; (2) puts best interpretation upon; (3) *forgives*; (4) *prevails* by not provoking, not differing;—a better, truer spirit. As you have seen ivy covering twisted gnarled oak, defaced and scarred ruins, so let love be ever green, covering the multitude of sins that defame and deface and scar human nature on every side of you.—U. R. T.

Vers. 9—11.—*Christian love as a service*. "Using hospitality one to another," etc. Here the apostle describes Christian love as a service. For as the word variously translated "minister" and "deacon" denotes a servant, so the word "ministereth" here really conveys the simple thought of service—a thought which veins the beautiful marble of these two verses. This service is—

I. UNIVERSAL IN ITS OBLIGATION. "As each hath received a gift." That includes all, for all are gifted by God with some endowment or other. The man who has received no gift from God would be one not only without possession or influence, but without life; he is as nothing, and he is nowhere to be found. We have seen all through the Epistle some of Peter's memories of his Lord's teaching. Is there not here a recollection of the parable of the talents? In its light every gifted man is "a steward" (ver. 10).

II. MANIFOLD IN ITS METHOD. All serve, but all serve in different ways. The service of love is not a dreary monotone, but the richest music; it embraces the full diapason of duty. It is "the manifold grace of God." Some of the notes are here. "Using hospitality." This is specially applicable to those to whom the Epistle was first written, *i.e.* "strangers of the dispersion." It was, indeed, almost the *earliest form* of Christian charity. Peter finds it in Simon the tanner, Paul in Gaius, etc. It is *incumbent on men now* in the midst of the yawning social distinctions, and of the ceaseless travel of to-day. Here is an echo of the teaching of the apostle's Lord, "I was a

stranger, and ye took me in." "Without murmuring;" *i.e.* without grumbling. Three watch-dogs keep the door of the inhospitable man: temper, suspicion, reproach. "If any man speaketh." Just as the hands put on the table viands for the body, the lips are to spread a banquet for the intellect and the heart. How? "As it were oracles of God." That must mean with reality, with purity, with tenderness. "If any man ministereth." This comprehends every form of service. It is a widening of the other two just mentioned. "As of the strength which God supplies." That implies that the service will be rendered (1) *humbly*,—no pride, for he is a channel only, not a fountain; (2) *freely*,—no stint, or grudging, when God is the Source.

III. ONE IN PURPOSE. "That in all things God may be glorified." Hospitality, teaching, almsgiving, all are to be for the glory of God. "Through Jesus Christ." Had it not been for Jesus Christ, that kindness, activity, wisdom, liberality, would not have been. He awakened all. He is the Head from whom the life of love flows. "Whose is the glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen." This is not a note of conclusion, but of strong emotion. Reason, gratitude, love, all utter their deep "amen" to the declaration that God through Christ has endless glory and dominion.—U. R. T.

Vers. 12—14.—*The Christian's fiery trial.* "Behold, think it not strange concerning," etc. Some have thought Peter is alluding to the burning of Rome, but both because the conception of suffering generally as *fire* is very common in the Old Testament Scripture, with which Peter shows himself familiar, and also because he is writing to Christians, upon whom through all parts of the Asiatic provinces of Rome the cruelties of Nero's persecution were being in many ways wreaked, we conclude that "the fiery trial" is a wider and more scathing and more enduring conflagration than that which destroyed the imperial city. So the lessons here are of wide application. They cover the whole scope of Christian suffering.

I. THE CHRISTIAN MUST NOT RECKON HIS SUFFERINGS AS STRANGE. Tenderly, with the word "beloved," Peter bids Christian sufferers not to feel themselves bewildered as men in a strange country. Do not let suffering shock you. Do not fear as you enter into the cloud. Why not? Because: 1. *The sorrows the Christian shares in common with the world generally are not strange.* His religion will not exempt him from bodily pain, business calamities, social bereavement, physical death. 2. *The sorrows that Christians endure in persecution because they are Christians are not strange.* Persecution is not to be wondered at. It is (1) an instinct of evil men; (2) in harmony with all history. The flippant dislike the real, the unclean are angry with the pure, the votaries of error are irritated with the teachers of truth, the wicked hate the good; hence the pains and penalties of persecution are not strange. 3. *The sorrows that are the direct result of Christian spirit and character are not strange.* (1) Grief for sin and imperfection; (2) compassion for the miserable; (3) self-sacrificing sympathy for the vicious and wretched. No. Trial is not "strange;" for: (1) *It meets the necessities of Christian character.* "It cometh upon you to prove you." (2) *It is in fulfilment of the repeated declarations of God's Word.* (3) *It is in harmony with all the biographies of good men.* The device on the Church's shield is the bush that burns and yet is not consumed.

II. THE CHRISTIAN MAY FIND IN HIS SORROWS A CAUSE FOR PROFOUND JOY. To Peter, as well as his beloved brother Paul, the vast region of sorrow was not unknown or unexplored; they did not feel "strange" in it, as bewildered men in a foreign country. They had descried light on its hill-tops, drunk of streams in its deserts, plucked flowers in its solitudes, eaten manna in its wastes. How was this? They were "partakers of Christ's sufferings." Some of our Lord's sorrows are infinite secrets. Some can be known and shared. Such as: 1. *Agonizing sensitiveness to sin.* His sigh, tear, groan, we may know in our experience. 2. *Sacrificial compassion for sinners.* 3. *Sternly self-denying loyalty to duty.* In all these we may, we must as Christians, be partakers of Christ's sufferings. "At the revelation of his glory." These words speak of unspeakable future joy. To rejoice in the revelation of his glory, which will be the triumph of pity, of purity, of the mission to bless others, we must be partakers of his sufferings. Blessed now with reproach for his sake, we shall, by growing resemblance to him and gracious reward from him, be blessed then. "The Spirit of glory and of God resteth on you." This token of the Divine presence not simply indi-

cates the *continuance* of God with you, but the *satisfaction* of God in you. His spirit "*resteth*" upon you. The teaching is: (1) God is *near* those who are partakers of Christ's sufferings. The Spirit of God is with them. (2) God is *near* them to *glorify* them, and himself to *rejoice* in them. "The Spirit of glory *resteth*." The music of the Beatitudes is ringing through Peter's soul, and he flings out their consoling, inspiring tones to all who were or ever shall be in the "fiery trial" through which all Christians pass. "Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."—U. R. T.

Vers. 15—19.—*Suffering, shameful and glorious.* "For let none of you suffer as a murderer," etc. The apostle is still dwelling on the "fiery trial." All trial to the Christian is a fire that (1) gives great pain; (2) destroys evil; (3) purifies the good. Notice—

I. SUFFERING FOR WRONG-DOING IS CERTAIN AND IS SHAMEFUL. "Let none of you suffer as a murderer," etc. This is strange counsel to Christians. That it is thus given to them: 1. *Reminds us of the classes from which the first converts were drawn.* No doubt many were not only from the poorest, but from criminal, classes. Hence the apostle's reminder after he has described some of the basest of characters, "Such were some of you." 2. *Suggests to us to be on our guard against sins to which before we became Christians we were addicted.* The old taint is a peril. Perhaps few now need fear being "murderers" or "malefactors," but many may be on their guard against being "meddlers." "Lay aside the sin that so easily besets." "Them that obey not the gospel." Here is another class whose sufferings will bring shame. The climax of judgment is for them. Who can tell what their "end" will be? "The house of God" is under his control, and all in it must suffer for their wrong-doing. Those who know the claims of the gospel, the possibilities it offers, and yet despise it and reject it, "do not obey it," must have even severer suffering than Christians who have blundered into error or been overcome by evil, for they at least have (1) *resignation*; (2) *hope of better life*; (3) *conscious fellowship with a forgiving God.*

II. SUFFERING FOR RIGHT-DOING MAY BEFALL US, BUT WILL BE A SOURCE OF GLORY. This Peter noted in earlier paragraphs, and reverts to again. "Suffer as a Christian," that is, because he is a Christian. The very name was at first one of scorn. And the name of scorn has become a name that glorifies God. So with all the sufferings that the character of those who truly wear that name has ever brought upon them. Are they the sufferings of (1) *poverty*, (2) *unpopularity*, (3) *contempt*, (4) *persecution*? They are sufferings none need be ashamed of, but in which they may, as the noblest of men have done, glorify God.

III. SUFFERING FOR RIGHT-DOING MUST BE ENDURED IN THE RIGHT SPIRIT. The words of the nineteenth verse, the final words about "the fiery trial," are addressed to those who suffer *because* they are Christians. 1. They "suffer according to the will of God." (1) Because he wills it; (2) along the course of his wise providence. 2. In such sufferings they are to "commit their souls, in well-doing unto a faithful Creator." Here is the obligation of: (1) *Trust.* "Commit;" deposit the treasure. (2) *Dutifulness.* "In well-doing;" keep on doing the right. (3) *Trust in and dutifulness towards God.* "Faithful Creator." He knows—he cares: he will be faithful to his creation, and emphatically to the *trustful* ones. He who gave the soul its existence, and knows its capacities and needs, is its loving Guardian.—U. R. T.

Vers. 1—6.—*Coming to judgment.* I. THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST CARRIES WITH IT THE RESOLUTION TO SUFFER. "Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind." Peter goes back to the starting-point, that from it, with practical instruction, he may go beyond the present session of Christ at the right hand of God, viz. to his coming to judgment. He does not say, "put to death in the flesh," but more generally, to suit the condition of those whom he was addressing, "suffered in the flesh." When it is said that he *suffered*, we are to understand that he did not avoid, but bravely faced, whatever suffering came to him in the way of righteousness. He armed himself with the resolution to suffer; and thus he was prepared for it when it came. Let us *also* arm ourselves *with the same mind.* Let us *not*, in the way of evil compliance, avoid suffering. Let us be resolved bravely to face

whatever ordeal our God appoints; thus also shall we be prepared for it when it comes. When it is said that Christ suffered *in the flesh*, there may be, in the line of a former thought, a look beyond his past condition to his present condition. He is no longer in the flesh to suffer; so shall it soon be with us, that we are no longer in the flesh to suffer.

II. THE RESOLUTION TO SUFFER CARRIES WITH IT A BREAK WITH SIN. "For he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that ye no longer should live the rest of your time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God." It is better to carry the third person through the whole, the second part being simply a further definition of the first. It is wrong also not to bring out the past tense, "he that suffered," just as it was said "Christ suffered." It is, however, introducing a foreign thought to suppose the meaning to be that, when Christ suffered, the person thought of suffered. The person to be thought of is one to whom at a previous stage and a critical stage in his history there was given the choice of suffering or not suffering. When he resolved to suffer, he very distinctly broke with sin. He said that he would rather suffer than *sin*. He looked forward to the rest of his time in the flesh, and said that the rule of his life would no longer be *the lusts of men* (a rule variable and without authority), but *the will of God* (a rule invariable and having the highest authority). The "no longer" of sin along with "the time past of suffering" is to be explained by the fact that suffering commenced with conversion to Christianity.

III. THE BREAK WITH SIN IS NOT TO BE REGRETTED. "For the time past may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles, and to have walked in lasciviousness, lusts, wine-bibblings, revellings, carousings, and abominable idolatries." The life according to "the desire of the Gentiles" is particularly described. It was a life in *excesses*, especially of impurity. It was a life in *lusts*, especially fleshly. It was a life in *wine-swillings*. It was a life in *night-banquetings*, after which the custom was to sally out into the streets "wakening the echoes with song and dance and noisy frolic." It was a life in *drinking-bouts*. It was a life in *idolatries that violated what was sacred* (associated with many abominations). Peter's readers were of Gentile extraction; for it is said that in time past they had wrought the desire of the Gentiles, and walked in the things mentioned. He adroitly founds on their experience, saying less than the reality in order to suggest the more. "The past may suffice; there is a figure in that, meaning much more than the words express. It is enough! oh, too much, to have so long, so miserable a life" (Leighton). We are reminded of Paul's way of dealing with the Roman Christians, "For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things, whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death."

IV. THE NEW ARE A PUZZLE AND AN OFFENCE TO THE OLD. "Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you." The heathen are represented as rushing over the barriers that stand in the way of vicious indulgence; and they are astonished to find their former companions not rushing with them to the same goal. They are puzzled to understand the new principles from which they act, the complete revolution that has taken place in their ways of thinking and acting. And they are more than puzzled; they are *offended*. They take it as an affront that their company should not be thought good enough, and so they *speak evil* of them.

V. ACCOUNT IS TO BE GIVEN TO CHRIST AS JUDGE. "Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead." Was it right for the Christians to withdraw? was it wrong for the heathen to resent their withdrawal? Yes; it would be as decided by Christ, to whom these evil-speakers would give account. Thus does the apostle return to his line of thought. So far from being crushed by death, Christ is to be gloriously active in the future on earth again. He is here represented as *ready to judge the quick and the dead*. He is to judge *all* without exception. He is *ready to judge*, as invested with all the authority and power that are necessary for judgment. At this moment, if the materials for judgment were complete, he could descend from heaven to hold the great assize.

VI. CONNECTION WITH JUDGMENT OF THE FORMERLY MENTIONED PREACHING TO THE DEAD. "For unto this end was the gospel preached even to the dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit."

"Dead" is general; but we are not to think of *all* the dead. The word is properly limited by the connected language. The *time* is to be observed—the gospel was preached to the dead. And we are only to think of the dead with whom the language can be associated, that they had been *judged according to men in the flesh*. The reference seems to be simply to the *antediluvians*. They had been overtaken, not by death in the ordinary way; but, in the interests of humanity, it had been considered necessary that they should be swept from the face of the earth. This *judgment according to man* was not one with the *final judgment* on them. To them, after they had been judged thus on earth, in Hades the gospel was preached. The aim seems to be so stated as to throw the judging before the preaching. The expression of the aim as *life in the spirit* is very startling. This is far from being plain to us; and we have not the links that would enable us to connect it with judgment. We can only apply to Peter's own writings the words he applies to Paul's, "In which are some things hard to be understood."—R. F.

Vers. 7—11.—*Duty in view of the nearness of the end.* I. NEARNESS OF THE END. "But the end of all things is at hand." It is presupposed that *all things* are to come to an *end*, i.e. the Divine purpose in all things is to be brought forward to its completion. What gives this solemn significance to us, is that there is to be, in view of probation, a final relating of us to the purpose. How shall we stand related to the completion of all things? Stress is laid here on the *time* of the end. It is not revealed when definitely it is to be—whether it is to be to-day or a thousand years hence. In judging of the language employed, it is to be borne in mind that with the Lord "a thousand years are as one day." Allowance is to be made for the great vividness of the language. The early Christians, taking some words of revelation too literally, thought the end of all things was to be in their day. We go to the opposite extreme, and put it far off. It is intended that the Church, in all times, should have a vivid realization of the end:

II. DUTY IN VIEW OF THE NEARNESS OF THE END. 1. *Personal duty.* (1) *Calmness.* "Be ye therefore of sound mind, and be sober." The two verbs are to the same purport. The first points rather to governing considerations; the second points rather to the effect of governing considerations. Because the end is near, we are not to be *imaginative, extravagant, unbalanced*. We are to be free even from the intoxication of the coming glory; not driven to idleness, but bringing ordinary prudence to bear on our daily duties; not taking our pleasure, but rather being the more exacting on ourselves. (2) *Calmness unto prayer.* "Unto prayer." A calm mind is needed for prayer; prayer, again, reacts on the mind in making it calm. By prayer we quietly refer the determination of the future and of the end to God. The force of the plural seems to be that we are to connect prayer with every event as it transpires; thus shall we be prepared for the last event. 2. *Relative duty.* (1) *Ministering love in its intensity.* "Above all things being fervent in your love among yourselves; for love covereth a multitude of sins." It is presupposed that we are to have love among ourselves; the *essential* thing is that this love is to have its proper intensity or warmth. Soon the end is to be upon us; why should there be any coldness or disagreements? The apostle does not enjoin without presenting sufficient reason. He goes back, as is his manner, on Old Testament language. "Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins" (Prov. x. 12). It is the latter clause that is made use of here, with the substitution of "a multitude of sins" for "all sins." It is not difficult to catch the meaning. Where there is rancour or coldness there are constant occasions of variance; where there is good feeling there is a passing by faults in the spirit of forgiveness. For the removal of faults connected with brotherly intercourse, the Church must depend on the *fervency of love*. (2) *Ministering love in its manifestations. Hospitality.* "Using hospitality one to another without murmuring." It is taken for granted that we are *hospitable*. There was greater opportunity when Christians had sometimes to leave their homes, to lose their employment, on account of their religion. Stress is laid here on the *quality* of this form of ministration. Let it be *without murmuring*, i.e. at the trouble and expense caused by the hospitality. There is a hint here, which is not unneeded. Our religion requires that we should give out of our means for its support and extension. When we thus give out of our means, in loyalty to our convictions, let us not spoil the

giving by *murmuring*. *Exercise of gifts. Rule for their exercise.* "According as each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." All that God graciously bestows on the Church is here called *grace*; particular manifestations are *graces* (the words being connected). The grace of God (summing up the particular manifestations, and implying their homogeneity) is *manifold*, i.e. the gifts graciously bestowed on members of the Church are very varied. Each hath received a gift, i.e. one or more. According to the kind of gift which each hath received we are to *minister* it. We are not to allow it to be unused; and the rule for its ministration is that we are to use it for the good of the Christian community. This proceeds on our being not absolute owners, but *stewards* of the gift. As God has bestowed the gift, he has the right to determine the use to which it is to be put; and he intends it for the service, not of the individual (which would be division), but of the society (which preserves unity). What, then, we have to aim at is to be *good stewards*, i.e. to have the excellence of stewardship—fidelity to our trust. Let us see that we faithfully carry out the intention with which the gift was bestowed on us. *Application of the rule to speaking.* "If any man speaketh, speaking as it were oracles of God." It is a complaint brought against Christian teachers that we assume too much. We assume the existence of God; we assume that the Bible has come from God. We do not argue about these things in the pulpit. We have *warrant* for taking this course. We proceed on the principle here laid down by the Apostle Peter. In speaking, we speak as it were the oracles of God, i.e. as uttering the Divine thoughts, as giving forth the truths presented to us in God's book. And it is preaching that answers to this description—is an effective uttering of the Divine thoughts, opening of the meaning of Scripture, that is fitted to produce the best results. *Application of the rule to doing.* "If any man ministereth, ministering as of the strength which God supplieth." We are not to think merely of *official* ministering. There is a ministering official and unofficial to the young, to the poor, to the sick, to the ignorant, to the erring. The rule for this ministering is here laid down. Whatever service we render to the congregation, or to any section of those who need to be cared for, we are to do it, not as out of our own store of strength, but out of the strength which God supplieth. It is by attention to this rule (difficult, for self will come in, even when we profess to be unselfish) that Christian service is to be purified and elevated. Let us seek, even in our ordinary services, to be filled with the thought of God supplying the strength. *End contemplated in the rule.* "That in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, whose is the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen." The speaking and the acting are both regulated so that, in all things embraced under these, God is to be glorified, and not we the speakers and actors. It is God's thoughts we utter, not our own; and so God has the glory for these. It is God's strength that we employ in service; and so it is to him that we ascribe the enabling power. It is only through Christ's agency that we can either speak or act; and so when we glorify God, it is through him. The glory and the power we ascribe to God to the ages of ages. To this ascription let us add our hearty "Amen."—R. F.

Vers. 12—19.—*Fiery trial among the Christians.* I. HAPPINESS CONNECTED WITH THE FIERY TRIAL. 1. *The fiery trial not a perplexity.* "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among you, which cometh upon you to prove you, as though a strange thing happened unto you." With an affectionate address the subject is appropriately introduced. There was a fierce trial not coming on them, as the old translation bears, but already in the midst of them, as the revised translation bears. The word used ("fieriness") expresses the *sharpness* of the persecution to which they were subjected. They were mercilessly attacked in their dearest earthly interests. We do not know the details of the persecution; but it was a reality as of fire carried into the midst of the Christians, laying hold upon one here and upon another there, and distressing the whole circle. By severe suffering there has often been suggestion of the way of the Divine dealing. The apostle here supposes that they might be inclined to think it strange that they had the fire of persecution in the midst of the loved circle. The word expressive of the feeling of strangeness was formerly used with regard to the miraculous change of life introduced by Christianity. Former companions thought it strange that they did not continue to overleap the bounds with them. Now, the sup-

position is of them that did not overleap the bounds, but put on restraints, thinking it strange that the fire should be allowed to come among them. How did this consist with their Christian standing, character, destiny? Were they not the objects of covenant love? Were they not sincerely striving to honour the Divine ordinances? Were they not looking forward to a glorious, blood-bought inheritance? Why, then, was the fire working its work among them? It was justified, Peter points out, by its *probationary* use. It was upon them, and not yet fully spent, not to pain them simply (which would be inconsistent with covenant love), but by its very painfulness to *prove* them, i.e. to bring out their sincerity, and also their greater excellence, and therewith their deliverance from remaining impurity. The fire makes us feel the reality of life. It tends to make us thoughtful, earnest, humble. There is a knowledge of God, of Divine things, of the Divine promises, which enters only by the door of suffering. "Knowledge through suffering entereth." It is as sufferers that we obtain the richest experience, even of the tenderness of God, and that our love in its greatest tenderness is drawn out towards him. Let us not, then, think the fire strange, even as though a strange thing were happening unto us. It is not strange when it works toward such an end. And we may trust the All-wise God to proportion the intensity of the fire to what our spiritual requirements are. 2. *The fiery trial a rejoicing.* "But inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice; that at the revelation of his glory also ye may rejoice with exceeding joy." The apostle rises here to *jubilation*. Not merely is the fiery trial not a reason for bewilderment; it is even a reason for *rejoicing*. We are to rejoice in that we are partners with Christ; we are to rejoice in that we are partners with Christ even in his *sufferings*, i.e. those which he personally endured on earth. He endured the sharpness of persecution, ending in "the sharpness of death;" and what made his death so difficult to endure was not the fire of persecution, but the *penal fire* of God. There was a *solitariness* in Christ's sufferings; and yet our sufferings can be joined to his sufferings, and it is an honour to have them so joined. We are to look even at the degree or measure in which our sufferings can be placed along with Christ's sufferings. For there is the quantitative word used—meaning "in proportion as." There is thus exegetical value in the remark of Leighton, "What does the world, by its hatred and persecutions and railings for Christ, but make me more like him, give me a greater share with him in that which he did so willingly undergo for me?" The persecuting world thus in a way defeats itself; it makes the Christian suffer, but only to add to his joy in making him a greater sharer with Christ in what he suffered. "Rejoice," then, is the word of command to the persecuted; but now the end of the present rejoicing is seized on. "Rejoice; that at the revelation of his glory also ye may rejoice with exceeding joy." There is a present rejoicing; there is *also* a future rejoicing; and the one is with a view to the other. Both, it seems to be implied here, and is certainly elsewhere taught, go upon *partnership*, and *in this order*—first partners with Christ in his sufferings, and *then* partners with Christ in his glory. The future rejoicing is to be at the revelation of Christ's glory. There is a glory of Christ which is at present concealed—concealed from the world. There is even a glory of Christ which is not yet possessed—the glory expressive of the final vindication of his mission, the final triumph of his cause. Then he is to *get* glory from the saints; but then, also, he is to be in a position to bless his saints, without any hindrance, according to his heart's desire, according also to the thought of the Father from all eternity; and he is to bless them by making them partners with him in his glory. Their very bodies raised are to take after his glorified body: how can it, then, be aught but Christ's glory that is to shine forth in their spirits? The word for the present is "rejoice," but at the revelation of Christ's glory it is to be rejoicing with exceeding joy, rejoicing beyond the measure of the present, rejoicing far beyond our present power of conception. Now it is rejoicing in the midst of persecutions; then it will be rejoicing when the persecutions are all over for ever and sublimated, and the glorious realities are in actual possession.

II. THE CONDITION OF HAPPINESS EMPHASIZED. 1. *Being reproached for the Name of Christ.* "If ye are reproached for the Name of Christ, blessed are ye; because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you." The condition which has been implied is now expressed. There are reproachful words, and there are reproachful acts. To be reproached *for the Name of Christ* is to be interpreted in the light of our Lord's own words, "In my Name, because ye belong to Christ." We are not, then,

to understand the Beatitude as connected with what Christians suffer in the ordinary course of providence, but with suffering that they could avoid but do not avoid because the Name of Christ does not permit it. Blessed are they who are not intimidated, who are willingly reproached, when it is demanded by Christian principle, nay, by loyalty to him who has been manifested as their Saviour, and entitled to be served before and above every other. Blessed are they, because the spirit resting upon them is not the reproach-avoiding spirit of the world, but the *Spirit of glory*, who is also the *Spirit of God*. When Paul prays for the Ephesian Christians that they may have a worthy conception of the future glory, he calls God "the Father of glory" (Eph. i. 17); so here Peter says that there rests upon the reproached for the Name of Christ the Spirit of glory, *i.e.* whose nature is glory, and who, according to his nature, imparts glory. Granted that they do not by worldly compliance avoid reproach: have they not infinite compensation in what the possessed Spirit of glory will yet make to shine forth in them?

2. *The condition in what it excludes.* "For let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as a meddler in other men's matters." "For" is explanatory. Let the characterization of the condition be noted; for there is a suffering with which the Beatitude is not connected. "Let none of you [Peter is here directly personal] suffer for his own faults." "Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or [generally] an evil-doer." By the second "as" a fourth class is marked off by itself. "Let none of you suffer as a meddler in other men's matters;" literally, "a bishop or overseer within what belongs to another." The word, which may have been of Peter's own coining, is sufficiently expressive. The Christian, with his superior knowledge, saw many things around him which needed to be rectified. Let him not thereby be betrayed into stepping beyond his proper sphere. Thus meddling, he was not to be classed with the evil-doer; but for his interference he might suffer heavily enough.

3. *The condition further elucidated.* "But if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name." This verse is remarkable for the introduction of a name which occurs in only two other places in the New Testament. At first the followers of Christ were confounded with the Jews; when the distinction could be made, they were very naturally named Christians. This was the name current when Peter wrote. It was a name which exposed its bearer to suffering. But if he suffered in this name, let him not consider himself disgraced. He was disgraced if he suffered as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or even as a meddler; but not if he suffered as a Christian. On the contrary, says Peter, "let him glorify God in this name." He might have said, "Let him consider himself honoured," but, going beyond that, his thought is, "Let him render the honour of such suffering to God."

III. UNHAPPINESS CONNECTED WITH DISOBEDIENCE. 1. *The order of judgment.* "For the time is come for judgment to begin at the house of God: and if it begin first at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God?" This follows up not being ashamed, but glorifying God. There is to be, in accordance with ver. 7, which is not yet lost sight of, a speedy rectification of things. There is the actual arrival of the time for judgment to begin. With this there is a passing on to the *order of judgment*. The object of judgment is first the house of God, *i.e.* believers collectively. The language is taken from the temple at Jerusalem, which was probably still standing. The objects of judgment are next—they that *obey not the gospel of God*. We are not to think of those with whom the gospel has not been brought into contact. We are rather to think of men refusing the gospel when presented to them. We are especially to think of men showing active hostility to the gospel as persecutors. The gospel is here called "the gospel of God," not as coming from the heart of God, but rather as that with which God has to do in judgment in respect of the treatment it receives. There is judgment upon the house of God. We are not to think of *condemnatory* judgment, but rather of the *corrective* judgment referred to in 1 Cor. xi. 32, "But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." The judgment was to be regarded as taking place in the persecutions to which they were subjected as belonging to the house of God. These were fitted to remind them of their sins, their shortcomings. Because they were not pure enough, the *fiery trial* was sent upon them to act as a *refiner's fire*, separating the unworthy, and also from the genuine all unworthy elements. There is also to be judgment upon them that *obey not the gospel of God*. This is of the nature of *condemnatory* judgment. There

is to be final judicial dealing with them for their ungodly deeds, for their hard speeches. There is especially to be final judicial dealing with them for the treatment they have given the gospel, the preachers of the gospel, the Christian communities, the Christian members. Stress is laid on the *order* of the judgment. The starting-point is noted. It begins at, or from, the house of God. The language is used in Ezek. ix. 6, "Begin at my sanctuary." Upon this an argument is founded. It is similar to what is found in Jer. xxv. 29, "For, lo, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my Name, and should ye be utterly unpunished?" The argument has a consolatory side to them that belong to the house of God. "If it begin *first at us*," says Peter, referring to himself and the persecuted to whom he wrote. It was only to begin *first* at them; it was not to stay with them. It was to pass on to them that obeyed not the gospel of God—and how? We may understand, with increasing severity; for the question is ominously asked, "What shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God?" They experienced the beginnings of the storm: what would be their experience upon whom the storm, gathering volume as it proceeded, at last burst in all its fury? 2. *Old Testament reference.* "And if the righteous is scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?" The reference is to Prov. xi. 31, "Behold the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner." The language is properly from the imperfect Septuagint rendering. The singular individualizes. The righteous is he who stands in a right relation to God. The New Testament bearing is he who stands in right relation to God in view of the revelation made in the gospel. The Old Testament equivalent to "obeying not the gospel of God," is "the ungodly and sinner," i.e. he who has not the fear of God on him, and therefore acts presumptuously. It is said of the righteous that he is *scarcely saved*. Two men have a task assigned to them—climbing a hill; the task to be accomplished in a given time. It would require of both all their might to reach the top in the given time. One sets himself to it, and when the time expires he has scarcely reached the top. What is to be said of the other, who all the time has gone after his own pleasure? God has assigned to all, as he has a right to assign, a task; this task is the salvation of the soul. To accomplish it in the time appointed requires working with all the might. Here is one who sets himself to the task. He works while it is day; and when the night of death comes down on him the task is scarcely accomplished, there is still purification that needs to be done. It is not said of him that he shall not appear before God in the issue of judgment; rather may we understand that he shall appear, though there may be withheld from him the highest reward in the presence of God. Here is another who misjudges life, who spends the day of grace in idleness and pleasure, who has not fear for the God who is to judge him, who throws off restraints. This ungodly man and sinner, where shall he appear? The question is ominously left unanswered; but we may take the answer as given in the first psalm, "The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish."

IV. CONCLUSION SHOWING HOW THEY WERE TO DO UNDER THE FIERY TRIAL. "Wherefore let them also that suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing unto a faithful Creator." "Also" is to be connected with "wherefore," and is to be taken as indicating something additional in the way of conclusion. By the will of God we are to understand, not so much the Divine appointment, as the Divine requirement. It is the will of God that we should suffer even as confessors and martyrs rather than deny Christ. Let them that thus suffer according to the will of God follow this course. Let them commit their souls to God. Thus it was with him who pre-eminently suffered according to the will of God. In dying he said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Let them commit their souls *in well-doing unto a faithful Creator*. There can be a falling back, not only on Fatherhood, but even on Creatorship. In creating us he constituted us so that in a course of well-doing we should be happy. Let us do well, and we may be assured that God will be *faithful* to his part of the covenant. "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee; thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands" (Job xiv. 14, 15).—R. F.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER V.

Ver. 1.—**The elders which are among you** I exhort. The Vatican and Alexandrine Manuscripts omit the article, and insert “therefore” (the Sinaitic gives both), reading, “Elders, therefore, among you I exhort.” The solemn thoughts of the last chapter, the coming judgment, the approach of persecution, the necessity of perseverance in well-doing, suggest the exhortation; hence the “therefore.” The context shows that the apostle is using the word “elder” (*πρεσβύτερος*, presbyter) in its official sense, though its original meaning was also in his thoughts, as appears by ver. 5. We first meet with the word in the Old Testament (Exod. iii. 16, 18; xxiv. 9; Numb. xi. 16; Josh. xx. 4, etc.). Used originally with reference to age, it soon became a designation of office. Very early in the history of the Christian Church we meet with the same title. It occurs first in Acts xi. 30. The Christians of Antioch make a collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, and send their alms by the hand of Barnabas and Saul to the elders of the Jerusalem Church. We read several times of these elders in Acts xv., as associated with the apostles in the consideration of the great question of the circumcision of Gentile Christians; they joined with St. James in the official reception of St. Paul at his last visit to Jerusalem (Acts xxi. 18). It appears, then, that the Christian presbyterate originated in the mother Church of Jerusalem. It was soon introduced into the daughter Churches; the apostles Paul and Barnabas ordained elders in every Church during the first missionary journey (Acts xiv. 23); and the various notices scattered over the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles imply the early establishment of the office throughout the Church. **Who am also an elder** (*ὁ συμπρεσβύτερος*). St. Peter, though holding the very highest rank in the Church as an apostle of Christ, one of those who were to sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. xix. 28), claims no supremacy; he simply designates himself as a brother presbyter. So also St. John (2 John 1; 3 John 1). He exhorts the presbyters as a brother, and grounds his exhortation on community of office. The absence of any note of distinction between bishops and presbyters is, so far, an indication of the early date of this Epistle, as against Hilgenfeld and others. **And a witness of the sufferings of Christ.** This was his one distinction above those whom he addresses. Like St. John, he declared unto them that which he had heard, which he

had seen with his eyes. He had seen the Lord bound and delivered into the hands of wicked men; probably he had watched his last sufferings among them which stood afar off. **And also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.** The thought of the sufferings of Christ leads on to the thought of the future glory (comp. ch. i. 11; iv. 13). Perhaps St. Peter was also thinking of the Lord's promise to himself, “Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards” (John xiii. 36).

Ver. 2.—**Feed the flock of God which is among you**; rather, *tend*, as a shepherd tends his flock. The verb (*ποιμάνατε*) is aorist, as if St. Peter wished to concentrate into one point of view all the labours of the ministerial life. He is echoing the word so solemnly addressed to himself by the risen Lord, “Feed my sheep (*ποιμαίνε τὰ πρόβατά μου*).” The word covers all the various duties of the pastoral office: “Pasce mente, pasce ore, pasce opere, pasce animi oratione, verbi exhortatione, exempli exhibitione” (St. Bernard, quoted by Alford). St. Peter lays stress upon the solemn fact that the flock belongs to God, not to the shepherds (comp. Acts xx. 28). Some understand the words rendered “which is among you (*τὸ ἐν ὑμῖν*)” as meaning “quantum in vobis est,” “as far as lies in your power.” Others as “that which is committed to you,” or “that which is placed under your care.” But the simple local meaning seems the best. **Taking the oversight thereof.** This word (*ἐπισκοποῦντες*) is not found in the Sinaitic and Vatican Manuscripts. Alford thinks that “it has, perhaps, been removed for ecclesiastical reasons, for fear *πρεσβύτεροι* should be supposed to be, as they really were, *ἐπίσκοποι*.” It is in the Alexandrine and most other ancient manuscripts and versions, and there seems to be no sufficient reason for omitting it. It shows that when this Epistle was written, the words *πρεσβύτερος* and *ἐπίσκοπος*, presbyter and bishop, were still synonymous (comp. Acts xx. 17 and 28 in the Greek; also Titus i. 5 and 7). **Not by constraint, but willingly.** The word *ἀνγκαστῶς*, by constraint, occurs only here. St. Paul says (1 Cor. ix. 16), “Necessity is laid upon me;” but that was an inward necessity, the constraining love of Christ. Bede, quoted by Alford, says, “Coacte pascit gregem, qui propter rerum temporalium penuriam non habens unde vivat, idecirco prædicat evangelium ut de evangelio vivere possit.” Some good manuscripts add, after “willingly,” the words *κατὰ θεόν*, “according to God,” i.e. according to his will (comp. Rom. viii. 27). **Not for filthy lucre.** The

adverb (*ἀσχροκερδῶς*) occurs only here (for the thought, comp. 1 Tim. iii. 8; Titus i. 7). It would seem that, even in the apostolic age, there were sometimes such opportunities of gain (see Titus i. 11; 2 Tim. iii. 6) as to be a temptation to enter the ministry for the sake of money. St. Peter uses a strong word in condemnation of such a motive. But of a ready mind. This adverb (*προθύμως*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament; it has a stronger meaning than the preceding word *ἐκουσίως*, willingly; it implies zeal and enthusiasm.

Ver. 3.—Neither as being lords over God's heritage; rather, as in the Revised Version, *neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you*. The *κατά* in the verb *κατακυριεύω* is not only intensive, it implies something of scorn and tyranny or even of hostility, as also in *καταδυναστεύω* (Jas. ii. 6); comp. Matt. xx. 25. The literal rendering of the clause is, "lording it over the lots." The Authorized Version, following Beza, supplies τοῦ Θεοῦ, "God's heritage." But if this were the apostle's meaning, he would surely have used the singular, *κλήρος*, "the lot or portion of God;" and it is very unlikely that he would have left the most important word to be supplied. Some commentators take *κλήροι* in its modern sense, of the clergy, as if St. Peter was commanding the bishops not to tyrannize over the inferior clergy. But this view involves an anachronism; the word had not acquired this meaning in St. Peter's time. It is clearly best to understand it of the lots or portions assigned to individual presbyters. The word *κλήρος* originally meant a "lot" (Matt. xxvii. 35; Acts i. 26), then portions assigned by casting lots, as the possessions of the tribes of Israel (Josh. xviii. and xix.), then any portion or inheritance however obtained; thus in Deut. x. 9 the Lord is said to be the Inheritance (*κλήρος*) of the Levites. In later times the word was applied to the clergy, who were regarded as, in a special sense, the Lord's portion or inheritance, perhaps because God was pleased to take the tribe of Levi instead of the firstborn, saying, "the Levites shall be mine" (Numb. iii. 12). But being ensamples to the flock; literally, *becoming examples*. They must imitate the great Example, the Lord Jesus, and, by gradual imitation of his blessed character, become examples themselves. Thus they will acquire a more salutary influence and a truer authority. "The life should command, and the tongue persuade" (Athanasius, quoted by Frommüller).

Ver. 4.—And when the chief Shepherd shall appear; rather, *is manifested*. The word rendered "chief Shepherd" (*ἀρχιποίμην*) occurs only here; it reminds us of the Lord's description of himself as "the

good Shepherd," and of the "great Shepherd of the sheep" (Heb. xiii. 20). Ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. This is the true reward of the faithful presbyter, not power or filthy lucre. Literally, it is "the crown of glory," the promised glory, the glory of the Lord which he hath promised to his chosen. "The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them" (John xvii. 22). The crown is the glory; the genitive seems to be one of apposition. The Greek word here rendered "that fadeth not away" (*ἀμάραντινος*) is not exactly the same with that so rendered in ch. i. 4 (*ἀυδάραντος*); taken literally, the words used here mean an amaranthine wreath—a wreath of amaranth flowers; the general meaning remains the same, "unfading." St. Peter is thinking, not of a kingly crown, but of the wreaths worn on festive occasions or bestowed on conquerors.

Ver. 5.—Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Is St. Peter still using the last word in its official sense? or is he passing to its ordinary meaning? It seems impossible to answer the question with certainty. Some think that the word *νεώτερος*, younger, had also acquired an official meaning, and that it is used here, and in Acts v. 6 of assistant-ministers who were employed to help the presbyters and apostles. Others think that it had a meaning nearly equivalent to our "laity" as distinguished from the presbyters. But, on the whole, it seems more natural to suppose that the word "elder," when once used, led St. Peter on from one meaning to another, and that here he is simply speaking of the respect due to age (comp. 1 Tim. v. 1). Yea, all of you be subject one to another. The word *υποτασσόμενοι*, rendered "be subject," is omitted in the most ancient manuscripts. If their reading is adopted, the dative, *ἀλλήλοις*, "one to another," may be taken either with the previous clause, "Submit yourselves unto the elder; yea, all of you, to one another;" or with that which follows, "Be clothed with humility one towards another." And be clothed with humility. The word rendered "be clothed" (*ἐγκυμβάσασθε*) occurs here only, and is a remarkable word. It is derived from *κύβωτος*, a knot or band; the corresponding noun, *ἐγκύμβωμα*, was the name of an apron worn by slaves, which was tied round them when at work, to keep their dress clean. The word seems to teach that humility is a garment which must be firmly fastened on and bound closely round us. The association of the slave's apron seems also to suggest that Christians should be ready to submit to the humblest works of charity for others, and to point back to the lowliness of the Lord Jesus, when he girded himself, and

washed the feet of his apostles (John xiii. 4). It may be noticed that the Greek word for "humility" (*ταπεινοφροσύνη*) is used only by St. Paul, except in this place. For God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. St. Peter is quoting from the Septuagint Version of Prov. iii. 34, without marks of quotation, as in other places. St. James quotes the same passage (iv. 6), and with the same variation, substituting "God" for "Lord," as St. Peter does. The Greek word for "resisteth" (*ἀντιτάσσεται*) is a strong one: God rangeth himself as with an army against the haughty.

Ver. 6.—**Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.** The Alexandrine Manuscript and some ancient versions add *ἐπισκοπῆς*, "in the time of visitation," probably from Luke xix. 44. For "the mighty hand of God," comp. Deut. iii. 24; Luke i. 51. St. Peter was doubtless thinking of the well-remembered words of the Lord, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Ver. 7.—**Casting all your care upon him; rather, all your anxiety (μέριμνα).** St. Peter is quoting, with slight alterations, the Septuagint Version of Ps. lv. 22. We cast our anxiety upon God when we fulfil the Lord's commandment, "Take no thought [rather, 'be not anxious'], saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewith shall we be clothed? For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." God cares for us; therefore we must not be over-anxious, but trust in him. The participle is aorist, as if implying that we are to cast the whole burden of all our anxieties (*πᾶσαν τὴν μέριμναν ὑμῶν*) by one act of faith upon the Lord. For he careth for you. The Greek word is *μέλει*, quite different from the *μέριμνα* of the foregoing clause. The care which is forbidden is that anxiety about worldly things which harasses a man and distracts his mind, so that he cannot compose himself to prayer and holy meditation. God's care for us is calm, holy, thoughtful providence. He "knoweth that we have need of all these things;" and he maketh all things work together for good to his chosen, to them that love him.

Ver. 8.—**Be sober, be vigilant** (comp. 1 Thess. v. 6). For the first word, *νήφατε*, see note on ch. iv. 7. The second, *γρηγόρησατε*, is the word so often and so emphatically used by our Lord (Mark xiii. 35, 37; Matt. xxvi. 40, 41, etc.). The imperatives are aorist, as in ch. iv. 7; and, as there, either imply that the exhortation was needed by the readers, or are used to express vividly the necessity of instant attention. **Because your adversary the devil.** The conjunction

"because" is omitted in the best manuscripts. The asyndeton, as in the last clause, increases the emphasis. The word rendered "adversary" (*ἀντίδικος*) means properly an opponent in a lawsuit, as in Matt. v. 25; but it is also used generally for "adversary," and so is a translation of the Hebrew word *Satan*. The word *διδόλος*, devil, means "slanderer," "false accuser." As a roaring lion. He is called a serpent to denote his subtlety, a lion to express his fierceness and strength. The word rendered "roaring" (*ὤρυόμενος*) is used especially of the cries of wild beasts when ravenous with hunger (see Ps. civ. 21; and comp. Ps. xxii. 13, 21). Walketh about, seeking whom he may devour (comp. Job i. 7; ii. 2). The words express the restless energy of the wicked one. He cannot touch those who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation; but he walketh about, looking eagerly after any lost sheep that may have wandered from the fold. He roars in the craving of his heart for prey, like a hungry lion, seeking whom he may devour, or (for the reading here is somewhat uncertain) to devour some one, or simply to devour. The Greek word means literally "to drink down;" it implies utter destruction. It is the word in 1 Cor. xv. 54, "Death is swallowed up (*καταπρόθη*) in victory." Satan now seeks whom he may destroy: "The Lord will destroy him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. ii. 14).

Ver. 9.—**Whom resist steadfast in the faith;** comp. Jas. iv. 7, where the same word, *ἀντίστητε*, is used; the close resemblance seems to indicate St. Peter's knowledge of the Epistle of St. James; comp. also St. Paul in Eph. vi. 13, etc. The Greek word for "steadfast" (*στερεοί*) is emphatic; it implies solidity, rocklike firmness. Only faith can give that steadfastness—faith in Christ, the one Foundation, the Rock on which the Christian's house is built. Faith here is trustfulness rather than objective truth. Therefore the rendering of the Revised Version seems preferable, "in your faith," the article having, as often, a possessive meaning. Knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world; literally, *the same (forms) of afflictions* (*τὰ αὐτὰ τῶν παθόντων*)—an unusual construction with the pronoun, though common with adjectives, intended to give emphasis; the sufferings were the very same. The infinitive is present; it should therefore be rendered, "are being accomplished." The persecutions were now beginning to break out. The word for "brethren" is the collective, *ἀδελφότης*, brotherhood, which we met with in ch. ii. 17. The dative is that of reference—"in" or "for"

the brotherhood. (For the words, "in the world," comp. John xvi. 33, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.") There is another way of taking the clause. The unusual construction (in the Greek Testament) of the accusative and infinitive, which, indeed, occurs nowhere else with *eĩdws*, has led Hofman and others to take the verb *ἐπιτελείσθαι* as middle, and to connect the dative, "for the brotherhood," with τὰ αὐτά, the same. Thus the translation will be, "Knowing how to pay the same tribute of affliction as your brethren in the world." This seems forced and unnecessary. Huther gives another possible translation, which he thinks preferable to all others: "Knowing [or better rather, 'considering'] that the same sufferings are accomplishing themselves in the brethren."

Ver. 10.—**But the God of all grace** (comp. 2 Cor. i. 3, "the God of all comfort"). St. Peter has finished his exhortations; he has told his readers what they must do; he now bids them look to God, and tells them where they will find strength. God will work within them both to will and to do of his good pleasure; for he is the God of all grace. All that grace by which we are saved, without which we can do nothing, comes from him as its Author and Source. **Who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus**; rather, *who called you . . . in Christ Jesus*. All the best manuscripts read "you" instead of us. Two of the most ancient omit "Jesus" here. God called us "in Christ;" that is, through spiritual union with Christ; the glory is promised to those who are one with Christ; for the glory is Christ's, and his members will share it. The very end and purpose of our calling was that we might inherit that glory. This is the apostle's great topic of consolation. **After that ye have suffered a while**; literally, *a little*. The word may refer to the degree, as well as to the duration, of the sufferings. They are transient; the glory is eternal. They may seem very severe, but they are light in comparison with that "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." **Make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you**. The manuscripts vary between the future and the optative in these four verbs; the preponderance of evidence seems in favour of the future. The emphatic pronoun αὐτός must not be omitted. Translate therefore, "shall himself make you perfect." He only can "perfect what is lacking in our faith" (1 Thess. iii. 10, where the same verb is used); and he will do it. This is our hope and encouragement. The verb καταρτίζω means "to finish, to complete, to repair." It is the word used in the account of the calling of

Peter and Andrew, James and John, by the Sea of Galilee, when the two last were in the ship with Zebedee their father, mending (καταρτίζοντας) their nets. God will repair, bring to completion, what is lacking in the character of his chosen, if they persevere in prayer, if they are sober and vigilant (comp. 1 Cor. i. 10; 2 Cor. xiii. 11, etc.). **Stablish (στηρίξει)**. The Lord had said to St. Peter, "When thou art converted, strengthen (στήριζον) thy brethren" (Luke xxii. 32); Peter remembers his Master's words. **Strengthen (σθενώσει)**. The word occurs only here. **Settle (θεμελιώσει)**; literally, "shall ground you, shall give you a firm foundation." "Digna Petro oratio, 'Confirmat fratres suos,'" says Bengel (comp. Eph. iii. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 19; 1 Cor. iii. 11). The word is omitted in the Vatican and Alexandrine Manuscripts; but it is found in the Sinaitic and other manuscripts and versions, and ought to be retained.

Ver. 11.—**To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen**. This doxology occurs also in ch. iv. 11, where see notes. The best manuscripts omit the word "glory" in this place. St. Peter has been directing the thoughts of his readers to the power of God. He will make them perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle them; he can, for "his is the might for ever and ever." The Christian may well say his "Amen" with a thankful and adoring heart.

Ver. 12.—**By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly**; rather, as in the Revised Version, *by Silvanus, our faithful brother, as I account him, I have written unto you briefly*. The preposition "by" (διὰ) has the same sense as διὰ χειρός in Acts xv. 23. Silvanus was the bearer of the Epistle; he may have been the amanuensis also. In all probability he is the Silas of the Acts of the Apostles, and the Silvanus whose name St. Paul associates with his own in the address of both Epistles to the Thessalonians; he is mentioned also in 2 Cor. i. 19. As the companion of St. Paul, he must have been known to the Churches of Asia Minor. The word rendered in the Authorized Version "I suppose" (λογίζομαι) does not imply any doubt (comp. Rom. iii. 28; viii. 18; Heb. xi. 19). The Christians of Asia Minor knew Silvanus as a faithful brother; St. Peter adds his testimony. Some connect it with the clause, "I have written unto you briefly," as if St. Peter meant to say that he regarded his letter as a short one, the subjects being so important; but this does not seem natural. It is better to take the pronoun σὺν, unto you, with the verb "I have written," than with the words, "a faithful brother," as in the Authorized Version. The verb ἐγραψα is the epistolary aorist,

and may therefore be rendered "I write." Exhorting, and testifying. The general tone of this Epistle is hortatory: St. Peter comforts his readers in the sufferings which were coming on them, and exhorts them to patient endurance. The word rendered "testifying" (*ἐπιμαρτυρῶν*) occurs only here in the New Testament. Bengel and others take the preposition *ἐν* in the sense of *insuper*, in "addition:" "Petrus insuper testatur;" he adds his testimony to that of Paul and others who have gone before; or, he not only exhorts, he also testifies—the testimony is in addition to the exhortation. But more probably the *ἐν* is intensive, or expresses simply the direction of the testifying (comp. Acts ii. 40, where the same words (nearly); the Greek for "testified" is *διεμαρτύρητο*) are used in describing St. Peter's exhortations. That this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand; rather, as in the Revised Version, *that this is the true grace of God: stand ye fast therein*. The reading *εἰς ἣν στήτε* is supported by the oldest manuscripts. The construction involves a common ellipse, "Into which (having entered) stand fast." Some think that it was St. Peter's intention in these words to set the seal of his apostolic authority upon the truth of the teaching which the Christians of Asia Minor had received from St. Paul. It may be so. The whole Epistle corroborates the teaching of St. Paul, and shows St. Peter's exact agreement with it. But it seems probable that, if St. Peter had thought it necessary to give a formal sanction to St. Paul's preaching, he would have done so plainly, as he does at the end of the Second Epistle. Again, there are no traces in the Epistle of any doubts now existing in the minds of the Asiatic Christians, or of any opposition to St. Paul, such as there once had been in the Churches of Corinth and Galatia. And St. Peter does not say, "These are the true doctrines," but "This is the true grace of God." He seems rather to be giving the testimony of his knowledge and spiritual experience to the fact that the grace which they had received came indeed from God, that it was his true grace, that it was he who was working within them both to will and to do. They must stand fast in that grace, and by its help work out their own salvation.

Ver. 13.—The Church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; literally, *the co-elect in Babylon* (*ἡ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι συνεκλεκτή*). The word "Church" is given in no manuscripts with the remarkable exception of the Sinaitic; the rest have simply "the co-elect." We ask—What word is to be supplied, "Church" or "sister"? Some think that St. Peter's wife (comp. Matt. viii.

14; 1 Cor. ix. 5) is intended, or some other well-known Christian woman (comp. 2 John 1). In favour of this view is the following salutation from Marcos. It is more natural to join together the names of two persons than to couple a Church with an individual. Also it seems exceedingly improbable that such a word as "Church" should be omitted (a word, we may remark, which occurs nowhere in St. Peter's Epistles), and the ellipse left to be filled up by the readers. On the other hand, it is said to be unlikely that a humble Galilean woman should be described as "the co-elect in Babylon." This argument would have considerable weight if the apostle were writing from a large and well-known Church, like that at Rome; but it is quite possible that "the co-elect" might be the only Christian woman, or the one best known among a very small number in Babylon. On the whole, it seems most probable to us that by "the co-elect" (whether we supply "together with you" or "with me") is meant a Christian woman known at least by name to the Churches of Asia Minor, and therefore very possibly St. Peter's wife, who, St. Paul tells us, was his companion in travel. The question now meets us—Is "Babylon" to be taken in a mystic sense, as a cryptograph for Rome, or literally? Eusebius, and ancient writers generally, understand it of Rome. Eusebius is commonly understood to claim for this view the authority of Papias and Clement of Alexandria (as has been stated in the Introduction, p. ix.). But the historian's words ('Hist. Eccl.,' II. xv. 2) seem to claim that authority only for the connection of St. Peter with St. Mark's Gospel; the identification of Babylon with Rome seems to be mentioned only as a common opinion in the time of Eusebius. It is said that there is no trace of the existence of a Christian Church at the Chaldean Babylon, and no proof, apart from this passage, that St. Peter was ever there. There had been a great Jewish colony at Babylon, but it had been destroyed in the time of Caligula. In answer to these arguments, it may be urged that the cryptograph of Babylon for Rome would probably not be understood; even if we assume the earliest date assigned to the Apocalypse, that book could scarcely be known very generally in Asia Minor when this Epistle was written. St. Peter at Babylon, like St. Paul at Athens, may have met with little success; the infant Church may have been quickly crushed. There may have been a second settlement of Jews at Babylon between A.D. 40 and the date of this Epistle. But it is quite possible that St. Peter may have been working as a missionary among the Babylonian Gentiles, for we cannot believe that

he confined his ministrations to the Jews. On the whole, it seems much more probable that St. Peter was writing at the famous city on the Euphrates, though no traces of his work there remain, than that he should have used this one word in a mystical sense at the end of an Epistle where all else is plain and simple (see this question discussed in the Introduction, p. ix.). And so doth Marcus my son. *Τέκνον* is the word used by St. Paul of spiritual relationship (see 1 Tim. i. 2; 2 Tim. i. 2; Titus i. 4). St. Peter has *vidēs* here. Still, it seems most probable that Marcus, mentioned as he is without any further description, is not a son of the apostle after the flesh, but the well-known John Mark of the Acts (see Introduction, p. viii.).

Ver. 14.—Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. St. Paul gives the same direction in four places (Rom. xvi. 16; 1 Cor. xvi. 20; 2 Cor. xiii. 12; 1 Thess. v.

26). The practice seems to have been universal in early times; it is mentioned by Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Chrysostom, Augustine, and other ancient writers (see Bingham's 'Antiquities,' xv. iii. 3). It is now used only in the Coptic Church of Egypt. Rites and ceremonies may be changed "according to the diversities of countries, times, and men's manners;" the sacred duty of brotherly love remains unchanged for ever. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen. The most ancient manuscripts omit the word "Jesus" here and the "Amen." St. Paul's blessing at the end of his Epistles is usually "grace" (in the Epistle to the Ephesians he adds "peace"). St. Peter ends his Epistle with the benediction which he had so often heard from the Saviour's lips. That blessed gift of peace is granted to all who are "in Christ," who is our Peace (Eph. ii. 14).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—4.—*Charge to the elders of the Churches of Asia Minor.* I. WHAT HE IS WHO ADDRESSES THEM. 1. "Also an elder." St. Peter is a beautiful example of that humility which should especially mark those who are called to high office in the Church, without which high office is a most dangerous temptation. He assumes no superiority; he does not remind them of the great trust committed to him by Christ (Matt. xvi. 18, 19); he does not even insist on his apostleship. He identifies himself with those whom he exhorts, calling himself simply "a brother elder." The word "elder" should remind them of the dignity of their office. Most of them were probably elders in years as well as in official position; but sometimes younger men, as in the case of Timothy, would have special fitness for the work of the ministry. They must take care to let none despise their youth (1 Tim. iv. 12); they must exhibit in their lives something of that thoughtfulness, that sobriety, that unworldliness, that sweet and holy wisdom, which the very name of their office suggests as necessary qualifications for its fulfilment. 2. "A witness of the sufferings of Christ." St. Peter was an eye-witness, at least in part, of the sufferings of the Lord; he could say, like St. John, "That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you." If our exhortations are to have real influence, they must come out of the depths of personal experiences; if we would make Christ known to others, we must know him ourselves; we must be made conformable unto his death, and know what is the fellowship of his sufferings, if we are to bear witness to others of the blessed meaning of the cross.

"Who is God's chosen priest?

He, who on Christ stands waiting day and night,
Who traced his holy steps, nor ever ceased,
From Jordan banks to Bethphage height: . . .

"Who both in agony

Hath seen him and in glory; and in both
Owned him Divine, and yielded, nothing loth,
Body and soul, to live and die,

"In witness of his Lord,

In humble following of his Saviour dear!
This is the man to wield th' unearthly sword,
Warring unharmed with sin and fear."

3. "A partaker of the glory that shall be revealed." St. Peter had the blessed promise, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards."

Those who would teach and exhort like St. Peter, must have St. Peter's faith and hope; we must know, not with the cold knowledge which may be gleaned from books, but with the warm, real knowledge of the heart, what is the deep value of religion—its preciousness, the sweetness of its peace, the gladness of its hope; we must share that holy hope ourselves, if we are to kindle it in others; our words must have that reality, that energy, which only a living hope can give.

II. **THEIR DUTY.** 1. *They must tend the flock.* That touching figure of the relations between a shepherd and his flock covers all the duties of the ministerial office. The shepherd feeds, guides, protects, his flock. The presbyters of the Church must do the like; they must be faithful dispensers of God's holy Word and sacraments; they must preach zealously, diligently, as dying men to dying men; they must teach privately, from house to house; they must care for the little ones, the lambs of Christ; they must do all that lieth in them to bring their people to the holy table of the Lord, there to feed on him in their hearts by faith with thanksgiving. They must guide the flock, themselves leading the way, setting a holy example, an example of humility, holy love, self-denying zeal. They must do all they can to protect their flock from the evil one, the lion who goeth about seeking whom he may devour; they must do their best by constant prayer for their people, by affectionate warnings, sometimes by faithful rebukes, to save the souls committed to their charge. And in all this they must set constantly before their eyes the Lord Jesus Christ, the good Shepherd, as the high Pattern for all under-shepherds to follow; they must seek daily to learn of him lessons of self-sacrificing love and lowliness and ardent zeal for the salvation of souls. They must remember always that the flock is his, the flock of God, "the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." And they must watch for souls, as they who must give account; for the souls for which the precious Blood was shed are very dear in the sight of God. The care of his flock is a most solemn, a most sacred charge; those to whom that charge is entrusted must strive so to labour now that they may render their account with joy in the great day. 2. *The spirit in which they must work.* (1) *Willingly.* The central thought here, the figure of the shepherd, implies loving care; those who care for the sheep will take the oversight of them willingly. They will need no constraint; they will not need to be urged to diligence by those set over them, for they will work, not for fear of censure, but for the love of souls. They will need no external constraint; for they have within them a constraint stronger than any worldly incentive, the strong compulsion of the constraining love of Christ. (2) *Zealously.* The hireling cares not for the sheep, but only for his hire; he fleeth when there is danger, when there is need of hard work, of self-sacrifice. Filthy lucre must not enter into the motives which actuate the minister of Christ; he must work for the love of the work, for the love of him whose work it is, and that zealously, with a holy enthusiasm, knowing the priceless value of immortal souls. (3) *Humbly.* The Lord had once said to Peter, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." He did not pride himself on the greatness of his charge; he did not make it a means of self-exaltation; he had subdued his natural forwardness and impetuosity, and had learned of the Lord Jesus Christ the blessed grace of humility. Those who have succeeded him in the work of the ministry must learn the same holy lesson; they must crush out of their hearts worldly ambitions, the lust of power and pre-eminence. They must not lord it over those committed to their charge, but must try to lead them by the power of holy example. They should ever study to imitate in all things the one great Example, and so reflecting in their lives something of the glory of his holiness, they should become themselves examples to the flock. Even in the apostles' times there were presbyters—there was once an apostle—whose motives were unholy, who were covetous, self-seeking, proud. Example is better than precept; a holy life has more power over men than holy words; for a holy life proves with convincing evidence the presence and the energy of the good Spirit of God.

III. **THEIR REWARD.** 1. *From whom it comes.* Not from men. They must not look for it here; they must wait in patient expectation for the manifestation of the chief Shepherd. He is the Centre of all pastoral work; the pastoral office comes from him. He first discharged it as the chief Shepherd, the good Shepherd; he cared for the sheep;

he died for them. And he appointed under-shepherds to work under his eye. He still gives the pastoral spirit to those who are faithfully serving him in their sacred calling; zeal, self-denying charity, the strong love of souls, are his gift. For he is the chief Shepherd, and under-shepherds must gather round him, and learn of him, and imitate him, if they are to become in any true sense shepherds and bishops of souls. They see him now, by faith, "through a glass, darkly;" but in the time appointed of the Father he shall come nearer, he shall be manifested—they shall see him face to face. "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me." 2. *What it is.* Not filthy lucre, not high place and rank, not the praise of men. But an amaranthine wreath; not a wreath that withereth, such as those worn at festive gatherings, or the wreaths so highly prized that were bestowed on victorious athletes. The wreath which the chief Shepherd giveth is of amaranth, imperishable; it is a wreath of glory—glory that cannot fade, for it is the Lord's own glory, the glory which he had before the foundation of the world, which he giveth to his chosen. Eye hath not seen that glory; it hath not entered into the heart of man; it is the glory of the chief Shepherd. He shall bestow it in the great day upon those faithful shepherds of the sheep, who for his love have striven in patience and self-forgetfulness to fulfil the charge which was once given to St. Peter, and is given still to those who have succeeded the apostles in the sacred ministry of the Church: "Lovest thou me? then, feed my lambs, tend my sheep."

LESSONS. 1. If we are to exhort others with success, we must live very near the cross; we must have the blessed hope of glory in heaven. 2. Presbyters must tend the flock, for it is the Lord's; and to neglect it is to neglect him. 3. They must work out of love, willingly, zealously, humbly. 4. They must follow the chief Shepherd now, and look to him for their reward.

Vers. 5—9.—*General exhortations.* I. TO HUMILITY. 1. *In the case of the young.* They must submit themselves to the elder. Young men are often tempted to despise their seniors, to regard them as antiquated, as obstructive; to be impatient to remodel everything according to their own devices; to put more trust in the impetuosity characteristic of youth than in the mellow wisdom of age. Therefore the Scriptures exhort young men to be sober-minded (Titus ii. 6). 'They must learn to keep in check the extravagance of their aspirations, and to remember that the experience of years gives greater weight to the opinions and advice of their elders. They must submit themselves to the elder; for "the hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness." "A graceless old age," Leighton says, "is a most despicable and lamentable sight. What gains an unholy man or woman by their scores of years, but the more scores of guiltiness and misery? Their white hairs speak of nothing but ripeness for wrath. But, found in the way of righteousness, the hoary head shines, and has a kind of royalty." To such young men should submit themselves. Respect for age is graceful and becoming in the young, and has the sanction of Holy Scripture. 2. *Generally.* All should be subject one to another. "Honour all men," the apostle has already taught us (ch. ii. 17). Respect is due to all men, whatever their outward condition; the true Christian will respect the feelings of his humblest dependents. For all men are the creatures of the one Father; all are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ; all are dear to the Saviour; and he who loves the Lord who bought us must care for all those whom he bought with his blood. Therefore the Christian will in a true sense be subject to all men. He will make himself, like St. Paul, the servant of all; he will understand that he has duties even to the wicked and the most degraded; he will readily give up his own wishes, and submit sometimes to work and surroundings which are coarse and offensive and utterly distasteful to his feelings; he will be content to be "made all things to all men, that he might by all means save some" (1 Cor. ix. 22). Thus he will be clothed with humility. He will wear it like a close-fitting dress, firmly fastened on; for unless it is woven into the very character, it is quickly driven away and dissipated by the constant incitements to proud and self-seeking thoughts, which the varying circumstances of daily life continually suggest. It may be despised, it may be regarded as a garment fit for slaves; but he knows how precious it is; he will wrap it tightly round him, and will be careful not to let it go; for while he is covered with it, his inner soul is kept white and clean from many stains and spots which, but for the robe of humility, he would inevitably contract in the stir and bustle of every-

day life. The Lord himself chose and wore that lowly garb. He girded himself; he washed his disciples' feet, setting us an example that we should do as he hath done unto us; that as he, our Lord and Master, washed the feet of his creatures, so we should be willing to submit ourselves to humble works of Christian love for the lowliest of our brethren. 3. *Its blessedness.* "God resisteth the proud." It is not out of envy, as the heathen falsely imagined, and as the serpent whispered to Eve; the greatness of men does not irritate God, as the Persian thought (Herod., vii. 10); man's little greatness is nothing in comparison with the eternal majesty of the Most High. It is out of loving care for us; it is because pride means rebellion, and rebellion is the very essence of sin; and sin means misery, ruin, death. Therefore "God resisteth the proud;" he setteth himself in array against them; they must be brought low; they must sooner or later be humbled to the very dust: for how can they stand against the Lord God Almighty? "He that exalteth himself shall be abased." But "he giveth grace to the humble." The heart that is filled with pride hath no room for the blessed grace of God; thronging thoughts of self drive out the holy thought of God. And the presence of God is the secret of holiness; without that presence there is no spiritual life. "Abide in me," saith the Lord. It is only lowly-hearted men who can abide in Christ; they obey the calling of the Lord; they come out of themselves, so to speak, away from the bustling, restless pursuit of self-interest and self-exaltation into the quiet, solemn, hallowing sphere of the blessed Saviour's presence; they abide in that presence, because proud thoughts of self do not draw them away, because, through the absence of pride and self-assertion, they are enabled to concentrate their minds upon the gracious presence of Christ. And while they abide in the humble and reverent sense of his presence, he abideth in them; he makes his influence more deeply felt, more fully enjoyed. The spiritual life, which comes from him who is the Life, spreads itself throughout their whole being, bringing forth the fruit of holiness. Thus God giveth grace to the humble. Therefore we ought to humble ourselves under his mighty hand. His hand is mighty, almighty; it is vain to strive against the Lord; he brings down the proud and humbles them to the dust. But not all whom the Lord humbles with his chastisements learn to humble themselves; they are crushed, broken down, but they do not learn that sweet humility which recognizes its own unworthiness and submits in patient resignation. He doth not exalt all who are humbled, but all who humble themselves. Let us seek this precious grace of him who is meek and lowly in heart. "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." He is exalted now above all heavens. He will exalt those who learn of him the grace of humility, who take up the cross, denying themselves. He will exalt them in due time; in his own good time: not yet, perhaps; but surely, sooner or later, when he sees it best for us; certainly at the great day, when those who have taken his yoke upon them shall sit with him upon his throne.

II. TO TRUSTFULNESS. 1. *Description of Christian trustfulness.* It consists in casting all our care upon God. This life is full of anxieties. They vary indefinitely with our position in life, our circumstances, our characters; but none are free from them. They throng in upon our thoughts and disturb our rest with their distracting presence. The Lord says, "Take no thought;" St. Paul echoes his words, "Be careful for nothing;" St. Peter, quoting the ancient Scriptures, bids us cast all our care upon the Lord. It is not thoughtfulness which our Lord and his apostles forbid; it is not carelessness and improvidence which Holy Scripture commends. The original word in each passage means "anxiety, distracting care." We must do our duty, we must provide, as far as lieth in us, for ourselves and for those dependent on us, and then trust in God, casting all our anxiety upon him. If we have learned to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, we shall know that all our troubles and trials come from him; we shall know, too, that his fatherly hand is ever over his people, that they are in his hands always. Humility increases trustfulness; the sense of our own weakness deepens our confidence in God. 2. *The grounds of it.* "He careth for us." His care is not like ours; it is not anxiety (μέριμνα). It is calm, loving providence. He ordereth all things both in heaven and earth, and he cares for us (ἀντὶ μέλει περὶ ἡμῶν), for he loves us. All things are known to him—the fall of every sparrow. He knows all our needs, difficulties, dangers, temptations, with the same fullness of knowledge and depth of sympathy as if there were no other beings in the world besides ourselves and our God. In

all those troubles he cares for us, and guides them all for our eternal good. If we have faith in his love, we shall be able to cast all our care upon him. Hezekiah took the threatening letter of Sennacherib into the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord. So should we do with all our anxieties, great and small. "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." If we do this, if we lay not only the great anxieties which come occasionally, but also the little daily trials of common life, before the Lord, then the peace of God shall keep our hearts and thoughts. "He careth for us." The thought is full of deep sweetness and strong consolation. Only let us take it into our hearts, and we shall be able to roll away from ourselves the burden of anxieties and to cast it upon God.

III. To watchfulness. 1. *The need for it.* We may cast all our care upon him; yet we must watch and pray. "This is the Scripture logic," says Leighton. "It is he that worketh in you to will and to do. Then, would you possibly think, I need not work at all, or, if I do, it may be very easily and securely? No; therefore, says the apostle, 'work out your own salvation;' yea, and do it with fear and trembling. Work you in humble obedience to his command, and in dependence on him who worketh all in you." We are bidden to cast our anxieties upon God for the very reason that we may have time and freedom of thought to care for our souls. There is need of watchfulness and of that temperance without which we cannot be watchful, for we have an adversary, an enemy, who seeks our ruin. That adversary is restless in his insatiable malice. He goeth to and fro in the earth; he walketh about. There is no corner of the earth, no human being safe from his assaults; not even the remote wilderness, not even the incarnate Son of God. He walketh about, impatient, eager, full of rage and bitter hatred, like a lion roaring from the pangs of unsatisfied hunger. The holy Lord Jesus Christ thirsted for the salvation of souls; this horrible lion hungers for their death and endless misery. He is always seeking whom he may devour. Therefore the Christian must be ever on the watch; temptations come when we least expect them. He must be strictly temperate; excess in meat and drink, self-indulgence in any form, prevent him from watching, and expose him to the wiles of the enemy. 2. *Encouragements for it.* (1) The strength of faith. We are bidden to resist this roaring lion, to withstand him in all his fury. He is strong; but this is the victory that overcometh, even our faith. Faith is strong, because it lays hold upon God, and finds in him almighty strength. "Faith," says Leighton, "sets the stronger Lion of the tribe of Judah against this roaring lion of the bottomless pit; that delivering Lion against this devouring lion." Faith gives steadfastness, solid firmness, for it sets our feet upon the Rock, and that Rock is Christ. "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abideth for ever." (2) The thought of community in suffering. "There hath no temptation taken us, but such as is common to man." We must not suppose, as we are apt to do, that we are of all men the most sorely tried. The Lord Jesus Christ suffered being tempted. He endured for us that great agony of temptation in the wilderness. All our brethren in the faith are tempted too, and tried by various forms of suffering. Let us, seeing that we are encompassed about with a great cloud of witnesses, follow the faith of the saints and martyrs of the Lord; but, above all, let us look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, learning of him to endure the cross and to be faithful unto death.

LESSONS. 1. Self-confidence and presumption are among the great dangers of youth. Let the young learn to reverence the aged. 2. Humility is one of the most precious of Christian graces. Let us learn it of Christ the Lord, and practise it in our intercourse with men. 3. Humility must be woven into the white robe of righteousness. Let us wrap it closely round us. 4. God resisteth the proud. Herod Agrippa was eaten of worms because he gave not God the glory. Let us hate pride and crush it out. 5. The humble will be trustful. Let us remember always that God careth for us, and always strive to cast our care upon him. 6. Yet be watchful, for the devil is ever at work. "Resist him, steadfast in faith."

Vers. 10—14.—*Conclusion of the Epistle.* I. ENCOURAGEMENT. 1. *The ground of confidence.* St. Peter has finished his work of exhortation. He bids his readers look to God. Human teachers can only deliver their message; it is God himself who giveth

strength to obey. They must look unto Jesus (*ἀποφώντες*, Heb. xii. 2); they must look away from the troubles which were surrounding them—their light affliction, which was but for a moment, to the Author and Finisher of their faith. And that because it is by grace that men are saved, and God is the God of all grace. All the various manifestations of grace—pardoning grace, sanctifying grace, supporting grace—all flow from him who is the Fountain of grace. That grace is sufficient for the Christian in all his trials, however great and many they may be. It is made perfect in weakness. It was God who began the good work, and he will complete it. He giveth more grace. The fountain of grace is ever open, ever flowing. “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. . . . And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” We may come always, and come boldly; for it was God who first called us. And it was his own eternal glory to which he called us; not to a transient enjoyment of his presence, nor to a few feeble intermittent efforts, but to his own eternal glory. This was the very end and purpose for which he called us. But for this he would not have called us at all; for the God of truth doth not mock men with vain promises. The glory to which he called us is eternal; then he will not desert us in the midst of our course, but will complete his gracious work. It is his glory, true, real glory. “All here that is so named,” says Leighton, “is no more than a name, a shadow of glory; it cannot endure the balance, but is found light. . . . The glory above is true, real glory, and bears weight, and so bears aright the name of glory, the term for which in the Hebrew signifies ‘weight;’ and the apostle’s expression seems to allude to that sense; speaking of this same glory to come, he calls it ‘a far more exceeding weight of glory.’ It weighs down all labour and sufferings in the way, so far as that they are not worth the speaking of in respect of it. It is the hyperbole, *καθ’ ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολήν*. Other glory is over-spoken, but this glory is over-glorious to be duly spoken; it exceeds and rises above all that can be spoken of it.” It is this to which God hath called us, and he hath called us *in* Christ. The grace by which the spiritual life is given, sustained, strengthened, comes through union with Christ. That life flows from Christ, who is the Life, through all the members of his mystical body. As long as we abide in Christ we are safe, for then he abideth in us, and the life that comes from Christ dieth not; it will live on, growing from grace to grace, from strength to strength, till it reaches that eternal glory. 2. *What God will do for us.* (1) He will make us perfect. There is much which is lacking in our faith; there are many stains, many rents, in what should be the white robe of righteousness. It is, alas! like filthy rags. But God will repair that which is torn, and cleanse that which is defiled. Our characters show many faults, many shortcomings, many stains of past sins. But let us not despair. It was God who began the work; he will complete it. Let us do our poor best to work out our own salvation, and he will work within us both to will and to do; for he is faithful. (2) He will “stablish” us. We are unstable; we are easily driven this way and that by the changeful currents of temptation. Our course is marked by much wavering, much inconstancy. This is the reason why we make so little progress. If we are not to fall short of the glory of God, we must run, not as uncertainly, but with a firm and steadfast step, with our eyes fixed upon the prize of the high calling. It is that glory to which God hath called us. He will stablish us if we persevere and if we pray. (3) He will “strengthen” us. Our adversary is strong—strong as a roaring lion; but the Lion of the tribe of Judah is stronger. He will bruise Satan under our feet. He is the Strength of his chosen; through him they can do all things. “He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.” For he does not leave his people to wrestle alone against the evil one; he endues them with power from on high—the power of the presence of the Spirit of God. With that presence there comes the gift of strength—power and strength to have the victory, and to triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh. (4) He will “settle” us. He hath built his Church upon a Rock, and that Rock is Christ. He will build up each faithful Christian as a living stone upon that one Foundation once laid, “which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. iii. 11). That Foundation is “like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but standeth fast for ever.” The house built thereupon is safe. The rain may descend, the floods may come, the winds may blow; they may beat hard upon the house which is the shelter of the faithful Christian’s soul; but (thanks be to God through our Lord Jesus Christ) it cannot fall, for it is founded upon a Rock. 3. *Thanksgiving for it.* He can

make us perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle us; for his is the might, and that for all the ages of eternity. His hand is mighty; all might is his. The Christian thankfully and joyfully acknowledges it. His hand framed the heavens; they declare his glory. His hand is over his elect; they set forth his praises. The same power that sustains the planets in their orbits as they circle round the sun orders the course of the humblest believer as he draws nearer and nearer to the Sun of Righteousness. His heart is filled with thankful adoration when he reflects on the power of God, and remembers that that power is exerted for his defence, and makes all things work together for his eternal good. Praise becometh saints; they must ascribe unto the Lord worship and power. In heaven they rest not day and night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." The saints on earth are learning the new song, practising the anthems of heaven. They delight in thanksgiving; they delight to contemplate with adoring love the majesty of God, and to add their "Amen" to the high chant of praise.

II. PERSONAL NOTICES. 1. *Commendation of Silvanus.* He was faithful; he had proved his faithfulness in his constant attendance on St. Paul. He had laboured much in the good cause; he had been patient and even joyful, able to give thanks in suffering: "At midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God" (Acts xvi. 25). St. Peter gives his testimony to his faithfulness, and sends his letter by him. Good men will gladly recognize goodness in others. 2. *Reason for writing.* (1) To exhort them. They needed exhortation and encouragement, for troubles were gathering fast around them. St. Peter points them to the example of Christ; he teaches them the blessed meaning of suffering; his letter breathes hope and consolation from beginning to end. If Barnabas was a son of prophesying or exhortation, Peter was a son of consolation. (2) To testify. To give the weight of his apostolic authority and his great spiritual experience to the truth of their religion. Like St. John, he declared unto others that which he himself had heard and seen. He knew from the certain knowledge of actual experience the reality of the power of the grace of God. Men who can speak like this, with weight and authority, are very valuable in the Church. It is an authority which only real experience can give; it springs from the inner life of prayer and fellowship with God. 3. *Salutations.* (1) From "the co-elect at Babylon (*ἡ ἐν Βαβυλῶνι συνεκλεκτή*). If there was a Church at Babylon, that Church sends her greetings to the Churches of Asia Minor. But the words seem to indicate an individual. There was one Christian woman in great Babylon, in what had been once the mightiest city of the world, the centre of a mighty empire, the very type of the world-power arrayed against the people of God. There, where Nebuchadnezzar had seen in vision the great image, whose brightness was excellent, and the form thereof was terrible—in that very city the Stone that "was cut out without hands" was now beginning its conquering course; and the first agent in the great work was the apostle "called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone." With him laboured his wife, his partner now in holy work for Christ, as (we are told) she was afterwards in the blessed death of martyrdom. Then he bade her remember the Lord: *Μέμνησο, ὡς αὐτῇ, τοῦ Κυρίου.* Here he calls her the co-elect; he had addressed his Epistle to the elect strangers of the dispersion; his wife also was elect, and she was now at Babylon. "The Lord knoweth them that are his;" wherever they are, his fatherly hand is over them; they are his chosen; he careth for them; at Babylon or at Jerusalem he is near them; strangers on earth, they are citizens of the heavenly country; there is their heart and their treasure. (2) From Marcus. St. Peter calls him his son, as St. Paul calls Timothy his son in the faith (1 Tim. i. 2). St. Peter knew the mother of John whose surname was Mark (Acts xii. 12); he may have been the means of converting her son. Mark, like Silvanus, was one of the links between the two great apostles; he had been with St. Paul in his first imprisonment at Rome (Col. iv. 10). Then he was about to travel into Asia Minor; now, it seems, he had joined St. Peter at Babylon. He had once shrunk from hardships and dangers (Acts xv. 38); now he had learned steadfastness and Christian courage—he worked now with St. Peter among fierce heathen and fanatical Jews. St. Paul, who once "thought it not good to take him," desired his help and sympathy (2 Tim. iv. 11); he would be profitable for the ministry at Rome, as doubtless he was at Babylon. Rome and Babylon were the extreme points then reached by Christian missionaries. Christ's Church is dispersed throughout the world; its centre of unity is Christ the Lord; its members should be united in faith and love.

4. *The kiss of charity.* It was a touching custom dating from our Lord's own time, and long practised in the Church. Ceremonies "may be changed according to the diversities of countries, times, and men's manners." But that charity, of which the holy kiss was an expression, may not be changed; it is the very mark and badge of Christ's disciples. Still they greet one another with looks and words and deeds of holy love. 5. *St. Peter's greeting.* "Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied," he had said at the opening of his Epistle; he closes it with the like holy farewell: "Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus." We can express no better wish for our friends. The peace of God passeth all understanding; but they only can have that blessed peace who are in Christ. For it is his peace; he giveth it; it cometh to his chosen through intimate spiritual communion with the Lord. May we share that deep blessedness!

LESSONS. 1. God giveth more grace; let us come boldly to the throne of grace. He hath called us to his eternal glory; let us persevere in faith and hope. 2. He can make his people perfect; he can stablish, strengthen, settle them. Let us trust in him, living in constant thankfulness. 3. St. Peter's friends were like-minded with himself. Let us seek our friends among faithful Christians. 4. St. Peter's wife was co-elect. The marriage tie is most blessed when husband and wife are united "in the Lord."

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 5 (middle clause).—*The slave's dress.* "Be clothed," or, according to the Revised Version, "gird yourselves." It is a remarkable word, occurring only here in the New Testament. It means to put on a certain article of dress which according to one view was a kind of "overall" worn by slaves above their other clothing, and according to another was a white scarf which was part of the slave's dress. In either case it was a mark of servitude; therefore the exhortation is not merely to wear the garment of lowly-mindedness, veiling all other graces, but specifically to put on the badge of menial service. There may be a still more touching allusion in the peculiar word. Did not Peter's memory go back to that scene in the upper room, which he had understood so little then, but had, as his Lord promised, come to "know" in some measure in the "hereafter" of his many years of service? He recalls how the Master had *girded* himself with the towel, and stooped to the slave's task of washing the disciples' feet. Surely in this text, especially if we adopt the reading and translation of the Revised Version ("gird yourselves with humility to serve one another"), we trace a reference to that wonderful act of stooping love, and hear an echo of the solemn lesson which Christ himself taught in connection with it: "Ye also ought to wash one another's feet."

I. THE CHRISTIAN SLAVE'S GARMENT. Whatever was the exact form of the article of dress referred to, it was worn by slaves, and was a badge of their condition. We, too, are slaves, bought and absolutely possessed by our Owner and Master, Jesus Christ. The fitting garb for us is that lowliness of mind which he himself manifested, and which Christianity has throned as in some sense the queen of all the virtues. It is purely a Christian virtue; the very name for it in the New Testament is a Christian coinage; for new things need new words, and this was a new thing. The modest grace of humility looks, by the side of the splendid virtues of Greece and Rome, like some homely brown bird among the gorgeously coloured birds of the East, or a dove among eagles. The gospel has brought to us such a clear revelation of what we ought to be, and has so quickened the sensitiveness of men's consciences as to their failures and sins, that a lowly estimate of one's self is for a Christian the only possible one, and is felt to be for all men the only true one. The more clear our vision of what we may become, and the more ardent our enthusiasm after yet unattained stages of progress in character, the more lowly will necessarily be our estimate of ourselves. Whoever has seen himself as he really is will have no heart to blow his own trumpet, or to hear other men singing his praises. We do not need to affect to be ignorant of, or to depreciate, what we are or can do. It is no breach of humility to be conscious of power, but it is to be so conscious of it that we forget our weakness, and forget that the power is a gift, or are ever expecting recognition from our brethren, and thinking more of ourselves and

of our claims than either of our obligations or of our weaknesses. If we would obey this injunction, and be rooted in humility, we must seek to know ourselves as we are, and to that end must study our own faces in the glass of God's Word and Christ's example. These mirrors will show us what will put us out of conceit of ourselves. We must further reverse the favourite mode of comparison with others, and search into their good and our own evil. We must further remember that all on which pride or self-conceit can build their flimsy castles is God's gift, and that therefore thankfulness and not self-exaltation should be our temper. To wear this servile dress goes clean against the grain of human nature. It is the victory of unselfishness when we truly put it on. It is not pleasant to flesh and blood to go about in the garb which proclaims that we are slaves. But what true Christianity can there be in a man who has not learned that he is poor and blind and naked, and that all his wealth and sight and vesture he must owe to undeserved, unpurchased grace? And how can a man who has had to kneel before Jesus a suppliant penitent, and confess himself leprous and beggared and lost, get up from his knees and go out among his fellows, carrying his head very high and bearing himself as if he were somebody? If we are Christ's, we must wear the dress that proclaims us slaves, and gird ourselves with humility, the livery of his household.

II. THE PATTERN WHICH WE HAVE TO FOLLOW. Our thoughts are carried back, as we have already suggested, to the memorable incident of the foot-washing. In that incident was condensed, and as it were presented in an acted parable, the spirit of Christ's whole mission. The evangelist emphatically marks that supreme instance of condescension as being the outcome of our Lord's clear consciousness of His Divine Sonship and of his universal authority. Just because he knew that he had come from God and went to God, and held all things in his sway, he bowed to serve us. And it was also the outcome of his ever-flowing love to his followers. So his whole work on earth, in every stage of its humiliation, is based on that unique consciousness of Divinity and imperial sway, and is animated by love. As he then laid aside his garments, so he has put off the glories which he wore or ever the world was; and as he then girded himself with the towel, so he has voluntarily assumed the coarse and lowly body of our humiliation, stooping to be a man. As he then assumed a menial garb in order that he might wash his disciples' feet, so he has taken the form of a servant and become obedient to death that he might cleanse us all from our sins, by his own application to conscience and character of his own cleansing blood. In all these points we have to follow his example. Our humility must not only be a lowly estimate of ourselves, but it must be a practical stripping off of distinctions and prerogatives and an identifying of ourselves with the lowliest. It must lead to service. That service must have for its end our brother's cleansing. Jesus is not only our Pattern, but also our Motive; and not only our Motive, but by his indwelling Spirit he is the Power which moulds our selfishness into the likeness of his perfect self-surrender. In the deepest sense of the words, the "mind which was in Christ Jesus" must be in us, if we are truly Christians. If we have not his Spirit, we are not his servants. If we have that Spirit, we too, like him, shall be girt with humility, and do for others what he has done for us.

III. THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH IT IS WORN. According to one view of the word, the piece of dress here referred to was, as we have said, a kind of loose "overall" put on in preparation for work, and, according to another, a scarf which served the purpose of a girdle. So this grace of humility may be regarded as keeping all the other virtues which robe the Christian character in their places. It adds lustre to them all, as rich attire and flashing jewels are harmonized and beautified by some sober-tinted cloak thrown over them. Nay, more, it is their very life, for nothing more surely destroys the charm of all other excellences and withers them when they grow than self-gratulation and self-conceit. Moses was all unaware that his face shone. But the great purpose for which humility is enjoined on Christians is that they may be ready for service. The man who flaunts about in gay clothing of self-conceit is usually slow to put his hand to work in anything which will not advance his reputation, or will soil his bravery. Fine clothes and hard work do not go well together. He is generally more ready to insist upon his claims than to respond to his brother's claims on him. We must put off that gaudy robe, and be content to hide our excellences with the wrapper of humility, as a servant puts on some coarse apron for coarse tasks, if we are

to be rightly attired for the work we have to do. The humble mind thinks not of its claims on others, but of its duties to them. It is ready for the lowest service, and is kept by no false dignity from placing itself by the side of the feeblest and the foulest. Like the Master, it will take beggars by the hand, nor shrink from the touch of publicans and sinners. It will regard the meanest task done for Jesus as an honour and a mark of the Master's favour. Diffident of its own power, it will depend, and not in vain, upon him for all its efficiency; and, so depending, it will be enriched with all necessary helps, while self-conceit, trusting in its own power, will do little, and that little mostly barren, for, as the next words tell us, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." The rains and dews run off the mountain crests, which are always sterile and often struck by the lightning. It is down in the valleys that the broad rivers glide and spread fruitfulness and smiling plenty.—A. M.

Ver. 10 (first portion).—*Why may we make sure of God's help in conflict.* These closing words of the Epistle, which have only some personal greetings after them, are best taken, not as a prayer, but as a full-toned assurance, like some grand swell of music at the end of an oratorio. The apostle has been speaking much about suffering and trial, especially in the latter part of his letter. He has just warned his readers of the adversary who seeks their destruction. And here against that grim figure he holds up the shield of the Name and purpose of God, and bids us be brave and jubilant amid all sufferings and in the presence of the enemy, because he is for us. We shall consider the rich significance of the various forms of the Divine help as expressed in the latter part of this verse, in another homily. For the present we confine ourselves to the former half of the verse, each clause of which sets forth a fresh ground on which a poor feeble soul may build its confidence, in spite of sorrow and Satan, that no harm will come to it.

I. THE GREAT FOUNDATION FOR THE TRIUMPHANT ASSURANCE WHICH FORESEES VICTORY IN THE MIDST OF THE SOREST CONFLICT IS THE INFINITE FULLNESS AND LOVING HEART OF GOD. When surrounded by difficulties, crushed by sorrows, assaulted and battered by all the artillery of temptations, when faint of heart and conscious of one's own weakness, when dull torpor seems to have taken all warmth of feeling out of us, and many defeats to have robbed us of hope,—there is one strong tower into which we may run and be safe. The Name of the Lord, the thought of his revealed character as the God of all grace, is enough to scatter all the black-winged brood of cares and fears, and to bring the dove of peace into our hearts, though they be lonely as the ark, and all be one waste of waters around. For that great Name proclaims that his love is inexhaustible. Grace is love exercised to inferiors and undeserving persons; and, if he is the God of all grace, boundless love for the lowliest and foulest is in his heart. Anything short of such Divine fullness of love would be tired out by our slowness and repeated sin. Impatience steals into the most long-suffering heart, and the most liberal hand will shut fast at last when the ragged good-for-nothing comes for the hundredth time with the old story of shiftless improvidence and misery, and the old whining petition for help already so often given and squandered. But there is no wearying out his patient love, and no past misuse of his gifts can ever prompt him to deny us more. The God of *all* grace has grace for all. The Name, too, proclaims the infinite fullness of his resources. That great storehouse is inexhaustible, after all giving full. He works and is not weary. He bestows and is none the poorer. The stream has been pouring for ages with a rush like Niagara, and the flood to-day is as mighty as at the beginning. It is fed from the eternal fountains in the "mountains of God," and cannot cease. Shall we fear drought whilst we are borne on its broad bosom? The coins in circulation, though enough to enrich the world, are as nothing to the masses of bullion stored in the depths. The sun itself will die by self-communication, and that great hearth-fire will grow cold, and all the family of worlds that move around it cease to be united and warmed by its beams; but the God who is our Sun burns and is not consumed. Shall we fear freezing or darkness while we walk in the light of his face? And that great Name implies an infinite variety of resources. All diversities of grace are his, that they may be ours. Grace is not only love in exercise to inferiors, but is also the gifts of that love, which are so inseparable from it that they are called by the same name. These take the shape of every man's need, and of all the needs of every man. The bread-fruit tree to the South Sea Islanders

is a storehouse from which they get all they require. Its fruit is their food, its juice their beverage, from its bark they prepare their clothing, from its wood they build their houses and fashion their weapons, its leaves make their thatch, its fibres their cordage. So the grace of God is all-sufficient—Protean in its forms, fitting each necessity as it arises, and shaped so as to give to every one of us the very thing which character and circumstances at the moment require. Shall we fear to be ever left to fall before enemies or to be crushed by our sorrows, when we have such an ever-full fountain of various grace to draw from?

II. ANOTHER GROUND OF CONFIDENT ASSURANCE IS GOD'S OWN ACT, WHICH WOULD BE STULTIFIED IF WE WERE NOT UPHELD. He "called us unto his eternal glory in Christ." Here the act of calling, and that to which we are called, and the Christ in whom we are called, are all alleged as a threefold cord on which we may hang the whole weight of our confidence. They make it inconceivable that God should not do for us all which the next clause assures us he will do. He will not leave his purpose half accomplished. Nobody shall ever have to point to his incomplete work, and say that he began to build and was not able to finish. His gifts and calling are subject to no change of his solemn purpose. He is not a son of man that he should repent. And if he wills an end, he wills the means to that end. He will assuredly provide for his children all that is needed to bring them to the glory to which he has called them. Does God summon men to his eternal glory, and forget to provide them grace? Will he call them to his own palace, and not give them an outfit for their journey? Does he send out his soldiers without ammunition or stores? "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" was Christ's great reason to his little flock why they should not fear; as if he had said, "Do you suppose that the Father who gives you a crown at last will not give you all you need on your way to it?" So a joyous temper of triumphant confidence in the face of all suffering and temptation should be ours; "for faithful is he that calleth you, who also will" carry out his purpose to the blessed end.

III. THE FINAL GROUND ON WHICH WE MAY BUILD OUR CONFIDENCE IS GOD'S APPOINTMENT OF SUFFERING AND ITS MEANING. The words, "after that ye have suffered a while," must be connected more immediately with the preceding. They teach that the way to the eternal glory is through transitory, brief suffering. The apostle comes back to the thoughts with which he began his Epistle about "for a season being in heaviness." These sufferings, then, were included in the Divine purpose. They are as much a part of his scheme, are as much a fruit of his inexhaustible love, as the glory to which they lead. They do not break in upon the Divine plan. There is no fear of their threatening its fulfilment. They are not excrescences, but essential parts of that deep counsel of the unfathomable wisdom according to which all our circumstances are appointed by him. He will not, then, be taken at unawares by them, nor will any accumulation of sorrow or suffering be any hindrance to his Divine purpose of strengthening us. The electric spark finds no resistance to its passage in the deepest sea, and though all the waves and billows go over us, his sustaining grace can none the less make its way to our hearts. Nor are they only his appointment, but their direct purpose is to fit us for the eternal glory to which we are called. Joy alone would not do that. The heart needs to be refined by sorrow, and the experience of desolation, ere it can fully receive the grace now which leads to the glory hereafter. So we are not only strengthened for, but by, sorrow; and one of God's ways of "stablishing" us is to cut away all other props, that we may lean all our weight upon him. Faith, then, out of the lion brings honey, wrings hope and assured triumph out of the very pains and foes that beset us, as if one should draw lightning to guide him on his road from the heavy thunder-clouds that frown above him. When sorrow comes, see in it a part of that Divine plan which issues in eternal glory, see in it one of the channels by which that plan shall be accomplished, that glory reached, and the grace of the God of all grace enter more abundantly into your heart. So good cheer will be born of sadness, as radiant morning from night, and your light affliction, which is but for a moment, will bring you even now a confidence in God and an enlarged strength, which are precursors and pledges of an eternal weight of glory.—A. M.

Ver. 10 (latter half).—*The manifold gifts for manifold need.* The apostle has so

exalted an idea of the fulness and variety of the operations of God's grace that he heaps together here all these terms which substantially express the same idea. The accumulation, however, is not empty tautology. It witnesses to the joyful emotion which fills his heart. It brings to view the completeness of the multifarious help which our need in all its aspects may expect to receive. That great river of ever-flowing Divine communication parts into the four heads which water all the Eden of the renewed soul. Though the ideas be closely connected, yet we may distinguish between them, and may let our thoughts dwell on these words, in which the apostle seeks to breathe his own cheerful confidence into sorrowful and tried hearts, as illustrating both man's manifold need and God's manifold grace. The whole verse is best regarded, with the Revised Version, not as a prayer, but as an assurance: "God shall perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."

I. OUR FAILURES AND IMPERFECTIONS WILL BE REPAIRED. The word here translated "perfect" properly means "to restore to a state of completeness." It is used to describe the process of mending nets. It is used in its ethical sense (Gal. vi. 1) to express the Christian duty of restoring the brother overtaken in a fault. And so it is employed here for that great work of Divine grace by which our defects are made good, the rents which sin has made mended, the tarnished purity given back, the scars effaced. That form of the Divine help answers to the deepest of our needs, and, in its incipient stages, is the firstfruits of the great harvest of God's grace which a believing soul reaps. We need first of all forgiveness and the removal of the guilt of our sins. All restoration of fallen men to the lost ideal of man, which is the likeness of God, must begin there, and then there follows a long process which the patient God carries on, mending us by slow degrees, and step by step supplementing this defect and repairing the results of that sin, till there be no gaps remaining needing to be filled and no flaws in character needing to be corrected. "Tis a lifelong task till the lump be leavened." The restoring grace has to permeate all the crannies and corners of the soul. It must transform and expel, if it is to mend and restore. When we think of our own defects and see how much is lacking in our characters, we may well feel that nothing can ever fill up these. Then the confidence of this brave text may hearten us. It is the God of all grace to whom we look for our perfecting. No emptiness can be so vast and so empty that that "all" cannot fill it. No man can have gone so far from the right way, or had his nature so lacerated by sin's cruel fangs, that that "all" cannot heal and repair the damage. Therefore the more we sound the height, and length, and breadth, and depth of our imperfections and sins, the more joyfully should we think of the completeness of that power which overlaps them on all sides and surpasses them in every dimension, and the more confidently should we exclaim, "The God of all grace shall restore us and complete us."

II. OUR FLUCTUATIONS WILL BE STEADIED. The God of all grace will stablish us. The assurance comes with special force from the life of the apostle whose earlier character had been marked by such extreme variations, and by such an enormous difference between high and low water. If ever there was a believer whose impulsiveness needed steadying, it was the man who is denying his Master from fear of a maid-servant's sharp tongue less than four and twenty hours after he had bragged that, whoever fled, he would stand by him. Such quick alternations of hot and cold fits indicate a character very lovable, no doubt, in its transparency and in its generous impulses, but needing much painful discipline, before it can be consolidated into "rock," and Peter deserve his new name. There are many indications in this Epistle that the result had been attained, and that Peter's assurance here is in some measure a transcript of his own experience. But however that may be, the operation of the grace of God is to give firmness and solidity of character, both as against our own vacillations, and as against outward oppositions which bring a constant pressure against us to move us from our foundation. So long as we are on this earth and in this body, we shall be subject to variations both in the clearness of our perceptions of religious truth and in the warmth of our religious emotions, but God's grace is able to diminish the range of our thermometers, so that there shall not be so many degrees between the summer maximum and the winter minimum, and to bring about a gradual approximation to a uniformity in which emotion shall be converted into steadfast principle. If we are to be thus established, we must open our hearts for the entry of the grace which will

steady us, and so we find, a verse or two before our text, that the apostle has bid his readers be "steadfast in the faith," where he employs a word which is cognate with that here used. Faith knits us to God, and sets wide the portals of the heart that the flood of his power may enter in. If we trust him, he will hold us up. If we set the Lord at our right hands, we shall not be moved. Our hearts are changeable, and our temperaments may be impulsive and fickle, but God's grace is given us to help us to conquer our temperaments and change our dispositions. If we will let it work its work upon us, it will make us partakers of an inviolable and unshaken evenness of soul, which is a faint shadow of God's own unchangeableness.

III. OUR WEAKNESSES WILL BE STRENGTHENED. Our manifold need may be contemplated in yet another aspect. We are weak, and we need strength. If we measure our power compared with what we have to do, still more as compared with what we have to resist and suffer, how disproportionate it is! Heavy tasks have to be done, hard battles to be fought, bitter sorrows to be borne, and "who is sufficient for these things?" Our weakness is our misery, and often it is our sin. It comes partly from the natural limits of our powers, but far more from the enfeebling influence of living to self, which, like fever, burns away energy and leaves us exhausted. What we are unfit by nature to do is not duty to do. It may be and often is duty to attempt what seems more than we can manage, and experience confirms faith in the expectation that power grows in the effort. But that which is plainly beyond our measure is not binding on us. God never bids us do what he does not strengthen us to do. And the feeblest Christian may cherish the triumphant assurance given to us all here that he will get all the power he needs for work, warfare, and sorrow. How will the strength come? It will be breathed into us by the communication of the mighty Spirit who dwells in all Christian souls. He is the Comforter, in the proper meaning of that word—the Strengtheners, by whose companionship all weakness is invigorated, and the whole nature quickened into higher energy. We shall be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man. It will come by the increase of faith; for dependence on God of itself brings strength, and to be persuaded that we have him to lean on makes the weak strong. It will come from self-control and self-denial; for the life purged of that taint is strong.

"My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure."

An indwelling God will be the glory of our strength, and, possessing his grace, "the weakest may be as David, and David as an angel of God."

IV. WE SHALL BE FIXED ON THE FOUNDATION. The Revised Version omits the word "settle," and is probably correct in doing so. In addition to the external evidence against it, we may notice that it conveys an idea of a somewhat different order to those of the preceding verbs, inasmuch as it introduces the thought of a foundation external to us, while they pointed entirely to inward processes. That very difference in the point of view may have been the reason for the insertion of the word, which, even if it be spurious, conveys a very striking and important concluding thought. All the preceding assurances will only be realized in proportion as we are fixed and abide on the one foundation. This unmoved repose on it is expressed by that final word "settle." All repair of our manifold imperfections and sins, all fixity of character and purpose, all strength for service or for suffering, comes from union with Christ the Foundation. Our organic oneness with him is not only like the resting of a building on the rock, it is like the rooting of a tree in the ground from which it draws nourishment, and, more wonderful still, is like the union of a branch with the stem from which it draws life. If we rest by faith on Jesus Christ, we have a basis for our thoughts, a foundation on which we can build holy, strenuous, and blessed lives. We have union with the personal Source of all completeness, of all resolute self-command and heroic persistence, as well as of all strength. If we keep near to Christ, his life will pass into our deadness, and all our needs will be supplied from that fulness of which all who believe receive, and grace for grace.—A. M.

Vers. 2—4.—*The true pastorate.* The office of the Christian pastor—the bishop, the presbyter, the deacon—was something new in the history of mankind. The functions

of the Christian pastor differ widely and radically from those of the heathen priest or philosopher; and they differ decidedly from those of the Jewish prophet or priest. The bonds uniting pastor and people together are more sacred, more tender, and more morally powerful than the official bonds which owe their efficacy merely to superior power or superior wisdom. It is only the religion of Christ which can furnish the basis for the pastoral relation, even among those who accept the great doctrines of man's spiritual nature and the Divine redemption.

I. THE NATURE OF THE PASTORAL LIFE AND MINISTRY. 1. The *personal* spring of this ministry is the pure devotion of heart and energies to the welfare of those for whom Christ died. 2. The *intellectual* character of the pastorate is expressed in the vocation described by St. Peter as "feeding the flock." The reference in this language is evidently to teaching, to wise and constant instruction in Divine and spiritual truth. 3. The *moral* work to be fulfilled is ruling in righteousness. It is not enough for the Christian minister to teach; he is called to guide in the way of virtue and piety, to exercise supervision over the character and the conduct of the members of the flock.

II. THE TEMPTATIONS AND PERILS OF THE PASTORAL LIFE AND MINISTRY. St. Peter deals very faithfully with his fellow-labourers; he reminds them that they are but men, and are subject to human infirmities, which must be guarded against by watchfulness and prayer. 1. It is possible for one to assume or to retain the pastoral office without a cheerful and cordial delight in it; as e.g. is the case with those who engage in the service of the Church, not by Divine summons, but through the influence of friends or through the force of circumstances. Such ministers lose the greater part of their power for good, because their heart is not in their work. 2. Mercenary service cannot be profitable to men or acceptable to God. He who for the sake of gain insincerely professes to seek men's spiritual welfare is beneath human contempt. 3. A domineering spirit is contrary to the very nature and purpose of the pastoral relation. That proud and ambitious natures have made the Church the means of rising to high station and to vast power is plainly taught by the history of Christendom. But upon the work of such men the blessing of the chief Shepherd cannot rest; for he was "meek and lowly in heart."

III. THE RECOMPENSE OF THE PASTORAL LIFE AND MINISTRY. 1. It is not present, but future. 2. It is not from man, but from God. 3. It is not perishable, but immortal. For the faithful and the lowly servant of Christ there is reserved the amaranthine crown.—J. R. T.

Ver. 5.—*The rightful authority of experience.* Complaints are commonly made in our day that the authority of age, experience, and social and ecclesiastical position is little revered or even regarded. There have been times when such authority has been boldly asserted on the one hand, and readily acknowledged on the other. Owing to the growth of education and of democratic sentiment, a very different habit now prevails. There is no fear of harshness, of foul and arbitrary conduct, on the part of the older, or even on the part of the great, in human society. The danger is all in the other direction. Hence the urgent necessity, at the present time, of attention to the directions of St. Peter in this passage.

I. THE SCOPE OF THE PRECEPT. 1. Children are required by Divine authority to be subject to parents. 2. The young and inexperienced in human society are enjoined to show respect and deference to those who have seen much of life, and who have acquired lessons of experience and wisdom. 3. In the Church of Christ, novices and recruits should place themselves under the guidance of veterans, and members of any congregation should submit to the judgment and authority of those who are placed in office. Probably this is the especial reference of the apostle in this passage. It would, indeed, be absurd to imagine that men can be trusted with absolute and arbitrary power, or that a blind, unreasoning obedience is required of intelligent beings. There are limits alike to authority and to submission. But the lessons of history teach us that, within such limits, deference, service, and submission may wisely and safely be rendered.

II. THE REASONABLENESS AND ADVANTAGES OF OBEDIENCE TO THIS PRECEPT. 1. Submission is for the good of those who are subject. A lawless spirit is a hopeless spirit. Where there is no modesty, no humility, there is little prospect of moral

growth, of a mature, noble, and serviceable character. 2. Especially, obedience and subjection are the best preparation for the exercise of authority and command. As society is constituted, it is natural and necessary that, whilst generation succeeds generation, the younger should step into the places of those who have gone before them, and should wield the power which they formerly acknowledged and cheerfully obeyed. 3. Thus the order and happiness of society and of the Christian Church are secured and promoted. Insubordination is a curse alike to Church and state. True liberty and true order are not opposed, but harmonious. It is well with that community where the elder and the rulers exercise their power in the sight of God and for the public good; and where the younger and the subject submit themselves "to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake."—J. R. T.

Vers. 5, 6.—*Christian humility.* It is natural for men to think highly of themselves and depreciatingly of others. Pride was always reckoned by the old Catholic moralists among the seven deadly sins. It is a sin into which too many habitually fall, however it may seem to them anything but a sign of degradation. Christianity attacks this habit, and seeks to substitute for it in human character the fair but often despised grace of humility.

I. THE SPHERE OF HUMILITY. 1. The Christian is humble before God. A just and scriptural conception of the Divine attributes is necessary to true humility. A man must compare himself with infinite greatness and excellence, with infinite power and wisdom, in order that he may form a proper estimate of himself. Such humility displays itself in reverential prayer, in scrupulous obedience, in patient submission, especially under disciplinary affliction. 2. The Christian is humble in his demeanour towards his fellow-men. This is a far more difficult exercise. And it must not be supposed that humility is expected, of the same kind and the same degree, in the attitude of man to man, as in the attitude of man to God. A wise man is not required to regard a fool as his superior in wisdom, or a virtuous man to regard a criminal as his superior in character. But the Christian is to guard against an overbearing and haughty spirit; he is to treat the lowly and the poor with due respect and consideration. Humility is best shown in the bearing of a man towards those who are his inferiors, and even towards those who are ungrateful for favours and services.

II. THE DISCIPLINE AND HABIT OF HUMILITY. The expression in the original translated "gird yourselves with humility," is not without difficulty; yet it seems to imply both that an effort and resolution are required, and that humility is to become a vestment, a clothing, to be habitually worn for use.

III. THE MOTIVES TO HUMILITY. The need of powerful motives in order to overcome powerful temptations is obvious; and such motives are provided for the Christian's benefit and aid. 1. The consciousness of our own feebleness and ill desert. None who truly knows himself can cherish pride. His frequent errors in the past, his liability still to err, must be too present to his mind to allow of self-confidence and boasting. 2. The pressing necessity of the service of man. All around us are those who need help. It may not promote our personal advantage to minister to their needs; and such ministry may involve the sacrifice of self, the crucifixion of pride. 3. The prospect of the future exaltation of the lowly. This is a proper motive, for it is one presented by the inspired writers. The way of self-denial is the way to victory. 4. The precepts and example of the Lord Jesus himself must have great force with his affectionate followers; and he has shown us that it is right and admirable even "to wash one another's feet"!—J. R. T.

Ver. 7.—*The cure of care.* The Christian religion is not simply a body of doctrine, it is a provision of grace. Its practical helpfulness has been proved by all who have accepted its guidance and put themselves under its authority. It is intended not merely to brighten this life, when dark, by the prospect of a better life to come, but to supply motives to service and to endurance, even when toil is hard and thankless and trials are many and oppressive.

I. THE ILL THAT CALLS FOR REMEDY. This is anxiety; and from the beginning human life has abounded in occasions of anxiety. No doubt the measure of this evil varies with the character and temperament of individuals, and with their needs and

circumstances. The anxieties of some are personal; those of others are relative. Many are anxious because health is broken, or circumstances are narrow, or a vocation is uncongenial. Some are anxious concerning the prospects of their children, others concerning the state of their Church or their country. The anxieties of not a few arise from their spiritual state—their temptations, doubts, and fears. These anxieties are distractions, and have a tendency to depress the spirits, to mar happiness, to cripple in the discharge of duty.

II. THE REMEDY PROPOSED FOR THIS ILL. It is, in the simple language of St. Peter—language prompted, there can be no doubt, by his own personal experience—to cast anxiety upon God. But how is this to be done? It is to be done by confession, i.e. where there is a consciousness of sin, where there has been distrust or murmuring. By prayer; in which deliverance is to be sought. “Roll thy burden,” said the psalmist, “upon the Lord.” By faith; in which the anxious Christian, convinced of God’s all-sufficiency, is content to leave all that concerns him in the wise and merciful hands of his Father and Saviour. Whether the cause for anxiety be temporal or spiritual, great or small, personal or relative, the remedy is the same, and is equally efficacious.

III. THE ENCOURAGEMENT TO APPLY THE REMEDY TO THE ILL WITH A VIEW TO RELIEF AND CURE. The apostle assures us that God “careth for us.” By this we understand that he observes, being minded otherwise than the fabled Epicurean deities, who were deaf to human cries and indifferent to human affairs. And he takes a deep and sympathetic interest in the condition and the sorrows of his children upon earth. Nor is this all. There are ways in which God gives expression to his interest and care for his own. By his providence he guides and governs all human affairs for their good. And by his Spirit he brings their hearts into harmony with his will, and thus causes all things to work together for their good.—J. R. T.

Ver. 8.—*Watchfulness.* Peter may well have remembered the Lord’s appeal to him and his companions in the garden of Gethsemane, “Could ye not watch with me one hour?” And his failure upon that occasion to exercise this virtue, connected as it was with the reproach of his Divine Friend, may well have deepened his sense of the importance of the Christian virtue which he in this passage inculcated upon his readers.

I. THE NEED FOR WATCHFULNESS. 1. The uncertainty of the future. No one can reckon upon events succeeding one another with even regularity, and therefore no one can make provision for time to come, and abandon himself to security and ease, assured that all things will continue as from the beginning. In our Lord’s discourses we find frequent warnings of changes and catastrophes, accompanied by exhortations to vigilance. 2. The certainty that every man will be called upon, and that before very long, to appear before the Divine Judge, to give an account of the deeds done in the body. How important that that day should not come upon us unawares and find us unprepared! 3. The temptations to unfaithfulness and indolence which beset us from without. Whether Christians are vigilant or not, they may be sure the adversary of souls is upon the alert, and ready to take advantage of every opportunity of attacking us by force or seducing us by craft. 4. The frailty of our own nature is prone to concur with the enemy’s activity in exposing us to spiritual danger. We have not only to watch against Satan, we have to watch against self.

II. THE METHODS AND SCOPE OF CHRISTIAN WATCHFULNESS. As the avenues by which danger approaches are many, it is necessary to set a guard against every one of them. More especially is it important: 1. To watch the *thoughts*. Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts and sins; accordingly the precept of inspiration is most appropriate, “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.” 2. To watch the *lips*. We are reminded by St. James that the tongue is a little member, but that it may be set on fire of hell. How much misery is caused by unbridled speech!—misery to the speaker himself, who regrets words spoken in sinful anger or passion of some other kind; misery to others, whose character may be blasted, whose usefulness may be crippled. 3. To watch the *actions*. It has been said that four-fifths of life consists of conduct. Certain it is that, unless the actions be watched, unless deeds of justice and mercy occupy the energies, all professions of religion are worthless. No man ought to be so confident of the stability and purity of his character as to deem himself exempt

from the necessity of observing his conduct and consciously regulating it by the counsels of inspired wisdom.

III. THE MOTIVE TO WATCHFULNESS. The motive which will weigh most with the Christian will be the wish and authoritative command of his Lord. How deep an impression his frequent admonitions to spiritual vigilance produced upon his Church is apparent from the truly Christian names which were so frequently given or assumed by Christians; they took a pleasure in being called by such names as Gregory and Vigilantius, meaning "the Watcher." The Lord has said, "I say unto all, Watch!" "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation!"—J. R. T.

Ver. 10.—*"The God of all grace."* This language, so natural coming from the pen of an inspired apostle, would have been almost impossible to a religious teacher ignorant of Christ. It is testimony to the moral revolution wrought by the Christian faith that such a description of the almighty and eternal power should seem to us just and by no means singular. For nowhere can we meet with language more glorious in itself, more comforting to feeble, sinful, needy men.

I. A SUBLIME DOCTRINE CONCERNING GOD. To some minds omnipotence or omniscience might appear the grandest attributes to be predicated of the Supreme. But to the Christian the moral attributes are the most majestic. That the Eternal is a God of grace is to him the peculiar revelation of Christianity, transcending in excellence every other representation of the character of Deity. And that "all grace" should be attributed to God enhances our conception of his glory. In fact, it is the manifestation of God in Christ which makes this declaration comprehensible and real to us.

II. A DOCTRINE MOST CONSOLATORY TO MEN. There is no one of us, at any moment of his life, who does not stand in need of grace—pardoning grace, renewing grace, strengthening grace, enlightening grace, consoling grace. And when our Father in heaven is thus depicted by the inspired apostle, the Christian reader cannot but recognize, in such a delightful representation, abundant ground for gratitude, abundant encouragement to faith, abundant stimulant to prayer; whilst he who has offended against God's righteous laws, and who repents of his transgressions, may find, in this representation, ground for approaching the Divine presence with the assurance of a favourable reception and of forgiving mercy.—J. R. T.

Vers. 1—4.—*The conduct becoming the elders of the Church.* The work of the pastoral office is to be fulfilled also by the private members of the Church, according to their respective gifts and opportunities. So there are practical lessons here for them, as well as for the minister. It is to them the words are addressed, "Exhort one another daily," and "Bishoping, lest any man fail of the grace of God."

I. THE ELDERS OF THE CHURCH AND THEIR WORK. Church system is in itself worth nothing; its sole value consists in that it is a means of promoting the life of the Church and its mission to the world. But some system every Church must have; and it becomes us, in our reverence for inspired example, and our sense of the importance of the ends for which the Church exists, to endeavour to discover and adopt that system most in harmony with the Divine mind, as seen in the principles embodied in apostolic times. In the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles we find that the believers in any one place were called a "Church"—"what thou seest write in a book, and send unto the seven Churches which are in Asia." These Churches were so many separate societies, each governing itself according to Divine instruction, without acknowledging the authority of sister Churches. Even the appeal of the Church at Antioch to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem was made of their own accord, not of necessity; and they received in response, not a command, but a recommendation only. The apostles endeavoured to bind these Churches together in Christian affection; witness the greetings in different Epistles from members of one fellowship to those of others. The only unity of early Christians was that of spiritual life and love; of external unity there is no trace. Now, in these Churches we find mention of two permanent officers—bishops and deacons. Timothy receives instruction as to the ordination of two classes of Church servants, called respectively bishops and deacons. Who, then, are the "elders" of whom we read? They were the same persons as the bishops. Paul, in writing to Titus, says, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst . . . ordain elders in every city, as I had

appointed thee: if any be blameless, . . . for a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God;" or in the passage before us. "The elders which are among you I exhort . . . feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof" (literally, Greek *ἐπισκοποῦντες*, bishoping). The two terms (as also, we believe, the term "angel," in Rev. ii.) are designations of the same office, and used interchangeably; we never find them together. Each Church apparently had its own bishop, or elder, and deacons. When you have taken from the list of the public servants of the early Church such names as those of "apostles," "prophets," "workers of miracles," none of whom were intended to be permanent, I think you will find but these two left besides the evangelists. The work of the elders. 1. *To feed the flock of God.* Just the words you would expect from Peter. They take us back to that early morning when his Master thrice bade him feed his sheep and lambs. To feed the flock is essentially the minister's task. The Word of truth is the great sanctifying agency in the hands of the Divine Spirit, and it is the minister's business so to present this that sanctification shall be the result. There never was greater need of plain practical Scripture teaching than now, when the pressure of business leaves, I fear, too little leisure for Scripture study. It should not be so, but so it is. 2. *To take the oversight of the flock.* "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour." God's Word shows that he regards the elders as the superintendents of the Churches committed to them, as the presidents of all the work of those Churches, and as having heavy responsibilities for their well-being. Of the Christian minister it is said, he shall "warn the unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak." 3. *To be examples to the flock.* A minister's personal spiritual life is the first essential in his work; he has to watch his character, lest it should be a shadow darkening his teaching. Many of you have your own smaller portions of the flock to feed and care for. Christian workers, remember that the shepherds of Christ's fold must, like the great Shepherd, always go first. If you want to work for Christ successfully, the best part of that work will be done in your closet, ministering Christ to yourself. The work can never be better than the worker; the power of a lesson depends on the teacher seen behind it.

II. THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THIS WORK IS TO BE WROUGHT. 1. *It is to be wrought from personal fellowship with Christ.* Peter here says that he was an elder, because he had seen Christ suffer, and was a partaker of his glory. How we shall teach and preach when we look at the sufferings of Jesus, and at his glorified face! We must live with our unseen Lord, and then work for his flock will be no more a constraint, but a joy. 2. *In subordination to Christ.* "Neither as being lords over God's heritage." It is "God's heritage;" it is the "flock of God;" and there is a "chief Shepherd." Christ has set shepherds over his people, but they are shepherds under him. The flock are never fed, or guided, or upheld, or restored by human ministry, but he does it. If the under-shepherds are not what they ought to be, Jesus remains, and the flock is his. 3. *It is to be wrought with hope in Christ.* "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." Whatever happiness awaits Christ's faithful servants in another world, whatever forms the unfading crown may take, this at least will not be wanting—the presence there of those who have been redeemed through their instrumentality. Christian worker, when the chief Shepherd shall appear, and you with him, the first wondering glance at the autumnal fields you sowed will be your overwhelming recompense.

III. THE BEARING OF THE CALL TO THIS WORK ON THE CHURCH. Christ has called some of the elders in his Church to feed and oversee his flock. [What of that to the Church?] 1. *It reminds us of the dependence of the people on the ministry.* "The perfecting of the saints, and the edifying of the body of Christ," are declared to be, in a very important sense, dependent on the ministry; then it must be a perilous thing to depreciate that ministry, to cast one's self off from it willingly. "Feed the flock of God," he says to the elders; then let the flock of God see that they are willing to be fed. 2. *And this calls for the recognition by the people of the proper work of the ministry.* It would be a great thing if the elders were able to lead in all the paths of life—in things political, things social, things literary, things scientific, things philanthropic; but spiritual work is essentially theirs, and if these lower things are attended to, the great thing will suffer; and, though the sheep may follow, they will be unfed. 3. *The furtherance by the people of the work of the ministry.* The Church can greatly help their minister to

help them; they can let him know the help they need; they can speak freely of their spiritual difficulties; they can ask for prayer and sympathy, when other aid is unavailing; and in this way can give a joy as great as that they seek.—C. N.

Vers. 5—7.—*The conduct becoming Church members towards the elders of the Church.* The apostle is not thinking of those who are young in years when he writes, "Likewise, ye younger." In the early Church the ministers were to be tried men, consequently they were more advanced in experience than most of the rest, and thus were called elders as their official designation; and those who are here addressed are the private members of the Church. He speaks of them as "younger," a term corresponding to "elder." "Ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder." All that Peter actually says of the conduct becoming the Church to its ministers is in that word "submit." He then applies the principle on a much broader scale. From the fifth verse to the ninth the one idea is self-submission, and, having struck that key, he says, "Let there be the humility of subjection to one another; the humility of submission to God; and the humility of suspicion with regard to Satan." Our subject is—*The conduct becoming Church members towards the elders of the Church, and the principle applied generally.* Self-suppression was not always Peter's characteristic; the Peter of the Gospels almost always asserted himself and took the lead; the Peter of the Epistles, Peter the aged, has grown in gentleness by growing downwards.

I. THE DIVINE DEMAND FOR HUMILITY. "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." It is probably correct to say that pride is wherever self is put first, and refuses to submit either to God or man. There is the pride of self-righteousness; the pride of self-glorification; the pride of self-reliance; the pride of self-will, etc. 1. *Think of God's resistance of pride.* The word really means, "God sets himself in battle array" against the proud. But can God be against man? May I use an illustration? God is like a river; his laws ever sweep to the great ocean of blessing his love desires for men, and those who submit to be carried by them where they will, ever find that God is wholly on man's side; but let them set themselves against those laws, and try to make headway and reach success in opposition to them, when, then, they are beaten about and disappointed, and at last utterly ruined, are they at liberty to say that God is against them? No, and Yes. No, because they were against him, and it was not God resisting them, but they resisting God. Yes, because in doing that they brought all the Divine force to bear against them. Think of having the whole of God, his purposes, his laws, his providences, yea, and his love, turned to fight against us. 2. *"God giveth grace to the humble."* Grace! what grace? All kinds of grace—all the varied treasures which he designs for his children, and which Christ's sacrifice has purchased for them. Grace according to the riches of Divine glory. Who can have it? The consciously empty heart, submitting itself to God, to be filled by him.

II. THE APPLICATION OF THIS DEMAND FOR HUMILITY TO THE MUTUAL RELATIONSHIP OF CHRISTIANS. "All of you," ministers and people, "be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility." The apostle here uses a rare and curious word; in the Revised Version it is rendered, "Gird yourselves with humility." Another instance of how Peter's early life reproduces itself in this Epistle. 1. *Humble subjection to one another is his demand.* Forego for others something to which you may be entitled—some pleasure, or distinction, or convenience, which none could blame you for accepting, but which for the happiness of your brother you willingly give up. And this when you have to stoop to do it, when it involves a bringing down of your pride, when it is on behalf of the unworthy, possibly of an enemy, or one lower than you. 2. *This must be a matter of personal discipline.* Humility does not grow on us; it is foreign to our proud selfish nature; and the soul which sets out at the Divine bidding to acquire this spirit of humility to which God imparts all grace, will have to be much alone with itself and God, and not be in a moment's doubt as to where lies one of the great battle-fields of life. 3. *This humble subjection to one another is greatly due to the keeping of Christ's example before us.* If we are plagued with pride, with a spirit that stands aloof, that cannot bend, nor yield, nor serve, but that wants to lead and receive homage, that spirit from which God withholds his grace, let us set Christ before us. The mind that was in him will be in us only as we keep him in view; the law of heaven fulfilled on earth—looking, we become like.

III. THIS DEMAND (FOR HUMILITY) STILL FURTHER APPLIED TO OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD UNDER AFFLICTION. It is implied here that pride of heart is likely to manifest itself in affliction in two ways. 1. *In rebellion against God, casting us down.* Affliction may come through many means, but, let the means be what they may, it is "the mighty hand of God." Now, our tendency is to rebel against him and his will, and this rebellion is the essence of pride; it is the soul lifting up its own judgment against the wisdom of the Most High. We call our murmuring at God's will by much softer names than this, but this is what it is; let us shrink from it with all our might. Here is our Pattern. A Pleader in the dark grove of Gethsemane, pleading in his agony, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" but adding, in the utter humility of his faith, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" 2. *In unwillingness to trust him.* We think our affairs depend on us, and that, if we fail, they must fail. I say it is a subtle pride that is at the bottom of that, the soul unwilling to let God be everything. We must lose that; for God's happiness and glory, we must lose it; we must be ready to confide in him absolutely, though we cannot see what he is doing, and cannot do anything more for ourselves. We must rely entirely on his love. 3. *But whence comes this humility?* "Know thyself." Depend upon it, we shall be humble enough if we know ourselves. But we shall only know ourselves as we know Jesus; in his greatness we discover our littleness, in his goodness our sin, in his life our example, in his love our coldness, in his cross our doom.—C. N.

Vers. 8—11.—*Suspicion of Satan.* "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour," etc. Jesus had appointed Peter to the care of his flock, and here we have the cry of the wakeful shepherd, and also another instance in which Peter's personal history reappears in the Epistle. The lesson of humility had been burnt into his heart on that dark evening when Jesus was betrayed; he had discovered then what he tells them here, that the hour of sorrow is Satan's hour. No wonder that years after he wrote with emphasis, "Cherish that Christian humility which suspects Satan."

I. THE CHRISTIAN'S ADVERSARY. *The fact of this adversary.* Behind the forces antagonistic to the Church, Peter sees another, the master-force, the inspiring power of all, and, thinking of him as the one great foe, speaks of "your adversary the devil." The doctrine of a personal Satan is regarded by some as a superstition. But even from the standpoint of human speculation it is not unreasonable. There are many grades of being between man and the rudimentary forms of life, and for aught we know we may be as far from the perfect creature state as from the least perfect; and as there are so many ranks between us and the one, why not also between us and the other? And if, in the highest forms of animal life, creatures begin to herd together under a chief till this becomes the invariable rule with man, why, as life rises higher into the unseen, should there not still be leaders and princes, one position above another, till all possible authority is vested in one who is called "the prince of the power of darkness." Judging thus by analogy with what we know, the idea of a personal Satan is not without reason. But when we turn to Scripture, which of necessity is our only source of information in this matter, the teaching is very plain. We have the same evidence for the personality of Satan as of God. He is universally spoken of as a person; we are taught to pray, "Deliver us from the evil one." It is said, when Scripture speaks of him thus, it is in a figure—the principle of evil personified. There can be no such thing as a principle of evil apart from mind; yet when Jesus, in whose mind was no evil, was in the wilderness, Satan was there; and in heaven, where from every mind evil has been expelled, the Book of Job tells us Satan was there. Satan appears before us in Scripture as an apostate angel, exalted above his associates, the great enemy of God and man, the first cause of sin here, the quickener of temptation in human minds, the "god of this world," permitted under Divine restraint to "blind the minds of those who believe not;" that man in his freedom of will may elect the good, and attain that holiness which must always be voluntary, and rise to that purity and blessedness which are only possible through temptation's discipline. *The character of the adversary.* "As a roaring lion" suggests the twofold idea of power and great cruelty. *His work.* "He goeth about," etc. Satan is not omnipotent, neither is he omnipresent; but he

probably has larger agencies under his control than we suppose, and wherever man is, there may be no moment when, by some instrumentality, he may not have access to our will. Every circumstance may conceal our deadly foe. Are you weak? or are you a leader? Be sure his eye is fixed on you; he thirsts to destroy your faith, your purity, your peace, your good name.

II. THE CHRISTIAN'S RESISTANCE OF THE ADVERSARY. Satan tempts to cast us down; God permits him to tempt, in order to raise us up. Three ways in which we may resist him. 1. *Sobriety*; the opposite of intoxication. Anything that strengthens the lower principle of our nature, deadening us to conscience and reason, intoxicates. Business, love of the world, happiness, sorrow. Christian, be sober, let nothing engross thee till it masters thee. 2. *Vigilance*. "Be vigilant." Victory is sure to no other attitude; but this attitude must be maintained till death brings the great discharge. Sometimes Satan so takes us by surprise that we hardly know we are sinning till we have sinned. Take heed that he come not upon you unawares; five minutes off your guard may be the loss of your most sacred treasure. 3. *Steadfastness in the faith*. Faith in God is the fort from which the adversary would dislodge us; driven from that, all is lost, unless God in his mercy bring us back again. Satan can do us no harm whilst we are shut up in the strong walls of faith in God. What does the word "afflictions" mean, coming in where it does? Peter was writing to the afflicted, and he knew that affliction is Satan's opportunity; the afflicted know it too. It is then he whispers, "Is this a God of love? give up thy faith in him." Afflictions are a family sign; of all the brethren it shall be said, "These are they who have come out of great tribulation;" and the sufferings of the eldest Brother, God's Well-beloved, were the keener of all.

III. THE CHRISTIAN'S STRENGTH IN RESISTANCE. "And the God of all grace," etc. Read this beautiful verse as it is in the Revised Version, and you will see that it is a Divine promise, and its position in the argument will be apparent. There is help enough in this one passage for any victory. 1. *There is help in the title here ascribed to God*. "The God of all grace"—of every needed grace, of every kind of grace, of every means of grace. Here is the power that overcometh Satan. "My grace is sufficient for thee." 2. *There is help in the purpose here adopted by God*. "Who hath called us unto his eternal glory," etc. Then he will accomplish his purpose, and, though Satan does his worst, if in our resistance of him we bear the mark of the "called," nothing shall prevent our reaching perfect victory when our "little while" of suffering shall be forgotten in the eternal glory of the tearless land. 3. *There is help in the promise here given by God*. "He shall himself perfect, stablish, strengthen you." The victory shall be his. As you resist the foe, he will gird you with strength. He will nerve your arm, he will "beat down Satan under your feet;" and in that day your humbled, grateful soul will recognize that it was all of him, and will cry, with the apostle, "To him the dominion for ever and ever."—C. N.

Ver. 1.—*True office-bearers in the Church (No. 1)*. "The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder," etc. With the word "well-doing" in the last sentence of the preceding chapter ringing in our ears, we easily understand why the apostle thus proceeds to exhort men to their duties as office-bearers in the Christian Church. We notice, as here indicated—

I. THE SPIRIT OF OFFICE-BEARERS IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. The word "elders," according to Dean Alford, simply here means "leaders" in the Church. Subsequently it becomes clear that there were two orders of "elders," viz. bishops and deacons. But at this time these offices had not crystallized thus. All were included in the term here used. Their spirit is indicated by Peter's use of the word "fellow-elders" as describing himself, and "exhort" as denoting his relationship to them. There is none of the spirit of an ecclesiastical princeling; no arrogance. But brotherliness permeates all the intercourse. That is the supreme spirit of true office-bearers.

II. THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR TRUE SERVICE IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. 1. *Fellowship in sympathy*. "Fellow-elder;" burdened with the same cares, stirred with the same inspirations, etc. 2. *Witness-bearing to most solemn realities*. "Witness of the sufferings of Christ." All through this Epistle those sufferings are conspicuous as the theme of thought, the constraint of will. The word "witness" implies that Peter felt

he was, as regarded these sufferings, (1) *a spectator*; (2) *a testifier*. Ruskin says, "You look at marble which is the delight of the eyes, the wealth of the architecture of all civilized nations, and you find there is not a purple vein or flaming zone that is not the record of its ancient torture in raging fire and stormful convulsion." So is it with the beauty of the Christ, our Foundation-stone, our Corner-stone. 3. *Possession of a sublime inheritance*. "Partaker of the glory," etc. (1) *The glory of character*. (2) *That glory at present partially hidden*. (3) Yet a Christian already *possesses* it. What wealth! what dignity! How unspeakably richer than the mere millionaire, and more honourable than the mere hero, is the true Christian worker!—U. R. T.

Vers. 2-5.—*True office-bearers in the Church* (No. 2). "Tend the flock of God which is among you," etc. The apostle's practical exhortation to leaders in the Church about well-doing opens up a view of—

I. *THEIR DUTY*. "Tend"—a completer word than "feed." The word "flock" suggests what tending is needful; e.g. feeding, leading, controlling, protecting, "exercising the oversight." Keen and constant care. Of what sort of care he speaks, the word Peter coins to describe Christ, "chief Shepherd," eloquently tells. 1. *Receive instructions from him*. 2. *Imitate him*.

II. *THEIR MOTIVE*. 1. This motive is dealt with *negatively*. (1) Not constrainedly—a warning against perfunctoriness. (2) Not covetously. "Lucre" becomes filthy if it is a motive for spiritual work. (3) Not ambitiously. Not "lording it." 2. This motive is dealt with *positively*. (1) *Voluntariness*. "Ready mind." (2) *Sympathy*. "Making yourselves ensamples."

III. *THEIR HOPE*. "The crown"—the symbol of dignity. "Of glory;" not tinselled or tarnished, but unalloyed. "That fadeth not away." Amaranthine; imperishable. We are advancing to such a coronation if we are true workers for Christ.

IV. *THEIR SPIRIT*. 1. *Mutual subjection*. "Be subject," etc. 2. *Perfect humility*. "Gird yourselves with humility;" persistent and constant lowliness of temper.

V. *THEIR HELP*. "God giveth grace." Grace, the favour of God, the gentlest yet mightiest inspiration of souls.—U. R. T.

Vers. 6-11.—*Counsels for troubled Christians*. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God," etc. Approaching the end of his letter, the apostle condenses into two or three almost electric sentences some most momentous practical directions for troubled Christian men. In these directions we learn—

I. *THE TRUE SPIRIT FOR CHRISTIAN MEN TO CHERISH IN LIFE'S TRIALS*. Here is: 1. *Devout humility, and with it freedom from anxiety*. The two are more closely associated than we sometimes imagine. Let us look at them separately, and then in their combination. "Humble yourselves . . . under the mighty hand of God." (1) *Self-humbling* is true humility. To be crushed by others or by circumstances may be only humiliation. (2) *Humbling of self before God* is true humility. Towards God first and chiefly the emotion is to be cherished, the attitude maintained. (3) *Humbling of self before a personal, great, and loving God* is true humility. "Mighty hand of God." Not a force, but a "hand"—a hand as gentle as mighty. (4) *Humbling of self before, such a God will lead to exaltation*. "In due time he will exalt." "Casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you." "Anxiety;" perplexing, dividing, cutting thought. "Cast;" by a brave and resolute and simple act of will. "For he careth." Not *anxiety* now, but clear, loving, constant interest. Now, we can see how true humility leads to freedom from anxiety. The relationship and attitude of the soul towards God is the key to both. 2. *Sober watchfulness, and with it stern conflict*. "Be sober," etc. Note the *need* for the watchfulness. (1) *An enemy*. "Your adversary the devil." (2) *An active enemy*. "Walketh about." (3) *A destructive enemy*. "Whom he may devour." (4) *An enemy who can be resisted*. "Whom withstand." (5) *An enemy whom others have contended with and conquered*. "The same sufferings are accomplished in your brethren who are in the world." Into that trial and battle and storm all the brotherhood, even the great elder Brother, have gone.

II. *THE FINAL PURPOSE OF GOD WITH REGARD TO MEN WHO CHERISH SUCH A SPIRIT IN LIFE'S TRIALS*. 1. *A destiny that is wonderful*. "God of grace"—compassion, favour, help. "Called." God compels rivers, oceans, in their courses, etc., but calls souls to their

high destiny. "Eternal glory in Christ;" such as is (1) *revealed* in Christ; (2) *shared* with Christ; (3) *inherited* through Christ. 2. *A trial that is transient.* "After ye have suffered a little while." Often it seems long. "Life, an age to the miserable, a moment to the happy." But it is a "little while" comparatively to eternity, and absolute in itself. 3. *A character that is complete.* "Perfect;" no deficiency or defect. "Stablish;" all this to be made permanent. Not goodness like the early cloud and morning dew. "Strengthen;" inspire with force to overcome all hostile influences. 4. *A character that calls for praise to God.* "To him be the dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Peter exulted that God reigned, and yearned for him to have empire that was universal and perpetual, and acknowledged by all with the "Amen," not only of all men, but of all the powers in every man.—U. R. T.

Vers. 1—11.—*Concluding exhortations.* I. EXHORTATION TO ELDERS. 1. *In what character Peter exhorts.* "The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed." The link of connection is "well-doing," which is here given in detail. The first who are exhorted to do well are the *elders*, to be understood officially. These elders are referred to as *among* them, *i.e.* in the Churches in the various localities. Peter might have commanded even the elders, as an apostle; there was nothing derogatory to his apostleship, and there was a gain of influence, in his humbly exhorting them as a fellow-elder, who had the same duties of the eldership to perform. If he had superior authority, he would only derive it from the fact that he was "a witness of the sufferings of Christ." He had seen Christ suffer in the garden and on the cross; he had, therefore, the advantage of proceeding on personal testimony in his preaching. An eye-witness of the sufferings of Christ, might he not claim to have a special title comfortably to exhort the suffering, the persecuted? Taking them back to the Crucifixion-scene, he does not leave them there, but points them forward. He was also "a partaker of the glory to be revealed," *i.e.* future sharer with Christ when revealed in his glory, of which he had already enjoyed the foretaste in his having been a privileged witness of the Transfiguration. He does not say "fellow-partaker;" but we may suppose that this was in his mind for the comfort of the persecuted. 2. *To what duty he exhorts.* (1) *Shepherding.* "Tend the flock of God which is among you." Thrice Peter fell; thrice the Master laid on him his commission. Twice the word of the commission was *feed*, as if special attention was to be given to feeding of the flock, finding spiritual food for them; on the second occasion the word of the commission was more comprehensively *shepherd*, or, as it is translated, "tend." It is that word which is used here, taken, we can believe, from the commission. The shepherd has to guide, guard, fold, as well as find food; so the minister (the elder chiefly, though not exclusively, to be thought of) has not only to teach, but also to do what is sometimes, with a limitation, called *pastoral* work—attending to the sick, the aged, the anxious, the tempted. The elders were to tend the flock in their several localities in the consciousness of its being *the flock of God*, *i.e.* not belonging absolutely to them, but God. (2) *Character of the shepherding.* *First negative and positive.* "Exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according unto God." Shepherding is of the nature of *overseeing*. This overseeing is not to be engaged in *of constraint*, *i.e.* from outward pressure such as the solicitation of friends, but *willingly*, *i.e.* from free choice. "The remaining words introduced into the Revised Version seem unnecessary in thought. *Second negative and positive.* "Nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind." Overseeing is not to be engaged in *for filthy lucre*, *i.e.* lucre which is not filthy in itself, but becomes filthy when made the determining consideration in the holding of a sacred office. On the contrary, it is to be engaged in *of a ready mind*, *i.e.* from love for the work. Support cannot be overlooked, but it will be a secondary consideration with a man who loves his work, is glad to have the abundant opportunity of doing good in the name of Christ. *Third negative and positive.* "Neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock." Elders are to oversee; it is said that they are to preside; it is also said that they are to lead; but it is not said that they are to *lord* it, nor that they are to lord it *against*, as it is literally here, *i.e.* against the rights or interests of the people over whom they are placed. They are not to lord it over the *charges* allotted to them. On the contrary, they are to *make*

themselves ensamples to the flock. Their ambition is to be to live what they teach. "Either teach not," says Gregory Nazianzen, "or teach by living." 3. *Promise of reward for fulfilment of the exhortation.* "And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away." The pastoral wealth of the great Proprietor makes one flock, over which is placed the chief Shepherd. This is a very beautiful designation of our Lord. It is suggestive of shepherds under him. If these under-shepherds act from their own free choice, and from love of the work, and are exemplary, they shall not go unrewarded. The time of their reward is to be when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, i.e. shall be disclosed in all the glory that belongs to him on account of what he has done for the flesh. The faithful under-shepherds are to be crowned with a *crown of glory*. Peter, who is Jewish in his imagery, may have had in his mind the wreath used by the Jews on festive occasions. They are to be crowned as with flowers, i.e. with all that is most beautiful in body and soul. The designation given to the crown of beauty is derived from a flower, to which Milton thus makes allusion.

"Their crowns inwove with amaranth and gold;
Immortal amaranth, a flower which once
In Paradise, fast by the tree of life
Began to bloom."

As the lily is symbolic of purity, so the amaranth (being what we call an "everlasting") is symbolic of immortality. What is at last to blossom forth in the faithful servants of Christ is never to lose its form or brightness.

II. EXHORTATION TO THE YOUNGER. "Likewise, ye younger, be subject unto the elder." As there was what was suitable for the elders, *in like manner* there was what was suitable for the *younger* (people). By these we are to understand all in the congregations except the elders. The designation was not simply with reference to age (which held to a certain extent), but with reference to their being placed under the elders. We should therefore read "elders" here, as in the first verse. In accordance with former injunctions in regard to other relations, the word for the younger is "subjection" They were to be subject unto the elders. It is not said that they were to be subject *in the Lord*; but we are to understand the ground and conditions of the subjection to lie in the elders being representatives of Christ's authority and administering Christ's laws.

III. HUMILITY. 1. *Humility in service of one another.* "Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another: for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." Peter now turns to *all of them*, i.e. both the elders and the younger (people), and with a certain emphasis sums up their duties in *humility*. A recognized definition of it is "the esteeming of ourselves small, because we are so, the thinking truly, and, because truly, therefore lowly, of ourselves." The work for which Christ's gospel came into the world was no less than to put down the mighty from their seat, and to exalt the humble and meek. It was, then, only in accordance with this its mission that it should dethrone the heathen virtue *great-souledness*, and set up the despised Christian grace *humility* in its room, stripping that of the honour it had unjustly assumed, delivering this from the dishonour which so unjustly had clung to it hitherto; and in this direction advancing so far that a Christian writer has called this last not merely a grace, but the casket or treasure-house in which all other graces are contained. And, indeed, not the grace only, but the very word was itself a fruit of the gospel; "no Greek writer employed it before the Christian era, nor, apart from the influence of Christian writers, after" (Trench). What we are to do with humility is to *gird ourselves* with it, the reference being to the use of an apron (worn especially by slaves) for menial service. "Even if this were not the reference, it would be difficult to believe that Peter could have written this without remembering how the Lord washed his disciples' feet, and what he said on that occasion, and specially to Peter himself. The Lord put on a servile garment for the occasion—he *girded* himself before he addressed himself to that menial, gracious task, which was a parable in action never to be forgotten. This being so, how much force, how much life, is given to Peter's admonition! When his words come to us loaded with the loving, overwhelming remembrance, they bring to us all the weight of what our Saviour did and said on

that sacred evening before the Crucifixion" (Howson's 'Horn Petrinæ'). All of them, after the example of Christ, were to gird themselves to serve one another—the elders the younger (people), and the younger (people) the elders. The principle laid down in ch. iv. 10 was that all gifts—experience, youthful energy, among them—were to be placed at the service of the community. The consideration by which humility is enforced here contains the principles according to which God withholds and grants his blessing. There is a certain disposition which is necessarily disowned, its opposite being that which is owned. The proud, *i.e.* those who are satisfied with themselves and who exalt themselves above others on account of advantages, *God sets himself in array against* them. The humble, *i.e.* those who have a sense of their needs and who do not think of comparing themselves with others, *God giveth grace to them*. He sends the rich empty away, while satisfying the poor with good things. 2. *Humility before God*. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." Even in the persecutors Peter saw the *mighty hand of God*. In what they suffered at their hands there was a call to acknowledge their importance in the hands of might. There was also a call to acknowledge their sins. If they thus abased themselves individually and unitedly before God, he would exalt them in due time. He would certainly exalt them above their persecutors, and, without reference to their persecutors, on the day of judgment. He would then bring forth their righteousness as the light, and their judgment as the noonday. But the language may also be taken as holding out a promise that, whenever the ends of the Divine administration permitted, they would be exalted here above their persecutors. The hand that afflicted would also remove the affliction. 3. *Accompaniment of humility before God*. "Casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you." This does not stand by itself, but is particularly connected with the foregoing. Whilst there is to be an abasing, there must be, if there is to be a lifting up, if there is to be a balanced condition in the spiritual life, also a *casting* upon God. What they were to cast was, not their care, but their *anxious care*. What was to become of them in the persecution? In the event of their being martyred, how would their families be provided for? how would their children be defended against worldly influences, which were worse than persecution? Let them be encouraged to cast all their anxious care upon God; for he most effectually cared for them. He was acquainted with all their anxious care in its length and breadth, in its height and depth, and he would not forget them or theirs in the present or in the future. When Peter penned this precept he had grown above his own restless energy into the calm of words which he had once heard from sacred lips. "For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought [have no anxious care] for the morrow."

IV. THE ADVERSARY OF SOULS. 1. *Watchfulness*. "Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." By the omission of connecting words, a nervous force is given to the language. In 1 Thess. v. 6 it is said, "Let us watch and be sober." The same verbs are used here, but the order is reversed. The stress is here upon *be watchful*, which is placed next the danger pointed to. *Be sober*, *i.e.* be free from the stupefying of meats and drinks, from all worldly excitement; from the disturbing influence of anxious care. Unless they were sober, they could not be *watchful*, *i.e.* have all their senses and powers wakened up, so as to be prepared like a sentinel against the approach of the enemy. The two words are like the ringing of an alarm-bell. Be in a fit and wakeful state; the enemy may any moment be here. There is raised an impression of the formidableness of the enemy named here. In respect of good qualities—strength, majesty—Christ is compared to a lion. He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. In respect of bad qualities—fierceness, wonderful activity for rapacious ends—the devil is here compared to a lion. "As a roaring lion he walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." This language has special application to times of persecution. When the fire of persecution is among the Churches, then there is, as it were, roaring, unwonted stirring-up of energy, in the expectation that, through unsteadfastness, one here and another there may fall into his power. 2. *Steadfastness*. "Whom withstand steadfast in your faith, knowing that the same sufferings are accomplished in your brethren who are in the world." It is sometimes our duty to flee from the devil. We are to flee from the scene where we

are strongly tempted. We are here exhorted not to flee from but to *face* the devil; and James adds the thought that, when we boldly face him, he will flee from us. There seems to be a connecting of the devil with the persecutions that were taking place. Paul says that Satan hindered once and again his going to the Thessalonians. So, through the persecutors who were under his influence, he was opposing the Christians; and they were not weakly to yield to him, but to stand up against him. They could only expect to be unwavering in their stand against him in *their faith*, i.e. in the strong conviction that they were not left to themselves, but that there was One with them stronger than their adversary. Let them be supported by the consciousness that they occupied no singular position. It was the destiny of the brotherhood in the world to suffer. The same sufferings were being accomplished in Babylon from which he wrote as in the Churches of Asia Minor to which he wrote. 3. *Promise of support from God.* "And the God of all grace, who called you unto his eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while, shall himself perfect, stablish, strengthen you." They were to be steadfast in their faith; there was this promise on which their faith could rest. The God of the promise is designated *the God of all grace*, i.e. who could supply grace up to and beyond all their needs. The beginning of his grace was when he *called them in Christ*; but that beginning was connected with an end. He called them *unto his eternal glory*. The end was not to be reached, unless by means going before. The foregoing condition was *suffering a little while*. There is consolation in the manner of stating it, the shortness of the suffering being placed in contrast with the length of the glory. In and through the suffering God would support them, so that they would not fail of eternal glory. There being three words employed has the effect of giving increased force to the idea. The first word is a promise that God will supply all that is *lacking* in the elements of character upon which strength depends. The second word is a promise that God will keep from being overpowered in the actual assault. The third word is a promise that God will increase strength so as to turn successful resistance into victorious aggression. The God who called, *he will support all through unto eternal glory*. 4. *Doxology annexed to the promise.* "To him be the dominion for ever and ever. Amen." "Power" is a better word than "dominion." When God promises us power or gives us to experience power, it becomes us to ascribe the power to him. As we shall be receiving accessions of power through the ages of ages, our ascriptions of power can never end. As our ascriptions are so defective at their best, we seek to have them intensified by adding our "Amen."—R. F.

Vers. 12—14.—*Conclusion.* I. NOTICE REGARDING THE LETTER. 1. *The bearer.* "By Silvanus, our faithful brother, as I account him, I have written unto you briefly." Peter has written at considerable length, and yet, in comparison with the crowding of thoughts on his mind, *briefly*, being able to be brief because he had so qualified a messenger in Silvanus. This Silvanus or Silas is a link between Peter and Paul. He was associated with Paul in the writing of the two letters to the Thessalonians. He had assisted Paul in the founding of the Churches here addressed. This associate and assistant of Paul's Peter accounted a faithful brother. As he had been faithful in past services to the Churches, he would also be faithful in this. 2. *Aim.* "Exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God: stand ye fast therein." "He proposed an *exhorting* and a *testifying*, both in close connection with each other, as the immediate juxtaposition of the ideas shows. The occasion of them lay in this, that the readers, as professing Christians, had to endure severe afflictions through the slanders of the heathen. In view of the dangers lying therein, the apostle was careful, on the one hand, to exhort them to patience, by directing their minds to the future inheritance, as also to the continuance in holiness, and to a conduct towards each other and towards the heathen, such as would lead the latter to see how groundless their slanders were; and, on the other hand, that his exhortation might not be without a firm basis, to assure them that a state of suffering was the true Divine state of grace" (Huther). Having stated his aim, he also *exemplifies* it. Having testified to their standing in the true grace (we may understand through Pauline preaching, which thus agreed with Petrine preaching) he exhorts them to *stand fast therein*.

II. SALUTATIONS. 1. *The Church in Babylon.* "She that is in Babylon, elect together with you, saluteth you." It is significant of the widespread activity of Peter that he

was at this time writing from Babylon. He was attracted to this city (changed from what it had once been) by the number of Jews that were resident there. Christianity had found a congenial soil among them; and now, on the occasion of Peter writing to the elect Churches of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, the co-elect Babylonian Church sends greeting to them. 2. *Mark*. "And so doth Mark my son." As Timothy to Paul, so was Mark to Peter, his son, *i.e.* convert, companion, helper. It was to the house of Mary the mother of Mark that Peter went when he was miraculously delivered from prison; it is pleasing to see the old friendship kept up. Thus associated, we can scarcely think of Mark writing his Gospel without consulting with Peter. 3. *Mutual salutation*. "Salute one another with a kiss of love." What Paul calls the *holy kiss*, Peter calls the *kiss of love*, *i.e.* Christian brotherly love. When this Epistle was read aloud in open assembly, at the close of the reading, the men were to kiss each other, and the women, sitting apart, were also to kiss each other. "The fraternal kiss, with which every one, after being baptized, was received into the particular community—which the members bestowed on each other just before the celebration of the communion, and with which every Christian saluted his brother, though he never saw him before—was not an empty form, but the expression of Christian feeling; a token of the relation in which Christians conceived themselves to stand to each other. It was this, indeed, which in a cold and selfish age struck the pagans with wonder; to behold men of different countries, ranks, stages of culture, so intimately bound together; to see the stranger who came into a city, and by his letter of recognition made himself known to the Christians of the place as a brother beyond suspicion, finding at once among them, to whom he was personally unknown, all manner of brotherly sympathy and protection" (Neander).

III. *BENEDICTION*. "Peace be unto you all that are in Christ." Christ said, "Peace be unto you." The addition made by Peter to the Master's words defines the range within which he invokes peace. Let none that *are in Christ* want the peace of the Divine forgiveness, of the Divine keeping.—R. F.

HOMILETICAL INDEX

TO THE

FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

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