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COMMENTARY

**COMMENTARY
ON THE FIRST EPISTLE
OF PETER**

by John Calvin

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COMMENTARIES
ON
THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES
BY JOHN CALVIN

*Translated And Edited By The Rev. John Owen, Vicar Of Thrussington,
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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

THE Dedication to King Edward the Sixth is remarkably interesting, as it refers to the character of Popery at that day, and to its manoeuvres with regard to a General Council. The language is strong, and perhaps rougher than what would be at present used, but still true according to all we gather from history as to the state of things in those days. The main principles of Popery are still the same, and similar are its proceedings, though they may be more disguised, and its spirit is equally intolerant and persecuting. Like Mahomedanism, it is exclusive, and ever injurious to the harmony and peace of society.

The order in which the Epistles are arranged is not the same as in our version. There has not been a uniformity in this respect among the ancients. The reason for the arrangement here adopted was probably this, that the First Epistle of Peter, and the First of John, had, from the beginning, been universally acknowledged as genuine, while the Epistle of James, the Second of Peter, and that of Jude, had not from the first been universally received as canonical, though they were eventually so received. The Second and the Third Epistle of John were evidently not deemed by Calvin as “catholic;” and for this reason, as it seems, he omitted them.

The word “Catholic,” or General, as applied to the Epistles here explained, has been differently understood. Some have thought that they have been thus called, because they contain catholic truths; but other Epistles might, for this reason, be also called catholic. Others have supposed that catholic is synonymous with canonical; but in this case also there is no more reason for applying the word to these Epistles than to any other Epistles. But the more probable opinion is, that they were called Catholic, or General, because they were not written to any particular Church, but to Jewish or to Gentile Christians generally. Moreover, the term was not given them at first, but in subsequent ages.

The most probable *dates* of the *five* Epistles here explained are the following : —

The Epistle of James,	A.D. 61
The First Epistle of Peter,	65
The Second Epistle of Peter,	65
The Epistle of Jude,	66
The First, Epistle of John	68

This is the order according to the dates most approved by the learned. There is, for the most part, a unanimity as to the dates of the three first Epistles; but with regard to the Epistle of Jude, and the First Epistle of John, there is not the same agreement. There are many who fix later dates: to Jude, 90, and to John, 91 or 92. But this is a matter of no great consequence.

No doubt can be justly entertained but that JAMES, called the Less, was the author of the Epistle. He was the son of Alphaeus or Cleopas, and of Mary, probably a cousin, not a sister, of Mary the mother of our Lord. Hence he is called our Lord's brother, (<480119> Galatians 1:19;) that is, a near relative, as the Word brother is often taken in Scripture. He took a leading part in the council held at Jerusalem, mentioned in <441501> Acts 15; and, according to *Jerome*, he resided there thirty years, and presided over the Church. He was put to death, as *Hegesippus* relates, who flourished in the second century, by a tumultuous mob, excited by Jewish zealots, in the year 62.

The canonicity of James's Epistle has been a subject of dispute, though almost universally allowed in the present day. The facts respecting it, according to *Basnage*, are these, — During the three first centuries it was not extensively known; in the fourth century its authenticity was by *some* disputed; but in the fifth century it was universally acknowledged as genuine; and it has ever since been so acknowledged, with a very few exceptions. What seems to be a sufficient evidence in its favor is the fact, that it is found as a part of Holy Scripture in the first Syriac Version, which was made early in the second century.

The occasion of writing the Epistle appears to have been the abuse made of the doctrine of free grace by professing Christians, — a subject referred

to also by Paul in Romans vi., and in his other Epistles. Abounding grace is at one time despised and rejected; at another time it is turned into licentiousness: these are evils which have ever prevailed in the Church. The Pharisee is too proud to receive grace; the Antinomian pretends to receive and magnify grace, that he may gratify the inclinations of his sinful nature. It was against the Antinomian that James wrote his Epistle.

According to *Lardner* and *Macknight*, the Epistle was addressed to the whole Jewish nation, at home and abroad, believers and unbelievers; according to *Grotius* and *Wall*, to the Jews dispersed abroad indiscriminately, believing and unbelieving; according to *Michaelis*, to the believing Jews, while the unbelieving were not overlooked; but according to *Beza* and *Scott*, to the scattered Jews who professed the Christian faith. And this last opinion has the strongest reasons and evidence in its favor. ^{F1}

With regard to the *First* Epistle of PETER, there has never been a doubt respecting its genuineness. This Apostle took a prominent part at first in the cause of Christianity, but of his labors after the council at Jerusalem, in the year 49, recorded in Acts 15., we have no account in Scripture. Mention is indeed made, in ^{<480211>}Galatians 2:11, of his being afterwards at Antioch. It has been justly concluded from the superscription of this Epistle that he exercised his ministry in those parts which are here mentioned.

It was thought by *Beza* and *Grotius* that the Epistle was addressed to converted Jews; but by *Doddridge*, *Macknight*, and *Scott*, to Christians in general, both Jews and Gentiles. The latter opinion is the most probable. The arguments assigned by *Horne*, in his Introduction, in favor of the former opinion, are by no means satisfactory.

With regard to the *Second* Epistle of PETER, doubts have been entertained by some as to its authenticity. It appears that it was not at first so widely known as his First Epistle; and this was probably the reason why there were some during the first three centuries who did not regard it as genuine. But it has been quoted as a part of Scripture by some of the earliest Fathers, and fully acknowledged as authentic by those of the fourth and succeeding centuries.

The *First* Epistle of JOHN has from the beginning been uniformly received as a portion of Divine Revelation. Some difference has existed as to the

persons for whom it was especially intended, — a matter of no great importance. Some have supposed it to have been written for the Jewish Christians in Judea; but others, with more probability, for Christians generally, both Jewish and Gentile.

Though there is no name attached to it, yet there has been universal consent from the beginning that John was its author; and indeed the style of it throughout is sufficient to shew that he was the writer of it; for his Gospel and the Book of Revelation are in this respect exactly alike; and it is a style peculiarly his own.

JUDE, or Judas, was, as he says, the brother of James, and therefore the son of Alphaeus or Cleopas. Though he does not call himself an apostle, yet he proved himself to be so by saying that he was the brother of James. He is called, as James was, the brother of our Lord, ^{<401355>} Matthew 13:55. We have in Scripture no account of his ministry after the day of Pentecost.

His Epistle was not at first universally received as canonical. This is acknowledged by *Origen*, *Eusebius*, and *Jerome*; at the same time, they themselves so regarded it; and Jerome says that in his day it was by most received as genuine; and it has been quoted as a part of Scripture by *Clement of Alexandria*, *Tertullian*, *Cyril of Jerusalem*, *Athanasius*, *Ambrose*, and *Augustine*.^{f2}

That some of the Epistles were not universally received as authentic at first is no matter of wonder, when we consider the scattered condition of the Church, and the scanty means of communication. The fact, that *some* had doubts respecting them does not in the least degree invalidate their genuineness; on the contrary, it has conduced to strengthen the evidence in their favor; for the doubts of some must have occasioned a more minute inquiry as to their authenticity. And it was not long before all the Epistles, about which there had been some doubts, had attained the universal approbation of the Church; and what *Lardner* states is worthy of special attention, — That no writings, received by the primitive Church as genuine, have been since proved to be spurious; and that no writings, regarded by it as spurious, have been since proved to be genuine.

The Editor must mention here, what perhaps he ought to have mentioned before, — that in his translations he has not always retained what is called the historical present tense, which is often used by *Calvin*, according to

the practice of Latin and Greek writers, and also of the Prophets and the Evangelists. This mode of writing does not accord with the usage of the present day.

Our translators have not been uniform in this respect either in the New or the Old Testament; for they sometimes departed from the original as to this tense, though, for the most part, they retained it. As, for instance, in ^{<431139>}John 11:39-40, the historical present is *not* retained in the 39th, while it is retained in the 40th verse. The anomalies as to the tenses often met with, especially in the Psalms, have arisen from overlooking this peculiarity. The future in Hebrew is very often used for the present; and this is the historical present, and ought to be rendered in our language in the past tense.

J.O.

THRUSSLINGTON, Sept. 29, 1855.

DEDICATION

TO HIS MOST SERENE HIGHNESS,

EDWARD THE SIXTH

THE KING OF ENGLAND, THE LORD OF IRELAND, AND A
MOST CHRISTIAN PRINCE,

JOHN CALVIN.

BEHOLD, I return to you again, most excellent King. For though I did not expect that the Commentaries on Isaiah, which I lately dedicated to your Majesty, were a worthy gift, yet it was offered with my hearty good wishes. I have, therefore, thought of adding the Catholic Epistles, as they are commonly called, as a supplement to make up a full measure, so that both might come to your hands at the same time. And doubtless, since they were written either to Gentiles far distant, or to such as inhabited various countries far asunder, it is nothing new to them to pass over the sea, and to make a long circuit in coming to your Majesty. At the same time I thus as a private individual offer to you, most illustrious King, my labors, that being published under your name, they may profit all.

And truly, if there has ever been a time when the truth of God ought to have been freely and boldly maintained, it has never been more necessary than in the present day, as all must see. Not to mention the atrocious cruelty exercised towards its professors, to omit also all those machinations by which Satan fights against it, sometimes covertly and sometimes openly, there are places in which the pure doctrine of Religion lately prevailed, but where now the satellites of the Roman Antichrist, by their spurious deformations so mock Christ as though they gave a reed in his hand instead of a scepter, and laid a crown of thorns on his head. When these crafty corrupters of the purity of the Gospel hope by their arts gradually to extinguish it, with what cowardice do they connive at these mockeries offered to Christ, who ought to have hazarded their life a

hundred times rather than to redeem it for a very short time by their perfidious silence?

In the meantime, the Pope himself, to complete the last tragedy of crucifying the Son of God, is said to have summoned again his own masked council. Though he marches with his savage soldiery to obliterate the name of Christ and to destroy his Church, yet every kind of council is to him as a sacred sword, to make slaughter as it were a solemn rite. Thus Paulus the Third, when he had resolved to kill and destroy all by whom the defense of truth was preferred to their own life, made a show at Trent of that odious spectre, though disguised in fine colors, that he might put an end to the Gospel as it were by its thunders. But all that preparation, when the good fathers had begun, through some gleams emitted at the sessions, to dazzle the eyes of the simple, was put an end to by a secret and sudden blast from the holy seat, and vanished into smoke, except that for the purpose of continuing the terror, a little cloud rested for a time on Bononia.

Hence Julius, his successor, who had performed his part previously at Trent, is said to be preparing himself now for this stratagem, as though this only remained as means to obliterate the Gospel from the memory of men, that is, to fulminate against us with the horrible and terrific decrees of council; though many think that he only makes a pretense. But it signifies but little whether he pretends or really means to call a council. It is indeed a thing clear and well proved, that since the Papacy began to decline through the efforts of Luther, whoever occupied that citadel of tyranny, though they might hope to obtain some support from a council, they yet have shunned this kind of remedy in way similar to a sick man, who, being all over full of ulcers, dreads even the touch of the most tender physician. Therefore common even among children is the saying, that the Papacy cannot otherwise be assisted by a council than by cauterizing or amputation.

But I see no cause why the Popes dread councils so much, except that fear is an inseparable companion of a bad conscience. For what, I pray, was the late rabble at Trent, (to which yet they gave the name of a holy, general, and ecumenical synod,) but a sort of empty apparition, which no more disturbed the pleasures of the Pope than the clangor of trumpets, or the sound of drums, with which he daily amuses himself? Were, indeed, a synod from all parts really assembled, here might be some cause of fear,

lest a disturbance, arising in so great a multitude, should occasion a greater tumult. But by such fictitious councils as that of Trent, who can believe that a Pope could be terrified any more than by children's rattles, but that on the contrary he would sweetly slumber as through the blandishments of a quieter sleep? For example, two or three cardinals shall be chosen by the Pope, being his bosom friends, who shall wield all the authority. The same tyrant will hire from his courtiers some greedy fellow for a few ducats a month, who, being clothed in the mask of a patriarch, will servilely declare as his own opinion what had been dictated to him. Such was that blind Robert at Trent, whom I saw some time ago at Ratisbon, busying himself, not less foolishly than wickedly, in behalf of the Pope, when by his inveiglements he tried to draw me to a conference with Contarenus. There will fly together from all Italy the three-halfpenny bishops, of whom there will be a vast abundance. There will come also from France and Spain some of the light-headed and fatuitous, and others infamous for the vices of their former life; who afterwards returning home will boast that they had rendered a good and faithful service to the Catholic Church. Moreover, there will come forth from the caves of monks a great conflux of frogs into that marsh, who by their eager croaking will banish far away every truth. What! do I imagine here a new thing, or do I not, on the contrary, correctly describe the assembly which was lately seen at Trent?

Why then is it that the Pope dreads these guardians of his own tribunal, who are all, in the *first* place, his own servile creatures; and who, in the *second* place, seek no other thing than to gain by any means his favor?

Our Julius especially, who is a veteran in matters of this kind, can in mockery, whenever he pleases, compose such a council as this, so as, in the meantime, to leave as usual the thing undone. And, indeed, as he has given to many of the Dominicans the red cap, it seems to be no obscure prelude of such an event. This order, as they say, has ever been in favor with him; but such profusion arises from a higher cause. He, indeed, knows well, that none are more shameless than these beggarly fellows, as he has often employed at his nod their illiberal and sordid services. When he raised them again to this dignity, he knew that whatever he might bid them to do, none would be more audacious or more cruel than they. Besides, he is not ignorant that most of these hungry dogs, feeding on the same rewards, would rush into any contentions he wishes. I do not, however, say that they are mistaken who declare that he does not desire a council.

But when he has arranged his own theater, some sudden storm will be raised with no great trouble, which will disturb the whole proceeding. Hence, at the very beginning, if his own advantage so require it, he will fold up the curtains. A council, however, though an empty phantom, he thinks to be to him like Hercules's club, to lay Christ prostrate, and to break in pieces the remnant of the Church.

When this prince of impiety so wickedly tramples upon the glory of our God and the salvation of men, does it become us by silence to betray the sacred cause? nay, we ought to undergo hundred deaths, were that possible, rather than to suffer so unworthy, wicked, and barbarous oppression of sound doctrine to continue unknown through our sloth.

But let us grant what is hardly credible, that the Pope with his band does seriously intend to call a council. In that case Christ will not, at the first view, be so grossly mocked; yet in this way a wicked conspiracy would be formed Against him: nay, the greater the fame of the gravity and splendor of the Papal council, the more injurious would it be to the Church, and a more dreadful pest would it prove. For it cannot possibly be hoped, that an assembly gathered under the authority of Antichrist, should be governed by the Spirit, or that the slaves of Satan should exercise any moderation. In the first place, the Pope, the professed and sworn enemy of Christ, would occupy there the chief place of authority. Though he would especially pretend to ask the opinions of the Fathers sitting there, yet being terrified by his presence, they would all follow what would please him. But in an assembly fully agreeing in every impiety, what need would there be of dissimulation? Such, I have no doubt, is every one of the cardinals. In that very college, which pretends to be a holier senate, there prevails, it is evident, an Epicurean contempt of God, a savage hatred of truth, a rabid fury against all the pious. Then the order of bishops, does it not consist nearly of the same monsters? except that many among them are slothful asses, who neither openly despise God, nor hostilely oppose sound doctrine; yet they are so enamoured with their own depraved state, that they cannot endure any reformation. Add to this, that authority will reside almost wholly with the few, who, being indeed altogether destitute of any concern for true religion, will shew themselves the most fierce supporters of the Roman See: others will make up the number. As every one of these will speak the most atrocious things against us, there will be many not only of those who may only give their votes, but also of the

princes, who will subscribe either willingly and gladly according to their own inclinations, or from ambition, or from fear.

I am not however, so unjust as not to concede that some of these have a sounder judgment and are not otherwise ill disposed; but they do not possess so much courage, that they will dare to resist the wickedness of the whole body. There will be perhaps, amidst a thousand, two or three who may dare to give a half-uttered word for Christ, (as Peter Paul Vergerius at Trent) but the holy council of the Fathers will have a remedy at hand, so that such may not create any further trouble; for being cast into prison, they will be presently driven to a recantation, or they will have to pay the penalty of death for too much freedom of speech, or they will have to drink the cup of perpetual silence.

But such is the equity with which we are treated, that we are untameable and hopelessly perverse heretics, except we seek from the holy council the rule for the necessary reformation, except we acquiesce without any demur in its decrees, whatever they may be. We, indeed, do not shun the authority of a legitimate council, (if such could be had,) as we have already made sufficiently evident by clear proofs. But when they require that we are to bow to the judgment of the chief adversary of Christ without any appeal, and indeed on this condition, that religion is to be defined at their will and pleasure, and not by the Word of God, what reason have we for submission, except we are prepared willingly and knowingly to deny Christ? There is no reason for any one to object and say, that we distrust before the time. Let them give us a council in which there will be a free liberty given to defend the cause of truth: if to that we refuse to come, and to give a reason for all that we have done, then they will justly charge us with contumacy. But so far will a permission be given us freely to speak, that there is no doubt but that we shall be prevented from making even a suitable defense. For how can they listen to the clear-sounding thunders of truth, who can by no means bear warnings however bland and conveyed in soft whispers? But this they publicly do — They invite us; is it that they may grant us some place on the lowest seats? Nay, they declare that it is not lawful to admit any one to their sittings except the anointed and the mitred. Then let them sit, provided we are heard, declaring the truth while standing. They answer, that they freely promise a hearing; that is, that having presented a suppliant petition, being ordered immediately to depart, after the turbulent clamours of some days, we shall be recalled for

the purpose of being condemned. I say clamours, not that any altercation of dissidents is to be in that assembly, but that the sacred ears of bishops having been so irreverently offended by us, the indignity will appear to them intolerable. It is not unknown how tumultuous is their violence. Surely, when they ought to determine the cause with reason, this can never be obtained from them, when not even a slight hearing can be hoped for.

We shall endeavor to restore God's worship to its purity, purged from the innumerable superstitions by which it has been corrupted. Here the profane orators will chatter about nothing but the institutes, the old rites and ceremonies of the Fathers, as though the Church taught by the celestial ministry of the prophets and of Christ knew no other way of worshipping God than by adopting, in brutal stupidity, the dregs of Romulus, made fascinating by the anile dotages of Numa Pompilius. But where is that simplicity of obedience which the Lord everywhere makes so much of and so distinctly requires?

If the controversy be concerning the depravity of human nature, the miserable and lost state of mankind, the grace and power of Christ, or the freeness of our salvation, they will immediately bring forward and dogmatically allege the putid axioms of the schools, as things that ought to be received without dispute. The Holy Spirit teaches us in Scripture, that our mind is smitten with so much blindness, that the affections of our heart are so depraved and perverted, that our whole nature is so vitiated, that we can do nothing but sin, until he forms a new will within us. He constrains us, condemned to eternal death, to renounce all confidence in our own works, and to flee to our only asylum, the mercy of God, and to trust in it for all our righteousness. He also, inviting us to God, testifies that God is reconciled to us only through the blood of Christ, and bids us to rely on Christ's merits, and to come boldly to the heavenly tribunal. That none of these things may be heard, those endless decrees are adduced, to violate which is deemed more unlawful than to disbelieve God and all his angels.

Of the sacraments they will not permit a word to be said, differing from the notions entertained of them. And what else is this but to preclude the possibility of any reformation? But it is easy to show how preposterous is the administration of the sacraments under the Papacy, so that hardly anything bears an affinity to the genuine doctrine of Christ. What spurious

corruptions have crept in, nay, what disgraceful sacrileges have entered! It is not lawful to move a question on this subject. Hence it is a common saying with theologians, which they have published everywhere in their books: That the Church may remain safe, care must especially be taken that the council should not admit a doubt respecting the chief controversies of the present day. Come forth also has lately, in the Italian language, the insipid book of one Mutius, witlessly breathing nothing but carnage, in which he dwells profusely on this point, that nothing else is to be done by the reverend Fathers, when they meet in council, but to pronounce what already appears to them right on the whole subject, and to compel us to subscribe to their sanguinary edicts. I should not indeed have thought it necessary to mention the hoarse chatterings of this unlucky owl, had not Pope Julius recommended the work. Hence readers may judge what sort of council Mutius recommends, and is to be expected from Julius his approver.

As then we see that these antichrists rush on with desperate pertinacity in order to destroy sound doctrine, and with equal insolence boldly exult that they will set up a masked council for no other purpose than that, having put to flight the gospel, they may celebrate their own victory; let us also in our turn gather courage to follow the banner of our leader, having put on the armor of truth. Were only the pure and simple doctrine of Scripture to shine forth as it ought, every one, who refuses not to open his eyes, would acknowledge the Papacy to be a savage and an execrable monster, made up, through Satan's arts, of innumerable masses of errors. For we make it evident by the most solid proofs, that the glory of God is so distributed by a sacrilegious rending among fictitious idols, that hardly a hundredth portion of his right remains to him. And further, when they reserve for him some portion of worship, we can show that no part of it is sincere, inasmuch as all things are full of the superstitious inventions of men; the law of God is also loaded with similar devices, for miserable consciences are held bound under the yoke of men, rather than ruled by God's commandments; and they groan and toil under the unjust burden of so many traditions, nay, they are oppressed with a cruel tyranny. We declare that, prevaricating obedience can avail nothing except to lead men to a deeper labyrinth. We shew clearly from Scripture, that Christ's power under the Papacy is almost abolished, that his grace is in a great measure made void, that unhappy souls removed from him, are inflated with a fatal

confidence in their own power and works. We prove that prayer to God, such as is prescribed by his word, (which yet is the only true asylum of salvation) is wholly subverted. We plainly shew that the sacraments are adulterated by extraneous inventions, and are also transferred to a foreign purpose; for the power of the Spirit is impiously tied to them, and what is peculiar to Christ is ascribed to them. Then we disown the number *seven*, which they have presumptuously adopted. The mass also, which they imagine to be a sacrifice, we prove to be a disgraceful denial of the sacrifice of Christ. There are many other sacrilegious things of which we make it evident that they are guilty.

Doubtless, were only the Scripture allowed its own authority, there are none of these things respecting which our adversaries would not be constrained to be mute. And this is what they by no means dissemble, when they contend that owing to the ambiguous meaning of Scripture, we ought to stand solely on the judgment of the Church. Who, I pray, does not see, that by laying aside the word of God, the whole right of defining things is thus transferred to them? Though they may kiss the closed copies of the Scripture as a kind of worship, when yet they charge it with being obscure and ambiguous, they allow it no more authority than if no part of it existed in writing. Let them assume specious titles as they please, that they may not appear to allege anything besides the dictates of the Spirit, (as they are wont to boast,) yet it is a settled and fixed thing with them, that all reasons being laid aside, their will alone ought to be believed (αὐτόπιστος.)

Then, lest the faithful should be carried about by every wind of imposture, lest they should be exposed to the crafty cavils of the ungodly, being taught by the sure experiment of faith, let them know that nothing is more firm or certain than the teaching of Scripture, and on that support let them confidently recumb. And since we see that it is shamefully deformed by the false comments of the Sophists, and that at this day the hired rabble of the Pope are bent on this artifice, in order that by their smoke they may obscure the light, it behoves us to be more intent on the restoration of its brightness.

I, indeed, have in an especial manner resolved to devote myself to this work, as long as I live, whenever time and opportunity shall be afforded me. In the first place, the Church to which I belong shall thus receive the

fruit of this labor, so that it may hereafter continue the longer; for though a small portion of time remains to me from the duties of my office, yet that, how small soever it may be, I have determined to devote to this kind of writing.

But to return to you, most, illustrious King, here you have a small pledge, my Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles, where many things have been deemed obscure and recondite, which I have endeavored so to explain, that an easy access to the true meaning might be open to a reader not altogether slothful. And as interpreters of Scripture, according to their opportunity, are to supply weapons to fight against Antichrist, so also you must bear in mind that it is a duty which belongs to your Majesty, to vindicate from unworthy calumnies the true and genuine interpretation of Scripture, so that pure religion may flourish. It was not without reason that God commanded by Moses, that as soon as a king was appointed over his people, he should take care to have a copy of the Law written out for himself. Why so, if he had, as a private individual, already exercised himself diligently in this work, but that he might know that kings have themselves need of this remarkable doctrine, and are especially enjoined to defend and maintain it; the Lord has assigned to his Law a sacred habitation in their palaces. Moreover, since the heroic greatness of your mind far surpasses the measure of your age, there is no reason why I should add more words to stimulate you.

Farewell, most noble King. May the Lord protect your Majesty as he has already done, govern you and your counsellors with the spirit of wisdom and fortitude, and keep your whole kingdom in safety and peace.

GENEVA, Jan. 24, 1551.

COMMENTARIES

ON

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

THE ARGUMENT

THE design of Peter in this Epistle is to exhort the faithful to a denial of the world and a contempt of it, so that being freed from carnal affections and all earthly hindrances, they might with their whole soul aspire after the celestial kingdom of Christ, that being elevated by hope, supported by patience, and fortified by courage and perseverance, they might overcome all kinds of temptations, and pursue this course and practice throughout life.

Hence at the very beginning he proclaims in express words the grace of God made known to us in Christ; and at the same time he adds, that it is received by faith and possessed by hope, so that the godly might raise up their minds and hearts above the world. Hence he exhorts them to holiness, lest they should render void the price by which they were redeemed, and lest they should suffer the incorruptible seed of the Word, by which they had been regenerated into eternal life, to be destroyed or to die. And as he had said, that they had been born again by God's Word, he makes mention of their spiritual infancy. Moreover, that their faith might not vacillate or stagger, because they saw that Christ was despised and rejected almost by the whole world, he reminds them that this was only the fulfillment of what had been written of him, that he would be the stone of stumbling. But he further teaches them that he would be a firm foundation to those who believe in him. Hence he again refers to the great honor to which God had raised them, that they might be animated by the contemplation of their former state, and by the perception of their present benefits, to devote themselves to a godly life.

He afterwards comes to particular exhortations, — that they were to conduct themselves in humility and obedience under the government of princes, that servants were to be subject to their masters, that wives were to obey their husbands and to be modest and chaste, and that, on the other hand, husbands were to treat their wives with kindness. And then he commands them to observe what was just and right towards one another; and that they might do this the more willingly, he sets before them what would be the fruit — -a peaceable and happy life.

As, however, it happened to Christians, that how much soever they sought peace, they were often harassed by many injuries, and had the world for no just cause inimical to them, he exhorts them calmly to bear their persecutions, which they knew would promote their salvation. For this purpose he brings forward the example of Christ. On the other hand, he reminds them what unhappy end awaits the ungodly, whilst in the meantime God wonderfully delivers his Church from death by death. He still further refers to the example of Christ to enforce the mortification of the flesh. To this exhortation he adds various and brief sentences; but shortly after he returns to the doctrine of patience, so that the faithful might mingle consolation with their evils, regarding it as good for them to be chastised by the paternal hand of God.

At the beginning of the fifth chapter he reminds the elders of their duty, that they were not to tyrannize over the Church, but to preside under Christ with moderation. He recommends to the young modesty and teachableness. At length, after a short exhortation, he closes the Epistle with a prayer.

As to the place from which he wrote, all do not agree. There is, however, no reason that I see why we should doubt that he was then at Babylon, as he expressly declares.^{f3} But as the persuasion had prevailed, that he had moved from Antioch to Rome, and that he died at Rome, the ancients, led by this sole argument, imagined that Rome is here allegorically called Babylon. But as without any probable conjecture they rashly believed what they have said of the Roman episcopate of Peter, so also this allegorical figment ought to be regarded as nothing. It is indeed much more probable that Peter, according to the character of his apostleship, traveled over those parts in which most of the Jews resided; and we know that a great number of them were in Babylon and in the surrounding countries.

CHAPTER 1

<600101> 1 PETER 1:1-2

1. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,	1. Petrus, apostolus Jesu Christi, electis inquilinis qui dispersi sunt per Pontum, Galatiam, Cappadociam, Asiam et Bithyniam,
2. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.	2. Secundum precognitionem Dei Patris in sanctificatione Spiritus, in obedientiam et aspersionem sanguinis Jesu Christi; Gratia vobis et pax multiplicetur.

1. *Peter, an apostle.* What in this salutation is the same with those of Paul, requires no new explanation. When Paul prayed for *grace* and *peace*, the verb is left out; but Peter adds it, and says, *be multiplied*; still the meaning is the same; for Paul did not wish to the faithful the beginning of grace and peace, but the increase of them, that is, that God would complete what he had begun.

To the elect, or the elected. It may be asked, how could this be found out, for the election of God is hid, and cannot be known without the special revelation of the Spirit; and as every one is made sure of his own election by the testimony of the Spirit, so he can know nothing certain of others. To this I answer, that we are not curiously to inquire about the election of our brethren, but ought on the contrary to regard their calling, so that all who are admitted by faith into the church, are to be counted as the elect; for God thus separates them from the world, which is a sign of election. It is no objection to say that many fall away, having nothing but the semblance; for it is the judgment of charity and not of faith, when we deem all those elect in whom appears the mark of God's adoption. And that he does not fetch their election from the hidden counsel of God, but gathers it from the effect, is evident from the context; for afterwards he connects it

with the *sanctification of the Spirit*. As far then as they proved that they were regenerated by the Spirit of God, so far did he deem them to be the elect of God, for God does not sanctify any but those whom he has previously elected.

However, he at the same time reminds us whence that election flows, by which we are separated for salvation, that we may not perish with the world; for he says, *according to the foreknowledge of God*. This is the fountain and the first cause: God knew before the world was created whom he had elected for salvation.

But we ought wisely to consider what this precognition or foreknowledge is. For the sophists, in order to obscure the grace of God, imagine that the merits of each are foreseen by God, and that thus the reprobate are distinguished from the elect, as every one proves himself worthy of this or that lot. But Scripture everywhere sets the counsel of God, on which is founded our salvation, in opposition to our merits. Hence, when Peter calls them elect according to the precognition of God, he intimates that the cause of it depends on nothing else but on God alone, for he of his own free will has chosen us. Then the foreknowledge of God excludes every worthiness on the part of man. We have treated this subject more at large in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, and in other places.

As however in our election he assigns the first place to the gratuitous favor of God, so again he would have us to know it by the effects, for there is nothing more dangerous or more preposterous than to overlook our calling and to seek for the certainty of our election in the hidden prescience of God, which is the deepest labyrinth. Therefore to obviate this danger, Peter supplies the best correction; for though in the first place he would have us to consider the counsel of God, the cause of which is alone in himself; yet he invites us to notice the effect, by which he sets forth and bears witness to our election. That effect is the sanctification of the Spirit, even effectual calling, when faith is added to the outward preaching of the gospel, which faith is begotten by the inward operation of the Spirit.

To the sojourners. ^{F4} They who think that all the godly are thus called, because they are strangers in the world, and are advancing towards the celestial country, are much mistaken, and this mistake is evident from the word *dispersion* which immediately follows; for this can apply only to the Jews, not only because they were banished from their own country and

scattered here and there, but also because they had been driven out of that land which had been promised to them by the Lord as a perpetual inheritance. He indeed afterwards calls all the faithful sojourners, because they are pilgrims on the earth; but the reason here is different. They were sojourners, because they had been dispersed, some in Pontus, some in Galatia, and some in Bithynia. It is nothing strange that he designed this Epistle more especially for the Jews, for he knew that he was appointed in a particular manner their apostle, as Paul teaches us in ^{<480208>} Galatians 2:8. In the countries he enumerates, he includes the whole of Asia Minor, from the Euxine to Cappadocia.^{f5}

Unto obedience. He adds two things to sanctification, and seems to understand newness of life by *obedience*, and by the *sprinkling* of the blood of Christ the remission of sins. But if these be parts or *effects* of sanctification, then sanctification is to be taken here somewhat different from what it means when used by Paul, that is, more generally. God then sanctifies us by an effectual calling; and this is done when we are renewed to an obedience to his righteousness, and when we are sprinkled by the blood of Christ, and thus are cleansed from our sins. And there seems to be an implied allusion to the ancient rite of sprinkling used under the law. For as it was not then sufficient for the victim to be slain and the blood to be poured out, except the people were sprinkled; so now the blood of Christ which has been shed will avail us nothing, except our consciences are by it cleansed. There is then to be understood here a contrast, that, as formerly under the law the sprinkling of blood was made by the hand of the priest; so now the Holy Spirit sprinkles our souls with the blood of Christ for the expiation of our sins.

Let us now state the substance of the whole; which is, that our salvation flows from the gratuitous election of God; but that it is to be ascertained by the experience of faith, because he sanctifies us by his Spirit; and then that there are two effects or ends of our calling, even renewal into obedience and ablution by the blood of Christ; and further, that both are the work of the Holy Spirit.^{f6} We hence conclude, that election is not to be separated from calling, nor the gratuitous righteousness of faith from newness of life.

<600103> 1 PETER 1:3-5

3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,	3. Benedictus Deus et Pater Domini nostri Jesu Christi, qui secundum multam suam misericordiam regenuit nos in spem vivere, per resurrectionem Jesu Christi ex mortuis,
4. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,	4. In haereditatem incorruptibilem et incontaminatam et immarcescibilem, repositum in caelis erga vos,
5. Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.	5. Qui virtute Dei custodimini per fidem in salutem, quae parata est revelari tempore ultimo.

Blessed be God. We have said that the main object of this epistle is to raise us above the world, in order that we may be prepared and encouraged to sustain the spiritual contests of our warfare. For this end, the knowledge of God's benefits avails much; for, when their value appears to us, all other things will be deemed worthless, especially when we consider what Christ and his blessings are; for everything without him is but dross. For this reason he highly extols the wonderful grace of God in Christ, that is, that we may not deem it much to give up the world in order that we may enjoy the invaluable treasure of a future life; and also that we may not be broken down by present troubles, but patiently endure them, being satisfied with eternal happiness.

Further, when he gives thanks to God, he invites the faithful to spiritual joy, which can swallow up all the opposite feelings of the flesh.

And Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Understand the words thus, — "Blessed be God who is the Father of Jesus Christ." For, as formerly, by calling himself the God of Abraham, he designed to mark the difference between him and all fictitious gods; so after he has manifested himself in his own Son, his will is, not to be known otherwise than in him. Hence they who form their ideas of God in his naked majesty apart from Christ, have an idol instead of the true God, as the case is with the Jews and the

Turks. Whosoever, then, seeks really to know the only true God, must regard him as the Father of Christ; for, whenever our mind seeks God, except Christ be thought of, it will wander and be confused, until it be wholly lost. Peter meant at the same time to intimate how God is so bountiful and kind towards us; for, except Christ stood as the middle person, his goodness could never be really known by us.

Who hath begotten us again. He shews that supernatural life is a gift, because we are born the children of wrath; for had we been born to the hope of life according to the flesh, there would have been no necessity of being begotten again by God. Therefore Peter teaches us, that we who are by nature destined to eternal death, are restored to life by God's mercy. And this is, as it were, our second creation, as it is said in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians. *Lively* or *living hope*, means the hope of life.^{f7} At the same time there seems to be an implied contrast between the hope fixed on the incorruptible kingdom of God, and the fading and transient hopes of man.

According to his abundant mercy. He first mentions the efficient cause, and then he points out the mediating cause, as they say. He shews that God was induced by no merits of ours to regenerate us unto a living hope, because he assigns this wholly to his mercy. But that he might more completely reduce the merits of works to nothing, he says, *great (multam) mercy*. All, indeed, confess that God is the only author of our salvation, but they afterwards invent extraneous causes, which take away so much from his mercy. But Peter commends mercy alone; and he immediately connects the way or manner, *by the resurrection of Christ*; for God does not in any other way discover his mercy; hence Scripture ever directs our attention to this point. And that Christ's death is not mentioned, but his resurrection, involves no inconsistency, for it is included; because a thing cannot be completed without having a beginning; and he especially brought forward the resurrection, because he was speaking of a new life.

4. *To an inheritance.*^{f8} The three words which follow are intended to amplify God's grace; for Peter (as I have before said) had this object in view, to impress our minds thoroughly as to its excellency. Moreover, these two clauses, "to an inheritance incorruptible," etc., and "to salvation ready to be revealed," I deem as being in apposition, the latter being explanatory of the former; for he expresses the same thing in two ways.

Every word which follows is weighty. The inheritance is said to be *reserved*, or preserved, that we may know that it is beyond the reach of danger. For, were it not in God's hand, it might be exposed to endless dangers. If it were in this world, how could we regard it as safe amidst so many changes? That he might then free us from every fear, he testifies that our salvation is placed in safety beyond the harms which Satan can do. But as the certainty of salvation can bring us but little comfort, except each one knows that it belongs to himself, Peter adds, *for you*. For consciences will calmly recumb here, that is, when the Lord cries to them from heaven, "Behold, your salvation is in my hand and is kept for you." But as salvation is not indiscriminately for all, he calls our attention to faith, that all who are endued with faith, might be distinguished from the rest, and that they might not doubt but that they are the true and legitimate heirs of God. For, as faith penetrates into the heavens, so also it appropriates to us the blessings which are in heaven.

5. *Who are kept by the power of God.* We are to notice the connection when he says, that we are kept while in the world, and at the same time our inheritance is reserved in heaven; otherwise this thought would immediately creep in, "What does it avail us that our salvation is laid up in heaven, when we are tossed here and there in this world as in a turbulent sea? What can it avail us that our salvation is secured in a quiet harbour, when we are driven to and fro amidst thousand shipwrecks?" The apostle, therefore, anticipates objections of this kind, when he shews, that though we are in the world exposed to dangers, we are yet kept by faith; and that though we are thus nigh to death, we are yet safe under the guardianship of faith. But as faith itself, through the infirmity of the flesh, often quails, we might be always anxious about the morrow, were not the Lord to aid us.^{f9}

And, indeed, we see that under the Papacy a diabolical opinion prevails, that we ought to doubt our final perseverance, because we are uncertain whether we shall be tomorrow in the same state of grace. But Peter did not thus leave us in suspense; for he testifies that we stand by the power of God, lest any doubt arising from a consciousness of our own infirmity, should disquiet us. How weak soever we may then be, yet our salvation is not uncertain, because it is sustained by God's power. As, then, we are begotten by faith, so faith itself receives its stability from God's power. Hence is its security, not only for the present, but also for the future.

Unto salvation. As we are by nature impatient of delay, and soon succumb under weariness, he therefore reminds us that salvation is not deferred because it is not yet prepared, but because the time of its revelation is not yet come. This doctrine is intended to nourish and sustain our hope. Moreover, he calls the day of judgment *the last time*, because the restitution of all things is not to be previously expected, for the intervening time is still in progress. What is elsewhere called the last time, is the whole from the coming of Christ; it is so called from a comparison with the preceding ages. But Peter had a regard to the end of the world.

<600106>1 PETER 1:6-9	
6. Wherein ye greatly rejoyce, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations;	6. In quo exultatis, paulisper nunc, si opus est, contristati in variis tentationibus;
7. That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ:	7. Ut probatio fidel vestrae multo pretiosior auro, quod perit et tamen per ignem probatur, reperiatur in laudem et honorem et gloriam, quum revelabitur Jesus Christus:
8. Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see <i>him</i> not, yet believing, ye rejoyce with joy unspeakable, and full of glory:	8. Quem quum non videritis, diligitis, in quem nunc credentes, quum eum non aspicitis, exultatis gaudio inenarrabili et glorificato;
9. Receiving the end of your faith, <i>even</i> the salvation of <i>your</i> souls.	9. Reportantes finem fidel vestrae, salutem animarum.

6. *Wherein ye greatly rejoyce*, or, In which ye exult. Though the termination of the Greek verb is doubtful, yet the meaning requires that we read, “ye exult,” rather than “exult ye.” *In which* refers to the whole that is said of the hope of salvation laid up in heaven. But he rather exhorts than praises them; for his object was to shew what fruit was to come from the hope of salvation, even spiritual joy, by which not only the bitterness of all evil might be mitigated, but also all sorrow overcome. At the same time to exult is more expressive than to rejoyce.^{f10}

But it seems somewhat inconsistent, when he says that the faithful, who exulted with joy, were at the same time sorrowful, for these are contrary feelings. But the faithful know by experience, how these things can exist together, much better than can be expressed in words. However, to explain the matter in a few words, we may say that the faithful are not logs of wood, nor have they so divested themselves of human feelings, but that they are affected with sorrow, fear danger, and feel poverty as an evil, and persecutions as hard and difficult to be borne. Hence they experience sorrow from evils; but it is so mitigated by faith, that they cease not at the same time to rejoice. Thus sorrow does not prevent their joy, but, on the contrary, give place to it. Again, though joy overcomes sorrow, yet it does not put an end to it, for it does not divest us of humanity. And hence it appears what true patience is; its beginning, and, as it were, its root, is the knowledge of God's blessings, especially of that gratuitous adoption with which he has favored us; for all who raise hither their minds, find it an easy thing calmly to bear all evils. For whence is it that our minds are pressed down with grief, except that we have no participation of spiritual things? But all they who regard their troubles as necessary trials for their salvation, not only rise above them, but also turn them to an occasion of joy.

Ye are in heaviness, or, Ye are made sorrowful. Is not sorrow also the common lot of the reprobate? for they are not free from evils. But Peter meant that the faithful endure sorrow willingly, while the ungodly murmur and perversely contend with God. Hence the godly bear sorrow, as the tamed ox the yoke, or as a horse, broken in, the bridle, though held by a child. God by sorrow afflicts the reprobate, as when a bridle is by force put in the mouth of a ferocious and refractory horse; he kicks and offers every resistance, but all in vain. Then Peter commends the faithful, because they willingly undergo sorrow, and not as though forced by necessity.

By saying, *though now for a season*, or, a little while, he supplied consolation; for the shortness of time, however hard evils may be, does not a little lessen them; and the duration of the present life is but a moment of time. *If need be*; the condition is to be taken for a cause; for he purposed to shew, that God does not, without reason, thus try his people; for, if God afflicted us without a cause, to bear it would be grievous. Hence Peter took an argument for consolation from the design of God; not that the reason

always appears to us, but that we ought to be fully persuaded that it ought to be so, because it is God's will.

We must notice that he does not mention one temptation, but many; and not temptations of one kind, but *manifold temptations*. It is, however, better to seek the exposition of this passage in the first chapter of James.

7. *Much more precious than of gold.* The argument is from the less to the greater; for if gold, a corruptible metal, is deemed of so much value that we prove it by fire, that it may become really valuable, what wonder is it that God should require a similar trial as to faith, since faith is deemed by him so excellent? And though the words seem to have a different meaning, he yet compares faith to gold, and makes it more precious than gold, that hence he might draw the conclusion, that it ought to be fully proved.^{f11} It is moreover uncertain how far he extends the meaning of the words, “tried” δοκιμάζεσθαι and “trial” δοκίμιον.

Gold is, indeed, tried twice by fire; first. when it is separated from its dross; and then, when a judgment. is to be formed of its purity. Both modes of trial may very suitably be applied to faith; for when there is much of the dregs of unbelief remaining in us, and when by various afflictions we are refined as it were in God's furnace, the dross of our faith is removed, so that it. becomes pure and clean before God; and, at the same time, a trial of it is made, as to whether it be true or fictitious. I am disposed to take these two views, and what immediately follows seems to favor this explanation; for as silver is without honor or value before it be refined, so he intimates that our faith is not to be honored and crowned by God until it be duly proved.

At the appearing of Jesus Christ, or, when Jesus Christ shall be revealed. This is added, that the faithful might learn to hold on courageously to the last day. For our life is now hidden in Christ, and will remain hidden, and as it were buried, until Christ shall appear from heaven; and the whole course of our life leads to the destruction of the external man, and all the things we suffer are, as it were, the preludes of death. It is hence necessary, that we should cast our own eyes on Christ, if we wish in our afflictions to behold glory and praise. For trials as to us are full of reproach and shame, and they become glorious in Christ; but that glory in Christ is not yet plainly seen, for the day of consolation is not yet come.^{f12}

8. *Whom having not seen*, or, Whom though ye have not seen. He lays down two things, that they loved Christ whom they had not seen, and that they believed on him whom they did not then behold. But the first arises from the Second; for the cause of love is faith, not only because the knowledge of those blessings which Christ bestows on us, moves us to love him, but because he offers us perfect felicity, and thus draws us up to himself. He then commends the Jews, because they believed in Christ whom they did not see, that they might know that the nature of faith is to acquiesce in those blessings which are hid from our eyes. They had indeed given some proof of this very thing, though he rather directs what was to be done by praising them.

The first clause in order is, that faith is not to be measured by sight. For when the life of Christians is apparently miserable, they would instantly fail, were not their happiness dependent on hope. Faith, indeed, has also its eyes, but they are such as penetrate into the invisible kingdom of God, and are contented with the mirror of the Word; for it is the demonstration of invisible things, as it is said in ^{<581101>} Hebrews 11:1. Hence true is that saying of Paul, that we are absent from the Lord while we are in the flesh; for we walk by faith and not by sight. (^{<470506>} 2 Corinthians 5:6-7.)

The second clause is, that faith is not a cold notion, but that it kindles in our hearts love to Christ. For faith does not (as the sophists prattle) lay hold on God in a confused and implicit manner, (for this would be to wander through devious paths;) but it has Christ as its object. Moreover, it does not lay hold on the bare name of Christ, or his naked essence, but regards what he is to us, and what blessings he brings; for it cannot be but that the affections of man should be led there, where his happiness is, according to that saying,

“Where your treasure is, there is also your heart.”
(^{<400621>} Matthew 6:21.)

Ye rejoice, or, Ye exult. He again refers to the fruit of faith which he had mentioned, and not without reason; for it is an incomparable benefit, that consciences are not only at peace before God, but confidently exult in the hope of eternal life. And he calls it *joy unspeakable*, or unutterable, because the peace of God exceeds all comprehension. What is added, *full of glory*, or glorified, admits of two explanations. It means either what is magnificent and glorious, or what is contrary to that which is empty and

fading, of which men will soon be ashamed. Thus “*glorified*” is the same with what is solid and permanent, beyond the danger of being brought to nothing.^{f13} Those who are not elevated by this joy above the heavens, so that being content with Christ alone, they despise the world, in vain boast that they have faith.

9. *Receiving the end of your faith.* He reminds the faithful where they ought to direct all their thoughts, even to eternal salvation. For this world holds all our affections ensnared by its allurements; this life and all things belonging to the body are great impediments, which prevent us from applying our minds to the contemplation of the future and spiritual life. Hence the Apostle sets before us this future life as a subject of deep meditation, and he indirectly intimates that the loss of all other things is to be deemed as nothing, provided our souls be saved. By saying *receiving*, he takes away all doubt, in order that they might more cheerfully go on, being certain of obtaining salvation.^{f14} In the meantime, however, he shews what the end of faith is, lest they should be over-anxious, because it is as yet deferred. For our adoption ought now to satisfy us; nor ought we to ask to be introduced before the time into the possession of our inheritance. We may also take *the end* for reward; but the meaning would be the same. For we learn from the Apostle’s words, that salvation is not otherwise obtained than by faith; and we know that faith leans on the sole promise of gratuitous adoption; but if it be so, doubtless salvation is not owing to the merits of works, nor can it be hoped for on their account.

But why does he mention *souls* only, when the glory of a resurrection is promised to our bodies? As the soul is immortal, salvation is properly ascribed to it, as Paul sometimes is wont to speak, —

“That the soul may be saved in the day of the Lord.”

(<460505> 1 Corinthians 5:5.)

But it is the same as though he had said “Eternal salvation.” For there is an implied comparison between it and the mortal and fading life which belongs to the body. At the same time, the body is not excluded from a participation of glory when annexed to the soul.

<600110> 1 PETER 1:10-12

<p>10. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:</p>	<p>10. De qua salute exquisierunt et scrutati sunt prophetae, qui de futura erga nos gratia vaticinati sunt;</p>
<p>11. Searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.</p>	<p>11. Scrutantes in quem aut cujusmodi temporis articulum significaret qui in illis erat Spiritus Christi; prius testificans venturas in Christum afflictiones, et quae sequuturae erant glorias;</p>
<p>12. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.</p>	<p>12. Quibus revelatum est quod non sibi ipsis, sed nobis ministrabant haec, quae nunc annunciata sunt vobis per eos qui vobis praedicarunt evangelium, per Spiritum sanctum missum e coelo; in quae desiderant angeli prospicere.</p>

He hence commends the value of salvation, because the prophets had their minds intensely fixed on it; for it must have been a great matter, and possessing peculiar excellency, which could have thus kindled in the prophets a spirit of inquiry respecting it. But still more clearly does God's goodness toward us shine forth in this case, because much more is now made known to us than what all the prophets attained by their long and anxious inquiries. At the same time he confirms the certainty of salvation by this very antiquity; for from the beginning of the world it had received a plain testimony from the Holy Spirit.

These two things ought to be distinctly noticed: he declares that more has been given to us than to the ancient fathers, in order to amplify by this comparison the grace of the gospel; and then, that what is preached to us respecting salvation, cannot be suspected of any novelty, for the Spirit had formerly testified of it by the prophets. When, therefore, he says that the prophets searched and sedulously inquired, this does not belong to their

writings or doctrine, but to the private desire with which every one boiled over. What is said afterwards is to be referred to their public office.

But that each particular may be more evident, the passage must be arranged under certain propositions. Let the first then be this, — that the Prophets who foretold of the grace which Christ exhibited at his coming, diligently inquired as to the time when full revelation was to be made. The second is, — that the Spirit of Christ predicted by them of the future condition of Christ's kingdom, such as it is now, and such as it is expected yet to be, even that it is destined that Christ and his whole body should, through various sufferings, enter into glory. The third is, — that the prophets ministered to us more abundantly than to their own age, and that this was revealed to them from above; for in Christ only is the full exhibition of those things of which God then presented but an obscure image. The fourth is, — that in the Gospel is contained a clear confirmation of prophetic doctrine, but also a much fuller and plainer explanation; for the salvation which he formerly proclaimed as it were at a distance by the prophets, he now reveals openly to us, and as it were before our eyes. The last proposition is, — -that it hence appears evident how wonderful is the glory of that salvation promised to us in the Gospel, because even angels, though they enjoy God's presence in heaven, yet burn with the desire of seeing it. Now all these things tend to shew this one thing, that Christians, elevated to the height of their felicity, ought to surmount all the obstacles of the world; for what is there which this incomparable benefit does not reduce to nothing ?

10. Of *which salvation*. Had not the fathers the same salvation as we have? Why then does he say that the fathers *inquired*, as though they possessed not what is now offered to us? The answer to this is plain, that salvation is to be taken here for that clear manifestation of it which we have through the coming of Christ. The words of Peter mean no other thing than those of Christ, when he said,

“Many kings and prophets have desired to see the things which ye see, and have not seen them.” (<401317> Matthew 13:17.)

As then the prophets had but a limited knowledge of the grace brought by Christ, as to its revelation they justly desired something more. When Simeon, after seeing Christ, prepared himself calmly and with a satisfied

mind for death, he shewed that he was before unsatisfied and anxious. Such was the feeling of all the godly.

11. And what they inquired is pointed out when he adds, *Searching what, or what manner of time*. There was a difference between the law and the gospel, a veil as it were being interposed, that they might not see those things nearer which are now set before our eyes. Nor was it indeed proper, while Christ the Sun of righteousness was yet absent, that the full light should shine as at mid-day. And though it was their duty to confine themselves within their prescribed limits, yet it was no superstition to sigh with a desire of having a nearer sight. For when they wished that redemption should be hastened, and desired daily to see it, there was nothing in such a wish to prevent them patiently to wait as long as it pleased the Lord to defer the time. Moreover, to seek as to prophecies the particular time, seems to me unprofitable; for what is spoken of here is not what the prophets taught, but what they wished. Where the Latin interpreters render, “of future grace,” it is literally, “of the grace which is to you.” But as the meaning remains the same, I was not disposed to make any change.

It is more worthy of observation, that he does not say that the prophets searched according to their own understanding as to the time when Christ’s kingdom would come, but that they applied their minds to the revelation of the Spirit. Thus they have taught us by their example a sobriety in learning, for they did not go beyond what the Spirit taught them. And doubtless there will be no limits to man’s curiosity, except the Spirit of God presides over their minds, so that they may not desire anything else than to speak from him. And further, the spiritual kingdom is a higher subject than what the human mind can succeed in investigating, except the Spirit be the guide. May we also therefore submit to his guidance.

11. *The Spirit of Christ which was in them.* First, “who was in them,” and secondly, “testifying,” that is, giving a testimony, by which expression he intimates that the prophets were endued with the Spirit of knowledge, and indeed in no common manner, as those who have been teachers and witnesses to us, and that yet they were not partakers of that light which is exhibited to us. At the same time, a high praise is given to their doctrine, for it was the testimony of the Holy Spirit; the preachers and ministers were men, but he was the teacher. Nor does he declare without reason that

the Spirit of Christ then ruled; and he makes the Spirit, sent from heaven, to preside over the teachers of the Gospel, for he shews that the Gospel comes from God, and that the ancient prophecies were dictated by Christ.

The sufferings of Christ. That they might bear submissively their afflictions, he reminds them that they had been long ago foretold by the Spirit. But he includes much more than this, for he teaches us, that the Church of Christ has been from the beginning so constituted, that the cross has been the way to victory, and death a passage to life, and that this had been clearly testified. There is, therefore, no reason why afflictions should above measure depress us, as though we were miserable under them, since the Spirit of God pronounces us blessed.

The order is to be noticed; he mentions sufferings first, and then adds the glories which are to follow. For he intimates that this order cannot be changed or subverted; afflictions must precede glory. So there is to be understood a twofold truth in these words, — that Christians must suffer many troubles before they enjoy glory, — and that afflictions are not evils, because they have glory annexed to them. Since God has ordained this connection, it does not behove us to separate the one from the other. And it is no common consolation, that our condition, such as we find it to be, has been foretold so many ages ago.

Hence we learn, that it is not in vain that a happy end is promised to us; secondly, we hence know that we are not afflicted by chance, but through the infallible providence of God; and lastly, that prophecies are like mirrors to set forth to us in tribulations the image of celestial glory.

Peter, indeed, says, that the Spirit had testified of the coming afflictions of Christ; but he does not separate Christ from his body. This, then, is not to be confined to the person of Christ, but a beginning is to be made with the head, so that the members may in due order follow, as Paul also teaches us, that we must be conformed to him who is the first-born among his brethren. In short, Peter does not speak of what is peculiar to Christ, but of the universal state of the Church. But it is much fitted to confirm our faith, when he sets forth our afflictions as viewed in Christ, for we thereby see better the connection of death and life between us and him. And, doubtless, this is the privilege and manner of the holy union, that he suffers daily in his members, that after his sufferings shall be completed in us, glory also may have its completion. See more on this subject in the

third chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians, and in the fourth of the first Epistle to Timothy.

12. *Unto whom it was revealed.* This passage has been strangely perverted by fanatics, so as to exclude the fathers who lived under the law from the hope of eternal salvation. For it does not deny that the prophets usefully ministered to their own age, and edified the church, but teaches us that their ministry is more useful to us, because we are fallen on the ends of the world. We see how highly they extolled the kingdom of Christ, how assiduous they were in adorning it, how diligently they stimulated all to seek it; but they were by death deprived of the privilege of seeing it as it now is. What else then was this, but that they spread the table, that others might afterwards feed on the provisions laid on it. They indeed tasted by faith of those things which the Lord has by their hands transmitted to be enjoyed by us; and they also partook of Christ as the real food of their souls. But what is spoken of now is the exhibition of this blessing, and we know that the prophetic office was confined as it were within limits, in order that they might support themselves and others with the hope of Christ, who was to come. They therefore possessed him as one hidden, and as it were absent — absent, I say, not in power or grace, but because he was not yet manifested in the flesh. Therefore his kingdom also was as yet hid as it were under coverings. At length descending on earth, he in a manner opened heaven to us, so that we might have a near view of those spiritual riches, which before were under types exhibited at a distance. This fruition then of Christ as manifested, forms the difference between us and the prophets. Hence we learn how they ministered to us rather than to themselves.

But though the prophets were admonished from above that the grace which they proclaimed would be deferred to another age, yet they were not slothful in proclaiming it, so far were they from being broken down with weariness. But if their patience was so great, surely we shall be twice and thrice ungrateful, if the fruition of the grace denied to them will not sustain us under all the evils which are to be endured.

Which are now reported to you, or announced to you. He again marks the difference between the ancient doctrine and the preaching of the gospel. For as the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel, having a testimony from the law and the prophets, so also the glory of Christ, of

which the Spirit testified formerly, is now openly proclaimed. And at the same time he hence proves the certainty of the gospel, because it contains nothing but what had been long ago testified by the Spirit of God. He further reminds them, that under the banner of the same Spirit, by his dictation and guidance, the gospel was preached, lest they might think of anything human in this case.

Which things the angels desire to look into. It is indeed the highest praise to the gospel, that it contains treasures of wisdom, as yet concealed and hidden from angels. But some one may object, and say that it is not reasonable that things should be open and known to us which are hidden from angels, who always see the face of God, and are his ministers in ruling the church, and in the administration of all his blessings. To this I answer, that things are open to us as far as we see them in the mirror of the word; but our knowledge is not said to be higher than that of angels; Peter only means that such things are promised to us as angels desire to see fulfilled. Paul says that by the calling of the Gentiles the wonderful wisdom of God was made known to angels. for it was a spectacle to them, when Christ gathered into one body the lost world, alienated for so many ages from the hope of life. Thus daily they see with admiration the magnificent works of God in the government of his church. How much greater will their admiration be, at witnessing the last display of divine justice, when the kingdom of Christ shall be completed! This is as yet hidden, the revelation of which they still expect and justly wish to see.

The passage indeed admits of a twofold meaning; either that the treasure we have in the gospel fills the angels with a desire to see it, as it is a sight especially delightful to them; or that they anxiously desire to see the kingdom of Christ, the living image of which is set forth in the gospel. But the last seems to me to be the most suitable meaning.

<600113> 1 PETER 1:13-16

13. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ:

13. Quare succincti lumbis mentis vestrae, sobrii, perfecte sperate in eam quae ad vos defertur gratiam, in revelatione Jesu Christi;

14. As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

14. Tanquam filii obediētes, non conformati pristinis, quae in ignorantia vestra regnarunt, cupiditatibus:

15. But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation:

15. Sed quaemadmodum is qui vos vocavit sanctus est, ita ipsi sancti in tota conversatione reddamini;

16. Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

16. Propterea quòd scriptum est, Sancti estote, quia ego sanctus sum. (<031144> Leviticus 11:44; 19:2; 20:7.)

From the greatness and excellency of grace he draws an exhortation, that it surely behoved them the more readily to receive the grace of God, as the more bountifully he bestowed it upon them. And we must notice the connection: he had said, that so elevated was the kingdom of Christ, to which the gospel calls us, that even angels in heaven desire to see it; what then ought to be done by us who are in the world? Doubtless, as long as we live on earth, so great is the distance between us and Christ, that in vain he invites us to himself. It is hence necessary for us to put off the image of Adam and to cast aside the whole world and all hinderances, that being thus set at liberty we may rise upwards to Christ. And he exhorted those to whom he wrote, to be prepared and sober, and to hope for the graces offered to them, and also to renounce the world and their former life, and to be conformed to the will of God. ^{f15}

Then the first part of the exhortation is, to gird up the loins of their mind and to direct their thoughts to the hope of the grace presented to them. In the second par, he prescribes the manner, that having their minds changed, they were to be formed after the image of God.

13. *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind.* It is a similitude taken from an ancient custom; for when they had long garments, they could not make a journey, nor conveniently do any work, without being girded up. Hence these expressions, to gird up one's-self for a work or an undertaking. He then bids them to remove all impediments, that being set at liberty they might go on to God. Those who philosophize more refinedly about the loins, as though he commanded lusts to be restrained and checked, depart from the real meaning of the Apostle, for these words mean the same with those of Christ,

“Let your loins be girded about, and burning lamps in your hands,”
(^{<421235>} Luke 12:35,)

except that Peter doubles the metaphor by ascribing loins to the mind. And he intimates that our minds are held entangled by the passing cares of the world and by vain desires, so that they rise not upward to God. Whosoever, then, really wishes to have this hope, let him learn in the first place to disentangle himself from the world, and gird up his mind that it may not turn aside to vain affections. And for the same purpose he enjoins sobriety, which immediately follows; for he commends not temperance only in eating and drinking, but rather spiritual sobriety, when all our thoughts and affections are so kept as not to be inebriated with the allurements of this world. For since even the least taste of them stealthily draws us away from God, when one plunges himself into these, he must necessarily become sleepy and stupid, and he forgets God and the things of God.

Hope to the end, or, Perfectly hope. He intimates that those who let their minds loose on vanity, did not really and sincerely hope for the grace of God; for though they had some hope, yet as they vacillated and were tossed to and fro in the world, there was no solidity in their hope. Then he says, *for the grace which will be brought to you*, in order that they might be more prompt to receive it. God ought to be sought, though far off; but he comes of his own will to meet us. How great, then, must be our ingratitude if we neglect the grace that is thus set before us! This amplification, then, is especially intended to stimulate our hope.

What he adds, *At the revelation of Jesus Christ*, may be explained in two ways: that the doctrine of the Gospel reveals Christ to us; and that, as we see him as yet only through a mirror and enigmatically, a full revelation is

deferred to the last day. The first meaning is approved by Erasmus, nor do I reject it. The second seems, however, to be more suitable to the passage. For the object of Peter was to call us away beyond the world; for this purpose the fittest thing was the recollection of Christ's coming. For when we direct our eyes to this event, this world becomes crucified to us, and we to the world. Besides, according to this meaning, Peter used the expression shortly before. Nor is it a new thing for the apostles to employ the preposition *ἐν* in the sense of *ἐν*. Thus, then, I explain the passage, — "You have no need to make a long journey that you may attain the grace of God; for God anticipates you; inasmuch as he brings it to you." But as the fruition of it will not be until Christ appears from heaven, in whom is hid the salvation of the godly, there is need, in the meantime, of hope; for the grace of Christ is now offered to us in vain, except we patiently wait until the coming of Christ.

14. *As obedient children.* He first intimates that we are called by the Lord to the privilege and honor of adoption through the Gospel; and, secondly, that we are adopted for this end, that he might have us as his obedient children. For though obedience does not make us children, as the gift of adoption is gratuitous, yet it distinguishes children from aliens. How far, indeed, this obedience extends, Peter shews, when he forbids God's children to conform to or to comply with the desires of this world, and when he exhorts them, on the contrary, to conform to the will of God. The sum of the whole law, and of all that God requires of us, is this, that his image should shine forth in us, so that we should not be degenerate children. But this cannot be except we be renewed and put off the image of old Adam.

Hence we learn what Christians ought to propose to themselves as all object throughout life, that is, to resemble God in holiness and purity. But as all the thoughts and feelings of our flesh are in opposition to God, and the whole bent of our mind is enmity to him, hence Peter begins with the renunciation of the world; and certainly, whenever the Scripture speaks of the renewal of God's image in us, it begins here, that the old man with his lusts is to be destroyed.

In your ignorance. The time of ignorance he calls that before they were called into the faith of Christ. We hence learn that unbelief is the fountain of all evils. For he does not use the word ignorance, as we commonly do;

for that Platonic dogma is false, that ignorance alone is the cause of sin. But yet, how much soever conscience may reprove the unbelieving, nevertheless they go astray as the blind in darkness, because they know not the right way, and they are without the true light. According to this meaning, Paul says,

“Ye henceforth walk not as the Gentiles, in the vanity of their mind, who have the mind darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them.”

(^{<490417>} Ephesians 4:17.)

Where the knowledge of God is not, there darkness, error, vanity, destitution of light and life, prevail. These things, however, do not render it impossible that the ungodly should be conscious of doing wrong when they sin, and know that their judge is in heaven, and feel an executioner within them. In short, as the kingdom of God is a kingdom of light, all who are alienated from him must necessarily be blind and go astray in a labyrinth.

We are in the meantime reminded, that we are for this end illuminated as to the knowledge of God, that we may no longer be carried away by roving lusts. Hence, as much progress any one has made in newness of life, so much progress has he made in the knowledge of God.

Here a question arises, — Since he addressed the Jews, who were acquainted with the law, and were brought up in the worship of the only true God, why did he charge them with ignorance and blindness, as though they were heathens? To this I answer, that it hence appears how profitless is all knowledge without Christ. When Paul exposed the vain boasting of those who wished to be wise apart from Christ, he justly said in one short sentence, that they did not hold the head. (^{<510219>} Colossians 2:19.) Such were the Jews; being otherwise imbued with numberless corruptions, they had a veil over the eyes, so that they did not see Christ in the Law. The doctrine in which they had been taught was indeed a true light; but they were blind in the midst of light, as long as the Sun of Righteousness was hid to them. But if Peter declares that the literal disciples even of the Law were in darkness like the heathens, as long as they were ignorant of Christ, the only true wisdom of God, with how much greater care it behoves us to strive for the knowledge of him!

15. *He who hath called you is holy.* He reasons from the end for which we are called. God sets us apart as a peculiar people for himself; then we ought to be free from all pollutions. And he quotes a sentence which had been often repeated by Moses. For as the people of Israel were on every side surrounded by heathens, from whom they might have easily adopted the worst examples and innumerable corruptions, the Lord frequently recalled them to himself, as though he had said, “Ye have to do with me, ye are mine; then abstain from the pollutions of the Gentiles.” We are too ready to look to men, so as to follow their common way of living. Thus it happens, that some lead others in troops to all kinds of evil, until the Lord by his calling separates them.

In bidding us to be *holy* like himself, the proportion is not that of equals; but we ought to advance in this direction as far as our condition will bear. And as even the most perfect are always very far from coming up to the mark, we ought daily to strive more and more. And we ought to remember that we are not only told what our duty is, but that God also adds, “I am he who sanctify you.”

It is added, *In all manner of conversation*, or, in your whole conduct. There is then no part of our life which is not to be redolent with this good odour of holiness. For we see that in the smallest things and almost insignificant, the Lord accustomed his people to the practice of holiness, in order that they might exercise a more diligent care as to themselves.

<600117> 1 PETER 1:17-22

17. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:	17. Et si Patrem invocatis, eum qui sine personae acceptione secundum cujusque opus judicat, in timore conversantes, tempus incolatus vestri transigite;
18. Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;	18. Scientes quòd non corruptibilibus, argento vel auro, redempti sitis à vana conversatione à patribus tradita;
19. But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:	19. Sed pretioso sanguine velut agni immaculati et incontaminati Christi;
20. Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,	20. Qui praeordinatus quidem fuerat ante conditum mundum, manifestatus autem est extremis temporibus propter vos;
21. Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.	21. Qui per ipsum creditis in Deum, qui eum suscitavit ex mortuis, et gloriam illi dedit, ut fides vestra et spes sit in Deum;
22. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.	22. Purificantes animas vestras in obedientia veritatis per Spiritum, in fraternam charitatem non fictam, ex puro corde diligite vos mutuò impensè.

17. *And if ye call on the Father.* They are said here to call on God the Father, who professed themselves to be his children, as Moses says, that the name of Jacob was called on Ephraim and Manasseh, that they might be counted his children. (<014816> Genesis 48:16.) According to this meaning also, we say in French *reclamer*. But he had a regard to what he had said before, “as obedient children.” And from the character of the Father himself, he shews what sort of obedience ought to be rendered. He *judges*, he says, *without looking on the person*, that is, no outward mask is of any

account with him, as the case is with men, but he sees the heart, (<091607> 1 Samuel 16:7;) and his eyes look on faithfulness. (<240503> Jeremiah 5:3.) This also is what Paul means when he says that God's judgment is according to truth, (<450202> Romans 2:2;) for he there inveighs against hypocrites, who think that they deceive God by a vain pretense. The meaning is, that we by no means discharge our duty towards God, when we obey him only in appearance; for he is not a mortal man, whom the outward appearance pleases, but he reads what we are inwardly in our hearts. He not only prescribes laws for our feet and hands, but he also requires what is just and right as to the mind and spirit.

By saying, *According to every man's work*, he does not refer to merit or to reward; for Peter does not speak here of the merits of works, nor of the cause of salvation, but he only reminds us, that there will be no looking to the person before the tribunal of God, but that what will be regarded will be the real sincerity of the heart. In this place faith also is included in the work. It hence appears evident how foolish and puerile is the inference that is drawn, — "God is such that he judges every one of us by the integrity of his conscience, not by the outward appearance; then we obtain salvation by works."

The fear that is mentioned, stands opposed to heedless security, such as is wont to creep in, when there is a hope of deceiving with impunity. For, as God's eyes are such that they penetrate into the hidden recesses of the heart, we ought to walk with him carefully and not negligently. He calls the present life a *sojourning*, not in the sense in which he called the Jews to whom he was writing sojourners, at the beginning of the Epistle, but because all the godly are in this world pilgrims. (<581113> Hebrews 11:13,38.)

18. *Forasmuch as ye know*, or, knowing. Here is another reason, drawn from the price of our redemption, which ought always to be remembered when our salvation is spoken of. For to him who repudiates or despises the grace of the gospel, not only his own salvation is worthless, but also the blood of Christ, by which God has manifested its value. But we know how dreadfully sacrilegious it is to regard as common the blood of the Son of God. There is hence nothing which ought so much to stimulate us to the practice of holiness, as the memory of this price of our redemption.

Silver and gold. For the sake of amplifying he mentions these things in contrast, so that we may know that the whole world, and all things deemed precious by men, are nothing to the excellency and value of this price.

But he says that they had been *redeemed from* their *vain conversation*,^{f16} in order that we might know that the whole life of man, until he is converted to Christ, is a ruinous labyrinth of wanderings. He also intimates, that it is not through our merits that we are restored to the right way, but because it is God's will that the price, offered for our salvation, should be effectual in our behalf. Then the blood of Christ is not only the pledge of our salvation, but also the cause of our calling.

Moreover, Peter warns us to beware lest our unbelief should render this price void or of no effect. As Paul boasts that he worshipped God with a pure conscience from his forefathers, (<540103> 1 Timothy 1:3,) and as he also commends to Timothy for his imitation the piety of his grandmother Lois, and of his mother Eunice, (<550105> 2 Timothy 1:5,) and as Christ also said of the Jews that they knew whom they worshipped (<430422> John 4:22,) it may seem strange that Peter should assert that the Jews of his time learnt nothing from their fathers but mere vanity. To this I answer, that Christ, when he declared that the way or the knowledge of true religion belonged to the Jews, referred to the law and the commandments of God rather than to the people; for the temple had not to no purpose been built at Jerusalem, nor was God worshipped there according to the fancies of men, but according to what was prescribed in the Law; he, therefore, said that the Jews were not going astray while observing the Law. As to Paul's forefathers, and as to Lois, Eunice, and similar cases, there is no doubt but that God ever had at least a small remnant among that people, in whom sincere piety continued, while the body of the people had become wholly corrupt, and had plunged themselves into all kinds of errors. Innumerable superstitions were followed, hypocrisy prevailed, the hope of salvation was built on the merest trifles; they were not only imbued with false opinions, but also fascinated with the grossest dotages; and they who had been scattered to various parts of the world, were implicated in still greater corruptions. In short, the greater part of that nation had either wholly fallen away from true religion, or had much degenerated. When, therefore, Peter condemned the doctrine of the fathers, he viewed it as unconnected with Christ, who is the soul and the truth of the Law.

But we hence learn, that as soon as men depart from Christ, they go fatally astray. In vain is pretended in this case the authority of the Fathers or an ancient custom. For the Prophet Ezekiel cried to the Jews,

“Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers.”

(^{<262018>} Ezekiel 20:18.)

This ought also to be no less attended to by us in the present day; for, in order that the redemption of Christ may be effectual and useful to us, we must renounce our former life, though derived from the teaching and practice of our fathers. Thrice foolish, then, are the Papists, who think that the name of Fathers is a sufficient defense for all their superstitions, so that they boldly reject whatever is brought forward from the Word of God.

19. *As of a lamb.* He means by this similitude, that we have ill Christ whatever had been shadowed forth by the ancient sacrifices, though he especially alludes to the Paschal lamb. But let us hence learn what benefit the reading of the Law brings us in this respect; for, though the rite of sacrificing is abolished, yet it assists our faith not a little, to compare the reality with the type, so that we may seek in the former what the latter contains. Moses ordered a whole or perfect lamb, without blemish, to be chosen for the Passover. The same thing is often repeated as to the sacrifices, as in ^{<032301>} Leviticus 23; in ^{<042801>} Numbers 28; and in other places. Peter, by applying this to Christ, teaches us that he was a suitable victim, and approved by God, for he was perfect, without any blemish; had he had any defect in him, he could not have been rightly offered to God, nor could he pacify his wrath.

20. *Who verily was foreordained.* He again by a comparison amplifies the grace of God, with which he had peculiarly favored the men of that age. For it was not a common or a small favor that God deferred the manifestation of Christ to that time, when yet he had ordained him in his eternal council for the salvation of the world. At the same time, however, he reminds us, that it was not a new or a sudden thing as to God that Christ appeared as a Savior; and this is what ought especially to be known. For, in addition to this, that novelty is always suspicious, what would be the stability of our faith, if we believed that a remedy for mankind had suddenly occurred at length to God after some thousands of years? In short, we cannot confidently recumb on Christ, except we are convinced that eternal salvation is in him, and always has been in him. Besides, Peter

addressed the Jews, who had heard that he had already been long ago promised; and though they understood nothing true or clear or certain respecting his power and office, yet there remained among them a persuasion, that a Redeemer had been promised by God to the fathers.

It may yet be asked, As Adam did not fall before the creation of the world, how was it that Christ had been appointed the Redeemer? for a remedy is posterior to the disease. My reply is, that this is to be referred to God's foreknowledge; for doubtless God, before he created man, foresaw that he would not stand long in his integrity. Hence he ordained, according to his wonderful wisdom and goodness, that Christ should be the Redeemer, to deliver the lost race of man from ruin. For herein shines forth more fully the unspeakable goodness of God, that he anticipated our disease by the remedy of his grace, and provided a restoration to life before the first man had fallen into death. If the reader wishes for more on this subject, he may find it in my Institutes.

But was manifest, or manifested. Included in these words, as I think, is not only the personal appearance of Christ, but also the proclamation of the Gospel. For, by the coming of Christ, God executed what he had decreed; and what he had obscurely indicated to the fathers is now clearly and plainly made known to us by the Gospel. He says that this was done *in these last times*, meaning the same as when Paul says,

“In the fullness of time,” (^{<480404>} Galatians 4:4;)

for it was the mature season and the full time which God in his counsel had appointed. *For you*. He does not exclude the fathers, to whom the promise had not been useless; but as God has favored us more than them, he intimates that the greater the amplitude of grace towards us, the more reverence and ardor and care are required of us.

21. *Who believe*. The manifestation of Christ refers not to all indiscriminately, but belongs to those only on whom he by the Gospel shines. But we must notice the words, *Who by him believe in God*: here is shortly expressed what faith is. For, since God is incomprehensible, faith could never reach to him, except it had an immediate regard to Christ. Nay, there are two reasons why faith could not be in God, except Christ intervened as a Mediator: first, the greatness of the divine glory must be taken to the account, and at the same time the littleness of our capacity.

Our acuteness is doubtless very far from being capable of ascending so high as to comprehend God. Hence all knowledge of God without Christ is a vast abyss which immediately swallows up all our thoughts. A clear proof of this we have, not only in the Turks and the Jews, who in the place of God worship their own dreams, but also in the Papists. Common is that axiom of the schools, that God is the object of faith. Thus of hidden majesty, Christ being overlooked, they largely and refinedly speculate; but with what success? They entangle themselves in astounding dotages, so that there is no end to their wanderings. For faith, as they think, is nothing else but an imaginative speculation. Let us, therefore, remember, that Christ is not in vain called the image of the invisible God, (<510115> Colossians 1:15;) but this name is given to him for this reason, because God cannot be known except in him.

The second reason is, that as faith unites us to God, we shun and dread every access to him, except a Mediator comes who can deliver us from fear. For sin, which reigns in us, renders us hateful to God and him to us. Hence, as soon as mention is made of God, we must necessarily be filled with dread; and if we approach him, his justice is like fire, which will wholly consume us.

It is hence evident that we cannot believe in God except through Christ, in whom God in a manner makes himself little, that he might accommodate himself to our comprehension; and it is Christ alone who can tranquillize consciences, so that we may dare to come in confidence to God.

That raised him up from the dead. He adds, that Christ had been raised up from the dead, in order that their faith and hope, by which they were supported, might have a firm foundation. And hereby again is confuted the gloss respecting universal and indiscriminate faith in God; for had there been no resurrection of Christ, still God would remain in heaven. But Peter says that he would not have been believed in, except Christ had risen. It is then evident., that faith is something else than to behold the naked majesty of God. And rightly does Peter speak in this manner; for it belongs to faith to penetrate into heaven, that it may find the Father there: how could it do so, except it had Christ as a leader?

“By him,” says Paul, “we have confidence of access.”
(<490312> Ephesians 3:12.)

It is said also, in ^{<580416>}Hebrews 4:16, that relying on our high priest, we can come with confidence to the throne of grace. Hope is the anchor of the soul, which enter into the inner part of the sanctuary; but not without Christ going before. (^{<580619>}Hebrews 6:19.) Faith is our victory against the world, (^{<620504>}1 John 5:4) and what is it that makes it victorious, except that Christ, the Lord of heaven and earth, has us under his guardianship and protection ?

As, then, our salvation depends on the resurrection of Christ and his supreme power, faith and hope find here what can support them. For, except he had by rising again triumphed over death, and held now the highest sovereignty, to protect us by his power, what would become of us, exposed to so great a power as that of our enemies, and to such violent attacks? Let us, therefore, learn to what mark we ought to direct our aim, so that we may really believe in God.

22. *Seeing ye have purified your souls*, or, Purifying your souls. Erasmus badly renders the words, “Who have purified,” etc. For Peter does not declare what they had done, but reminds them of what they ought to do. The participle is indeed in the past tense, but it may be rendered as a gerund, “By purifying, etc.” The meaning is, that their souls would not be capable of receiving grace until they were purified, and by this our uncleanness is proved.^{f17} But that he might not seem to ascribe to us the power of purifying our souls, he immediately adds, *through the Spirit*; as though he had said, “Your souls are to be purified, but as ye cannot do this, offer them to God, that he may take away your filth by his Spirit.” He only mentions souls, though they needed to be cleansed also from the defilements of the flesh, as Paul bids the Corinthians, (^{<470701>}2 Corinthians 7:1;) but as the principal uncleanness is within, and necessarily draws with it that which is outward, Peter was satisfied with mentioning only the former, as though he had said, that not outward actions only ought to be corrected, but the very hearts ought to be thoroughly reformed.

He afterwards points out the manner, for purity of soul consists in obedience to God. *Truth* is to be taken for the rule which God prescribes to us in the Gospel. Nor does he speak only of works, but rather faith holds here the primacy. Hence Paul specially teaches us in the first and last chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, that faith is fiat by which we

obey God; and Peter in Acts, the fifteenth chapter, bestows on it this eulogy, that God by it purifies the heart.

Unto love of the brethren, or, Unto brotherly love. He briefly reminds us what God especially requires in our life, and the mark to which all our endeavors should be directed. So Paul in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, when speaking of the perfection of the faithful, makes it to consist in love. And this is what we ought the more carefully to notice, because the world makes its own sanctity to consist of the veriest trifles, and almost overlooks this the chief thing. We see how the Papists weary themselves beyond measure with thousand invented superstitions: in the meantime, the last thing is that love which God especially commends. This, then, is the reason why Peter calls our attention to it, when speaking of a life rightly formed.

He had before spoken of the mortification of the flesh, and of our conformity with the will of God; but he now reminds us of what God would have us to cultivate through life, that is, mutual love towards one another; for by that we testify also that we love God; and by this evidence God proves who they are who really love him.

He calls it *unfeigned*, (ἀνυπόκριτον), as Paul calls faith in <540105> 1 Timothy 1:5; for nothing is more difficult than to love our neighbors in sincerity. For the love of ourselves rules, which is full of hypocrisy; and besides, every one measures his love, which he shews to others, by his own advantage, and not by the rule of doing good. He adds, *fervently*; for the more slothful we are by nature, the more ought every one to stimulate himself to fervor and earnestness, and that not only once, but more and more daily.

<600123> 1 PETER 1:23-25

23. Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.	23. Regeniti non ex semine corruptibili, sed incorruptibili, per sermonem viventis Dei et manentis in aeternum.
24. For all flesh <i>is</i> as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass, The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:	24. Quandoquidem omnis caro tanquam herba, et omnis gloria ejus tanquam flos herbae; exaruit herba et flos ejus decidit:
25. But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.	25. Verbum autem Domini manet in aeternum; hoc autem est verbum quod annuntiatum est vobis.

23. *Being born again.* Here is another reason for an exhortation, — that since they were new men and born again of God, it behoved them to form a life worthy of God and of their spiritual regeneration. And this seems to be connected with a verse in the next chapter respecting the milk of the word, which they were to seek, that their way of living might correspond with their birth. It may, however, be extended wider, so as to be connected also with what has gone before; for Peter collected together those things which may lead us to an upright and a holy life. The object., then, of Peter was to teach us that we cannot be Christians without regeneration; for the Gospel is not preached, that it may be only heard by us, but that it may, as a seed of immortal life, altogether reform our hearts. ^{F18} Moreover, the *corruptible seed* is set in opposition to God’s word, in order that the faithful might know that they ought to renounce their former nature, and that it might be more evident how much is the difference between the children of Adam who are born only into the world, and the children of God who are renewed into a heavenly life. But as the construction of the Greek text is doubtful, we may read, “the living word of God,” as well as, “the word of the living God.” As, however, the latter reading is less forced, I prefer it; though it must be observed, that the term is applied to God owing to the character of the passage. For, as in ^{<580412>} Hebrews 4:12, because God sees all things, and nothing is hid from him, the apostle argues that the word of

God penetrates into the inmost marrow, so as to discern thoughts and feelings; so, when Peter in this place calls him the living God, who abides for ever, he refers to the word, in which the perpetuity of God shines forth as in a living mirror.

24. *For all flesh.* He aptly quotes the passage from Isaiah to prove both clauses; that is, to make it evident how fading and miserable is the first birth of man, and how great is the grace of the new birth. For as the Prophet there speaks of the restoration of the Church, to prepare the way for it, he reduces men to nothing lest they should flatter themselves. I know that the words are wrongly turned by some to another sense; for some explain them of the Assyrians, as though the Prophet said, that there was no reason for the Jews to fear so much from flesh, which is like a fading flower. Others think that the vain confidence which the Jews reposed in human aids, is reproved. But the Prophet himself disproves both these views, by adding, that the people were as grass; for he expressly condemns the Jews for vanity, to whom he promised restoration in the name of the Lord. This, then, is what I have already said, that until their own emptiness has been shewn to men, they are not prepared to receive the grace of God. In short, such is the meaning of the Prophet: as exile was to the Jews like death, he promised them a new consolation, even that God would send prophets with a command of this kind. The Lord, he says, will yet say, “Comfort ye my people;” and that in the desert and the waste, the prophetic voice would yet be heard, in order that a way might be prepared for the Lord. (<234006> Isaiah 40:6.)

And as the obstinate pride which filled them, must have been necessarily purged from their minds, in order that an access might be open for God, the Prophet added what Peter relates here respecting the vanishing glory of the flesh. What is man? he says — grass; what is the glory of man? the flower of the grass. For as it was difficult to believe that man, in whom so much excellency appears, is like grass, the Prophet made a kind of concession, as though he had said, “Be it, indeed, that flesh has some glory; but lest that should dazzle your eyes, know that the flower soon withers.” He afterwards shews how suddenly everything that seems beautiful in men vanishes, even through the blowing of the Spirit of God; and by this he intimates, that man seems to be something until he comes to God, but that his whole brightness is as nothing in his presence; that, in a word, his glory is in this world, and has no place in the heavenly kingdom.

The grass withereth, or, has withered. Many think that this refers only to the outward man; but they are mistaken; for we must consider the comparison between God's word and man. For if he meant only the body and what belongs to the present life, he ought to have said, in the second place, that the soul was far more excellent. But what he sets in opposition to the grass and its flower, is the word of God. It then follows, that in man nothing but vanity is found. Therefore, when Isaiah spoke of flesh and its glory, he meant the whole man, such as he is in himself; for what he ascribed as peculiar to God's word, he denied to man. In short, the Prophet speaks of the same thing as Christ does in ^{<430303>}John 3:3, that man is wholly alienated from the kingdom of God, that he is nothing but an earthly, fading, and empty creature, until he is born again.

25. *But the word of God.* The Prophet does not shew what the word of God is in itself, but what we ought to think of it; for since man is vanity in himself, it remains that he ought to seek life elsewhere. Hence Peter ascribes power and efficacy to God's word, according to the authority of the Prophet, so that it can confer on us what is real, solid, and eternal. For this was what the Prophet had in view, that there is no permanent life but in God, and that this is communicated to us by the word. However fading, then, is the nature of man, yet he is made eternal by the word; for he is remoulded and becomes a new creature.

This is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you, or, which has been declared to you. He first reminds us, that when the word of God is mentioned, we are very foolish if we imagine it to be remote from us in the air or in heaven; for we ought to know that it has been revealed to us by the Lord. What, then, is this word of the Lord, which gives us life? Even the Law, the Prophets, the Gospel. Those who wander beyond these limits of revelation, find nothing but the impostures of Satan and his dotages, and not the word of the Lord. We ought the more carefully to notice this, because impious and Luciferian men, craftily allowing to God's word its own honor, at the same time attempt to draw us away from the Scriptures, as that unprincipled man, Agrippa, who highly extols the eternity of God's word, and yet treats with scurrility the Prophets, and thus indirectly laughs to scorn the Word of God.

In short, as I have already reminded you, no mention is here made of the word which lies hid in the bosom of God, but of that which has proceeded

from his mouth, and has come to us. So again it ought to be borne in mind, that God designed by the Apostles and Prophets to speak to us, and their mouths is the mouth of the only true God.

Then, when Peter says, *Which has been announced*, or declared, *to you*, he intimates that the word is not to be sought elsewhere than in the Gospel preached to us; and truly we know not the way of eternal life otherwise than by faith. But there can be no faith, except we know that the word is destined for us.

To the same purpose is what Moses said to the people,

“Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven, etc.; nigh is the word, in thy mouth and in thy heart.”
(^{<053012>}Deuteronomy 30:12.)

That these words agree with what Peter says, Paul shews ^{<451006>}Romans 10:6, where he teaches us that it was the word of faith which he preached.

There is here, besides, no common eulogy on preaching; for Peter declares that what is preached is the life-giving word. God alone is indeed he who regenerates us; but for that purpose he employs the ministry of men; and on this account Paul glories that the Corinthians had been spiritually begotten by him. (^{<460415>}1 Corinthians 4:15.) It is indeed certain that those who plant and those who water, are nothing; but whenever God is pleased to bless their labor, he makes their doctrine efficacious by the power of his Spirit; and the voice which is in itself mortal, is made an instrument to communicate eternal life.

CHAPTER 2

<600201> 1 PETER 2:1-5

1. Wherefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,	1. Proinde deposita omni malitia et omni dolo et simulationibus et invidiis et omnibus obtreactionibus,
2. As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby;	2. Tanquam modò geniti infantes, lac rationale et dolo vacuum appetite, ut per illud subolescatis:
3. If so be ye have tasted that the Lord <i>is</i> gracious:	3. Si quidem gustastis quòd benignus sit Dominus;
4. To whom coming, <i>as unto</i> a living stone, disallowed indeed of <i>men</i> , but chosen of God, <i>and</i> precious,	4. Ad quem accedentes, qui est lapis vivus, ab hominibus quidera reprobatus, apud Deum vero electus ac pretiosus;
5. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.	5. Ipsi quoque tanquam vivi lapides, aedificamini, domus spirituales, sacerdotium sanctum, ad offerendas spirituales hostias, acceptas Deo per Jesum Christum.

After having taught the faithful that they had been regenerated by the word of God, he now exhorts them to lead a life corresponding with their birth. For if we live in the Spirit, we ought also to walk in the Spirit, as Paul says. (<480525> Galatians 5:25.) It is not, then, sufficient for us to have been once called by the Lord, except we live as new creatures. This is the meaning. But as to the words, the Apostle continues the same metaphor. For as we have been born again, he requires from us a life like that of infants; by which he intimates that we are to put off the old man and his works. Hence this verse agrees with what Christ says,

“Except ye become like this little child,
ye shall not enter into the kingdom of God.”
(^{<401802>}Matthew 18:2.)

Infancy is here set by Peter in opposition to the ancientness of the flesh, which leads to corruption; and under the word *milk*, lie includes all the feelings of spiritual life. For there is also in part a contrast between the vices which he enumerates and the sincere milk of the word; as though he had said, “Malice and hypocrisy belong to those who are habituated to the corruptions of the world; they have imbibed these vices: what pertains to infancy is sincere simplicity, free from all guile. Men, when grown up, become imbued with envy, they learn to slander one another, they are taught the arts of mischief; in short, they become hardened in every kind of evil: infants, owing to their age, do not yet know what it is to envy, to do mischief, or the like things.” He then compares the vices, in which the oldness of the flesh indulges, to strong food; and milk is called that way of living suitable to innocent nature and simple infancy.

1. *All malice.* There is not here a complete enumeration of all those things which we ought to lay aside; but when the Apostles speak of the old man, they lay down as examples some of those vices which mark his whole character.

“Known,” says Paul, “are the works of the flesh, which are these,”
(^{<480519>}Galatians 5:19;)

and yet he does not enumerate them all; but in those few things, as in a mirror, we may see that immense mass of filth which proceeds from our flesh. So also in other passages, where he refers to the new life, he touches only on a few things, by which we may understand the whole character.

What, then, he says amounts to this, — “Having laid aside the works of your former life, such as malice, deceit, dissimulations, envyings, and other things of this kind, devote yourselves to things of an opposite character, cultivate kindness, honesty,” etc. He, in short, urges this, that new morals ought to follow a new life.

2. *The sincere milk of the word.* This passage is commonly explained according to the rendering of Erasmus, “Milk not for the body but for the soul;” as though the Apostle reminded us by this expression that he spoke

metaphorically. I rather think that this passage agrees with that saying of Paul,

“Be ye not children in understanding, but in malice.”
(^{<461420>} 1 Corinthians 14:20.)

That no one might think that infancy, void of understanding and full of fatuity, was commended by him, he in due time meets this objection; so he bids them to desire milk free from guile, and yet mixed with right understanding. We now see for what purpose he joins these two words, *rational and guileless*, (λογικὸν καὶ ἄδολος.) For simplicity and quickness of understanding are two things apparently opposite; but they ought to be mixed together, lest simplicity should become insipid, and lest malicious craftiness should creep in for want of understanding. This mingling, well regulated, is according, to what Christ says,

“Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.”
(^{<401016>} Matthew 10:16.)

And thus is solved the question which might have been otherwise raised.
f19

Paul reproves the Corinthians because they were like children, and therefore they could not take strong food, but were fed with milk. (^{<460301>} 1 Corinthians 3:1.) Almost the same words are found in ^{<580512>} Hebrews 5:12. But in these passages those are compared to children who remain always novices and ignorant scholars in the doctrine of religion, who continued in the first elements, and never penetrated into the higher knowledge of God. *Milk* is called the simpler mode of teaching, and one suitable to children, when there is no progress made beyond the first rudiments. Justly, then, does Paul charge this as a fault, as well as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. But milk, here, is not elementary doctrine, which one perpetually learns; and never comes to the knowledge of the truth, but a mode of living which has the savor of the new birth, when we surrender ourselves to be brought up by God. In the same manner infancy is not set in opposition to manhood, or full age in Christ, as Paul calls it in ^{<490413>} Ephesians 4:13, but to the ancientness of the flesh and of former life. Moreover, as the infancy of the new life is perpetual, so Peter recommends milk as a perpetual aliment, for he would have those nourished by it to grow.

3. *If so be that ye have tasted*; or, If indeed ye have tasted. He alludes to <193408> Psalm 34:8,

“Taste and see that the Lord is good.”

But he says that this taste is to be had in Christ, as, doubtless, our souls can find no rest anywhere but in him. But he has drawn the ground of his exhortation from the goodness of God, because his kindness, which we perceive in Christ, ought to allure us; for what follows,

To whom coming, is not to be referred simply to God, but to him as he is revealed to us in the person of Christ. Now, it cannot be but that the grace of God must powerfully draw us to himself and inflame us with the love of him by whom we obtain a real perception of it. If Plato affirmed this of his Beautiful, of which a shadowy idea only he beheld afar off, much more true is this with regard to God.

Let it then be noticed, that Peter connects an access to God with the taste of his goodness. For as the human mind necessarily dreads and shuns God, as long as it regards him as rigid and severe; so, as soon as he makes known his paternal love to the faithful, it immediately follows that they disregard all things and even forget themselves and hasten to him. In short, he only makes progress in the Gospel, who in heart comes to God.

But he also shews for what end and to what purpose we ought to come to Christ, even that we may have him as our foundation. For since he is constituted a stone, he ought to be so to us, so that nothing should be appointed for him by the Father in vain or to no purpose. But he obviates an offense when he allows that Christ is rejected by men; for, as a great part of the world reject him, and even many abhor him, he might for this reason be despised by us; for we see that some of the ignorant are alienated from the Gospel, because it is not everywhere popular, nor does it conciliate favor to its professors. But Peter forbids us to esteem Christ the less, however despised he may be by the world, because he, notwithstanding, retains his own worth and honor before God.

5. *Ye also, as lively or living stones, are built up*. The verb may be in the imperative as well as in the indicative mood, for the termination in Greek is ambiguous. But in whatever way it is taken, Peter no doubt meant to exhort the faithful to consecrate themselves as a spiritual temple to God; for he aptly infers from the design of our calling what our duty is. We

must further observe, that he constructs one house from the whole number of the faithful. For though every one of us is said to be the temple of God, yet all are united together in one, and must be joined together by mutual love, so that one temple may be made of us all. Then, as it is true that each one is a temple in which God dwells by his Spirit, so all ought to be so fitted together, that they may form one universal temple. This is the case when every one, content with his own measure, keeps himself within the limits of his own duty; all have, however, something to do with regard to others.

By calling us *living stones* and *spiritual* building, as he had before said that Christ is a living stone, he intimates a comparison between us and the ancient temple; and this serves to amplify divine grace. For the same purpose is what he adds as to *spiritual sacrifices*. For by how much the more excellent is the reality than the types, by so much the more all things excel in the kingdom of Christ; for we have that heavenly exemplar, to which the ancient sanctuary was conformable, and everything instituted by Moses under the Law.

A holy priesthood. It is a singular honor, that God should not only consecrate us as a temple to himself, in which he dwells and is worshipped, but that he should also make us priests. But Peter mentions this double honor, in order to stimulate us more effectually to serve and worship God. Of the spiritual sacrifices, the first is the offering of ourselves, of which Paul speaks in ^{<451201>}Romans 12:1; for we can offer nothing, until we offer to him ourselves as a sacrifice; which is done by denying ourselves. Then, afterwards follow prayers, thanksgiving, almsdeeds, and all the duties of religion.

Acceptable to God. It ought also to add not a little to our alacrity, when we know that the worship we perform to God is pleasing o him, as doubt necessarily brings sloth with it. Here, then, is the third thing that enforces the exhortation; for he declares that what is required is acceptable to God, lest. fear should make us slothful. Idolaters are indeed under the influence of great fervor in their fictitious forms of worship; but it is so, because Satan inebriates their minds, lest they should come to consider their works; but whenever their consciences are led to examine things, they begin to stagger. It is, indeed, certain that no one will seriously and from the heart

devote himself to God, until he is fully persuaded that he shall not labor in vain.

But the Apostle adds, *through Jesus Christ*. There is never found in our sacrifices such purity, that they are of themselves acceptable to God; our self-denial is never entire and complete, our prayers are never so sincere as they ought to be, we are never so zealous and so diligent in doing good, but that our works are imperfect, and mingled with many vices. Nevertheless, Christ procures favor for them. Then Peter here obviates that want of faith which we may have respecting the acceptableness of our works, when he says, that they are accepted, not for the merit of their own excellency, but through Christ. And it ought to kindle the more the ardor of our efforts, when we hear that God deals so indulgently with us, that in Christ he sets a value on our works, which in themselves deserve nothing. At the same time, the words, *by* or *through Christ*, may be fitly connected with offering; for a similar phrase is found in ^{<581315>}Hebrews 13:15,

“Through him let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God.”

The sense, however, will remain the same; for we offer sacrifices through Christ, that they may be acceptable to God.

^{<600206>} 1 PETER 2:6-8	
6. Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.	6. Propterea etiam continet scriptura, Ecce pono in Sion lapidem angularem, electurn, pretiosum, et qui crediderit in illo, non pudefiet.
7. Unto you therefore which believe <i>he is</i> precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,	7. Vobis ergo qui creditis, pretiosus; incredulis vero, Lapis quem reprobaverunt aedificantes, hic positus est in caput anguli;
8. And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, <i>even to them</i> which stumble at the word, being disobedient; whereunto also they were appointed.	8. Et Lapis impactionis, et petra offendiculi iis qui impingunt in Sermonem, nec credunt; in quod etiam ordinati fuerant.

6. *Wherefore also it is contained in Scripture*; or, Wherefore also the Scripture contains. ^{f20} They who refer the verb “contain” (περιέχειν) to Christ, and render it “embrace,” because through him all these unite together, wholly depart from the meaning of the Apostle. No better is another exposition, that Christ excels others; for Peter simply intended to quote the testimony of Scripture. ^{f21} He then shews what had been taught by the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures, or, which is the same thing, that what he adds is contained in them. Nor is it an unsuitable confirmation of the preceding verse. For we see for what slight reasons, and almost for none, many reject Christ, and some fall away from him; but this is a stumblingblock which above all other things stands in the way of some; they are drawn away, because not only the common people despise and reject Christ, but also those who are high in dignity and honor, and seem to excel others. This evil has almost ever prevailed in the world, and at this day it prevails much; for a great part of mankind judge of Christ according to the false opinion of the world. Moreover, such is the ingratitude and impiety of men, that Christ is everywhere despised. Thus it is, that while they regard one another, few pay him his due honor. Hence Peter reminds us of what had been foretold of Christ, lest the contempt or the rejection of him should move us from the faith.

Now, the first passage, which he adduces, is taken from ^{<232816>} Isaiah 28:16; where the Prophet, after having inveighed against the desperate wickedness of his own nation, at length adds,

“Your perfidy shall not prevent God from restoring his church,
which now through you lies wholly in a ruinous state.”
(^{<232816>} Isaiah 28:16)

The manner of restoration he thus describes, “I will lay in Sion a stone.” We hence learn that there is no building up of the Church without Christ; for there is no other foundation but he, as Paul testifies, (^{<460311>} 1 Corinthians 3:11.) This is no matter of wonder, for all our salvation is found only in him. Whosoever, then, turns away from him in the least degree, will find his foundation a precipice.

Therefore the Prophet not only calls him a corner-stone, which connects the whole edifice, but also a stone of trial, according to which the building

is to be measured and regulated; and farther, he calls him a solid foundation, which sustains the whole edifice. He is thus, then, a corner-stone, that he might be the rule of the building, as well as the only foundation. But Peter took from the words of the Prophet what was especially suitable to his argument, even that he was a chosen stone, and in the highest degree valuable and excellent, and also that on him we ought to build. This honor is ascribed to Christ, that how much soever he may be despised by the world, he may not be despised by us; for by God he is regarded as very precious. But when he calls him a corner-stone, he intimates that those have no concern for their salvation who do not recumb on Christ. What some have refined on the word “corner,” as though it meant that Christ joins together Jews and Gentiles, as two distinct walls, is not well founded. Let us, then, be content with a simple explanation, that he is so called, because the weight of the building rests on him.

We must further observe, that the Prophet introduces God as the speaker, for he alone forms and plans his own Church, as it is said in [*<197869>*](#) Psalm 78:69, that his hand had founded Sion. He, indeed, employs the labor and ministry of men in building it; but this is not inconsistent with the truth that it is his own work. Christ, then, is the foundation of our salvation, because he has been ordained for this end by the Father.

And he says *in Sion*, because there God’s spiritual temple was to have its beginning. That our faith, therefore, may firmly rest on Christ, we must come to the Law and to the Prophets. For though this stone extends to the extreme parts of the world, it was yet necessary for it to be located first in Sion, for there at that time was the seat of the Church. But it is said to have been then set, when the Father revealed him for the purpose of restoring his Church. In short, we must hold this, that those only rest on Christ, who keep the unity of the Church, for he is not set as a foundation-stone except in Sion. As from Sion the Church went forth, which is now everywhere spread, so also from Sion our faith has derived its beginning, as Isaiah says,

“From Sion shall go forth the law,
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” ([*<230203>*](#) Isaiah 2:3.)

Corresponding with this is what is said in the Psalms,

“The scepter of thy power will the Lord send forth from Sion.”

(<19B002> Psalm 110:2.)

He that believeth. The Prophet does not say *in him*, but declares generally, “He that believeth shall not make haste.” As, however, there is no doubt but that God sets forth Christ there as the object of our faith, the faith of which the Prophet speaks must look on him alone. And, doubtless, no one can rightly believe, but he who is fully convinced that in Christ he ought wholly to trust.

But the words of the Prophet may be taken in two ways, either as a promise or as an exhortation. The future time is referred to, “He shall not make haste;” but in Hebrew the future is often to be taken for an imperative, “Let him not make haste.” Thus the meaning would be, “Be ye not moved in your minds, but quietly entertain your desires, and check your feelings, until the Lord will be pleased to fulfill his promise.” So he says in another place,

“In silence and in quietness shall be your strength,”

(<233015> Isaiah 30:15.)

But as the other reading seems to come nearer to Peter’s interpretation, I give it the preference. Then the sense would not be unsuitable, “He who believeth shall not waver” or vacillate; for he has a firm and permanent foundation. And it is a valuable truth, that relying on Christ, we are beyond the danger of falling. Moreover, to be ashamed (*pudeferi*) means the same thing. Peter has retained the real sense of the Prophet, though he has followed the Greek version. ^{f22}

7. *Unto you therefore which believe.* God having pronounced Christ to be a precious and a chosen stone, Peter draws the inference that he is so to us. For, no doubt, Christ is there described such as we apprehend him by faith, and such as he proves himself to be by real evidences. We ought, then, carefully to notice this inference: Christ is a precious stone in the sight of God; then he is such to the faithful. It is faith alone which reveals to us the value and excellency of Christ.

But as the design of the Apostle was to obviate the offense which the multitude of the ungodly creates, he immediately adds another clause respecting the unbelieving, that by rejecting Christ, they do not take away the honor granted him by the Father. For this purpose a verse in

<19B822> Psalm 118:22, is quoted, that the stone which the builders rejected, is become, nevertheless, the head of the corner. It hence follows, that Christ, though opposed by his enemies, yet continues in that dignity to which he has been appointed by the Father. But we must take notice of the two things here said, — the first is, that Christ was rejected by those who bore rule in the Church of God; and the other, that their efforts were all in vain, because necessarily fulfilled must have been what God had decreed, that is, that he, as the corner-stone, should sustain the edifice.

Moreover, that this passage ought properly to be understood of Christ, not only the Holy Spirit is a witness, and Christ himself, who has thus explained it, (<402142> Matthew 21:42;) but it appears also evident from this, that it was thus commonly understood before Christ came into the world; nor is there a doubt but this exposition had been delivered as it were from hand to hand from the fathers. We hence see that this was, as it were, a common saying even among children respecting the Messiah. I shall, therefore, no longer discuss this point. We may take it as granted, that David was thus rejected by his own age, that he might typify Christ.

Let us now, then, return to the first clause: Christ was rejected by the builders. This was first shadowed forth in David; for they who were in power counted him as condemned and lost. The same was fulfilled in Christ; for they who ruled in the Church, rejected him as far as they could. It might have greatly disturbed the weak, when they saw that Christ's enemies were so many, even the priests, the elders, and teachers, in whom alone the Church was conspicuously seen. In order to remove this offense, Peter reminded the faithful that this very thing had been predicted by David. He especially addressed the Jews, to whom this properly applied; at the same time, this admonition is very useful at this day. For they who arrogate to themselves the first place of authority in the Church, are Christ's most inveterate enemies, and with diabolical fury persecute his Gospel.

The Pope calls himself the vicar of Christ, and yet we know how fiercely he opposes him. This spectacle frightens the simple and ignorant. Why is this? even because they consider not that what David has predicted happens now. Let us, then, remember that not those only were by this prophecy warned who saw Christ rejected by the Scribes and Pharisees; but that we are also by it fortified against daily offenses, which might

otherwise upset our faith. Whenever then, we see those who glory in the title of prelates, rising up against Christ, let it come to our minds, that the stone is rejected by the builders, according to the prediction of David. And as the metaphor of building is common, when political or spiritual government is spoken of, so David calls them builders, to whom is committed the care and power of governing; not because they build rightly, but because they have the name of builders, and possess the ordinary power. It hence follows, that those in office are not always God's true and faithful ministers. It is, therefore, extremely ridiculous in the Pope and his followers to arrogate to themselves supreme and indubitable authority on this sole pretense, that they are the ordinary governors of the Church. In the first place, their vocation to govern the Church is in no way more just or more legitimate than that of Heliogabalus to govern the empire. But though we should allow them what they unblushingly claim, that they are rightly called, yet we see what David declares respecting the ordinary rulers of the Church, that they rejected Christ, so that they built a sty for swine rather than a temple for God. The other part follows, that all the great, proud of their power and dignity, shall not prevail, so that Christ should not continue in his own place.

And a stone of stumbling. After having comforted the faithful, that they would have in Christ a firm and permanent foundation, though the greater part, and even the chief men, allowed him no place in the building, he now denounces the punishment which awaits all the unbelieving, in order that they might be terrified by their example. For this purpose he quotes the testimony of ^{<230814>}Isaiah 8:14. The Prophet there declares that the Lord would be to the Jews a stone of stumbling and rock of offense. This properly refers to Christ, as it may be seen from the context; and Paul applies it to Christ, (^{<450932>}Romans 9:32.) For in him the God of hosts has plainly manifested himself.

Here, then, the terrible vengeance of God is denounced on all the ungodly, because Christ would be to them an offense and a stumbling, inasmuch as they refused to make him their foundation. For as the firmness and stability of Christ is such that it can sustain all who by faith recumb on him; so his hardness is so great that it will break and tear in pieces all who resist him. For there is no medium between these two things, — we must either build on him, or be dashed against him. ^{f23}

8. *Which stumble at the word.* He points out here the manner in which Christ becomes a stumbling, even when men perversely oppose the word of God. This the Jews did; for though they professed themselves willing to receive the Messiah, yet they furiously rejected him when presented to them by God. The Papists do the same in the present day; they worship only the name of Christ, while they cannot endure the doctrine of the Gospel. Here Peter intimates that all who receive not Christ as revealed in the Gospel, are adversaries to God, and resist his word, and also that Christ is to none for destruction, but to those who, through headstrong wickedness and obstinacy, rush against the word of God.

And this is especially what deserves to be noticed, lest our fault should be imputed to Christ; for, as he has been given to us as a foundation, it is as it were an accidental thing that he becomes a rock of offense. In short, his proper office is to prepare us for a spiritual temple to God; but it is the fault of men that they stumble at him, even because unbelief leads men to contend with God. Hence Peter, in order to set forth the character of the conflict, said that they were the unbelieving.

Whereunto also they were appointed, or, to which they had been ordained. This passage may be explained in two ways. It is, indeed, certain that Peter spoke of the Jews; and the common interpretation is, that they were appointed to believe, for the promise of salvation was destined for them. But the other sense is equally suitable, that they had been appointed to unbelief; as Pharaoh is said to have been set up for this end, that he might resist God, and all the reprobate are destined for the same purpose. And what inclines me to this meaning is the particle *καὶ* (also) which is put in.

^{f24} If, however, the first view be preferred, then it is a vehement upbraiding; for Peter does hence enhance the sin of unbelief in the people who had been chosen by God, because they rejected the salvation that had been peculiarly ordained for them. And no doubt this circumstance rendered them doubly inexcusable, that having been called in preference to others, they had refused to hear God. But, by saying that they were appointed to believe, he refers only to their outward call, even according to the covenant which God had made generally with the whole nation. At the same time their ingratitude, as it has been said, was sufficiently proved, when they rejected the word preached to them.

<600209> 1 PETER 2:9-10

9. But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shewforth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

9. Vos autem genus electum, regale sacerdotium, gens sancta, populus in acquisitionem, ut virtutes enarretis ejus qui vos ex tenebris vocavit in admirabile lumen suum:

10. Which in time past *were* not a people, but *are* now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

10. Qui aliquando non populus, nunc autem populus Dei, qui non consequuti eratis misericordiam, nunc misericordiam consequuti estis.

9. *But ye are a chosen generation*, or race. He again separates them from the unbelieving, lest driven by their example (as it is often the case) they should fall away from the faith. As, then, it is unreasonable that those whom God has separated from the world, should mix themselves with the ungodly, Peter here reminds the faithful to what great honor they had been raised, and also to what purpose they had been called. But with the same high titles which he confers on them, Moses honored the ancient people, (<021906> Exodus 19:6;) but the Apostle's object was to shew that they had recovered again, through Christ, the great dignity and honor from which they had fallen. It is at the same time true, that God gave to the fathers an earthly taste only of these blessings, and that they are really given in Christ.

The meaning then is, as though he had said,

“Moses called formerly your fathers a holy nation, a priestly kingdom, and God's peculiar people: all these high titles do now far more justly belong to you; therefore you ought to beware lest your unbelief should rob you of them.” (<021906> Exodus 19:6)

In the meantime, however, as the greater part of the nation was unbelieving, the Apostle indirectly sets the believing Jews in opposition to all the rest, though they exceeded them in number, as though he had said, that those only were the children of Abraham, who believed in Christ, and

that they only retained possession of all the blessings which God had by a singular privilege bestowed on the whole nation.

He calls them *a chosen race*, because God, passing by others, adopted them as it were in a special manner. They were also *a holy nation*; for God had consecrated them to himself, and destined that they should lead a pure and holy life. He further calls them *a peculiar people*, or, a people for acquisition, that they might be to him a peculiar possession or inheritance; for I take the words simply in this sense, that the Lord hath called us, that he might possess us as his own, and devoted to him. This meaning is proved by the words of Moses,

“If ye keep my covenant, ye shall be to me a peculiar treasure
beyond all other nations.” (<021905> Exodus 19:5.)

There is in the *royal priesthood* a striking inversion of the words of Moses; for he says, “a priestly kingdom,” but the same thing is meant. So what Peter intimated was this, “Moses called your fathers a sacred kingdom, because the whole people enjoyed as it were a royal liberty, and from their body were chosen the priests; both dignities were therefore joined together: but now ye are royal priests, and, indeed, in a more excellent way, because ye are, each of you, consecrated in Christ, that ye may be the associates of his kingdom, and partakers of his priesthood. Though, then, the fathers had something like to what you, have, yet ye far excel them. For after the wall of partition has been pulled down by Christ, we are now gathered from every nation, and the Lord bestows these high titles on all whom he makes his people.”

There is further, as to these benefits, a contrast between us and the rest of mankind, to be considered: and hence it appears more fully how incomparable is God’s goodness towards us; for he sanctifies us, who are by nature polluted; he chose us, when he could find nothing in us but filth and vileness; he makes his peculiar possession from worthless dregs; he confers the honor of the priesthood on the profane; he brings the vassals of Satan, of sin, and of death, to the enjoyment of royal liberty.

That ye should shew forth, or declare. He carefully points out the end of our calling, that he might stimulate us to give the glory to God. And the sum of what he says is, that God has favored us with these immense benefits and constantly manifests them, that his glory might by us be made

known: for by *praises*, or virtues, he understands wisdom, goodness, power, righteousness, and everything else, in which the glory of God shines forth. And further, it behoves us to declare these virtues or excellencies not only by our tongue, but also by our whole life. This doctrine ought to be a subject of daily meditation, and it ought to be continually remembered by us, that all God's blessings with which he favors us are intended for this end, that his glory may be proclaimed by us.

We must also notice what he says, that we have been *called* out of darkness into God's marvellous or wonderful light; for by these words he amplifies the greatness of divine grace. If the Lord had given us light while we were seeking it, it would have been a favor; but it was a much greater favor, to draw us out of the labyrinth of ignorance and the abyss of darkness. We ought hence to learn what is man's condition, before he is translated into the kingdom of God. And this is what Isaiah says,

“Darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but over thee shall the Lord be seen, and his glory shall in thee shine forth.” (<236002> Isaiah 60:2.)

And truly we cannot be otherwise than sunk in darkness, after having departed from God, our only light. See more at large on this subject in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians.

10. Which in time past were not a people. He brings for confirmation a passage from Hosea, and well accommodates it to his own purpose. For Hosea, after having in God's name declared that the Jews were repudiated, gives them a hope of a future restoration. Peter reminds us that this was fulfilled in his own age; for the Jews were scattered here and there, as the torn members of a body; nay, they seemed to be no longer God's people, no worship remained among them, they were become entangled in the corruptions of the heathens; it could not then be said otherwise of them, but that they were repudiated by the Lord. But when they are gathered in Christ, from no people they really become the people of God. Paul, in <450926> Romans 9:26, applies also this prophecy to the Gentiles, and not without reason; for from the time the Lord's covenant was broken, from which alone the Jews derived their superiority, they were put on a level with the Gentiles. It hence follows, that what God had promised, to make a people of no people, belongs in common to both.

Which had not obtained mercy. This was added by the Prophet, in order that the gratuitous covenant of God, by which he takes them to be his people, might be more clearly set forth; as though he had said, “There is no other reason why the Lord counts us his people, except that he, having mercy on us, graciously adopts us.” It is then God’s gratuitous goodness, which makes of no people a people to God, and reconciles the alienated. ^{f25}

<600211> 1 PETER 2:11-12	
11. Dearly beloved, I beseech <i>you</i> , as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;	11. Amici, adhortor vos tanquam inquilinos et peregrinos, ut abstineatis à carnalibus desideriis, que militant adversus animam;
12. Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that, whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, by <i>your</i> good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.	12. Conversationem vestram inter gentes bonam habentes, ut in quo detrahunt de vobis tanquam maleficis, ex bonis operibus aestimantes (<i>vel</i> , considerantes) glorificent Deum in die visitationis.

11. *As strangers*, or sojourners. There are two parts to this exhortation, — that their souls were to be free within from wicked and vicious lusts; and also, that they were to live honestly among men, and by the example of a good life not only to confirm the godly, but also to gain over the unbelieving to God.

And first, to call them away from the indulgence of carnal lusts, he employs this argument, that they were sojourners and strangers. And he so calls them, not because they were banished from their country, and scattered into various lands, but because the children of God, wherever they may be, are only guests in this world. In the former sense, indeed, he called them sojourners at the beginning of the Epistle, as it appears from the context; but what he says here is common to them all. For the lusts of the flesh hold us entangled, when in our minds we dwell in the world, and think not that heaven is our country; but when we pass as strangers through this life, we are not in bondage to the flesh.

By the *lusts* or desires *of the flesh* he means not only those gross concupiscences which we have in common with animals, as the Sophists hold, but also all those sinful passions and affections of the soul, to which we are by nature guided and led. For it is certain that every thought of the flesh, that is, of unrenewed nature, is enmity against God. (<450807> Romans 8:7.)

Which war against the soul. Here is another argument, that they could not comply with the desires of the flesh, except to their own ruin. For he refers not here to the contest described by Paul in the seventh chapter of Romans, and in the fifth of the Galatians, as he makes the soul to be an antagonist to the flesh: but what he says here is, that the desires of the flesh, whenever the soul consents to them, lead to perdition. He proves our carelessness in this respect, that while we anxiously shun enemies from whom we apprehend danger to the body, we willingly allow enemies hurtful to the soul to destroy us; nay, we as it were stretch forth our neck to them.

12. *Your conversation.* The second part of the exhortation is, that they were to conduct themselves honestly towards men. What, indeed, precedes this in order is, that their minds should be cleansed before God; but a regard should also be had to men, lest we should become a hindrance to them. And he expressly says *among the Gentiles*; for the Jews were not only hated everywhere, but were also almost abhorred. The more carefully, therefore, ought they to have labored to wipe off the odium and infamy attached to their name by a holy life and a well-regulated conduct.^{f26} For that admonition of Paul ought to be attended to, “To give no occasion to those who seek occasion.” Therefore the evil speakings and the wicked insinuations of the ungodly ought to stimulate us to lead an upright life; for it is no time for living listlessly and securely, when they sharply watch us in order to find out whatever we do amiss.

That they — may glorify God. He intimates that we ought thus to strive, not for our own sake, that men may think and speak well of us; but that we may glorify God, as Christ also teaches us. And Peter shews how this would be effected, even that the unbelieving, led by our good works, would become obedient to God, and thus by their own conversion give glory to him; for this he intimates by the words, *in the day of visitation*. I know that some refer this to the last coming of Christ; but I take it otherwise, even

that God employs the holy and honest life of his people, as a preparation, to bring back the wandering to the right way. For it is the beginning of our conversion, when God is pleased to look on us with a paternal eye; but when his face is turned away from us, we perish. Hence the day of visitation may justly be said to be the time when he invites us to himself.

<600213> 1 PETER 2:13-16	
13. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;	13. Subditi ergo estote omni humanae ordinationi propter Dominum; sive regi tanquam supereminenti;
14. 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.	14. Sive praesidibus, tanquam iis qui per ipsum mittuntur, in vindictam quidem maleficorum, laudem verò benè agentium.
15. For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:	15. Sic enim est voluntas Dei, ut benefaciendo obstruatis ignorantiam stultorum horninum:
16. As free, and not using <i>your</i> liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.	16. Ut liberi, et non quasi praetextum habentes malitiae, libertatem; sed tanquam servi Dei.

13. *Submit yourselves.* He now comes to particular exhortations: and as obedience with regard to magistrates is a part of honest or good conversation, he draws this inference as to their duty, “Submit yourselves,” or, Be ye subject; for by refusing the yoke of government, they would have given to the Gentiles no small occasion for reproaching them. And, indeed, the Jews were especially hated and counted infamous for this reason, because they were regarded on account of their perverseness as ungovernable. And as the commotions which they raised up in the provinces, were causes of great calamities, so that every one of a quiet and peaceable disposition dreaded them as the plague, — this was the reason that induced Peter to speak so strongly on subjection. Besides, many thought the gospel was a proclamation of such liberty, that every one might deem himself as free from servitude. It seemed an unworthy

thing that God's children should be servants, and that the heirs of the world should not have a free possession, no, not even of their own bodies. Then there was another trial, — All the magistrates were Christ's adversaries; and they used their own authority, so that no representation of God, which secures the chief reverence, appeared in them. We now perceive the design of Peter: he exhorted the Jews, especially for these reasons, to shew respect to the civil power.

To every ordinance of man. Some render the words, “to every creature;” and from a rendering so obscure and ambiguous, much labor has been taken to elicit some meaning. But I have no doubt but that Peter meant to point out the distinct manner in which God governs mankind: for the verb **κτίζειν** in Greek, from which **κτίσις** comes, means to form and to construct a building. Suitable, then, is the word “ordination;” by which Peter reminds us, that God the maker of the world has not left the human race in a state of confusion, that they might live after the manner of beasts, but as it were in a building regularly formed, and divided into several compartments. And it is called a *human ordination*, not because it has been invented by man, but because a mode of living, well arranged and duly ordered, is peculiar to men. ^{f27}

Whether it be to the king. So he calls Caesar, as I think, whose empire extended over all those countries mentioned at the beginning of the Epistle. For though “king” was a name extremely hated by the Romans, yet it was in use among the Greeks. They, indeed, often called him autocrat, (**αὐτοκράτορα**) but sometimes he was also called by them king, (**βασιλεὺς**.) But as he subjoins a reason, that he ought to be obeyed because he excelled, or was eminent or supreme, there is no comparison made between Caesar and other magistrates. He held, indeed, the supreme power; but that eminence which Peter extols, is common to all who exercise public authority. And so Paul, in ^{<451301>}Romans 13:1, extends it to all magistrates. Now the meaning is, that obedience is due to all who rule, because they have been raised to that honor not by chance, but by God's providence. For many are wont to inquire too scrupulously by what right power has been attained; but we ought to be satisfied with this alone, that power is possessed and exercised. And so Paul cuts off the handle of useless objections when he declares that there is no power but from God. And for this reason it is that Scripture so often says, that it is

God who girds kings with a sword, who raises them on high, who transfers kingdoms as he pleases.

As Peter referred especially to the Roman Emperor, it was necessary to add this admonition; for it is certain that the Romans through unjust means rather than in a legitimate way penetrated into Asia and subdued these countries. Besides, the Caesars, who then reigned, had possessed themselves of the monarchy by tyrannical force. Hence Peter as it were forbids these things to be controverted, for he shews that subjects ought to obey their rulers without hesitation, because they are not made eminent, unless elevated by God's hand.

14. *Or unto governors*, or, Whether to presidents. He designates every kind of magistrates, as though he had said, that there is no kind of government to which we ought not to submit. He confirms this by saying that they are God's ministers; for they who apply *him* to the king, are greatly mistaken. There is then a common reason, which extols the authority of all magistrates, that they rule by the command of God, and are sent by him. It hence follows (as Paul also teaches us) that they resist God, who do not obediently submit to a power ordained by him.

For the punishment. This is the second reason why it behoves us reverently to regard and to respect civil authority, and that is, because it has been appointed by the Lord for the common good of mankind; for we must be extremely barbarous and brutal, if the public good is not regarded by us. This, then, in short, is what Peter means, that since God keeps the world in order by the ministry of magistrates, all they who despise their authority are enemies to mankind.

Now he assumes these two things, which belong, as Plato says, to a commonwealth, that is, reward to the good and punishment to the wicked; for, in ancient times, not only punishment was allotted to evil-doers, but also rewards to the doers of good. But though it often happens that honors are not rightly distributed, nor rewards given to the deserving, yet it is an honor, not to be despised, that the good are at the least under the care and protection of magistrates, that they are not exposed to the violence and injuries of the ungodly, that they live more quietly under laws and better retain their reputation, than if every one, unrestrained, lived as he pleased. In short, it is a singular blessing of God, that the wicked are not allowed to do what they like.

It may, however, be objected here and said, that kings and magistrates often abuse their power, and exercise tyrannical cruelty rather than justice. Such were almost all the magistrates, when this Epistle was written. To this I answer, that tyrants and those like them, do not produce such effects by their abuse, but that the ordinance of God ever remains in force, as the institution of marriage is not subverted though the wife and the husband were to act in a way not becoming them. However, therefore, men may go astray, yet the end fixed by God cannot be changed.

Were any one again to object and say, that we ought not to obey princes who, as far as they can, pervert the holy ordinance of God, and thus become savage wild beasts, while magistrates ought to bear the image of God. My reply is this, that government established by God ought to be so highly valued by us, as to honor even tyrants when in power. There is yet another reply still more evident, — that there has never been a tyranny, (nor can one be imagined,) however cruel and unbridled, in which some portion of equity has not appeared; and further, some kind of government, however deformed and corrupt it may be, is still better and more beneficial than anarchy.

15. *For so is the will of God.* He returns to his former doctrine, lest an occasion should be given to the unbelieving to speak evil, though he expresses less than what he had said before; for he says only that the mouths of the foolish ought to be stopped. The phrase which he adopts, “to stop up ignorance,” though it may seem harsh on account of its novelty, does not yet obscure the sense.^{f28} For he not only calls the unbelieving foolish, but also points out the reason why they slandered, even because they were ignorant of God. But inasmuch as he makes the unbelieving to be without understanding and reason, we hence conclude, that a right understanding cannot exist without the knowledge of God. How much soever, then, the unbelieving may boast of their own acuteness, and may seem to themselves to be wise and prudent, yet the Spirit of God charges them with folly, in order that we may know that, apart from God, we cannot be really wise, as without him there is nothing perfect.

But he prescribes the way in which the evil-speaking of the unbelieving is to be restrained, even by *well-doing*, or, by doing good. In this expression he includes all the duties of humanity and kindness which we ought to perform towards our neighbors. And in these is included obedience to

magistrates, without which concord among men cannot be cultivated. Were any one to object and say, that the faithful can never be so careful to do good, but that they will be evil-spoken of by the unbelieving: to this the obvious answer is, that the Apostle here does not in any degree exempt them from calumnies and reproaches; but he means that no occasion of slandering ought to be given to the unbelieving, however much they may desire it. And lest any one should further object and say, that the unbelieving are by no means worthy of so much regard that God's children should form their life to please them, Peter expressly reminds us that we are bound by God's command to shut up their mouths.

16. As free. This is said by way of anticipation, that he might obviate those things which are usually objected to with regard to the liberty of God's children. For as men are naturally ingenious in laying hold on what may be for their advantage, many, at the commencement of the Gospel, thought themselves free to live only for themselves. This doting opinion, then, is what Peter corrects; and he briefly shews how much the liberty of Christians differed from unbridled licentiousness. And, in the first place, he denies that there is any veil or pretext for wickedness, by which he intimates, that there is no liberty given us to hurt our neighbors, or to do any harm to others. True liberty, then, is that which harms or injures no one. To confirm this, he declares that those are free who serve God. It is obvious, hence, to conclude, that we obtain liberty, in order that we may more promptly and more readily render obedience to God; for it is no other than a freedom from sin; and dominion is taken away from sin, that men may become obedient to righteousness.

In short, it is a free servitude, and a serving freedom. For as we ought to be the servants of God, that we may enjoy this benefit, so moderation is required in the use of it. In this way, indeed, our consciences become free; but this prevents us not to serve God, who requires us also to be subject to men.

<600217> 1 PETER 2:17	
17. Honour all <i>men</i> . Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.	17. Omnes honorate, fraternitatem diligite, Deum timete, regem honorate.

This is a summary of what is gone before; for he intimates that God is not feared, nor their just right rendered to men, except civil order prevails among us, and magistrates retain their authority. That he bids honor to be rendered to all, I explain thus, that none are to be neglected; for it is a general precept, which refers to the social intercourse of men. ^{f29} The word *honor* has a wide meaning in Hebrew, and we know that the apostles, though they wrote in Greek, followed the meaning of words in the former language. Therefore, this word conveys no other idea to me, than that a regard ought to be had for all, since we ought to cultivate, as far as we can, peace and friendship with all; there is, indeed, nothing more adverse to concord than contempt.

What he adds respecting the love of brethren is special, as contrasted with the first clause; for he speaks of that particular love which we are bidden to have towards the household of faith, because we are connected with them by a closer relationship. And so Peter did not omit this connection; but yet he reminds us, that though brethren are to be specially regarded, yet this ought not to prevent our love from being extended to the whole human race. The word *fraternity*, or brotherhood, I take collectively for brethren.

Fear God. I have already said that all these clauses are applied by Peter to the subject he was treating. For he means, that honor paid to kings proceeds from the fear of God and the love of man; and that, therefore, it ought to be connected with them, as though he had said, “Whosoever fears God, loves his brethren and the whole human race as he ought, and will also give honor to kings.” But, at the same time, he expressly mentions *the king*, because that form of government was more than any other disliked; and under it other forms are included.

<600218> 1 PETER 2:18-20

18. Servants, be subject to *your* masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

18. Famuli, subjecti sint cum omni timore dominis *suis*, non solum bonis et humanis, sed etiam pravis.

19. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience towards God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

19. Haec enim est gratia, si propter conscientiam Dei quispiam molestias ferat patiens injustè.

20. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer *for* it, ye take it patiently, this *is* acceptable with God.

20. Qualis enim gloria, si quum peccantes alapis caedemini, suffertis? sed si bene facientes et in aliis affecti suffertis, haec gratia apud Deum.

18. *Servants, be subject.* Though this is a particular admonition, yet it is connected with what is gone before, as well as the other things which follow; for the obedience of servants to masters, and of wives also to their husbands, forms a part of civil or social subjection. ^{f30}

He first would have servants to be subject *with all fear*; by which expression he means that sincere and willing reverence, which they acknowledge by their office to be due. He then sets this fear in opposition to dissimulation as well as to forced subjection; for an eye-service (ὀφθαλμοδοουλεία, ^{<510321>} Colossians 3:21,) as Paul calls it, is the opposite of this fear; and further, if servants clamor against severe treatment, being ready to throw off the yoke if they could, they cannot be said properly to fear. In short, fear arises from a right knowledge of duty. And though no exception is added in this place, yet, according to other places, it is to be understood. For subjection due to men is not to be so far extended as to lessen the authority of God. Then servants are to be subject to their masters, only as far as God permits, or as far as the altars, as they say. But as the word here is not δούλοι, slaves, but οἰκέται, domestics, we may understand the free as well as the bond servants to be meant, though it be a difference of little moment.

Not only to the good. Though as to the duty of servants to obey their masters, it is wholly a matter of conscience; if, however, they are unjustly treated, as to themselves, they ought not to resist authority. Whatever, then, masters may be, there is no excuse for servants for not faithfully obeying them. For when a superior abuses his power, he must indeed hereafter render an account to God, yet he does not for the present lose his right. For this law is laid on servants, that they are to serve their masters, though they may be unworthy. For *the froward* he sets in opposition to the equitable or humane; and by this word he refers to the cruel and the perverse, or those who have no humanity and kindness. ^{f31}

It is a wonder what could have induced an interpreter to change one Greek word for another, and render it “wayward.” I should say nothing of the gross ignorance of the Sorbons, who commonly understand by wayward, (*dyscolos*,) the dissolute or dissipated, were it not that they seek by this absurd rendering to build up for us an article of faith, that we ought to obey the Pope and his horned wild beasts, however grievous and intolerable a tyranny they may exercise. This passage, then, shews how boldly they trifle with the Word of God.

19. For this is thankworthy. The word grace or favor, has the meaning of praise; for he means that no grace or praise shall be found before God, if we bear the punishment which we have by our faults deserved; but that they who patiently bear injuries and wrongs are worthy of praise and accepted by God. ^{f32} To testify that it was acceptable to God, when any one from conscience towards God persevered in doing his duty, though unjustly and unworthily treated, was at that time very necessary; for the condition of servants was very hard: they were counted no better than cattle. Such indignity might have driven them to despair; the only thing left for them was to look to God.

For conscience towards God means this, that one performs his duty, not from a regard to men, but to God. For, when a wife is submissive and obedient to her husband, in order to please him, she has her reward in this world, as Christ says of the ambitious, who looked to the praise of men, (<400616> Matthew 6:16.) The same view is to be taken of other cases: When a son obeys his father in order to secure his favor and bounty, he will have his reward from his father, not from God. It is, in short, a general truth, that what we do is approved by God, if our object be to serve him, and if

we are not influenced by a regard to man alone. Moreover, he who considers that he has to do with God, must necessarily endeavor to overcome evil with good. For, God not only requires that we should be such to every one as he is to us, but also that we should be good to the unworthy and to such as persecute us.

It is not, however, an assertion without its difficulty, when he says, that there is nothing praiseworthy in him who is justly punished; for, when the Lord punishes our sins, patience is certainly a sacrifice of sweet odour to him, that is, when we bear with a submissive mind our punishment. But to this I reply, that Peter does not here speak simply but comparatively; for it is a small and slender praise to bear with submission a just punishment, in comparison with that of an innocent man, who willingly bears the wrongs of men, only because he fears God. At the same time he seems indirectly to refer to the motive; because they who suffer punishment for their faults, are influenced by the fear of men. But the reply already given is sufficient.

<600221> 1 PETER 2:21-23	
21. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:	21. In hoc enim vocati estis; quoniam Christus quoque passus est pro vobis, relinquens vobis exemplum, ut sequeremini vestigia ejus:
22. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:	22. Qui quum peccatum non fecisset, nec inventus esset dolus in ore ejus;
23. Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed <i>himself</i> to him that judgeth righteously:	23. Quum probro afficeretur, non regerebat; quum pateretur, non comminabatur; causam vero commendabat ei qui juste judicat.

21. *For even hereunto were ye called.* For though his discourse was respecting servants, yet this passage ought not to be confined to that subject. For the Apostle here reminds all the godly in common as to what the condition of Christianity is, as though he had said, that we are called

by the Lord for this end, patiently to bear wrongs; and as he says in another place that we are appointed to this. Lest, however, this should seem grievous to us, he consoles us with the example of Christ. Nothing seems more unworthy, and therefore less tolerable, than undeservedly to suffer; but when we turn our eyes to the Son of God, this bitterness is mitigated; for who would refuse to follow him going before us?

But we must notice the words, *Leaving us an example.*^{f33} For as he treats of imitation, it is necessary to know what in Christ is to be our example. He walked on the sea, he cleansed the leprous, he raised the dead, he restored sight to the blind: to try to imitate him in these things would be absurd. For when he gave these evidences of his power, it was not his object that we should thus imitate him. It has hence happened that his fasting for forty days has been made without reason an example; but what he had in view was far otherwise. We ought, therefore, to exercise in this respect a right judgment; as also Augustine somewhere reminds us, when explaining the following passage,

“Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.”
(^{<401129>}Matthew 11:29.)

And the same thing may be learnt from the words of Peter; for he marks the difference by saying that Christ’s patience is what we ought to follow. This subject is handled more at large by Paul in ^{<450829>}Romans 8:29, where he teaches us that all the children of God are foreordained to be made conformable to the image of Christ, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Hence, that we may live with him, we must previously die with him.

22. *Who did no sin.* This belongs to the present subject; for, if any one boasts of his own innocence, he must know that Christ did not suffer as a malefactor. He, at the same time, shews how far we come short of what Christ was, when he says, that there was *no guile found in his mouth*; for he who offends not by his tongue, says James, is a perfect man. (^{<590302>}James 3:2.) He then declares that there was in Christ the highest perfection of innocency, such as no one of us can dare claim for himself. It hence appears more fully how unjustly he suffered beyond all others. There is, therefore, no reason why any one of us should refuse to suffer after his example, since no one is so conscious of having acted rightly, as not to know that he is imperfect.

23. *When he was reviled*, or, reproached. Here Peter points out what we are to imitate in Christ, even calmly to bear wrongs, and not to avenge wrongs. For such is our disposition, that when we receive injuries, our minds immediately boil over with revengeful feelings; but Christ abstained from every kind of retaliation. Our minds, therefore, ought to be bridled, lest we should seek to render evil for evil.

But committed himself, or, his cause. The word *cause* is not expressed, but it is obviously understood. And Peter adds this for the consolation of the godly, that is, that if they patiently endured the reproaches and violence of the wicked, they would have God as their defender. For it would be a very hard thing for us, to be subjected to the will of the ungodly, and not to have God caring for our wrongs. Peter, therefore, adorns God with this high attribute, that he *judgeth righteously*, as though he had said, “It behoves us calmly to bear evils; God in the meantime will not neglect what belongs to him, but will shew himself to be a righteous judge.” However wanton then the ungodly may be for a time, yet they shall not be unpunished for the wrongs done now to the children of God. Nor is there any cause for the godly to fear, as though they were without any protection; for since it belongs to God to defend them and to undertake their cause, they are to possess their souls in patience.

Moreover, as this doctrine brings no small consolation, so it avails to allay and subdue the inclinations of the flesh. For no one can recumb on the fidelity and protection of God, but he who in a meek spirit waits for his judgment; for he who leaps to take vengeance, intrudes into what belongs to God, and suffers not God to perform his own office. In reference to this Paul says, “Give place to wrath,” (^{<451219>} Romans 12:19;) and thus he intimates that the way is closed up against God that he might not himself judge, when we anticipate him. He then confirms what he had said by the testimony of Moses, “Vengeance is mine.” (^{<053235>} Deuteronomy 32:35.) Peter in short meant this, that we after the example of Christ shall be more prepared to endure injuries, if we give to God his own honor, that is, if we, believing him to be a righteous judge, refer our right and our cause to him.

It may however be asked, How did Christ commit his cause to the Father; for if he required vengeance from him, this he himself says is not lawful for us; for he bids us to do good to those who injure us, to pray for those who speak evil of us. (^{<400544>} Matthew 5:44.) To this my reply is, that it

appears evident from the gospel-history, that Christ did thus refer his judgment to God, and yet did not demand vengeance to be taken on his enemies, but that, on the contrary, he prayed for them, “Father,” he said, “forgive them.” (<422334> Luke 23:34.) And doubtless the feelings of our flesh are far from being in unison with the judgment of God. That any one then may commit his cause to him who judgeth righteously, it is necessary that he should first lay a check on himself, so that he may not ask anything inconsistent with the righteous judgment of God. For they who indulge themselves in looking for vengeance, concede not to God his office of a judge, but in a manner wish him to be an executioner. He then who is so calm in his spirit as to wish his adversaries to become his friends, and endeavors to bring them to the right way, rightly commits to God his own cause, and his prayer is, “Thou, O Lord, knowest my heart, how I wish them to be saved who seek to destroy me: were they converted, I should congratulate them; but if they continue obstinate in their wickedness, for I know that thou watchest over my safety, I commit my cause to thee.” This meekness was manifested by Christ; it is then the rule to be observed by us.

<600224> 1 PETER 2:24-25

24. Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

24. Qui peccata nostra ipse pertulit in corpore suo super lignum, ut peccatis mortui, justitiae vivamus: cujus livori sanati estis.

25. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

25. Eratis enim tanquam oves errantes; sed conversi estis nunc ad Pastorem et Episcopum animarum vestrarum.

Had he commended nothing in Christ’s death except as an example, it would have been very frigid: he therefore refers to a fruit much more excellent. There are then three things to be noticed in this passage. The first is, that Christ by his death has given us an example of patience; the second, that by his death he restored us to life; it hence follows, that we are so bound to him, that we ought cheerfully to follow his example. In the

third place, he refers to the general design of his death, that we, being dead to sins, ought to live to righteousness. And all these things confirm his previous exhortation.

24. *Who his own self bare our sins.* This form of speaking is fitted to set forth the efficacy of Christ's death. For as under the Law, the sinner, that he might be released from guilt, substituted a victim in his own place; so Christ took on himself the curse due to our sins, that he might atone for them before God. And he expressly adds, on *the tree*, because he could not offer such an expiation except on the cross. Peter, therefore, well expresses the truth, that Christ's death was a sacrifice for the expiation of our sins; for being fixed to the cross and offering himself a victim for us, he took on himself our sin and our punishment. Isaiah, from whom Peter has taken the substance of his doctrine, employs various forms of expression, — that he was smitten by God's hand for our sins, that he was wounded for our iniquities, that he was afflicted and broken for our sake, that the chastisement of our peace was laid on him. But Peter intended to set forth the same thing by the words of this verse, even that we are reconciled to God on this condition, because Christ made himself before his tribunal a surety and as one guilty for us, that he might suffer the punishment due to us.

This great benefit the Sophists in their schools obscure as much as they can; for they prattle that by the sacrifice of the death of Christ we are only freed after baptism from guilt, but that punishment is redeemed by satisfactions. But Peter, when he says that he bore our sins, means that not only guilt was imputed to him, but that he also suffered its punishment, that he might thus be an expiatory victim, according to that saying of the Prophet, "The chastisement of our peace was upon him." If they object and say, that this only avails before baptism, the context here disproves them, for the words are addressed to the faithful.

But this clause and that which follows, *by whose stripes ye were healed*, may be also applied to the subject in hand, that is, that it behoves us to bear on our shoulders the sins of others, not indeed to expiate for them, but only to bear them as a burden laid on us.

Being dead to sins. ^{f34} He had before pointed out another end, even an example of patience; but here, as it has been stated, it is made more manifest, that we are to live a holy and righteous life. The Scripture

sometimes mentions both, that is, that the Lord tries us with troubles and adversities, that we might be conformed to the death of Christ, and also that the old man has been crucified in the death of Christ, that we might walk in newness of life. (<500310> Philippians 3:10; <450604> Romans 6:4.) At the same time, this end of which he speaks, differs from the former, not only as that which is general from what is particular; for in patience there is simply an example; but when he says that Christ suffered, that we being dead to sins should live to righteousness, he intimates that there is power in Christ's death to mortify our flesh, as Paul explains more fully in the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. For he has not only brought this great benefit to us, that God justifies us freely, by not imputing to us our sins; but. he also makes us to die to the world and to the flesh, that we may rise again to a new life: not that one day makes complete this death; but wherever it is, the death of Christ is efficacious for the expiation of sins, and also for the mortification of the flesh.

25. *For ye were as sheep.* This also has Peter borrowed from Isaiah, except that the Prophet makes it a universal statement,

“All we like sheep have gone astray.” (<235306> Isaiah 53:6.)

But on the word *sheep* there is no particular stress; he indeed compares us to sheep, but the emphasis is on what the Prophet adds, when he says that every one had turned to his own way. The meaning then is, that we are all going astray from the way of salvation, and proceeding in the way of ruin, until Christ brings us back from this wandering.

And this appears still more evident from the clause which follows, *but are now returned to the Shepherd*, etc.;^{f35} for all who are not ruled by Christ, are wandering like lost sheep in the ways of error. Thus, then, is condemned the whole wisdom of the world, which does not submit to the government of Christ. But the two titles given here to Christ are remarkable, that he is the *Shepherd and Bishop of souls*. There is then no cause to fear, but that he will faithfully watch over the safety of those who are in his fold and under his care. And it is his office to keep us safe both in body and soul; yet Peter mentions only souls, because this celestial Shepherd keeps us under his own spiritual protection unto eternal life.

CHAPTER 3

<600301> 1 PETER 3:1-4

1. Likewise, ye wives, <i>be</i> in subjection to your own husbands: that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;	1. Similiter mulieres subjectae sint propriis maritis; ut etiam siqui sunt increduli sermoni, per uxorum conversationem absque sermone lucrifiant;
2. While they behold your chaste conversation <i>coupled</i> with fear.	2. Considerantes puram (<i>vel</i> , castam) vestram in timore conversationem;
3. Whose adorning, let it not be that outward <i>adoring</i> of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;	3. Quarum ornatus sit non externus, in plicatura capillorum et circumpositione auri, aut palliorum amictu;
4. But <i>let it be</i> the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, <i>even the ornament</i> of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.	4. Sed interior cordis homo, qui in incorruptione situs est placidi et quieti spiritus, qui spiritus coram Deo pretiosus est (<i>vel</i> , quod est coram Deo pretiosum.)

HE proceeds now to another instance of subjection, and bids wives to be subject to their husbands. And as those seemed to have some pretense for shaking off the yoke, who were united to unbelieving men, he expressly reminds them of their duty, and brings forward a particular reason why they ought the more carefully to obey, even that they might by their probity allure their husbands to the faith. But if wives ought to obey ungodly husbands, with much more promptness ought they to obey, who have believing husbands.

But it may seem strange that Peter should say, that a husband might be *gained* to the Lord *without the word*; for why is it said, that “faith cometh by hearing ?” <451017> Romans 10:17. To this I reply, that Peter’s words are

not to be so understood as though a holy life alone could lead the unbelieving to Christ, but that it softens and pacifies their minds, so that they might have less dislike to religion; for as bad examples create offenses, so good ones afford no small help. Then Peter shews that wives by a holy and pious life could do so much as to prepare their husbands, without speaking to them on religion, to embrace the faith of Christ.

2. *While they behold.* For minds, however alienated from the true faith, are subdued, when they see the good conduct of believers; for as they understood not the doctrine of Christ, they form an estimate of it by our life. It cannot, then, be but that they will commend Christianity, which teaches purity and fear.

3. *Whose adorning.* The other part of the exhortation is, that wives are to adorn themselves sparingly and modestly: for we know that they are in this respect much more curious and ambitious than they ought to be. Then Peter does not without cause seek to correct in them this vanity. And though he reproves generally sumptuous or costly adorning, yet he points out some things in particular, — that they were not artificially to curl or wreath their hair, as it was usually done by crimping-pins, or otherwise to form it according to the fashion; nor were they to set gold around their head: for these are the things in which excesses especially appear.

It may be now asked, whether the Apostle wholly condemns the use of gold in adorning the body. Were any one to urge these words, it may be said, that he prohibits precious garments no less than gold; for he immediately adds, *the putting on of apparel*, or, of clothes. But it would be an immoderate strictness wholly to forbid neatness and elegance in clothing. If the material is said to be too sumptuous, the Lord has created it; and we know that skill in art has proceeded from him. Then Peter did not intend to condemn every sort of ornament, but the evil of vanity, to which women are subject. Two things are to be regarded in clothing, usefulness and decency; and what decency requires is moderation and modesty. Were, then, a woman to go forth with her hair wantonly curled and decked, and make an extravagant display, her vanity could not be excused. They who object and say, that to clothe one's-self in this or that manner is an indifferent thing, in which all are free to do as they please, may be easily confuted; for excessive elegance and superfluous display, in short, all excesses, arise from a corrupted mind. Besides, ambition, pride,

affectation of display, and all things of this kind, are not indifferent things. Therefore they whose minds are purified from all vanity, will duly order all things, so as not to exceed moderation.

4. *But let it be the hidden, man of the heart.* The contrast here ought to be carefully observed. Cato said, that they who are anxiously engaged in adorning the body, neglect the adorning of the mind: so Peter, in order to restrain this desire in women, introduces a remedy, that they are to devote themselves to the cultivation of their minds. The word *heart*, no doubt means the whole soul. He at the same time shews in what consists the spiritual adorning of women, even in *the incorruptness of a meek and quiet spirit*. “Incorruptness,” as I think, is set in opposition to things which fade and vanish away, things which serve to adorn the body. Therefore the version of Erasmus departs from the real meaning. In short, Peter means that the ornament of the soul is not like a fading flower, nor consists in vanishing splendor, but is incorruptible. By mentioning *quiet* and a tranquil *spirit*, he marks out what especially belongs to women; for nothing becomes them more than a placid and a sedate temper of mind.^{f36} For we know how outrageous a being is an imperious and a self-willed woman. And further, nothing is more fitted to correct the vanity of which Peter speaks than a placid quietness of spirit.

What follows, that it is *in the sight of God of great price*, may be referred to the whole previous sentence as well as to the word *spirit*; the meaning indeed will remain the same. For why do women take so much care to adorn themselves, except that they may turn the eyes of men on themselves? But Peter, on the contrary, bids them to be more anxious for what is before God of a great price.

<600305> 1 PETER 3:5-6

5. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

5. Sic enim aliquando et sanctae mulieres quae sperabant in Deum, ornabant seipsas, subjectae propriis maritis:

6. Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

6. Quemadmodum et Sara obediebat Abrahae, dominum ipsum appellans, cujus filiae estis factae, si benefeceritis, et non terreamini ullo pavore.

He sets before them the example of pious women, who sought for spiritual adorning rather than outward meretricious ornaments. But he mentions Sarah above all others, who, having been the mother of all the faithful, is especially worthy of honor and imitation on the part of her sex. Moreover, he returns again to subjection, and confirms it by the example of Sarah, who, according to the words of Moses, called her husband Lord.

(**<011812>** Genesis 18:12.) God, indeed, does not regard such titles; and it may sometimes be, that one especially petulant and disobedient should use such a word with her tongue; but Peter means, that Sarah usually spoke thus, because she knew that a command had been given her by the Lord, to be subject to her husband. Peter adds, that they who imitated her fidelity would be her daughters, that is, reckoned among the faithful.

6. *And are not afraid.* The weakness of the sex causes women to be suspicious and timid, and therefore morose; for they fear lest by their subjection, they should be more reproachfully treated. It was this that Peter seems to have had in view in forbidding them to be disturbed by any fear, as though he had said, “Willingly submit to the authority of your husbands, nor let fear prevent your obedience, as though your condition would be worse, were you to obey.” The words may be more general, “Let them not raise up commotions at home.” For as they are liable to be frightened, they often make much of a little thing, and thus disturb themselves and the family. Others think that the timidity of women, which is contrary to faith, is generally reprov’d, as though Peter exhorted them to perform the duties of their calling with a courageous and intrepid spirit.

However, the first explanation is what I prefer, though the last does not differ much from it. ^{f37}

<600305>1 PETER 3:7	
7. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with <i>them</i> according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.	7. Viri similiter cohabitent secundum scientiam, tanquam infirmiori vasi, muliebri impertientes honorem, tanquam etiam cohaeredes gratiae vitae (<i>vel</i> , multiplicis gratiae et vitae,) ne preces vestrae interrumpantur.

7. *Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them.* From husbands he requires prudence; for dominion over their wives is not given them, except on this condition, that they exercise authority prudently. Then let husbands remember that they need prudence to do rightly their duty. And doubtless many foolish things must be endured by them, many unpleasant things must be borne with; and they must at the same time beware lest their indulgence should foster folly. Hence the admonition of Peter is not in vain, that the husbands ought to cohabit with them as with a *weaker vessel*. Part of the prudence which he mentions, is, that the husbands honor their wives. For nothing destroys the friendship of life more than contempt; nor can we really love any but those whom we esteem; for love must be connected with respect.

Moreover, he employs a twofold argument, in order to persuade husbands to treat their wives honourably and kindly. The first is derived from the weakness of the sex; the other, from the honor with which God favors them. These things seem indeed to be in a manner contrary, — that honor ought to be given to wives, because they are weak, and because they excel; but these things well agree together where love exists. It is evident, that God is despised in his gifts, except we honor those on whom he has conferred any excellency. But when we consider that we are members of the same body, we learn to bear with one another, and mutually to cover our infirmities. This is what Paul means when he says that greater honor is given to the weaker members, (<461223> 1 Corinthians 12:23;) even because

we are more careful in protecting them from shame. Then Peter does not without reason command that women should be cared for, and that they should be honored with a kind treatment, because they are weak. And then as we more easily forgive children, when they offend through inexperience of age; so the weakness of the female sex ought to make us not to be too rigid and severe towards our wives.

The word *vessel*, as it is well known, means in Scripture any sort of instrument.

Being heirs together (or co-heirs) of the grace of life. Some copies have “of manifold grace;” others, instead of “life,” have the word “living.” Some read “co-heirs” in the dative case, which makes no difference in the sense. A conjunction is put by others between manifold grace and life; which reading is the most suitable.^{f38} For since the Lord is pleased to bestow in common on husbands and wives the same graces, he invites them to seek an equality in them; and we know that those graces are manifold in which wives are partakers with their husbands. For some belong to the present life, and some to God’s spiritual kingdom. He afterwards adds, that they are co-heirs also of life, which is the chief thing. And though some are strangers to the hope of salvation, yet as it is offered by the Lord to them no less than to their husbands, it is a sufficient honor to the sex.

That your prayers be not hindered. For God cannot be rightly called upon, unless our minds be calm and peaceable. Among strifes and contentions there is no place for prayer. Peter indeed addresses the husband and the wife, when he bids them to be at peace one with another, so that they might with one mind pray to God. But we may hence gather a general doctrine — that no one ought to come to God except he is united to his brethren. Then as this reason ought to restrain all domestic quarrels and strifes, in order that each one of the family may pray to God; so in common life it ought to be as it were a bridle to check all contentions. For we are more than insane, if we knowingly and wilfully close up the way to God’s presence by prayer, since this is the only asylum of our salvation.

Some give this explanation, that an intercourse with the wife ought to be sparing and temperate, lest too much indulgence in this respect should prevent attention to prayer, according to that saying of Paul,

“Defraud not one another, unless by consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer.” (<460705> 1 Corinthians 7:5.)

But the doctrine of Peter extends wider: and then Paul does not mean that prayers are interrupted by mutual cohabitation. Therefore the explanation which I have given ought to be retained.

<600308> 1 PETER 3:8-9	
8. Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:	8. Denique sitis omnes idem sentientes, compatibles, fraternè vos diligentes, misericordes, humiles;
9. Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.	9. Non reddentes malum pro malo, vel convitium pro convitio; imo potius benedicentes, scientes quod in hoc vocati sitis, ut benedictionem hereditate consequamini.

Now follow general precepts which indiscriminately belong to all. ^{f39} Moreover he summarily mentions some things which are especially necessary to foster friendship and love. The first is, *Be ye all of one mind*, or, think ye all the same thing. For though friends are at liberty to think differently, yet to do so is a cloud which obscures love; yea, from this seed easily arises hatred. Sympathy (συμπάθεια) extends to all our faculties, when concord exists between us; so that every one condoles with us in adversity as well as rejoices with us in prosperity, so that every one not only cares for himself, but also regards the benefit of others.

What next follows, *Love as brethren*, belongs peculiarly to the faithful; for where God is known as a Father, there only brotherhood really exists. Be *pitiful*, or merciful, which is added, means that we are not only to help our brethren and relieve their miseries, but also to bear with their infirmities. In what follows there are two readings in Greek; but what seems to me the most probable is the one I have put as the text; for we know that it is the chief bond to preserve friendship, when every one thinks modestly and humbly of himself; as there is nothing on the other hand which produces more discords than when we think too highly of ourselves. Wisely then

does Peter bid us to be humble-minded (**ταπεινόφρονες**;) lest pride and haughtiness should lead us to despise our neighbors. ^{f40}

9. *Not rendering evil for evil.* In these words every kind of revenge is forbidden; for in order to preserve love, we must bear with many things. At the same time he does not speak here of mutual benevolence, but he would have us to endure wrongs, when provoked by ungodly men. And though it is commonly thought that it is an instance of a weak and abject mind, not to avenge injuries, yet it is counted before God as the highest magnanimity. Nor is it indeed enough to abstain from revenge; but Peter requires also that we should pray for those who reproach us; for to *bless* here means to pray, as it is set in opposition to the second clause. But Peter teaches us in general, that evils are to be overcome by acts of kindness. This is indeed very hard, but we ought to imitate in this case our heavenly Father, who makes his sun to rise on the unworthy. What the sophists imagine to be the meaning, is a futile evasion; for when Christ said, “Love your enemies,” he at the same time confirmed his own doctrine by saying, “That ye might be the children of God.”

Knowing that ye are thereunto called. He means that this condition was required of the faithful when they were called by God, that they were not only to be so meek as not to retaliate injuries, but also to bless those who cursed them; and as this condition may seem almost unjust, he calls their attention to the reward; as though he had said, that there is no reason why the faithful should complain, because their wrongs would turn to their own benefit. In short, he shews how much would be the gain of patience; for if we submissively bear injuries, the Lord will bestow on us his blessing.

The verb, **κληρονόμειν**, to inherit, seems to express perpetuity, as though Peter had said, that the blessing would not be for a short time, but perpetual, if we be submissive in bearing injuries. But God blesses in a way different, from men; for we express our wishes to him, but he confers a blessing on us. And on the other hand, Peter intimates that they who seek to revenge injuries, attempt what will yield them no good, for they thus deprive themselves of God’s blessing.

<600310> 1 PETER 3:10-15

10. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:	10. Qui enim vult vitam diligere, et videre dies bonos, contineat linguam suam à malo, et labia sua, ne loquantur dolum;
11. Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.	11. Declinet à malo et faciat bonum, quaerat pacem et persequatur eam:
12. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open, unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.	12. Quoniam oculi Domini super justos, et aures ejus in preces eorum; vultus autem Domini super facientes mala.
13. And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?	13. Et quis est qui vobis malè faciat, si boni aemuli sitis?
14. But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;	14. Verum etiam si patiamini propter justitiam, beati; timorem vero eorum ne timeatis neque turbemini;
15. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.	15. Sed Dominum exercituum sanctificate in cordibus vestris.

10. *For he.* He confirms the last sentence by the testimony of David. The passage is taken from the thirty-fourth Psalm, where the Spirit testifies that it will be well with all who keep themselves from all evil-doing and wrong-doing. The common feeling indeed favors what is very different; for men think that they expose themselves to the insolence of enemies, if they do not boldly defend themselves. But the Spirit of God promises a happy life to none except to the meek, and those who endure evils; and we cannot be happy except God prospers our ways; and it is the good and the benevolent, and not the cruel and inhuman, that he will favor.

Peter has followed the Greek version, though the difference is but little. David's words are literally these, — "He who loves life and desires to see good days," etc. It is indeed a desirable thing, since God has placed us in this world, to pass our time in peace. Then, the way of obtaining this blessing is to conduct ourselves justly and harmlessly towards all.

The first thing he points out are the vices of the tongue; which are to be avoided, so that we may not be contumelious and insolent, nor speak deceitfully and with duplicity. Then he comes to deeds, that we are to injure none, or cause loss to none, but to endeavor to be kind to all, and to exercise the duties of humanity.

11. *Let him seek peace.* It is not enough to embrace it when offered to us, but it ought to be followed when it seems to flee from us. It also often happens, that when we seek it as much as we can, others will not grant it to us. On account of these difficulties and hindrances, he bids us to seek and pursue it.

12. *For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous,* or, on the righteous. It ought to be a consolation to us, sufficient to mitigate all evils, that we are looked upon by the Lord, so that he will bring us help in due time. The meaning then is, that the prosperity which he has mentioned depends on the protection of God; for were not the Lord to care for his people, they would be like sheep exposed to wolves. And that we for little reason raise a clamor, that we suddenly kindle unto wrath, that we burn with the passion of revenge, all this, doubtless, happens, because we do not consider that God cares for us, and because we do not acquiesce in his aid. Thus in vain we shall be taught patience, except our minds are first imbued with this truth, that God exercises such care over us, that he will in due time succor us. When, on the contrary, we are fully persuaded that God defends the cause of the righteous, we shall first attend simply to innocence, and then, when molested and hated by the ungodly, we shall flee to the protection of God. And when he says, that the *ears* of the Lord are open to our prayers, he encourages us to pray.

But the face of the Lord. By this clause he intimates that the Lord will be our avenger, because he will not always suffer the insolence of the ungodly to prevail; and at the same time he shews how it will be, if we seek to defend our life from injuries, even that God will be an adversary to us. But it may, on the other hand, be objected and said, that we experience it daily far otherwise, for the more righteous any one is, and the greater lover of peace he is, the more he is harassed by the wicked. To this I reply, that no one is so attentive to righteousness and peace, but that he sometimes sins in this respect. But it ought to be especially observed, that the promises as to this life do not extend further than as to what is expedient for us to be

fulfilled. Hence, our peace with the world is often disturbed, that our flesh may be subdued, in order that we may serve God, and also for other reasons; so that nothing may be a loss to us.

13. *Who is he that will harm you.* He further confirms the previous sentence by an argument drawn from common experience. For it happens for the most part, that the ungodly disturb us, or are provoked by us, or that we do not labor to do them good as it behoves us; for they who seek to do good, do even soften minds which are otherwise hard as iron. This very thing is mentioned by Plato in his first book on the Republic, “Injustice,” he says, “causes seditions and hatreds and fightings one with another; but justice, concord and friendship.”^{f41} However, though this commonly happens, yet it is not always the case; for the children of God, how much soever they may strive to pacify the ungodly by kindness, and shew themselves kind towards all, are yet often assailed undeservedly by many.

14. Hence Peter adds, *But if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake.* The meaning is, that the faithful will do more towards obtaining a quiet life by kindness, than by violence and promptitude in taking revenge; but that when they neglect nothing to secure peace, were they to suffer, they are still blessed, because they suffer for the sake of righteousness. Indeed, this latter clause differs much from the judgment of our flesh; but Christ has not without reason thus declared; nor has Peter without reason repeated the sentence from his mouth; for God will at length come as a deliverer, and then openly will appear what now seems incredible, that is, that the miseries of the godly have been blessed when endured with patience.

To suffer *for righteousness*, means not only to submit to some loss or disadvantage in defending a good cause, but also to suffer unjustly, when any one is innocently in fear among men on account of the fear of God.

Be not afraid of their terror. He again points out the fountain and cause of impatience, that we are beyond due measure troubled, when the ungodly rise up against us. For such a dread either disheartens us, or degrades us, or kindles within us a desire for revenge. In the meantime, we do not acquiesce in the defense of God. Then the best remedy for checking the turbulent emotions of our minds will be, to conquer immoderate terrors by trusting in the aid of God.

But Peter no doubt meant to allude to a passage in the eighth chapter of Isaiah; for when the Jews against the prohibition of God sought to fortify themselves by the aid of the Gentile world, God warned his Prophet not to fear after their example. Peter at the same time seems to have turned “fear” into a different meaning; for it is taken passively by the Prophet., who accused the people of unbelief, because, at a time when they ought to have relied on the aid of God and to have boldly despised all dangers, they became so prostrate and broken down with fear, that they sent to all around them for unlawful help. But Peter takes fear in another sense, as meaning that terror which the ungodly are wont to fill us with by their violence and cruel threatenings. He then departs from the sense in which the word is taken by the Prophet; but in this there is nothing unreasonable; for his object was not to explain the words of the Prophet; he wished only to shew that, nothing is fitter to produce patience than what Isaiah prescribes, even to ascribe to God his honor by recumbent in full confidence on his power.

I do not, however, object, if any one prefers to render Peter’s words thus, *Fear ye not their fear*; as though he had said, “Be ye not afraid as the unbelieving, or the children of this world are wont to be, because they understand nothing of God’s providence.” But this, as I think, would be a forced explanation. There is, indeed, no need for us to toil much on this point, since Peter here did not intend to explain every word used by the Prophet, but only referred to this one thing, that the faithful will firmly stand, and can never be moved from a right course of duty by any dread or fear, if they will sanctify the Lord.

But this sanctification ought to be confined to the present case. For whence is it that we are overwhelmed with fear, and think ourselves lost, when danger is impending, except that we ascribe to mortal man more power to injure us than to God to save us? God promises that he will be the guardian of our salvation; the ungodly, on the other hand, attempt to subvert it. Unless God’s promise sustain us, do we not deal unjustly with him, and in a manner profane him? Then the Prophet teaches us that we ought to think honourably of the Lord of hosts; for how much soever the ungodly may contrive to destroy us, and whatever power they may possess, he alone is more than sufficiently powerful to secure our safety.

^{f42} Peter then adds, *in your hearts*. For if this conviction takes full

possession of our minds, that the help promised by the Lord is sufficient for us, we shall be well fortified to repel all the fears of unbelief.

<600315> 1 PETER 3:15-16	
15. And <i>be</i> ready always to <i>give</i> an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:	15. Parati autem sitis ad responsionem cuiusvis poscenti à vobis rationem ejus quae in vobis est spei;
16. Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.	16. Cum mansuetudine et timore, conscientiam habentes bonam; ut in quo de vobis obtrectant, tanquam maleficis, pudefiant dum infamant bonam vestram in Christo conversationem.

Though this is a new precept, it yet depends on what is gone before, for he requires such constancy in the faithful, as boldly to give a reason for their faith to their adversaries. And this is a part of that sanctification which he had just mentioned; for we then really honor God, when neither fear nor shame hinders us from making a profession of our faith. But Peter does not expressly bid us to assert and proclaim what has been given us by the Lord everywhere, and always and among all indiscriminately, for the Lord gives his people the spirit of discretion, so that they may know when and how far and to whom it is expedient to speak. He bids them only to be ready to give an answer, lest by their sloth and the cowardly fear of the flesh they should expose the doctrine of Christ, by being silent, to the derision of the ungodly. The meaning then is, that we ought to be prompt in avowing our faith, so as to set it forth whenever necessary, lest the unbelieving through our silence should condemn the religion we follow.

But it ought to be noticed, that Peter here does not command us to be prepared to solve any question that may be mooted; for it is not the duty of all to speak on every subject. But it is the general doctrine that is meant, which belongs to the ignorant and the simple. Then Peter had in view no other thing, than that Christians should make it evident to unbelievers that

they truly worshipped God, and had a holy and good religion. And in this there is no difficulty, for it would be strange if we could bring nothing to defend our faith when any one made inquiries respecting it. For we ought always to take care that all may know that we fear God, and that we piously and reverently regard his legitimate worship.

This was also required by the state of the times: the Christian name was much hated and deemed infamous; many thought the sect wicked and guilty of many sacrileges. It would have been, therefore, the highest perfidy against God, if, when asked, they had neglected to give a testimony in favor of their religion. And this, as I think, is the meaning of the word *apology*, which Peter uses, that is, that the Christians were to make it evident to the world that they were far off from every impiety, and did not corrupt true religion, on which account they were suspected by the ignorant.

Hope here is by a metonymy to be taken for faith. Peter, however, as it has been said, does not require them to know how to discuss distinctly and refinedly every article of the faith, but only to shew that their faith in Christ was consistent with genuine piety. And hence we learn how all those abuse the name of Christians, who understand nothing certain respecting their faith, and have nothing to give as an answer for it. But it behoves us again carefully to consider what he says, when he speaks of *that hope that is in you*; for he intimates that the confession which flows from the heart is alone that which is approved by God; for except faith dwells within, the tongue prattles in vain. It ought then to have its roots within us, so that it may afterwards bring forth the fruit of confession.

16. With meekness. This is a most necessary admonition; for unless our minds are endued with meekness, contentions will immediately break forth. And meekness is set in opposition to pride and vain ostentation, and also to excessive zeal. To this he justly adds *fear*; for where reverence for God prevails, it tames all the ferocity of our minds, and it will especially cause us to speak calmly of God's mysteries. For contentious disputes arise from this, because many think less honourably than they ought of the greatness of divine wisdom, and are carried away by profane audacity. If, then, we would render approved of God the confession of our faith, all boasting must be put aside, all contention must be relinquished.

Having a good conscience. What we say without a corresponding life has but little weight; hence he joins to confession a good conscience. For we see that many are sufficiently ready with their tongue, and prate much, very freely, and yet with no fruit, because the life does not correspond. Besides, the integrity of conscience alone is that which gives us confidence in speaking as we ought; for they who prattle much about the gospel, and whose dissolute life is a proof of their impiety, not only make themselves objects of ridicule, but also expose the truth itself to the slanders of the ungodly. For why did he before bid us to be ready to defend the faith, should any one require from us a reason for it, except that it is our duty to vindicate the truth of God against those false suspicions which the ignorant entertain respecting it. But the defense of the tongue will avail but little, except the life corresponds with it.

He therefore says, *that they may be ashamed*, who blame your good conversation in Christ, and who speak against you as evil-doers; as though he had said, “If your adversaries have nothing to allege against you, except that you follow Christ, they will at length be ashamed of their malicious wickedness, or at least, your innocence will be sufficient to confute them.”

<600317> 1 PETER 3:17-18	
17. For <i>it is better</i> , if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing, than for evil-doing.	17. Praestat enim benefaciendo (si ita fert voluntas Dei) pati quàm malefaciendo:
18. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:	18. Quia et Christus semel pro peccatis passus est, justus pro injustis, ut nos adduceret Deo; mortificatus quidem carne, vivificatus autem spiritu.

17. *For it is better.* This belongs not only to what follows but to the whole context. He had spoken of the profession of faith, which at that time was attended with great danger; he says now that it is much better, if they sustained any loss in defending a good cause, to suffer thus unjustly than to be punished for their evil deeds. This consolation is understood rather by secret meditation, than by many words. It is what indeed occurs everywhere in profane authors, that there is a sufficient defense in a good

conscience, whatever evils may happen, and must be endured. These have spoken courageously; but then the only really bold man is he who looks to God. Therefore Peter added this clause, *If the will of God be so*. For in these words he reminds us, that if we suffer unjustly, it is not by chance, but according to the divine will; and he assumes, that God wills nothing or appoints nothing but for the best reason. Hence the faithful have always this comfort in their miseries, that they know that they have God as their witness, and that they also know that they are led by him to the contest, in order that they may under his protection give a proof of their faith.

18. *For Christ also.* It is another comfort, that if in our afflictions we are conscious of having done well, we suffer according to the example of Christ; and it hence follows that we are blessed. At the same time he proves, from the design of Christ's death, that it is by no means consistent with our profession that we should suffer for our evil deeds. For he teaches us that Christ suffered in order to bring us to God. What does this mean, except that we have been thus consecrated to God by Christ's death, that we may live and die to him?

There are, then, two parts in this sentence; the first is, that persecutions ought to be borne with resignation, because the Son of God shews the way to us; and the other is, that since we have been consecrated to God's service by the death of Christ, it behoves us to suffer, not for our faults, but for righteousness' sake.

Here, however, a question may be raised, Does not God chastise the faithful, whenever he suffers them to be afflicted? To this I answer, that it indeed often happens, that God punishes them according to what they deserve; and this is not denied by Peter; but he reminds us what a comfort it is to have our cause connected with God. And how God does not punish sins in them who endure persecution for the sake of righteousness, and in what sense they are said to be innocent, we shall see in the next chapter.

Being put to death in the flesh. Now this is a great thing, that we are made conformable to the Son of God, when we suffer without cause; but there is added another consolation, that the death of Christ had a blessed issue; for though he suffered through the weakness of the flesh, he yet rose again through the power of the Spirit. Then the cross of Christ was not prejudicial, nor his death, since life obtained the victory. This was said (as Paul also reminds us in ^{<470410>}2 Corinthians 4:10) that we may know that

we are to bear in our body the dying of Christ, in order that his life may be manifested in us. *Flesh* here means the outward man; and *Spirit* means the divine power, by which Christ emerged from death a conqueror.

<600319> 1 PETER 3:19-22	
19. By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;	19. In quo et iis qui in specula (vel, in excubiis, vel, carcere) erant spiritibus, profectus prsedicavit;
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.	20. Quum inereduli fuissent olim, quum semel expectabatur Dei patientia in diebus Noe; dum apparabatur arca, in qua paucae, hoc est, octo animae servatae sunt per aquam.
21. The like figure whereunto <i>even</i> baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:	21. Cujus figura respondens baptismus, nos quoque salvos reddit, non abjectio sordium carnis, sed bonae conscientiae examen apud Deum, per resurrectionem Jesu Christi:
22. Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels, and authorities, and powers, being made subject unto him.	22. Qui est in dextera Dei profectus in coelum, subjectis sibi angelis, et potestatibus et virtutibus.

19. *By which also.* Peter added this, that we might know that the vivifying power of the Spirit of which he spoke, was not only put forth as to Christ himself, but is also poured forth with regard to us, as Paul shews in <450505> Romans 5:5. He then says, that Christ did not rise only for himself, but that he made known to others the same power of his Spirit, so that it penetrated to the dead. It hence follows, that we shall not less feel it in vivifying whatever is mortal in us.

But as the obscurity of this passage has produced, as usual, various explanations, I shall first disprove what has been brought forward by some, and secondly, we shall seek its genuine and true meaning.

Common has been the opinion that Christ's descent into hell is here referred to; but the words mean no such thing; for there is no mention made of the soul of Christ, but only that he went by the Spirit: and these are very different things, that Christ's soul went, and that Christ preached by the power of the Spirit. Then Peter expressly mentioned *the Spirit*, that he might take away the notion of what may be called a real presence.

Others explain this passage of the apostles, that Christ by their ministry appeared to the dead, that is, to unbelievers. I, indeed, allow that Christ by means of his apostles went by his Spirit to those who were kept as it were in prison; but this exposition appears incorrect on several accounts: First, Peter says that Christ went *to spirits*, by which he means souls separated from their bodies, for living men are never called spirits; and secondly, what Peter repeats in the fourth chapter on the same subject, does not admit of such an allegory. Therefore the words must be properly understood of the dead. Thirdly, it seems very strange, that Peter, speaking of the apostles, should immediately, as though forgetting himself, go back to the time of Noah. Certainly this mode of speaking would be most unsuitable. Then this explanation cannot be right.

Moreover, the strange notion of those who think that unbelievers as to the coming of Christ, were after his death freed from their sin, needs no long refutation; for it is an indubitable doctrine of Scripture, that we obtain not salvation in Christ except by faith; then there is no hope left for those who continue to death unbelieving. They speak what is somewhat more probable, who say, that the redemption obtained by Christ availed the dead, who in the time of Noah were long unbelieving, but repented a short time before they were drowned by the deluge. They then understood that they suffered in the flesh the punishment due to their perverseness, and yet were saved by Christ, so that they did not perish for ever. But this interpretation cannot stand; it is indeed inconsistent with the words of the passage, for Peter ascribes salvation only to the family of Noah, and gives over to ruin all who were not within the ark.

I therefore have no doubt but Peter speaks generally, that the manifestation of Christ's grace was made to godly spirits, and that they were thus endued with the vital power of the Spirit. Hence there is no reason to fear that it will not flow to us. But it may be inquired, Why he puts in prison the souls of the godly after having quitted their bodies? It

seems to me that φυλακή rather means a watchtower in which watchmen stand for the purpose of watching, or the very act of watching. for it is often so taken by Greek authors; and the meaning would be very appropriate, that godly souls were watching in hope of the salvation promised them, as though they saw it afar off. Nor is there a doubt but that the holy fathers in life, as well as after death, directed their thoughts to this object. But if the word *prison* be preferred, it would not be unsuitable; for, as while they lived, the Law, according to Paul, (<480323> Galatians 3:23,) was a sort of prison in which they were kept; so after death they must have felt the same desire for Christ; for the spirit of liberty had not as yet been fully given. Hence this anxiety of expectation was to them a kind of prison.

Thus far the Apostle's words seem to agree together, and with the thread of the argument; but what follows is attended with some difficulty; for he does not mention the faithful here, but only the unbelieving; and this seems to overturn the preceding exposition. Some have for this reason been led to think that no other thing is said here, but that the unbelieving, who had formerly persecuted the godly, found the Spirit of Christ an accuser, as though Peter consoled the faithful with this argument, that Christ, even when dead, punished them. But their mistake is discovered by what we shall see in the next chapter, that the Gospel was preached to the dead, that they might live according to God in the spirit, which peculiarly applies to the faithful. And it is further certain that he repeats there what he now says. Besides, they have not considered that what Peter meant was especially this, that as the power of the Spirit of Christ shewed itself to be vivifying in him, and was known as such by the dead, so it will be towards us.

Let us, however, see why it is that he mentions only the unbelieving; for he seems to say, that Christ in spirit appeared to those who formerly were unbelieving; but I understand him otherwise, that then the true servants of God were mixed together with the unbelieving, and were almost hidden on account of their number. I allow that the Greek construction is at variance with this meaning, for Peter, if he meant this, ought to have used the genitive case absolute. But as it was not unusual with the Apostles to put one case instead of another, and as we see that Peter here heaps together many things, and no other suitable meaning can be elicited, I have no hesitation in giving this explanation of this intricate passage; so that

readers may understand that those called unbelieving are different from those to whom he said the Gospel was preached.

After having then said that Christ was manifested to the dead, he immediately adds, *When there were formerly unbelievers*; by which he intimated, that it was no injury to the holy fathers that they were almost hidden through the vast number of the ungodly. For he meets, as I think, a doubt, which might have harassed the faithful of that day. They saw almost the whole world filled with unbelievers, that they enjoyed all authority, and that life was in their power. This trial might have shaken the confidence of those who were shut up, as it were, under the sentence of death. Therefore Peter reminds them, that the condition of the fathers was not different, and that though the multitude of the ungodly then covered the whole earth, their life was yet preserved in safety by the power of God.

He then comforted the godly, lest they should be cast down and destroyed because they were so few; and he chose an example the most remarkable in antiquity, even that of the world drowned by the deluge; for then in the common ruin of mankind, the family of Noah alone escaped. And he points out the manner, and says that it was a kind of baptism. There is then in this respect also nothing unsuitable.

The sum of what is said is this, that the world has always been full of unbelievers, but that the godly ought not to be terrified by their vast number; for though Noah was surrounded on every side by the ungodly, and had very few as his friends, he was not yet drawn aside from the right course of his faith. ^{f43}

When once the long-suffering of God waited. This ought to be applied to the ungodly, whom God's patience rendered more slothful; for when God deferred his vengeance and did not immediately execute it, the ungodly boldly disregarded all threatenings; but Noah, on the contrary, being warned by God, had the deluge for a long time before his eyes. Hence his assiduity in building the ark; for being terrified by God's judgment, he shook off all torpidity.

21. *The like figure whereunto.* I fully think that the relative ought to be read in the dative case, and that it has happened, through a mistake, that ♂ is put, and not ♀. The meaning, however, is not ambiguous, that Noah,

saved by water, had a sort of baptism. And this the Apostle mentions, that the likeness between him and us might appear more evident. It has already been said that the design of this clause is to shew that we ought not to be led away by wicked examples from the fear of God, and the right way of salvation, and to mix with the world. This is made evident in baptism, in which we are buried together with Christ, so that, being dead to the world, and to the flesh, we may live to God. On this account, he says that our baptism is an antitype (ἀντίτυπον) to the baptism of Noah, not that Noah's baptism was the first pattern, and ours an inferior figure, as the word is taken in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the ceremonies of the law are said to be antitypes of heavenly things, (<580904> Hebrews 9:4.) Greek writers apply the same word to sacraments, so that, when they speak of the mystical bread of the holy Supper, they call it the antitype. But here there is no comparison made between the greater and the less; the Apostle only means that there is a likeness, and as they commonly say, a correspondence. Perhaps it might more properly be said to be correspondency, (ἀντίστροφον,) as Aristotle makes Dialectics to be the antistrophè of Rhetoric. But we need not labor about words, when there is an agreement about the thing itself. As Noah, then, obtained life through death, when in the ark, he was enclosed not otherwise than as it were in the grave, and when the whole world perished, he was preserved together with his small family; so at this day, the death which is set forth in baptism, is to us an entrance into life, nor can salvation be hoped for, except we be separated from the world.

Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh. This was added, because it might be that the greatest part of men would profess the name of Christ; and so it is with us, almost all are introduced into the church by baptism. Thus, what he had said before would not be appropriate, that few at this day are saved by baptism, as God saved only eight by the ark. This objection Peter anticipates, when he testifies that he speaks not of the naked sign, but that the effect must also be connected with it, as though he had said, that what happened in the age of Noah would always be the case, that mankind would rush on to their own destruction, but that the Lord would in a wonderful way deliver His very small flock.

We now see what this connection means; for some one might object and say, "Our baptism is widely different from that of Noah, for it happens that most are at this day baptized." To this he replies, that the external

symbol is not sufficient, except baptism be received really and effectually: and the reality of it will be found only in a few. It hence follows that we ought carefully to see how men commonly act when we rely on examples, and that we ought not to fear though we may be few in number.

But the fanatics, such as Schuencfeldius, absurdly pervert this testimony, while they seek to take away from sacraments all their power and effect. For Peter did not mean here to teach that Christ's institution is vain and inefficacious, but only to exclude hypocrites from the hope of salvation, who, as far as they can, deprave and corrupt baptism. Moreover, when we speak of sacraments, two things are to be considered, the sign and the thing itself. In baptism the sign is water, but the thing is the washing of the soul by the blood of Christ and the mortifying of the flesh. The institution of Christ includes these two things. Now that the sign appears often inefficacious and fruitless, this happens through the abuse of men, which does not take away the nature of the sacrament. Let us then learn not to tear away the thing signified from the sign. We must at the same time beware of another evil, such as prevails among the Papists; for as they distinguish not as they ought between the thing and the sign, they stop at the outward element, and on that fix their hope of salvation. Therefore the sight of the water takes away their thoughts from the blood of Christ and the power of the Spirit. They do not regard Christ as the only author of all the blessings therein offered to us; they transfer the glory of his death to the water, they tie the secret power of the Spirit to the visible sign.

What then ought we to do? Not to separate what has been joined together by the Lord. We ought to acknowledge in baptism a spiritual washing, we ought to embrace therein the testimony of the remission of sin and the pledge of our renovation, and yet so as to leave to Christ his own honor, and also to the Holy Spirit; so that no part of our salvation should be transferred to the sign. Doubtless when Peter, having mentioned baptism, immediately made this exception, that it is not the putting off of the filth of the flesh, he sufficiently shewed that baptism to some is only the outward act, and that the outward sign of itself avails nothing.

But the answer of a good conscience. The word *question*, or questioning, is to be taken here for "answer," or testimony. Now Peter briefly defines the efficacy and use of baptism, when he calls attention to conscience, and expressly requires that confidence which can sustain the sight of God and

can stand before his tribunal. For in these words he teaches us that baptism in its main part is spiritual, and then that it includes the remission of sins and renovation of the old man; for how can there be a good and pure conscience until our old man is reformed, and we be renewed in the righteousness of God? and how can we answer before God, unless we rely on and are sustained by a gratuitous pardon of our sins? In short, Peter intended to set forth the effect of baptism, that no one might glory in a naked and dead sign, as hypocrites are wont to do.

But we must notice what follows, *by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*. By these words he teaches us that we are not to cleave to the element of water, and that what is thereby typified flows from Christ alone, and is to be sought from him. Moreover, by referring to the resurrection, he has regard to the doctrine which he had taught before, that Christ was vivified by the Spirit; for the resurrection was victory over death and the completion of our salvation. We hence learn that the death of Christ is not excluded, but is included in his resurrection. We then cannot otherwise derive benefit from baptism, than by having all our thoughts fixed on the death and the resurrection of Christ.

22. *Who is on the right hand of God.* He recommends to us the ascension of Christ unto heaven, lest our eyes should seek him in the world; and this belongs especially to faith. He commends to our notice his session on the Father's right hand, lest we should doubt his power to save us. And what his *sitting* at the right hand of the Father means, we have elsewhere explained, that is, that Christ exercises supreme power everywhere as God's representative. And an explanation of this is what follows, *angels being made subject to him*; and he adds *powers* and *authorities* only for the sake of amplification, for angels are usually designated by such words. It was then Peter's object to set forth by these high titles the sovereignty of Christ.

CHAPTER 4

<600401> 1 PETER 4:1-5

1. Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;	1. Christo igitur passo pro nobis carne, vos quoque eadem cogitatione armamini; quod scilicet qui passus est in carne, destitit à peccato;
2. That he no longer should live the rest of <i>his</i> time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.	2. Ne amplius hominum concupiscentiis, sed voluntati Dei, quod residuum est temporis in carne, vivat.
3. For the time past of <i>our</i> life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:	3. Satis enim nobis est quod anteacto vitae tempore voluntatem gentium patrauerimus, quum ambulaemus in lasciviis, concupiscentiis, comessionibus, potationibus et nefariis idololatriis:
4. Wherein <i>they</i> think it strange that ye run not with <i>them</i> to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of <i>you</i> ;	4. Quod illis videtur insolens, quòd non concurratis in eandem luxus profusionem, ideoque malè loquuntur;
5. Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.	5. Qui reddituri sunt rationem ei qui paratus est judicare vivos et mortuos.

1. *Forasmuch then as Christ.* When he had before set forth Christ before us, he only spoke of the suffering of the cross; for sometimes the cross means mortification, because the outward man is wasted by afflictions, and our flesh is also subdued. But he now ascends higher; for he speaks of the reformation of the whole man. The Scripture recommends to us a twofold likeness to the death of Christ, that we are to be conformed to him in reproaches and troubles, and also that the old man being dead and extinct in

us, we are to be renewed to a spiritual life. (<500310> Philippians 3:10; <450604> Romans 6:4.) Yet Christ is not simply to be viewed as our example, when we speak of the mortification of the flesh; but it is by his Spirit that we are really made conformable to his death, so that it becomes effectual to the crucifying of our flesh. In short, as Peter at the end of the last chapter exhorted us to patience after the example of Christ, because death was to him a passage to life; so now from the same death he deduces a higher doctrine, that we ought to die to the flesh and to the world, as Paul teaches us more at large in the sixth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. He therefore says, *arm yourselves*, or be ye armed, intimating that we are really and effectually supplied with invincible weapons to subdue the flesh, if we partake as we ought of the efficacy of Christ's death.

For he that hath suffered. The particle ὅτι does not, I think, denote here the cause, but is to be taken as explanatory; for Peter sets forth what that thought or mind is with which Christ's death arms us, even that the dominion of sin ought to be abolished in us, so that God may reign in our life. Erasmus has incorrectly, as I think, rendered the word "he who did suffer," (*patiebatur*) applying it to Christ. For it is an indefinite sentence, which generally extends to all the godly, and has the same meaning with the words of Paul in <450607> Romans 6:7,

"He who is dead is justified or freed from sin;"

for both the Apostles intimate, that when we become dead to the flesh, we have no more to do with sin, that it should reign in us, and exercise its power in our life. ^{f44}

It may, however, be objected, that Peter here speaks unsuitably in making us to be conformable to Christ in this respect, that we suffer in the flesh; for it is certain that there was nothing sinful in Christ which required to be corrected. But the answer is obvious, that it is not necessary that a comparison should correspond in all its parts. It is then enough that we should in a measure be made conformable to the death of Christ. In the same way is also explained, not unfitly, what Paul says, that we are planted in the likeness of his death, (<450605> Romans 6:5;) for the manner is not altogether the same, but that his death is become in a manner the type and pattern of our mortification.

We must also notice that the word *flesh* is put here twice, but in a different sense; for when he says that Christ suffered in the flesh, he means that the human nature which Christ had taken from us was made subject to death, that is, that Christ as a man naturally died. In the second clause, which refers to us, *flesh* means the corruption, and the sinfulness of our nature; and thus suffering in the flesh signifies the denying of ourselves. We now see what is the likeness between Christ and us, and what is the difference; that as he suffered in the flesh taken from us, so the whole of our flesh ought to be crucified.

2. *That he no longer.* Here he sets forth the way of ceasing from sin, that renouncing the covetings of men we should study to form our life according to the will of God. And thus he includes here the two things in which renovation consists, the destruction of the flesh and the vivification of the spirit. The course of good living is thus to begin with the former, but we are to advance to the latter.

Moreover, Peter defines here what is the rule of right living, even when man depends on the will of God. It hence follows, that nothing is right and well ordered in man's life as soon as he wanders from this rule. We ought further to notice the contrast between *God's will* and the *covetings* or lusts of *men*. We hence understand how great is our depravity, and how we ought to strive to become obedient to God. When he says, *the rest of time in the flesh*, the word *flesh* means the present life, as in ^{<580507>} Hebrews 5:7.

3. *For the time past of our life may suffice.* Peter does not mean that we ought to be wearied with pleasures, as those are wont to be who are filled with them to satiety; but that on the contrary the memory of our past life ought to stimulate us to repentance. And doubtless it ought to be the sharpest goad to make us run on well, when we recollect that we have been wandering from the right way the greatest part of our life. And Peter reminds us, that it would be most unreasonable were we not to change the course of our life after having been enlightened by Christ. For he makes a distinction here between the time of ignorance and the time of faith, as though he had said that it was but right that they should become new and different men from the time that Christ had called them. But instead of the *lusts* or covetings of men, he now mentions *the will of the Gentiles*, by

which he reproves the Jews for having mixed with the Gentiles in all their pollutions, though the Lord had separated them from the Gentiles.

In what follows he shews that those vices ought to be put off which prove men to be blind and ignorant of God. And there is a peculiar emphasis in the words, *the time past of our life*, for he intimates that we ought to persevere to the end, as when Paul says, that Christ was raised from the dead, to die no more. (<450606>Romans 6:6.) For we have been redeemed by the Lord for this end, that we may serve him all the days of our life.

In lasciviousness. He does not give the whole catalogue of sins, but only mentions some of them, by which we may briefly learn what those things are which men, not renewed by God's Spirit, desire and seek, and to which they are inclined. And he names the grosser vices, as it is usually done when examples are adduced. I shall not stop to explain the words, for there is no difficulty in them.

But here a question arises, that Peter seems to have done wrong to many, in making all men guilty of lasciviousness, dissipation, lusts, drunkenness, and revellings; for it is certain that all were not involved in these vices; nay, we know that some among the Gentiles lived honourably and without a spot of infamy. To this I reply, that Peter does not so ascribe these vices to the Gentiles, as though he charged every individual with all these, but that we are by nature inclined to all these evils, and not only so, but that we are so much under the power of depravity, that these fruits which he mentions necessarily proceed from it as from an evil root. There is indeed no one who has not within him the seed of all vices, but all do not germinate and grow up in every individual. Yet the contagion is so spread and diffused through the whole human race, that the whole community appears infected with innumerable evils, and that no member is free or pure from the common corruption.

The last clause may also suggest another question, for Peter addressed the Jews, and yet he says that they had been immersed in abominable idolatries; but the Jews then living in every part of the world carefully abstained from idols. A twofold answer may be adduced here, either that by mentioning the whole for a part, he declares of all what belonged to a few, (for there is no doubt but the Churches to which he wrote were made up of Gentiles as well as of Jews,) or that he calls those superstitions in which the Jews were then involved, idolatries; for though they professed

to worship the God of Israel, yet we know that no part of divine worship was genuine among them. And how great must have been the confusion in barbarous countries and among a scattered people, when Jerusalem itself, from whose rays they borrowed their light, had fallen into extreme impiety! for we know that dotages of every kind prevailed with impunity, so that the high-priesthood, and the whole government of the Church, were in the power of the Sadducees.

4. *Wherein they think it strange.* The words of Peter literally are these, “In which they are strangers, you not running with them into the same excess of riot, blaspheming.” But the word, to be strangers, means to stop at a thing as new and unusual. This is a way of speaking which the Latins also sometimes use, as when Cicero says that he was a stranger in the city, because he knew not what was carried on there. But in this place, Peter fortifies the faithful, lest they should suffer themselves to be disturbed or corrupted by the perverse judgments or words of the ungodly. For it is no light temptation, when they among whom we live, charge us that our life is different from that of mankind in general. “These,” they say, “must form for themselves a new world, for they differ from all mankind.” Thus they accuse the children of God, as though they attempted a separation from the whole world.

Then the Apostle anticipated this, and forbade the faithful to be discouraged by such reproaches and calumnies; and he proposed to them, as a support, the judgment of God: for this it is that can sustain us against all assaults, that is, when we patiently wait for that day, in which Christ will punish all those who now presumptuously condemn us, and will shew that we and our cause are approved by Him. And he expressly mentions *the living and the dead*, lest we should think that we shall suffer any loss, if they remain alive when we are dead; for they shall not, for this reason, escape the hand of God. And in what sense he calls them the living and the dead, we may learn from the fifteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians.

<600406> 1 PETER 4:6-11

6. For, 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.

6. In hoc enim et mortuis evangelizatus fuit (vel, praedicatum fuit evangelium,) ut judicentur quidem secundum homines carne, vivant autem secundum Deum spiritu.

7. But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

7. Porro omnium finis propinquus est: sobrii itaque estote, et vigilantes ad precandum.

8. And above all things, have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

8. Ante omnia vero charitatem inter vos intentam habentes; quia caritas operiet multitudinem peccatorum.

9. Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

9. Invicem hospitales sine murmurationibus.

10. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

10. Ut quisque acceperit donum, ministrantes illud inter vos, tanquam boni dispensatores multiplicis gratiae Dei.

11. If any speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ: to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

11. Siquis loquitur, loquatur tanquam eloquia Dei; siquis ministrat, tanquam ex virtute quam suppeditat Deus; ut in omnibus glorificetur Deus per Jesum Christum; cui est gloria et imperium in secula seculorum. Amen.

6. *For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead*, or, He has been evangelized to the dead. We see in what sense he takes the former passage in the third chapter, even that death does not hinder Christ from being always our defender. It is then a remarkable consolation to the godly, that death itself brings no loss to their salvation. Though Christ, then, may not appear a deliverer in this life, yet his redemption is not void,

or without effect; for his power extends to the dead. But as the Greek word is doubtful, it may be rendered in the masculine, or in the neuter gender; but the meaning is almost the same, that is, that Christ had been made known as a redeemer to the dead, or that salvation had been made known to them by the gospel. But if the grace of Christ once penetrated to the dead, there is no doubt but that we shall partake of it when dead. We then set for it limits much too narrow, if we confine it to the present life.

That they might be judged. I omit the explanations of others, for they seem to me to be very remote from the Apostle's meaning. This has been said, as I think, by way of anticipation, for it might have been objected, that the gospel is of no benefit to the dead, as it does not restore them to life. Peter concedes a part of this objection, and yet in such a way, that they are not deprived of the salvation obtained by Christ. Therefore, in the first clause, when he says, "that they might be judged in the flesh, according to men," it is a concession; and "judged" means here, as often elsewhere, condemned; and *flesh* is the outward man. So that the meaning is, that though according to the estimation of the world the dead suffer destruction in their flesh, and are deemed condemned as to the outward man, yet they cease not to live with God, and that in their spirit, because Christ quickens them by his Spirit.

But we ought to add what Paul teaches us in ^{<450810>}Romans 8:10, that the Spirit is life; and hence it will be, that he will at length absorb the relics of death which still cleave to us. The sum of what he says is, that though the condition of the dead in the flesh is worse, according to man, yet it is enough that the Spirit of Christ revives them, and will eventually lead them to the perfection of life. ^{f45}

7. *But*, or, moreover, *the end of all things is at hand.* Though the faithful hear that their felicity is elsewhere than in the world, yet, as they think that they should live long, this false thought renders them careless, and even slothful, so that they direct not their thoughts to the kingdom of God. Hence the Apostle, that he might rouse them from the drowsiness of the flesh, reminds them that the end of all things was nigh; by which he intimates that we ought not to sit still in the world, from which we must soon remove. He does not, at the same time, speak only of the end of individuals, but of the universal renovation of the world; as though he had said, "Christ will shortly come, who will put an end to all things."

It is, then, no wonder that the cares of this world overwhelm us, and make us drowsy, if the view of present things dazzles our eyes: for we promise, almost all of us, an eternity to ourselves in this world; at least, the end never comes to our mind. But were the trumpet of Christ to sound in our ears, it would powerfully rouse us and not suffer us to lie torpid.

But it may be objected and said, that a long series of ages has passed away since Peter wrote this, and yet that the end is not come. My reply to this is, that the time seems long to us, because we measure its length by the spaces of this fleeting life; but if we could understand the perpetuity of future life, many ages would appear to us like a moment, as Peter will also tell us in his second epistle. Besides, we must remember this principle, that from the time when Christ once appeared, there is nothing left for the faithful, but with suspended minds ever to look forward to his second coming. ^{f46}

The *watchfulness* and the *sobriety* to which he exhorted them, belong, as I think, to the mind rather than to the body. The words are similar to those of Christ:

“Watch ye, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.” (<402513>Matthew 25:13.)

For as an indulgence in surfeiting and sleep renders the body unfit for its duties, so the vain cares and pleasures of the world inebriate the mind and render it drowsy.

By adding *prayer*, he points out an exercise especially necessary, in which the faithful ought to be particularly occupied, since their whole strength depends on the Lord; as though he had said, “*Since* ye are in yourselves extremely weak, seek of the Lord to strengthen you.” He yet reminds them that they were to pray earnestly, not formally.

8. And above all things. He commends charity or love as the first thing, for it is the bond of perfection. And he bids it to be *fervent*, or intense, or vehement, which is the same thing; for whosoever is immoderately fervent in self-love, loves others coldly. And he commends it on account of its fruit, because it buries innumerable sins, than which nothing is more desirable. But the sentence is taken from Solomon, whose words are found in <201012>Proverbs 10:12,

“Hatred discovers reproaches, but love covers a multitude of sins.”

What Solomon meant is sufficiently clear, for the two clauses contain things which are set in contrast the one with the other. As then he says in the first clause that hatred is the cause why men traduce and defame one another, and spread whatever is reproachful and dishonorable; so it follows that a contrary effect is ascribed to love, that is, that men who love one another, kindly and courteously forgive one another; hence it comes that, willingly burying each other's vices, one seeks to preserve the honor of another. ^{f47} Thus Peter confirms his exhortation, that nothing is more necessary than to cherish mutual love. For who is there that has not many faults? Therefore all stand in need of forgiveness, and there is no one who does not wish to be forgiven.

This singular benefit love brings to us when it exists among us, so that innumerable evils are covered in oblivion. On the other hand, where loose reins are given to hatred, men by mutual biting and tearing must necessarily consume one another, as Paul says (<480515> Galatians 5:15.)

And it ought to be noticed that Solomon does not say that only a few sins are covered, but a multitude of sins, according to what Christ declares, when he bids us to forgive our brethren seventy times seven, (<401822> Matthew 18:22.) But the more sins love covers, the more evident appears its usefulness for the wellbeing of mankind.

This is the plain meaning of the words. It hence appears how absurd are the Papists, who seek to elicit from this passage their own satisfactions, as though almsgiving and other duties of charity were a sort of a compensation to God for blotting out their sins. ^{f48} It is enough to point out by the way their gross ignorance, for in a matter so clear it would be superfluous to add many words.

9. Use *hospitality*, or, Be hospitable. After having generally exhorted them to love one another, he specially mentions one of the duties of love. At that time hospitality was commonly used, and it was deemed in a manner a sacred kind of humanity, as we have stated elsewhere. He then bids them mutually to exercise it, so that no one might require more from others than what he himself was prepared to render. He adds, *without murmurings*, for it is a rare example that one spends himself and his own on his neighbor

without any disparaging reflection. Then the Apostle would have us to show kindness willingly and with a cheerful mind.

10. *As every one hath received.* He reminds us what we ought to bear in mind when we do good to our neighbors; for nothing is more fitted to correct our murmurings than to remember that we do not give our own, but only dispense what God has committed to us. When therefore he says, “Minister the gift which every one has received,” he intimates that to each had been distributed what they had, on this condition, that in helping their brethren they might be the ministers of God. And thus the second clause is an explanation of the first, for instead of ministry he mentions stewardship; and for what he had said, “as every one hath received the gift,” he mentions the manifold graces which God variously distributes to us, so that each might confer in common his own portion. If then we excel others in any gift, let us remember that we are as to this the stewards of God, in order that we may kindly impart it to our neighbors as their necessity or benefit may require. Thus we ought to be disposed and ready to communicate.

But this consideration is also very important, that the Lord hath so divided his manifold graces, that no one is to be content with one thing and with his own gifts, but every one has need of the help and aid of his brother. This, I say, is a bond which God hath appointed for retaining friendship among men, for they cannot live without mutual assistance. Thus it happens, that he who in many things seeks the aid of his brethren, ought to communicate to them more freely what he has received. This bond of unity has been observed and noticed by heathens. But Peter teaches us here that God had designedly done this, that he might bind men one to another.

11. *If any man speak.* As he had spoken of the right and faithful use of gifts, he specifies two things as examples, and he has chosen those which are the most *excellent* or the most renowned. The office of teaching in the Church is a remarkable instance of God’s favor. He then expressly commands those called to this office to act faithfully; though he does not speak here only of what we owe to men, but also of what we owe to God, so that we may not deprive him of his glory.

He who speaks, then, that is, who is rightly appointed by public authority, *let him speak as the oracles of God*; that is, let him reverently in

God's fear and in sincerity perform the charge committed to him, regarding himself as engaged in God's work, and as ministering God's word and not his own. For he still refers to the doctrine, that when we confer any thing on the brethren, we minister to them by God's command what he has bestowed on us for that purpose. And truly, were all those who profess to be teachers in the Church duly to consider this one thing, there would be in them much more fidelity and devotedness. For how great a thing is this, that in teaching the oracles of God, they are representatives of Christ! Hence then comes so much carelessness and rashness, because the sacred majesty of God's word is not borne in mind but by a few; and so they indulge themselves as in a worldly stewardship.

In the meantime, we learn from these words of Peter, that it is not lawful for those who are engaged in teaching to do anything else, but faithfully to deliver to others, as from hand to hand, the doctrine received from God; for he forbids any one to go forth, except he who is instructed in God's word, and who proclaims infallible oracles as it were from his mouth. He, therefore, leaves no room for human inventions; for he briefly defines the doctrine which ought to be taught in the Church. Nor is the particle of similitude introduced here for the purpose of modifying the sentence, as though it were sufficient to profess that it is God's word that is taught. This was, indeed, commonly the case formerly with false prophets; and we see at this day how arrogantly the Pope and his followers cover with this pretense all their impious traditions. But Peter did not intend to teach pastors such hypocrisy as this, to pretend that they had from God whatever doctrine it pleased them to announce, but, he took an argument from the subject itself, that he might exhort them to sobriety and meekness, to a reverence for God, and to an earnest attention to their work.

If any man minister. This second clause extends wider, it includes the office of teaching. But as it would have been too long to enumerate each of the ministerial works, he preferred summarily to speak of them all together, as though he had said, "Whatever part of the burden thou bearest in the Church, know that thou canst do nothing but what has been given time by the Lord, and that thou art nothing else but an instrument of God: take heed, then, not to abuse the grace of God by exalting thyself; take heed not to suppress the power of God, which puts forth and manifests itself in the ministry for the salvation of the brethren." Let him then

minister *as by God's power*, that is, let him regard nothing as his own, but let him humbly render service to God and his Church.

That God in all things may be glorified. When he says, *In all*, the word may be in the masculine or in the neuter gender; and thus men or gifts may be meant, and both meanings are equally suitable. The sense is, that God does not adorn us with his gifts, that he may rob himself and make himself as it were an empty idol by transferring to us his own glory, but that, on the contrary, his own glory may everywhere shine forth; and that it is therefore a sacrilegious profanation of God's gifts when men propose to themselves any other object than to glorify God. He says *through Jesus Christ*, because whatever power we have to minister, he alone bestows it on us; for he is the head, with which the whole body is connected by joints and bindings, and maketh increase in the Lord, according as he supplieth strength to every member.

To whom be praise, or glory. Some refer this to Christ; but the context requires that it should be rather applied to God; for he confirms the last exhortation, because God justly claims all the glory; and, therefore, men wickedly take away from him what is his own, when they obscure in anything, or in any part, his glory.

<600412> 1 PETER 4:12-17

12. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:	12. Dilecti, ne miramini quum exploramini per ignem ad probationem vestri, perinde ac si novum aliquid vobis obtingat:
13. But rejoyce, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.	13. Seal quatenus consortes estis passionurn Christi gaudere; ut in revelatione quoque glorie ejus gau deatis exultantes.
14. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.	14. Si probris afficimini in nomine Christi, beati estis, quoniam Spiritus glorie et Dei super vos requiescit; secundum ipsos quidem contumelia afflicitur, secundun vos aut em glorificatur.
15. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busy-body in other men's matters.	15. Ne quis enim vestrum patiatur, ut homicida, aut fur, aut maleficus, ant cupidè rebus alienis inhians.
16. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.	16. Si autem ut Christianus, ne pudefiat, imo glorificet Deum in hac parte.
17. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God : —	17. Quandoquidem et tempus est, ut judicium incipiat a domo Dei:—

12. *Beloved, think it not strange*, or, wonder not. There is a frequent mention made in this Epistle of afflictions; the cause of which we have elsewhere explained. But this difference is to be observed, that when he exhorts the faithful to patience, he sometimes speaks generally of troubles common to man's life; but here he speaks of wrongs done to the faithful for the name of Christ. And first, indeed, he reminded them that they ought not to have deemed it strange as for a thing sudden and unexpected; by which he intimates, that they ought by a long mediation to have been previously prepared to bear the cross. For whosoever has resolved to fight under Christ's banner, will not be dismayed when persecution happens,

but, as one accustomed to it, will patiently bear it. That we may then be in a prepared state of mind when the waves of persecutions roll over us, we ought in due time to habituate ourselves to such an event by meditating continually on the cross.

Moreover, he proves that the cross is useful to us by two arguments, — that God thus tries our faith, — and that we become thus partakers with Christ. Then, in the first place, let us remember that the trial of our faith is most necessary, and that we ought thus willingly to obey God who provides for our salvation. However, the chief consolation is to be derived from a fellowship with Christ. Hence Peter not only forbids us to think it strange, when he sets this before us, but also bids us to rejoice. It is, indeed, a cause of joy, when God tries our faith by persecution; but the other joy far surpasses it, that is, when the Son of God allots to us the same course of life with himself, that he might lead us with himself to a blessed participation of heavenly glory. For we must bear in mind this truth, that we have the dying of Christ in our flesh, that his life may be manifested in us. The wicked also do indeed bear many afflictions; but as they are separated from Christ, they apprehend nothing but God's wrath and curse: thus it comes that sorrow and dread overwhelm them.

Hence, then, is the whole consolation of the godly, that they are associates with Christ, that hereafter they may be partakers of his glory; for we are always to bear in mind this transition from the cross to the resurrection. But as this world is like a labyrinth, in which no end of evils appears, Peter refers to the future revelation of Christ's glory, as though he had said, that the day of its revelation is not to be overlooked, but ought to be expected. But he mentions a twofold joy, one which we now enjoy in hope, and the other the full fruition of which the coming of Christ shall bring to us; for the first is mingled with grief and sorrow, the second is connected with exultation. For it is not suitable in the midst of afflictions to think of joy, which can free us from all trouble; but the consolations of God moderate evils, so that we can rejoice at the same time.

14. *If ye be reproached.* He mentions reproaches, because there is often more bitterness in them than in the loss of goods, or in the torments or agonies of the body; there is therefore nothing which is more grievous to ingenuous minds. For we see that many who are strong to bear want, courageous ill torments, nay, bold to meet death, do yet succumb under

reproach. To obviate this evil, Peter pronounces those blessed, according to what Christ says, (<410835> Mark 8:35,) who are reproached for the sake of the Gospel. This is very contrary to what men commonly think and feel; but he gives a reason, *Because the Spirit of God*, called also the *Spirit of glory, rests* on them. Some read the words separately, “that which belongs to glory,” as though the words were, “*glory* and the Spirit of God.” But the former reading is more suitable as to the sense, and, as to language, more simple. Then Peter shews, that it is no hindrance to the happiness of the godly, that they sustain reproach for the name of Christ, because they nevertheless retain a complete glory in the sight of God, while the Spirit, who has glory ever connected with him, dwells in them. So, what seems to the flesh a paradox, the Spirit of God makes consistent by a sure perception in their minds.

On their part. This is a confirmation of the last sentence; for he intimates that it is enough for the godly, that the Spirit of God testifies that the reproaches endured for the sake of the Gospel, are blessed and full of glory. The wicked, however, attempted to effect a far different object; as though he had said, “Ye can boldly despise the insolence of the ungodly, because the testimony respecting your glory, which God’s Spirit gives you, remains fixed within.” And he says that the *Spirit* of God was reproached, because the unbelieving expose to ridicule whatever he suggests and dictates for our consolation. But this is by anticipation; for however the world in its blindness may see nothing but what is disgraceful in the reproaches of Christ, he would not have the eyes of the godly to be dazzled with this false opinion; but on the contrary they ought to look up to God. Thus he does not conceal what men commonly think; but he sets the hidden perception of faith, which God’s children possess in their own hearts, in opposition to their presumption and insolence. Thus Paul boasted that he had the marks of Christ, and he gloried in his bonds. (<480617> Galatians 6:17.) He had at the same time sufficiently found out what was the judgment formed of them by the world; and yet he intimates that it thought foolishly, and that those are blind together with the world, who esteem the slanders of the flesh glorious.

15. But (or, For) let one of you. Here also he anticipates an objection. He had exhorted the faithful to patience, if it happened to them to be persecuted for the cause of Christ; he now adds the reason why he had only spoken of that kind of trouble, even because they ought to have

abstained from all evil-doing. Here, then, is contained another exhortation, lest they should do anything for which they might seem to be justly punished. Therefore the causal particle is not, here superfluous, since the Apostle wished to give a reason why he so much exhorted the faithful to a fellowship with the sufferings of Christ, and at the same time to remind them by the way to live justly and harmlessly, lest they should bring on themselves a just punishment through their own faults; as though he had said, that it behoved Christians to deserve well of all, even when they were badly and cruelly treated by the world.

Were any one to object and say, that no one can be found to be so innocent but that he deserves for many faults to be chastised by God; to this I reply, that Peter here speaks of sins from which we ought to be entirely freed, such as thefts and murders; and I give further this reply, that the Apostle commands Christians to be such as they ought to be. It is, then, no wonder, that he points out a difference between us and the children of this world, who being without God's Spirit, abandon themselves to every kind of wickedness. He would not have God's children to be in the same condition, so as to draw on themselves by a wicked life the punishment allotted by the laws. But we have already said elsewhere, that though there are always many sins in the elect, which God might justly punish, yet according to his paternal indulgence he spares his own children, so that he does not inflict the punishment they deserve, and that in the meantime, for honour's sake, he adorns them with his own tokens and those of his Christ, when he suffers them to be afflicted for the testimony of the Gospel.

The word *ἄλλοτριεπίσκοπος* seems to me to designate one who covets what belongs to another. For they who gape after plunder or fraud, inquire into affairs of others with tortuous or crooked eyes, as Horace says;^{f49} but the despiser of money, as the same says elsewhere, looks on vast heaps of gold with a straight eye.^{f50}

16. *Yet if* any man suffer *as a Christian*. After having forbidden the Christians to do any hurt or harm, lest for their evil deeds, like the unbelieving, they should become hateful to the world, he now bids them to give thanks to God, if they suffered persecutions for the name of Christ. And truly it is no common kindness from God, that he calls us, freed and exempted from the common punishment of our sins, to so honorable a

warfare as to undergo for the testimony of his Gospel either exiles, or prisons, or reproaches, or even death itself. Then he intimates that those are ungrateful to God, who clamor or murmur on account of persecutions, as though they were unworthily dealt with, since on the contrary they ought to regard it as gain and to acknowledge God's favor.

But when he says, *as a Christian*, he regards not so much the name as the cause. It is certain that the adversaries of Christ omitted nothing in order to degrade the Gospel. Therefore, whatever reproachful words they made use of, it was enough for the faithful, that they suffered for nothing else but for the defense of the Gospel.

On this behalf, or, In this respect. For since all afflictions derive their origin from sin, this thought ought to occur to the godly, "I am indeed worthy to be visited by the Lord with this and even with greater punishment for my sins; but now he would have me to suffer for righteousness, as though I were innocent." For how much soever the saints may acknowledge their own faults, yet as in persecutions they regard a different end, such as the Lord sets before them, they feel that their guilt is blotted out and abolished before God. *On this behalf*, then, they have reason to glorify God.

17. *For the time is come*, or, Since also the time is come. He amplifies the consolation, which the goodness of the cause for which we suffer brings to us, while we are afflicted for the name of Christ. For this necessity, he says, awaits the whole Church of God, not only to be subject to the common miseries of men, but especially and mainly to be chastised by the hand of God. Then, with more submission, ought persecutions for Christ to be endured. For except we desire to be blotted out from the number of the faithful, we must submit our backs to the scourges of God. Now, it is a sweet consolation, that God does not execute his judgments on us as on others, but that he makes us the representatives of his own Son, when we do not suffer except for his cause and for his name.

Moreover, Peter took this sentence from the common and constant teaching of Scripture; and this seems more probable to me than that a certain passage, as some think, is referred to. It was formerly usual with the Lord, as all the prophets witness, to exhibit the first examples of his chastisements in his own people, as the head of a family corrects his own children rather than those of strangers. (<231012> Isaiah 10:12.) For though God is the judge of the whole world, yet he would have his providence to

be especially acknowledged in the government of his own Church. Hence, when he declares that he would rise up to be the judge of the whole world, he adds that this would be after he had completed his work on Mount Sion. He indeed puts forth his hand indifferently against his own people and against strangers; for we see that both are in common subjected to adversities; and if a comparison be made, he seems in a manner to spare the reprobate, and to be severe towards the elect. Hence the complaints of the godly, that the wicked pass their life in continual pleasures, and delight themselves with wine and the harp, and at length descend without pains in an instant into the grave — that fatness covers their eyes — that they are exempt from troubles — that they securely and joyfully spend their life, looking down with contempt on others, so that they dare to set their mouth against heaven. (<182113> Job 21:13; <197303> Psalm 73:3-9.) In short, God so regulates his judgments in this world, that he fattens the wicked for the day of slaughter. He therefore passes by their many sins, and, as it were, connives at them. In the meantime, he restores by corrections his own children, for whom he has a *care*, to the right way, whenever they depart from it.

In this sense it is that Peter says that judgment begins at the house of God; for judgment includes all those punishments which the Lord inflicts on men for their sins, and whatever refers to the reformation of the world.

But why does he say that it was *now the time*? He means, as I think, what the prophets declare concerning his own time, that it especially belonged to Christ's kingdom, that the beginning of the reformation should be in the Church. Hence Paul says that Christians, without the hope of a resurrection, would of all men be the most miserable, (<461519> 1 Corinthians 15:19;) and justly so, because, while others indulge themselves without fear, the faithful continually sigh and groan; while God connives at the sins of others, and suffers them to continue torpid, he deals rigidly with his own people, and subjects them to the discipline of the cross.

<600417> 1 PETER 4:17-19

17. — And if *it* first *begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God?

17. — Si autem primum a nobis, quis finis eorum qui non obediunt evangelio Dei?

18. And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

18. Et si iustus vix servatur, impius et peccator ubi apparebunt?

19. 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.

19. Itaque qui patiuntur secundum Dei voluntatem, tanquam fidei possessori commendent animas suas benefaciendo.

When the faithful see that it is well with the wicked, they are necessarily tempted to be envious; and this is a very dangerous trial; for present happiness is what all desire. Hence the Spirit of God carefully dwells on this, in many places, as well as in the thirty-seventh Psalm, lest the faithful should envy the prosperity of the ungodly. The same is what Peter speaks of, for he shews that afflictions ought to be calmly borne by the children of God, when they compare the lot of others with their own. But he takes it as granted that God is the judge of the world, and that, therefore, no one can escape his hand with impunity. He hence infers, that a dreadful vengeance will soon overtake those whose condition seems now favorable. The design of what he says, as I have already stated, is to shew that the children of God should not faint under the bitterness of present evils, but that they ought, on the contrary, calmly to bear their afflictions for a short time, as the issue will be salvation, while the ungodly will have to exchange a fading and fleeting prosperity for eternal perdition.

But the argument is from the less to the greater; for if God spares not his own children whom he loves and who obey him, how dreadful will be his severity against enemies and such as are rebellious! There is, then, nothing better than to obey the Gospel, so that God may kindly correct us by his paternal hand for our salvation.

18. *And if the righteous.* It has been thought that this sentence is taken from ^{<201131>}Proverbs 11:31; for the Greek translators have thus rendered what Solomon says,

“Behold, the just shall on the earth be recompensed; how much more the ungodly and the sinner?”

Now, whether Peter intended to quote this passage, or repeated a common and a proverbial saying, (which seems to me more probable,) ^{f51} the meaning is, that God’s judgment would be dreadful against the ungodly, since the way to salvation was so thorny and difficult to the elect. And this is said, lest we should securely indulge ourselves, but carefully proceed in our course, and lest we should also seek the smooth and easy road, the end of which is a terrible precipice.

But when he says, that a *righteous man is scarcely saved*, he refers to the difficulties of the present life, for our course in the world is like a dangerous sailing between many rocks, and exposed to many storms and tempests; and thus no one arrives at the port, except he who has escaped from thousand deaths. It is in the meantime certain that we are guided by God’s hand, and that we are in no danger of shipwreck as long as we have him as our pilot.

Absurd, then, are those interpreters who think that we shall be hardly and with difficulty saved, when we shall come before God in judgment; for it is the present and not the future time that Peter refers to; nor does he speak of God’s strictness or rigour, but shews how many and what arduous difficulties must be surmounted by the Christian before he reaches the goal. *Sinner* here means a *wicked man* ^{f52} and the righteous are not those who are altogether perfect in righteousness, but who strive to live righteously.

19. *Wherefore let them that suffer.* He draws this conclusion, that persecutions ought to be submissively endured, for the condition of the godly in them is much happier than that of the unbelieving, who enjoy prosperity to their utmost wishes. He, however, reminds us that we suffer nothing except according to the permission of God, which tends much to comfort us; when he says, *Let them commit themselves to God*, it is the same as though he had said, “Let them deliver themselves and their life to the safe keeping of God.” And he calls him a *faithful possessor*, because he

faithfully keeps and defends whatever is under his protection or power. Some render the word “Creator;” and the term κτίστης means both; but the former meaning I prefer, for by bidding us to deposit our life with God, he makes him its safe keeper. He adds, *in well-doing*, lest the faithful should retaliate the wrongs done to them, but that they might on the contrary contend with the ungodly, who injured them, by well-doing.

CHAPTER 5

<600501> 1 PETER 5:1-4

1. The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:	1. Presbyteros qui inter vos sunt, hortor ego qui simul sum presbyter, et testis passionum Christi, et gloriae quam revelabitur particeps:
2. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof; not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;	2. Pascite, quantum in vobis est, gregem Dei (<i>vel</i> , Christi, <i>vel</i> , Domini,) episcopatu fungentes, non coactè, sed voluntariè; neque turpis lucris causâ, sed liberaliter;
3. Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock:	3. Nec tanquam dominium exercentes adversus clericos, sed ut sitis exemplaria gregis.
4. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.	4. Et quum apparuerit Princeps pastorum, reportabitis immarcescibilem gloriae coronam.

IN exhorting pastors to their duty, he points out especially three vices which are found to prevail much, even sloth, desire of gain, and lust for power. In opposition to the first vice he sets alacrity or a willing attention; to the second, liberality; to the third, moderation and meekness, by which they are to keep themselves in their own rank or station.

He then says that pastors ought not to exercise care over the flock of the Lord, as far only as they are constrained; for they who seek to do no more than what constraint compels them, do their work formally and negligently. Hence he would have them to do willingly what they do, as those who are really devoted to their work. To correct avarice, he bids them to perform their office with a ready mind; for whosoever has not this end in view, to spend himself and his labor disinterestedly and gladly in

behalf of the Church, is not a minister of Christ, but a slave to his own stomach and his purse. The third vice which he condemns is a lust for exercising power or dominion. But it may be asked, what kind of power does he mean? This, as it seems to me, may be gathered from the opposite clause, in which he bids them to be examples to the flock. It is the same as though he had said that they are to preside for this end, to be eminent in holiness, which cannot be, except they humbly subject themselves and their life to the same common rule. What stands opposed to this virtue is tyrannical pride, when the pastor exempts himself from all subjection, and tyrannizes over the Church. It was for this that Ezekiel condemned the false prophets, that is, that they ruled cruelly and tyrannically. (<263404> Ezekiel 34:4.) Christ also condemned the Pharisees, because they laid intolerable burdens on the shoulders of the people which they would not touch, no, not with a finger. (<402304> Matthew 23:4.) This imperious rigour, then, which ungodly pastors exercise over the Church, cannot be corrected, except their authority be restrained, so that they may rule in such a way as to afford an example of a godly life.

1. *The elders.* By this name he designates pastors and all those who are appointed for the government of the Church. But they called them presbyters or elders for honor's sake, not because they were all old in age, but because they were principally chosen from the aged, for old age for the most part has more prudence, gravity, and experience. But as sometimes hoariness is not wisdom, according to a Greek proverb, and as young men are found more fit, such as Timothy, these were also usually called presbyters, after having been chosen into that order. Since Peter calls himself in like manner a *presbyter*, it appears that it was a common name, which is still more evident from many other passages. Moreover, by this title he secured for himself more authority, as though he had said that he had a right to admonish pastors, because he was one of themselves, for there ought to be mutual liberty between colleagues. But if he had the right of primacy he would have claimed it; and this would have been most suitable on the present occasion. But though he was an Apostle, he yet knew that authority was by no means delegated to him over his colleagues, but that on the contrary he was joined with the rest in the participation of the same office.

A witness of the sufferings of Christ. This may be explained of doctrine, yet I prefer to regard it as referring to his own life. At the same time both may

be admitted; but I am more disposed to embrace the latter view, because these two clauses will be more in harmony, — that Peter speaks of the sufferings of Christ in his own flesh, and that he would be also a partaker of his glory. For the passage agrees with that of Paul, “If we suffer together, we shall also reign together.” Besides, it avails much to make us believe his words, that he gave a proof of his faith by enduring the cross. For it hence appears evident that he spoke in earnest; and the Lord, by thus proving his people, seals as it were their ministry, that it might have more honor and reverence among men. Peter, then, had probably this in view, so that he might be heard as the faithful minister of Christ, a proof of which he gave in the persecutions he had suffered, and in the hope which he had of future life. ^{f53}

But we must observe that Peter confidently declares that he would be a partaker of that glory which was not yet revealed; for it is the character of faith to acquiesce in hidden blessings.

2. *Feed the flock of God.* We hence learn what the word presbyter imports, even that it includes the office of feeding. It is for a far different end that the Pope makes presbyters, even that they may daily slay Christ, there being no mention made of feeding in their ordination. Let us then remember to distinguish between the institution of Christ and the confusion of the Pope, it being as different as light is from darkness. Let us also bear in mind the definition given of the word; for the flock of Christ cannot be fed except with pure doctrine, which is alone our spiritual food.

Hence pastors are not mute hypocrites, nor those who spread their own figments, which, like deadly poison, destroy the souls of men.

The words, *as much as it is in you*, mean the same as though he had said, “Apply all your strength to this very thing, and whatever power God has conferred on you.” The old interpreter has given this rendering, “Which is among you;” and this may be the sense of the words: more correct, however, is the rendering of Erasmus, which I have followed, though I do not reject nor disapprove of the other. ^{f54}

The flock of God, or, of the Lord, or, of Christ: it matters little which you take, for the three readings are found in different copies. ^{f55}

Taking the oversight, or, discharging the office of a bishop. Erasmus renders the words, “Taking care of it,” (*curam illius agentes;*) but as the

Greek word is ἐπισκοποῦντες I doubt not but that Peter meant to set forth the office and title of the episcopate. We may learn also from other parts of Scripture that these two names, bishop and presbyter, are synonymous. He then shews how they were rightly to perform the pastoral office, though the word ἐπισκοπεῖν generally means to preside or to oversee. What I have rendered “not constraintally,” is literally, “not necessarily;” for when we act according to what necessity prescribes, we proceed in our work slowly and frigidly, as it were by constraint.

3. *Neither as being lords,* or, as exercising dominion. The preposition kata in Greek is taken, for the most part, in a bad sense: then Peter here condemns unreasonable exercise of power, as the case is with those who consider not themselves to be the ministers of Christ and his Church, but seek something higher. And he calls particular churches “lots,” (*cleros*;) for as the whole body of the Church is the Lord’s heritage, so the churches, scattered through towns and villages, were as so many farms, the culture of which he assigns to each presbyter. Some very ignorantly think that those called clergy are meant here. It was, indeed, an ancient way of speaking, to call the whole order of ministers, clergy; but I wish that it had never occurred to the Fathers to speak thus; for what Scripture ascribes in common to the whole Church, it was by no means right to confine to a few men. And this way of speaking was spurious, at least it was a departure from apostolic usage.

Peter, indeed, expressly gives the churches this title, in order that we may know that whatever men ascribe to themselves is taken away from the Lord, as in many places he calls the Church his peculiar treasure, and the rod of his heritage, when he intends to claim his entire dominion over it; for he never delivers to pastors the government, but only the care, so that his own right remains still complete.

4. *When the chief Shepherd shall appear.* Except pastors retain this end in view, it can by no means be that they will in good earnest proceed in the course of their calling, but will, on the contrary, become often faint; for there are innumerable hindrances which are sufficient to discourage the most prudent. They have often to do with ungrateful men, from whom they receive an unworthy reward; long and great labors are often in vain; Satan sometimes prevails in his wicked devices. Lest, then, the faithful servant of Christ should be broken down, there is for him one and only one

remedy, — to turn his eyes to the coming of Christ. Thus it will be, that he, who seems to derive no encouragement from men, will assiduously go on in his labors, knowing that a great reward is prepared for him by the Lord. And further, lest a protracted expectation should produce languor, he at the same time sets forth the greatness of the reward, which is sufficient to compensate for all delay: *An unfading crown of glory*, he says, awaits you.

It ought also to be observed, that he calls Christ the *chief Pastor*; for we are to rule the Church under him and in his name, in no other way but that he should be still really the Pastor. So the word *chief* here does not only mean the principal, but him whose power all others ought to submit to, as they do not represent him except according to his command and authority.

<600505> 1 PETER 5:5-7	
5. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder: yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.	5. Similiter juniores, subjecti estote senioribus; sic et omnes, alii allis subjjiciamini; humilitatem animi induite; propterea quod Deus superbis resistit, humilibus vero dat gratiam.
6. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:	6. Humiliamini ergo sub potenti manu Dei, ut vos extollat quum erit opportunum;
7. Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.	7. Omni cura vestra in eum conjecta; quoniam illi cura est vestri.

5. *Likewise, ye younger.* The word *elder* is put here in a sense different from what it had before; for it is necessary, when a contrast is made between them and the younger, that the two clauses should correspond. Then he refers to the elders in age, having before spoken of the office; and thus he comes from the particular to the general. And in short, he bids every one that is inferior in age to obey the counsels of the elders, and to be teachable and humble; for the age of youth is inconstant, and requires a bridle. Besides, pastors could not have performed their duty, except this reverential feeling prevailed and was cultivated, so that the younger

suffered themselves to be ruled; for if there be no subjection, government is overturned. When they have no authority who ought by right or order of nature to rule, all will immediately become insolently wanton.

Yea, all. He shews the reason why the younger ought to submit to the elder, even that there might be an equable state of things and due order among them. For, when authority is granted to the elders, there is not given them the right or the liberty of throwing off the bridle, but they are also themselves to be under due restraint, so that there may be a mutual subjection. So the husband is the head of the wife, and yet he in his turn is to be in some things subject to her. So the father has authority over his children, and still he is not exempt from all subjection, but something is due to them. The same thing, also, is to be thought of others. In short, all ranks in society have to defend the whole body, which cannot be done, except all the members are joined together by the bond of mutual subjection. Nothing is more adverse to the disposition of man than subjection. For it was formerly very truly said, that every one has within him the soul of a king. Until, then, the high spirits, with which the nature of men swells, are subdued, no man will give way to another; but, on the contrary, each one, despising others, will claim all things for himself.

Hence the Apostle, in order that humility may dwell among us, wisely reproves this haughtiness and pride. And the metaphor he uses is very appropriate, as though he had said, “Surround yourselves with humility on every side, as with a garment which covers the whole body.” He yet intimates that no ornament is more beautiful or more becoming, than when we submit one to another.

For, or, because. It is a most grievous threatening, when he says, that all who seek to elevate themselves, shall have God as their enemy, who will lay them low. But, on the contrary, he says of the humble, that God will be propitious and favorable to them. We are to imagine that; God has two hands; the one, which like a hammer beats down and breaks in pieces those who raise up themselves; and the other, which raises up the humble who willingly let down themselves, and is like a firm prop to sustain them. Were we really convinced of this, and had it deeply fixed in our minds, who of us would dare by pride to urge war with God? But the hope of impunity now makes us fearlessly to raise up our horn to heaven. Let,

then, this declaration of Peter be as a celestial thunderbolt to make men humble.

But he calls those *humble*, who being emptied of every confidence in their own power, wisdom, and righteousness, seek every good from God alone. Since there is no coming to God except in this way, who, having lost his own glory, ought not willingly to humble himself?

6. *Humble yourselves therefore.* We must ever bear in mind for what; end he bids us to be humble before God, even that we may be more courteous and kind to our brethren, and not refuse to submit to them as far as love demands. Then they who are haughty and refractory towards men, are, he says, acting insolently towards God. He therefore exhorts all the godly to submit to God's authority; and he calls God's power his *hand*, that he might make them to fear the more. For though hand is often applied to God, yet it is to be understood here according to the circumstances of the passage. But as we are wont commonly to fear, lest our humility should be a disadvantage to us, and others might for this reason grow more insolent, Peter meets this objection, and promises eminency to all who humble themselves.

But he adds, *in due time*, that he might at the same time obviate too much haste. He then intimates that it is necessary for us to learn humility now, but that the Lord well knows when it is expedient for us to be elevated. Thus it behoves us to yield to his counsel.

7. *Casting all our care.* He more fully sets forth here the providence of God. For whence are these proverbial sayings, "We shall have to howl among wolves," and, "They are foolish who are like sheep, exposing themselves to wolves to be devoured," except that we think that by our humility we set loose the reins to the audacity of the ungodly, so that they insult us more wantonly? But this fear arises from our ignorance of divine providence. Now, on the other hand, as soon as we are convinced that God cares for us, our minds are easily led to patience and humility. Lest, then, the wickedness of men should tempt us to a fierceness of mind, the Apostle prescribes to us a remedy, and also David does in the thirty-seventh Psalm, so that having cast our care on God, we may calmly rest. For all those who recumb not on God's providence must necessarily be in constant turmoil and violently assail others. We ought the more to dwell on this thought, that God cares for us, in order, first, that we may have

peace within; and, secondly, that we may be humble and meek towards men.

But we are not thus bidden to cast all our care on God, as though God wished us to have strong hearts, and to be void of all feeling; but lest fear or anxiety should drive us to impatience. In like manner, the knowledge of divine providence does not free men from every care, that they may securely indulge themselves; for it ought not to encourage the torpidity of the flesh, but to bring rest to faith.

<600508>1 PETER 5:8-11	
8. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour:	8. Sobrii estote, vigilate, quia adversarius vester diabolus, tanquam leo rugiens, circuit, quaerens quem devoret (vel, quempiam devorare;)
9. Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.	9. Cui resistite firmi fide, scientes easdem passiones, vestrae quae in mundo fraternitati adimpleri.
10. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you:	10. Deus autera omnis gratiae, qui nos vocavit in aeternam suam gloriam per Christum Jesum, paulisper afflictos ipse vos perficiat, confirmet, corroboret, stabiliat:
11. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.	11. Ei gloria et imperium in secula seculorum. Amen.

8. *Be sober.* This explanation extends wider, that as we have war with a most fierce and most powerful enemy, we are to be strenuous in resisting him. But he uses a twofold metaphor, that they were to be sober, and that they were to exercise watchfulness. Surfeiting produces sloth and sleep; even so they who indulge in earthly cares and pleasures, think of nothing else, being under the power of spiritual lethargy.

We now perceive what the meaning of the Apostle is. We must, he says, carry on a warfare in this world; and he reminds us that we have to do with no common enemy, but one who, like a lion, runs here and there, ready to devour. He hence concludes that we ought carefully to watch. Paul stimulates us with the same argument in the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, where he says that we have a contest not with flesh and blood, but with spiritual wickedness, etc. But we too often turn peace into sloth, and hence it comes that the enemy then circumvents and overwhelms us; for, as though placed beyond the reach of danger, we indulge ourselves according to the will of the flesh.

He compares the devil to a lion, as though he had said, that he is a savage wild beast. He says that he *goes round* to devour, in order to rouse us to wariness. He calls him the *adversary* of the godly, that they might know that they worship God and profess faith in Christ on this condition, that they are to have continual war with the devil, for he does not spare the members who fight with the head.

9. *Whom resist.* As the power of an enemy ought to stimulate us and make us more careful, so there would be danger lest our hearts failed through immoderate fear, except the hope of victory were given us. This then is what the Apostle speaks of; he shows that the issue of the war will be prosperous, if we indeed fight under the banner of Christ; for whosoever comes to this contest, endued with faith, he declares that he will certainly be a conqueror.

Resist, he says; but some one may ask, how? To this he answers, there is sufficient strength in faith. Paul, in the passage which I have already quoted, enumerates the various parts of our armor, but the meaning is the same, (^{<490613>}Ephesians 6:13,) for John testifies that faith alone is our victory over the world.

Knowing that the same afflictions, or sufferings. It is another consolation, that we have a contest in common with all the children of God; for Satan dangerously tries us, when he separates us from the body of Christ. We have heard how he attempted to storm the courage of Job,

“Look to the saints, has any one of them suffered such a thing ?”

— ^{<180501>}Job 5:1.

The Apostle on the other hand, reminds us here that nothing happens to us but what we see does happen to other members of the Church. Moreover a fellowship, or a similar condition, with all the saints, ought by no means to be refused by us.

By saying that the same sufferings are *accomplished*, he means what Paul declares in ^{<510124>}Colossians 1:24, that what remains of the sufferings of Christ is daily fulfilled in the faithful.

The words, *that are in the world*, may be explained in two ways, either that God proves his faithful people indiscriminately everywhere in the world, or that the necessity of fighting awaits us as long as we are in the world. But we must observe that having said before that we are assailed by Satan, he then immediately refers to every kind of afflictions. We hence gather that we have always to do with our spiritual enemy, however adversities may come, or whatever they may be, whether diseases oppress us, or the barrenness of the land threatens us with famine, or men persecute us.

10. *But the God of all grace.* After having sufficiently dwelt on admonitions, he now turns to prayer; for doctrine is in vain poured forth into the air, unless God works by his Spirit. And this example ought to be followed by all the ministers of God, that is, to pray that he may give success to their labors; for otherwise they effect nothing either by planting or by watering.

Some copies have the future tense, as though a promise is made; but the other reading is more commonly received. At the same time, the Apostle, by praying God, confirms those to whom he was writing, for when he calls God the author of *all grace*, and reminds them that they were called to eternal glory, his purpose no doubt was, to confirm them in the conviction, that the work of their salvation, which he had begun, would be completed.

He is called the *God of all grace* from the effect, from the gifts he bestows, according to the Hebrew manner.^{f56} And he mentions expressly *all grace*, first that they might learn that every blessing is to be ascribed to God; and secondly, that one grace is connected with another, so that they might hope in future for the addition of those graces in which they were hitherto wanting.

Who hath called us. This, as I have said, serves to increase confidence, because God is led not only by his goodness, but also by his gracious benevolence, to aid us more and more. He does not simply mention calling, but he shews wherefore they were called, even that they might obtain eternal glory. He further fixes the foundation of calling in Christ. Both these things serve to give perpetual confidence, for if our calling is founded on Christ, and refers to the celestial kingdom of God and a blessed immortality, it follows that it is not transient nor fading.

It may also be right, by the way, to observe that when he says that we are called *in Christ*, first, our calling is established, because it is rightly founded; and secondly, that all respect to our worthiness and merit is excluded; for that God, by the preaching of the gospel, invites us to himself, it is altogether gratuitous; and it is still a greater grace that he efficaciously touches our hearts so as to lead us to obey his voice. Now Peter especially addresses the faithful; he therefore connects the efficacious power of the Spirit with the outward doctrine.

As to the three words which follow, some copies have them in the ablative case, which may be rendered in Latin by gerunds (*fulciendo, roborando, stabiliendo*) by supporting, by strengthening, by establishing.^{f57} But in this there is not much importance with regard to the meaning. Besides, Peter intends the same thing by all these words, even to confirm the faithful; and he uses these several words for this purpose, that we may know that to follow our course is a matter of no common difficulty, and that therefore we need the special grace of God. The words *suffered a while*, inserted here, shew that the time of suffering is but short, and this is no small consolation.

11. *To him be glory.* That he might add more confidence to the godly, he breaks out into thanksgiving. Though this be read in the indicative as well as in the optative mood, still the meaning is nearly the same.

<600512> 1 PETER 5:12-14

12. By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, (as I suppose,) I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.	12. Per Silvanum vobis fidum fratrem (ut arbitror) paucis scripsi, exhortans et testificans hanc esse veram gratiam in qua statis.
13. The <i>church that is</i> at Babylon, elected together with <i>you</i> , saluteth you; and <i>so doth</i> Marcus my son.	13. Salutat vos quae in Babylone est Ecclesia, simul vobiscum electa, et Marcus filius meus.
14. Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace <i>be</i> with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.	14. Salutate vos invicem in osculo charitatis. Gratia vobis omnibus qui estis in Christo Jesu.

12. *By Silvanus.* He exhorts them at the conclusion of the Epistle to constancy in the faith: yea, he declares that his design in writing, was to retain them in obedience to the doctrine which they had embraced. But he first commends the brevity of his Epistle, lest the reading of it should be tedious to them; and, secondly, he adds a short commendation of his messenger, that the living voice might be added to what was written; for this was the design of the testimony he bears to his fidelity. But the exception, *as I suppose*, or think, was added, either as token of modesty or to let them surely know, that he spoke according to the conviction of his own mind; and it was unreasonable for them not to assent to the judgment of so great an apostle.

Exhorting and testifying. How difficult it is to continue in the faith! evidences of this are the daily defections of many: nor, indeed, is such a thing to be wondered at, when we consider how great is the levity and inconsistency of men, and how great is their inclination to vanity. But as no doctrine can strike firm and perpetual roots in men's hearts, if it be accompanied with any doubt, he testifies that God's truth, in which they had been taught, was certain. And, doubtless, except its certainty appears to our minds, we must at all times necessarily vacillate, and be ready to

turn at every wind of new doctrine. By the *grace of God*, he means faith with all its effects and fruits.

13. *That is at Babylon.* Many of the ancients thought that Rome is here enigmatically denoted. This comment the Papists gladly lay hold on, that Peter may appear to have presided over the Church of Rome: nor does the infamy of the name deter them, provided they can pretend to the title of an apostolic seat; nor do they care for Christ, provided Peter be left to them. Moreover, let them only retain the name of Peter's chair, and they will not refuse to set Rome in the infernal regions. But this old comment has no color of truth in its favor; nor do I see why it was approved by Eusebius and others, except that they were already led astray by that error, that Peter had been at Rome. Besides, they are inconsistent with themselves. They say that Mark died at Alexandria, in the eighth year of Nero; but they imagine that Peter, six years after this, was put to death at Rome by Nero. If Mark formed, as they say, the Alexandrian Church, and had been long a bishop there, he could never have been at Rome with Peter. For Eusebius and Jerome extend the time of Peter's presidency at Rome to twenty-five years; but this may be easily disproved by what is said in the first and the second chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians.

Since, then, Peter had Mark as his companion when he wrote this Epistle, it is very probable that he was at Babylon: and this was in accordance with his calling; for we know that he was appointed an apostle especially to the Jews. He therefore visited chiefly those parts where there was the greatest number of that nation.

In saying that the Church there was a partaker of the same election, his object was to confirm others more and more in the faith; for it was a great matter that the Jews were gathered into the Church, in so remote a part of the world.

My son. So he calls Mark for honor's sake; the reason, however, is, because he had begotten him in the faith, as Paul did Timothy. Of the *kiss of love* we have spoken elsewhere. Now he bids this to be the kiss of love, ^{f58} so that the sincerity of the heart might correspond with the external act.

END OF THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

A TRANSLATION OF

CALVIN'S VERSION OF

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

CHAPTER 1

- 1** PETER, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the sojourners who are scattered through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithyuia,
- 2** Elected according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.
- 3** Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his great mercy hath begotten us again to a living hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
- 4** To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and unfading, laid up in heaven for you;
- 5** Who by the power of God are kept through faith unto salvation, which is ready to be revealed at the last time:
- 6** On account of which ye exult, though now for a little while, if it be necessary, ye are made sorrowful through various temptations;
- 7** That the probation of your faith, much more precious than gold which perisheth, though even it be proved by fire, may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, when Jesus Christ shall be revealed:

- 8** Whom, though ye have not seen, ye love; on whom believing, though ye see him not, ye exult with joy unspeakable and glorious;
- 9** Receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls.
- 10** Of which, salvation the prophets inquired and searched, who prophesied of future grace to us;
- 11** Searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ who was in them did signify, previously testifying of the sufferings of Christ, and of the glories which were to follow:
- 12** To whom it was revealed, that not to themselves, but to us they ministered the things which have been now declared to you by those who have preached to you the gospel, through the Holy Spirit sent from heaven; into which things the angels desire to look.
- 13** Therefore, girding up the loins of your mind, being sober, perfectly hope for the grace which is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;
- 14** As obedient children, not conformed to former lusts which prevailed during your ignorance:
- 15** But as he who has called you is holy, be ye also yourselves holy in *your* whole conduct;
- 16** Because it is written, "Be ye holy, for I sin holy."
- 17** And since ye call on the Father, who, without respect of persons, judgeth the work of every one, puss in fear the time of your
- 18** Sojourning; knowing that not with corruptible things, silver or gold, you have been redeemed from your vain way of living, delivered down from the fathers;
- 19** But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled:
- 20** Who had been, indeed, foreordained before the world was founded, but has been manifested in the last times for you,

- 21 Who through him believe in God, who has raised him from the dead, and has given him glory, that your faith and hope may be in God:
- 22 Purifying your souls by obedience to the truth through the Spirit, with an unfeigned brotherly love, love ye one another from a pure heart fervently;
- 23 Having been begotten again, not from a seed that is corruptible, but incorruptible, through the word of the living God, which abideth for ever.
- 24 For all flesh is as grass, and all his glory as the flower of the grass: wither does the grass, and its flower fades;
- 25 but the word of the Lord remains for ever: and this is the word which has been declared to you.

CHAPTER 2

- 1 Laying aside, therefore, all wickedness, and all guile, and dissimulations, and envyings, and all slanderings,
- 2 As infants lately born, desire the milk that is rational and guileless, that by it ye may grow;
- 3 If indeed ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious:
- 4 To whom coming as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious,
- 5 Ye also yourselves as living stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
- 6 Therefore also the Scripture contains *this*, "Behold, I lay in Sion a corner-stone, chosen, precious; and he who believeth in him shall not be ashamed."
- 7 To you, then, who believe, he is precious; but to the unbelieving, the stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner;

- 8** And a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to those who stumble at the word, being unbelieving; to which also they had been appointed.
- 9** But ye are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye may declare the virtues of him who has called you out of darkness
- 10** Into his marvelous light: who sometimes were not a people, but now are the people of God; who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.
- 11** Beloved, I exhort you as sojourners and strangers, to abstain from carnal desires, which war against the soul;
- 12** Having your behavior good among the Gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, considering your good works, glorify God in the day of visitation.
- 13** Be then subject to every human ordinance for the Lord's sake;
- 14** Whether to the king, as supreme; or to governors, as those who are sent by him, for the punishment indeed of evil-doers, but for the praise of those who do well:
- 15** For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put a stop to the ignorance of foolish men;
- 16** As free, and not having liberty as a cloak for wickedness, but as the servants of God.
- 17** Honor all, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.
- 18** The servants, let them be subject with all fear to *their* lords, not only to the good and humane, but also to the perverse.
- 19** For this is acceptable, if for conscience towards God any one bears sorrows, suffering unjustly:
- 20** For what sort of glory is it, if ye bear it when having done evil ye be buffeted ? but if, having done well and suffering, ye bear it, this is acceptable with God.

- 21 For to this end you have been called; because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye may follow his footsteps;
- 22 Who did no sin, nor was guile found in his mouth; who, when reviled, reviled not again;
- 23 When suffering, threatened not; but committed his cause to him who judgeth righteously;
- 24 Who bare himself our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, may live to righteousness; by whose bruise have ye been healed.
- 25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but ye have been now turned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

CHAPTER 3

- 1 In like manner the wives, let them be subject to their own husbands, that even if any believe not the word, they may without the word be gained by the behavior of *their* wives,
- 2 While observing your pure behavior and fear:
- 3 Whose adorning, let it not be the outward, in the plaiting of the hair and the encircling of gold, or the putting on of cloaks;
- 4 But the inner man of the heart, which is in the incorruption of a placid and quiet spirit, which before God is precious.
- 5 For so formerly also holy women who hoped in God, adorned themselves, being subject to their own husbands;
- 6 As Sara, *who* obeyed Abraham, calling him lord; whose daughters ye become, when ye do well, and are not terrified by any dread.
- 7 Let husbands in like manner dwell with *them* according to knowledge, giving honor to the wife as the weaker vessel, and as joint-heirs of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

- 8** Finally, *be ye* of one mind, compassionate, loving to the brethren, merciful, humble-minded;
- 9** Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but on the contrary, bless ye, knowing that you have been called for this end, that ye may inherit a blessing.
- 10** For let him who would love life and see good days, keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking guile; let him turn away from evil and do good;
- 11** Let him seek peace and pursue it:
- 12** Because the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them who do evil.
- 13** And who is he who can do you harm, if ye be followers of what is good ?
- 14** But if ye also suffer for righteousness, happy *are ye*; and the fear of them fear not, nor be troubled;
- 15** But sanctify the Lord of hosts in your hearts, and be ready always for an answer to any one asking you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;
- 16** Having a good conscience, that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may be ashamed who slander your good behavior in Christ.
- 17** For it is better to suffer, if so be the will of God, for doing good than for doing evil:
- 18** Because Christ also once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, having indeed been put to death in the flesh, but brought to life by the Spirit:
- 19** By whom having also gone, he preached to the spirits who were in prison,
- 20** When there were formerly unbelievers, when once the patience of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was prepared; in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water;

- 21** Corresponding to which, baptism saves us also now (not the casting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ;
- 22** Who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, angels and dominions and powers being made subject to him.

CHAPTER 4

- 1** Christ then having suffered for us in the flesh, be ye also armed with the same mind: because he who hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;
- 2** That he may no longer live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.
- 3** For it is enough for us, that we have wrought, in the past time of life, the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excesses in wine, revellings, banquetings, and wicked idolatries:
- 4** On account of which they think it strange, that ye run not with *them* into the same excess of riot, speaking evil *of you*;
- 5** Who shall give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.
- 6** For the gospel has for this end been also preached to the dead, that they may indeed be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit.
- 7** But the end of all things is near; be ye then sober, and watchful to pray;
- 8** And above all things having fervent love among yourselves; for love will cover a multitude of sins.
- 9** Be hospitable towards one another, without murmurings.
- 10** As every one has received a gift, minister the same one to another, as good dispensers of the manifold grace of God;

- 11** If any one speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any one minister, *let him do so* as by the power which God supplies; that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.
- 12** Beloved, think it not strange when ye are tried by fire for the purpose of proving you, as though some new thing had happened to you;
- 13** But inasmuch as ye are partakers of the sufferings of Christ, rejoice; that at the revelation also of his glory ye may exultingly rejoice.
- 14** If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy *are ye*; for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you: by them, indeed, he is slandered, but by you he is glorified.
- 15** But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as a coveter of another man's goods; but if as a Christian, let him not be ashamed;
- 16** Nay, let him in this case glorify God: for it is the time, when judgment begins at the house of God;
- 17** But if it be first on us, what *will be* the end of those who obey not the gospel of God?
- 18** And if the righteous be hardly saved, the ungodly and the sinner, where will they appear ?
- 19** Let therefore those who suffer according to the will of God, commit their souls to him, in doing good, as to a faithful possessor.

CHAPTER 5

- 1** The elders who are among you I exhort, who am also an elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory which shall be revealed:

- 2 Feed as much as in you lieth the flock of God, discharging the office of bishops, not constrainedly, but willingly; not for the sake of filthy lucre, but liberally;
- 3 And not as exercising tyranny over *God's* heritages, but that ye may be patterns to the flock:
- 4 And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive an unfading crown of glory.
- 5 In like manner the younger, be ye subject to the elder; yea, be ye all subject to one another: put ye on humility of mind; because God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.
- 6 Be ye then humbled under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time;
- 7 All your care being cast on him, for he cares for you.
- 8 Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the Devil, as a roaring lion, goeth around, seeking whom he may devour:
- 9 Whom resist ye, being firm in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are accomplished in your brethren in the world.
- 10 Now the God of all grace, who hath called us to his eternal glory through Christ Jesus, — may he perfect you, while suffering for a short time, confirm, strengthen, *and* establish *you*:
- 11 To him be the glory and the dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.
- 12 By Sylvanus, a faithful brother to you, as I suppose, I have written in a few words, exhorting *you* and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which ye stand.
- 13 The *church*, elected together with you, which is in Babylon, saluteth you, and Marcus my son.
- 14 Salute ye one another with the kiss of love. Grace *be* to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

FOOTNOTES

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

^{Ft1} See *Horne's* Introduction, vol. 4:part 2:chap. 4:sect. 3.

^{Ft2} See *Wolfius'* Prolegomena to this Epistle.

ARGUMENT

^{Ft3} *Horne*, in his Introduction, vol. 4:p. 425, mentions four opinions on this subject. According to Bishop Pearson, Mill, and Le Clerc, it was Babylon in Egypt; according to Erasmus, Drusius, Beza, Dr. Lightfoot, Basnage, Beausobre, Dr. Cave, Wetstein, Drs. Benson and A. Clarke, it was Babylon in Assyria; according to Michaelis, it was Babylon in Mesopotamia; and according to Grotius, Drs. Whitby, Lardner, Macknight, and Hales, Bishop Tomline, and all the learned of the Romish communion, it is to be taken figuratively for Rome, according to what was done by John in Revelation 17:and 18:What renders the last opinion very improbable is, that to date an epistle at a place to which a figurative name is given, is without another instance in Scripture, and the thing itself seems quite absurd. The language of prophecy is quite a different matter. Paul wrote several of his epistles at Rome, and in no instance did he do anything of this kind. Such an opinion would have never gained ground, had there not been from early times a foolish attempt to connect Peter with Rome. And it is to be regretted that some learned Protestants have been duped on this subject by a mass of fictitious evidence which has been collected by the partisans of the Romish Church. — *Ed.*

CHAPTER 1

^{ft4} *Inquilinis*; they are those who dwell in a hired house, tenants. The original, *παρεπιδήμοις*, means those who dwell among a people, that is, not their own. Sojourners or pilgrims would be the best word. The

sentence literally is, “To the sojourners of the dispersion of Pontus.” etc. — *Ed.*

^{ft5}On this question both ancient and modern divines have differed. It is to be decided by the contents of the Epistle only. There is nothing *decisive* in favor of the opinion that it was written only to believing Jews; but there is a passage, ^{<600403>} 1 Peter 4:3, which seems clearly to shew that Peter included the believing Gentiles; for “the abominable idolatries” could only refer to them, as the Jews, since the Babylonian captivity, had never fallen into idolatry. — *Ed.*

^{ft6}The meaning would be more clear, were we to make a change in the order of the words, “Elected, according to the foreknowledge of God, unto obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, through (*or*, by) the sanctification of the Spirit,” that is, they were elected in order that they might obey the gospel, and be cleansed from the guilt of sin by the blood of Christ, through the sanctifying power of the Spirit. It was not their obedience that made them the elect, but they were chosen that they might obey, and thus obey through the influence of the Spirit. This is clearly the doctrine of this passage. See ^{<530213>} 2 Thessalonians 2:13 — *Ed.*

^{ft7}“This is a Hebraism,” says Macknight, “for *a hope of life*. Accordingly, the Syriac version hath here, *in spem vitae — to a hope of life*.” The begetting again seems not to refer to inward renovation, but to what God did by raising Christ from the dead. To beget, sometimes means to put one in a new state or condition; as the expression, “This day have I begotten thee,” means, that God had then constituted his Son a king, publicly invested him, as it were, with that office. Similar is the meaning here: God through the resurrection of Christ restored to the hope of life his desponding followers: hence the import of the word “again;” though *Macknight* thinks the reference to be to the covenant of grace made with our first parents after the fall, and that believers were begotten the second time to the same hope by the resurrection of Christ. The word for “begetting again,” is only found here, and in a passive sense in the 23d verse, where it has a different meaning, as it evidently refers to the renovation of the heart. — *Ed.*

^{ft8}*Pareus* puts, “that is, *to an inheritance*,” making this sentence explanatory of “the hope,” as hope here is a metonymy for its object. It is an inheritance “incorruptible,” not to be destroyed by a flood or

by fire, — ”undefiled,” not like the land of Canaan, its type, which was defiled by its inhabitants, — ” unfading,” different from any worldly inheritance, for the world passeth away. — *Ed.*

^{fi9}The meaning would be somewhat different, but the sentence would be more intelligible, were we to render it thus, “Who are kept by faith in the power of God unto salvation.” Salvation here means that of the body as well as of the soul at the resurrection. — *Ed.*

^{fi10}Some take the verb in a future sense, “At which (time) ye shall exult;” and some as being an imperative, “On account of which exult ye;” but neither of these comports with the context; for the 8th verse proves that he speaks of present joy, and that he states the case as it was among them. It is better with *Calvin* to refer “wherein,” or, “on account of which,” to the fact stated in the previous verse, that they were kept by God’s power for salvation ready to be revealed. — *Ed.*

^{fi11}The seeming difference in meaning referred to, arises from this, that the Apostle uses two nouns (a common thing in Scripture) instead of a noun and an adjective or participle — ”the trial of your faith,” instead of “your tried faith,” or, “your faith when tried.” — *Ed.*

^{fi12}The “praise, honor, and glory,” refer to tried faith; it will be praised or approved by the Judge, honored before men and angels, and followed by eternal glory. — *Ed.*

^{fi13}After “unspeakable,” “glorified” must mean something greater, or it may be viewed as more specific, it is a joy unspeakable, it being a glorified joy in a measure, or the joy of the glorified in heaven. According to this view the words may be thus rendered, “with joy unspeakable and heavenly.” *Doddridge* gives this paraphrase, “With unutterable and even glorified joy, with such a joy as seems to anticipate that of the saints in glory.” — *Ed.*

^{fi14}It is necessary either to give a future meaning to this participle, “Being about to receive;” or to view the Apostle as speaking of the salvation of the soul now, as distinct from the salvation of the soul and body hereafter. The latter view seems most appropriate to the passage. The soul is now saved by faith. The end of faith, its object and accomplishment, is reconciliation with God, and reconciliation is salvation. — *Ed.*

^{ft15} *Pareus* observes, that the Apostle, in this part of the chapter, exhorted the faithful to sobriety, holiness, humility, and brotherly love, by five reasons: 1, because they were the children of God, ver. 14; 2, because God is holy, and requires holiness, ver. 15; 3, because God is no respecter of persons, ver. 17; 4, because of the value of the price for their redemption, ver. 18; and 5, because they had been born again of an immortal seed, ver. 23. — *Ed.*

^{ft16} The verb *λυτρόω* means properly to redeem by a price from tyranny or bondage, but its meaning here, and in ^{<422421>} Luke 24:21, and ^{<560214>} Titus 2:14, is merely to deliver. “Vain conversation” signifies a useless, profitless mode of living. — *Ed.*

^{ft17} It is better to keep the tense of the participle, — “Having purified (or, since ye have purified) your souls by obeying the truth through the Spirit to an unfeigned love of the brethren, love ye one another fervently from a pure heart; having been born again,” etc.

The order here is similar to what is often found in Scripture; purification is mentioned before regeneration, as being the most visible and the effect; then what goes before it as being in a manner the cause. — *Ed.*

^{ft18} Most commentators, like *Calvin*, represent the *seed* as the word; but the construction does not admit this; the words are, “Having been begotten from a seed, not corruptible, but incorruptible, through the living word of God, and for-ever abiding.” The “seed” denotes evidently the vital principle of grace, the new nature, the restored image of God; it is the same with what John means when he says, “His seed (that is, of God) remaineth in him.” (^{<620309>} 1 John 3:9.)

Then “the word” is set forth as the means or instrument by which this seed is implanted. The “living” here does not mean life-giving, as some interpret it, but stands opposed to what ceases to be valid: and “for-ever abiding” more fully expresses its meaning. The metaphor in the parable of the sower is quite different: the word there is compared to a seed sown on bad or good ground; but here the turning of a bad into a good ground is the subject; and in this process the word is employed as an instrument. — *Ed.*

CHAPTER 2

^{ft19} Our version here seems to convey the most suitable meaning, by taking λογικὸν for τοῦ λόγου; see similar instances in ver. 13 and ^{<600307>} 1 Peter 3:7. It is the wordy milk, or milk made up of the word; the word is the milk. Then ἄδολον is to be taken in its secondary meaning: when applied to persons, it means undeceitful, or guileless; but when to things, genuine, pure, unadulterated, unmixed with anything deleterious. We may, therefore, render the words, “Desire the pure milk of the word.” It is a milk not adulterated by water or by anything poisonous. There is no contrast here between milk and strong food; but it includes all that is necessary as an aliment for the soul, when renewed. The Word had before been represented as the instrument of the new birth; it is now spoken of as the food and aliment of the new-born. — *Ed.*

^{ft20} Several copies have ἡ γραπὴ instead of ἐν τῇ γραπῇ; and this reading *Calvin* has followed. But the verb περιέχω is used by *Josephus* and others in a passive sense. — *Ed.*

^{ft21} The quotation is not exactly either from the Hebrew or from the *Sept.* The Apostle seems to have taken what was suitable to his purpose. — *Ed.*

^{ft22} As to this verb he has, but in the previous parts he comes nearer to the Hebrew than to the *Sept.* Paul quotes this sentence twice, ^{<450933>} Romans 9:33; 10:11, and follows the *Sept.* as Peter does. Indeed, the difference between שׁחׁ he shall make haste, and שׁבׁ, he shall be ashamed, is very small; and further, the former verb admits of a similar meaning with the latter. — *Ed.*

^{ft23} There are in this verse two quotations, one from ^{<19B822>} Psalm 118:22, and the other from ^{<230814>} Isaiah 8:14. That from the Psalms is literally the *Sept.*, and is the same as quoted in ^{<402142>} Matthew 21:42; ^{<411210>} Mark 12:10; and ^{<422017>} Luke 20:17. In all these instances it is λίθον, and not λίθος according to the Hebrew. It is therefore necessary to consider κατὰ as to, or, with respect to, as understood, a thing not uncommon in Greek. With regard to ἡ τιμή, a noun for an adjective, it refers to the stone, or to him, in the preceding verse; but as the metaphor of stone is still continued in this verse, it is better to

retain it here, “it is precious,” that is, the stone; and especially as Christ is represented before, in verse 4, a stone “precious” in the sight of God. — *Ed.*

^{ft24} The most obvious meaning is, to consider the phrase, “who stumble at the word,” as the antecedent to εἰς ὃ “to which:” they being disobedient or unbelieving were destined to stumble at the word, and thereby to fall and to be broken. (<230814> Isaiah 8:14,15.) To the believing it was precious, but to the unbelieving it became the stone of stumbling; and this stumbling is a judgment to which all the unpersuaded (literally) or the unbelieving, are destined. I would render the two verses thus, —

“To you then who believe it is precious; but to the unbelieving (*with regard to* the stone which the builders have rejected, the same *which* has become the head of the corner) even a stone of stumbling and rock of offense; that is, *to those* who stumble at the word, being unbelieving; to which also they have been appointed:” that is, according to the testimony of Scripture. — *Ed.*

^{ft25} This verse is a quotation from <280223> Hosea 2:23, only the two clauses are inverted. The same is quoted by Paul in <450925> Romans 9:25, in the same inverted form, and with this difference, that Peter follows the Hebrew, and Paul the Septuagint. The Hebrew is, “I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy;” but according to the Septuagint, “I will love her that had not been loved.” The meaning is the same, though the words are different. — *Ed.*

^{ft26} Neither “conversation” nor “honest” are suitable words. It is difficult to find a proper word in English for ἀναστροφή which means deportment, behavior, carriage, conduct, manner of live: perhaps life would be the best word, “Having your life good among the Gentiles;” that is, morally good (καλὴν) right, or upright. — *Ed.*

^{ft27} The words literally are, “Submit ye to every human creation:” but, as Calvin says, the Greek verb means sometimes to form, to construct; and so does בָּרָא to create, in Hebrew. The noun may hence be rendered “institution,” what is formed. As in the second verse, so here, the Apostle, in a way almost peculiar to himself, and the reverse of what is commonly done in Scripture, uses an adjective for a noun, “human” for “of man;” and he does the same in <600307> 1 Peter 3:7, “the

womanish weaker vessel,” instead of” the woman (or wife) the weaker vessel.” We may then render the words, “Submit ye to every institution of man.” The reference is clearly to government. The ostensible agent in the formation of all governments is man; but God is the overruler of all things. — *Ed.*

^{ft28} The word properly means to muzzle; “that ye, by doing good, should muzzle the he ignorance of foolish men;” according to what is done to savage animals, in order to prevent them to do harm. — *Ed.*

^{ft29} It is better to take it in this wide sense, than to limit it, as some have done, to rulers or magistrates, because honor to magistrates is included in the last clause, “Honour the king.” — *Ed.*

^{ft30} The word for “servants,” οἰκέται properly means “domestics,” or household servants. They are mentioned as they came more in contact with their masters, and were more liable to be ill-treated. — *Ed.*

^{ft31} “Good,” ἀγαθοῖς, the kind, benevolent; “gentle,” ἐπιεικέσιν, the yielding, mild, patient; “froward,” σκολιῶις the crooked, perverse, untoward, those of a cross disposition, self-willed, and hence cruel, being neither kind nor meek. — *Ed.*

^{ft32} Literally, “this is favor,” that is, with God, as at the end of the next verse. To “find favor with God” is a similar phrase, ^{<420130>} Luke 1:30, which means to find acceptance with him. We may render the words, “This is acceptable:” with whom acceptable, is afterwards explained. So the word יָיִן in Hebrew means a favorable acceptance, or approbation. See ^{<010608>} Genesis 6:8; 32:5. — *Ed.*

^{ft33} Calvin has “you” instead of” us,” and has also “you” after “suffered.” The authority as to *MSS.* is nearly equal; but the verse reads better with having “you” in both instances, as the verb “follow” is in the second person plural, “that ye may follow in his footsteps.” The word for “example” is ὑπογραμμὸν, a copy set before scholars to be imitated, and may be rendered “a pattern.” — *Ed.*

^{ft34} Or, “Being freed from sins:” ἀπογενόμενοι, being away from, having departed from, or, being removed from. *Beza* renders it “being separated from.” Freedom from the power or dominion of sin seems more expressly to be intended, as the end of this freedom is, that we may live to righteousness; the end of forgiveness on the other hand is, that we may have peace with God. *Beza, Estius, Grotius, and Scott*, take

this view of the sentence. The subject in hand is not the removal of guilt, but holiness of life, and Christ in his sufferings is set forth as the pattern to us. Then in what follows, our diseased state and our wandering from the right way, are the things referred to. Christ's death was intended to answer two great ends, — to remove guilt and to remove or to destroy sin in us. The latter is the subject of this passage. — *Ed.*

^{ft35} I would render the clause thus, “But you have been now restored,” that is, from your wandering, “to the shepherd and the bishop (or, overseer) of your souls.” *Macknight* thinks, that our Lord took the title of shepherd in order to shew that he is the person foretold in ^{<263423>} Ezekiel 34:23, and that Peter alludes, in calling him bishop or overseer, to the eleventh verse of that chapter, the latter clause of which, according to the *Sept.* is, “I will oversee them,” (ἐπισκέψομαι.) — *Ed.*

CHAPTER 3

^{ft36} The best construction is to regard “adorning,” or ornament, as understood after “incorruptible:”

“But the hidden man of the heart, *clothed* in (or with) the incorruptible *adorning* of a mild and quiet spirit.”

“Mild” or meek, not given to passion or wrath, patient, not proud nor arrogant; quiet, peaceable, not garrulous, not turbulent, nor given to strife and contention. — *Ed.*

^{ft37} The words are, “Whose daughters ye become, when ye do well and fear no terror.” Terror here stands for what terrifies. The paraphrase of *Macknight* seems to give the real and simple meaning of the passage, “Whose daughters ye Christian women have become, by behaving well towards your husbands, and not being frightened to actions contrary to your religion through fear of displeasing them.”

^{ft38} The received text is the most approved, and there is no different reading of any importance. — *Ed.*

^{ft39} In the previous statements of particular duties belonging to various relations in life, the duty of masters towards their servants is omitted. Some have hence inferred that there were no masters who were

Christians among those to whom Peter wrote. But this could not have been the ease, and for this reason, because Paul, in his Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, expressly specifies the duty of masters towards their servants; and Ephesus and Colosse were included in Asia Minor, and it was to Christians scattered throughout that country that Peter wrote his Epistle.

But this omission is somewhat singular. At the same time, though the master's duty is not specifically mentioned, we may yet consider this verse as having a special reference to masters, as sympathy, brotherly love, and compassion or commiseration, are here inculcated.

The construction of the whole passage, beginning at the 17th verse of the last chapter, and ending at the 12th of this (for at the 13th of this, he resumes the subject he left off at the end of the 16th of the last) deserves to be noticed. "Honour all," is the injunction which he afterwards exemplifies as to servants, wives, and husbands; for the construction is "Honour all — the servants being subject, etc. — in like manner, the wives being subject, etc. — in like manner, the husbands, cohabiting according to knowledge, giving honor, etc." Then follows this verse in the same form, "And finally, all being of one mind, sympathizing, loving the brethren, compassionate, friendly-minded (or humble-minded,) not rendering, etc." And thus he proceeds to the end of the 12th verse. Afterwards he resumes the subject respecting the treatment the Christians met with from the world.

May we not then conclude, that as the duty of masters does not come under the idea of *honoring*, he did not specifically mention them, but referred only to the spirit and temper they ought to have exhibited? — *Ed.*

^{ft40} *Griesbach* has given the preference to *ταπεινόφρονες* and has introduced it into the text. — *Ed.*

^{ft41} *Στάσεις γάρ που ἤγε ἀδικία καὶ μίσηα καὶ μάχας ἐν ἀλλήλοις παρέχει, ἡδὲ δικαιοσύνη ὁμόνοιαν καὶ φιλίαν.* — Rep. lib. 1.

^{ft42} "Sanctify" here, seems to have the same meaning as in our Lord's prayer, "Hallowed," or sanctified "be thy name;" where it means honored or glorified. And to honor or glorify God in our hearts is what Calvin very correctly explains. — *Ed.*

^{ft43}The most satisfactory explanation of this passage is that of *Beza*, *Doddridge*, *Macknight*, and *Scott*; that the reference is to what was done in the time of Noah, that is, that Christ by his Spirit employed him as a preacher of righteousness, though with no success, as the spirits of the men to whom he preached were then in prison, reserved, as the fallen angels are represented to be, for the judgment of the last day. The Apostle had before said that Christ's Spirit was in the prophets who foretold his coming, ^{<600111>} 1 Peter 1:11. The passage may be thus rendered, —

19. “By which also he, having gone, preached to the spirits who are in prison, formerly disobedient, when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah,” etc.; or, according to *Macknight*, “to the spirits *now* in prison, who formerly were disobedient,” etc. The word “formerly” seems to require “now” in the previous clause, or, “who are,” as rendered by *Beza*. “He, having gone, preached,” is similar to a phrase in ^{<490217>} Ephesians 2:17, “And came and preached,” etc.; or, literally, “And having come he preached,” etc. Paul does not speak of his coming personally, but by his ministers: and Peter evidently speaks of his going in the same sense.

For ἄπαξ ἐξεδέχετο, *Griesbach* substitutes ἀπεξεδέχετο as being the most approved reading. — *Ed.*

CHAPTER 4

- ^{ft44}The subject of this passage, from ^{<600314>} 1 Peter 3:14 to ^{<600406>} 1 Peter 4:6, is suffering unjustly, or for righteousness' sake, and Christ is brought as an example, he being just, suffered for the unjust. After a digression at the 19th verse of the third chapter, the Apostle returns here to his former subject, the example of Christ suffering in the flesh or in his body and in order to retain still the idea that he was just when he suffered, this clause seems to have been put in parenthetically, “For he who suffered ceased from sin,” that is, had no sin, but was just. And hence in the following verses he exhorts them to lead a holy life whatever might be the opposition from the world, so that they might be like their Savior, suffering unjustly, they themselves being innocent.

1. “Christ then having suffered for us in the flesh, arm ye also yourselves with the same mind, (for he who suffered in the flesh ceased from sin;)

2. so as to live no longer the remaining time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.”

They were exhorted to resolve to follow the example of Christ, but in such a way as not to suffer for their sins, but for righteousness’ sake. It is implied that they had been evil-doers, but they were no longer to be so, otherwise their suffering in the flesh would not be like that of Christ. To suffer as well-doers, and not as evil-doers, was to suffer as Christ did. — *Ed.*

^{ft45} *Whitby, Doddridge, and Macknight*, regard *the dead* here as the dead in sins, according to ^{<490201>} Ephesians 2:1. The first thus paraphrases what follows, “That they might condemn their former life, and live a better;” the second, “That they might be brought to such a state of life as their carnal neighbors will look upon it as a kind of condemnation and death;” and the third, “That *although* they might be condemned, indeed, by men in the flesh, yet they might live *eternally* by God in the Spirit.”

Beza, Hammond, and Scott, consider that *the dead* were those already dead, that is, when the Apostle wrote, and even before the coming of Christ, taking the *dead* in the same sense as in the former verse: but they differ as to the clause which follows. The two first interpret it as signifying the same as dying to sin and living to God, a meaning which the former part of the clause can hardly bear: but the view of *Scott* is, that the gospel had been preached to those at that time dead, that they might be condemned by carnal men, or in the flesh, as evildoers, but live to God through the Holy Spirit. The only fault, perhaps, with this rendering is as to the word *flesh*, which seems to mean here the same as *flesh* in ^{<600318>} 1 Peter 3:18, that is, the body; and the word *spirit* is also in the same form, for *Griesbach* in that verse regards the article τῷ as spurious. Then the rendering would be, “That they might be condemned in the flesh by men, but live as to God through the Spirit.” There are two previous instances of the word *spirit*, when denoting the Holy Spirit, being without the article, that is, in ^{<600102>} 1 Peter 1:2 and 22.

It seems an objection, that the gospel had been preached to them for *this end*, that they might be condemned to die by wicked men; but this had been expressly stated before, in ^{<600221>}1 Peter 2:21: “For even hereunto, (that is, suffering, mentioned in the former verse) were ye called;” or, “For to this end ye have been called.” Then Christ in his suffering is mentioned as one whom they ought to follow.

There is no other view so consistent with the whole tenor of the Apostle’s argument. — *Ed.*

^{ft46}There is no ground to suppose, as *Hammond*, *Macknight*, and some others have supposed, that “the end of all things” was the end of the Jews as a nation, the destruction of the temple and its worship. And it is strange that such a notion should be entertained, especially when we consider that the Apostle refers to the same subject in his Second Epistle, where the end of the world is plainly spoken of. — *Ed.*

^{ft47}The quotation is from the Hebrew, and the sentence in the *Sept.* is evidently different. The same words are found also in ^{<590520>}James 5:20.

^{ft48}“ Though charity, or benevolence, hides the faults of *others* from the severity of our censure, yet charity or almsgiving is totally unable to conceal *our own* from the observance of our all-righteous Judge. Indeed, the only cover for these, or to speak more properly, the discharge of all their stains, is *faith*, — is the *blood* of Christ, working with repentance towards God.” — *Bishop Warburton*, quoted by *Bloomfield*. — *Ed.*

^{ft49}*Sic tamen ut limis rapias quid prima secundo
Cera velit versu. . . . Sat. lib. 2:5, 53.*

^{ft50}*Quisquis ingentes oculo irretorto
Spectat acervos. — Carm. lib. it. Od. 2:23.*

The sin here referred to must have some public act, punishable by law. The word means an observer of other people’s affairs, but he must have done so for some sinister purpose. He was probably a pryer into matters of state or government in order to create discontent and to raise commotions; and this was an evil which prevailed much at the time among the Jews. Hence “seditions,” or factions, would convey probably the right meaning. — *Ed.*

^{ft51} It certainly *appears* as a quotation, as the words are literally the same. It is to be observed that the Hebrew has “on earth,” which seems to confirm the view that saved here refers to deliverances from the troubles, trials, and persecutions, which the righteous have to go through during life; and that *scarcely*, or hardly, or with difficulty, as rendered by *Doddridge* and *Macknight*, is to be limited to the time of the Christian’s course in this world; for, as *Macknight* observes, the Apostle speaks in his Second Epistle of an abundant entrance into the heavenly kingdom being vouchsafed to all faithful Christians. See ^{<610111>} 2 Peter 1:11. — *Ed.*

^{ft52} The two words, “ungodly,” ἄσεβης, and “sinner,” ἁμαρτωλός, exactly correspond with רשע and חוטא in Hebrew; the first is he who is not pious, not a worshipper of God, having neither fear nor love towards him; and the second is the wicked, and open and shameless transgressor, who regards not what is just and right. *Grotius* says, that the first is he who shews no piety towards God; and that the second is one who observes no justice towards man. — *Ed.*

CHAPTER 5

^{ft53} The most obvious meaning is, that Peter had been an *eye-witness* of Christ’s sufferings. So the word “witness” is taken by *Grotius*, *Macknight*, *Doddridge*, and *Scott*. — *Ed.*

^{ft54} The *Vulgate*, called here and elsewhere, “the old interpreter,” seems to be the most correct, as viewed by most critics. The same form of words is found in the first verse, “The elders *who are among you*.” — *Ed.*

^{ft55} By far the most approved reading is “of God.” — *Ed.*

^{ft56} We read in ^{<600410>} 1 Peter 4:10, of “the manifold grace of God,” which may be viewed as explanatory of “the God of all grace.” — *Ed.*

^{ft57} It seems that the preponderance as to readings is in favor of this construction, for *Griesbach* has introduced into his text these three words as nouns, στηρίξει, σθενώσει, θεμελιώσει, but it is a harsh construction. The probability is, that this reading has been introduced because of the sense, as it was not seen how these words could come after “make perfect.” But the order is according to the usual style of

the prophets, examples of which are also found in the New Testament: the ultimate object is mentioned first, and then what leads to it. The writer, as it were, retrogrades instead of going forward. See on this subject the preface to the third volume of *Calvin's Commentaries* on Jeremiah.

Divested of this peculiarity, the words would run thus: “may he establish, strengthen, confirm, perfect you;” that is, to give the words more literally, “may he put you on a solid foundation, render you strong, render you firm, make you perfect.” — *Ed.*

^{ft58} See a Note in the Epistle to the Romans — Ed.