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**COMMENTARY**

**COMMENTARY  
ON THE SECOND EPISTLE  
OF PETER**

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COMMENTARIES ON

# THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER

## THE ARGUMENT

The doubts respecting this Epistle mentioned by Eusebius, ought not to keep us from reading it. For if the doubts rested on the authority of men, whose names he does not give, we ought to pay no more regard to it than to that of unknown men. And he afterwards adds, that it was everywhere received without any dispute. What Jerome writes influences me somewhat more, that some, induced by a difference in the style, did not think that Peter was the author. For though some affinity may be traced, yet I confess that there is that manifest difference which distinguishes different writers. There are also other probable conjectures by which we may conclude that it was written by another rather than by Peter. At the same time, according to the consent of all, it has nothing unworthy of Peter, as it shews everywhere the power and the grace of an apostolic spirit. If it be received as canonical, we must allow Peter to be the author, since it has his name inscribed, and he also testifies that he had lived with Christ: and it would have been a fiction unworthy of a minister of Christ, to have personated another individual. So then I conclude, that if the Epistle be deemed worthy of credit, it must have proceeded from Peter; not that he himself wrote it, but that some one of his disciples set forth in writing, by his command, those things which the necessity of the times required. For it is probable that he was now in extreme old age, for he says, that he was near his end. And it may have been that at the request of the godly, he allowed this testimony of his mind to be recorded shortly before his death, because it might have somewhat availed, when he was dead, to support the good, and to repress the wicked. Doubtless, as in every part of the Epistle the majesty of the Spirit of Christ appears, to repudiate it is what I dread, though I do not here recognize the language of Peter. But since it is not quite evident as to the author, I shall allow myself the liberty of using the word Peter or Apostle indiscriminately.

I shall now come to the argument, which may be briefly stated.

The *design* is to shew, that those who have once professed the true faith of Christ, ought to respond to their calling to the last. After having then extolled, in high terms, the grace of God, he recommends to them holiness of life, because God usually punishes in hypocrites a false profession of his name, with dreadful blindness, and on the other hand he increases his gifts to those who truly and from the heart embrace the doctrine of religion. He, therefore, exhorts them to prove their calling by a holy life. And, to give a greater weight to his admonitions, he says that he is already near his end, and at the same time, excuses himself that he so often repeated the same things, his object being that they who should remain alive on the earth after his death, might have what he, when alive, wrote, more deeply fixed in their minds.

And as the foundation of true religion is the certainty or the truth of the gospel, he shews, first, how indubitable is its truth by this fact, -that he himself had been an eyewitness of all things which it contains, and especially that he had heard Christ proclaimed from heaven to be the Son of God; and, in the second place, it was God's will that it should be borne witness to, and approved by the oracles of the prophets.

He, however, predicts, at the same time, that danger was approaching from false teachers, who would spread impious inventions, as well as from the despisers of God, who would mock all religion; and he did this, that he seems to have spoken thus designedly, lest they expected that the course of truth in the kingdom Of Christ would be tranquil and peaceable, and free from all contention. He afterwards, as on a tablet, describes the character and manners of those who would, by their corruptions, pollute Christianity. But the description which he presents, especially suits the present age, as it will be more evident by a comparison. For he especially draws his pen against Lucianic men, who abandon themselves to every wickedness, and take a profane license to shew contempt to God, yea, and treat with ridicule the hope of a better life; and at this day we see that the world is everywhere full of such rabble.

He further exhorts the faithful, not only to look always for the coming of Christ with suspended and expectant minds, but also to regard that day as present before their eyes, and in the meantime to keep themselves unpolluted for the Lord: in which doctrine he makes Paul as his associate

and approver; and to defend his writings from the calumnies of the ungodly, he severely reproves all those who pervert them.

# CHAPTER 1

## <610101>2 PETER 1:1-4

1. Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ :	1. Simeon Petrus, et servus et apostolus Jesu Christi, iis quid æquè pretiosam nobiscum sortiti sunt fidem, per justitiam Dei nostri et Servatoris Jesu Christi,
2. Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,	2. Gratia vobis et pax multiplicetur per cognitionem (vel, cum cognitione) Dei et Jesu Domini nostri;
3. According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:	3. Quemadmodum divina ejus potentia omnia nobis quae spectant ad vitam et pietatem dedit per cognitionem ejus qui vocavit nos propria gloria et virtute (vel, per gloriam virtutem):
4. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.	4. Quibus et maximae pretiosae promissiones nobis donatae sunt, ut per Haec fieretis divinae consortes naturae, ubi fugeritis corruptionem quae in mundo est in concupiscentia.

1. *Simon Peter*. Prayer takes the first place at the beginning of this Epistle, and then follows thanksgiving, by which he excites the Jews to gratitude, lest they should forget what great benefits they had already received from God's hand. Why he called himself the *servant and an apostle* of Jesus Christ, we have elsewhere stated, even because no one is to be heard in the Church, except he speaks as from the mouth of Christ. But the word *servant* has a more general meaning, because it includes all the ministers of Christ, who sustain any public office in the Church. There was in the apostleship a higher rank of honor. He then intimates, that he was not one

from the rank of ministers, but was made by the Lord an apostle, and therefore superior to them.<sup>F1</sup>

*Like precious faith.* This is a commendation of the grace which God had indiscriminately shewed to all his elect people; for it was no common gift, that they had all been called to one and the same faith, since faith is the special and chief good of man. But he calls it *like* or equally *precious*, not that it is equal in all, but because all possess by faith the same Christ with his righteousness, and the same salvation. Though then the measure is different, that does not prevent the knowledge of God from being common to all, and the fruit which proceeds from it. Thus we have a real fellowship of faith with Peter and the Apostles.

He adds, *through the righteousness of God*, in order that they might know that they did not obtain faith through their own efforts or strength, but through God's favor alone. For these things stand opposed the one to the other, the righteousness of God (in the sense in which it is taken here) and the merit of man. For the efficient cause of faith is called God's righteousness for this reason, because no one is capable of conferring it on himself. So the righteousness that is to be understood, is not that which remains in God, but that which he imparts to men, as in <sup><450322></sup>Romans 3:22. Besides, he ascribes this righteousness in common to God and to Christ, because it flows from God, and through Christ it flows down to us.<sup>F2</sup>

**2. *Grace and peace.*** By grace is designated God's paternal favor towards us. We have indeed been once for all reconciled to God by the death of Christ, and by faith we come to the possession of this so great a benefit; but as we perceive the grace of God according to the measure of our faith, it is said to increase according to our perception when it becomes more fully known to us.

*Peace* is added; for as the beginning of our happiness is when God receives us into favor; so the more he confirms his love in our hearts, the richer blessing he confers on us, so that we become happy and prosperous in all things,

*Through the knowledge*, literally, *in the knowledge*; but the preposition *ἐν* often means "through" or "with:" yet both senses may suit the context. I am, however, more disposed to adopt the former. For the more any one

advances in the knowledge of God, every kind of blessing increases also equally with the sense of divine love. Whosoever then aspires to the full fruition of the blessed life which is mentioned by Peter, must remember to observe the right way. He connects together at the same time the knowledge of God and of Christ; because God cannot be rightly known except in Christ, according to that saying,

“No one knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom  
the Son will reveal him.” (<sup><401127></sup> Matthew 11:27)

**3. *According as his divine power.*** He refers to the infinite goodness of God which they had ,already experienced, that they might more fully understand it for the future. For he continues the course of his benevolence perpetually to the end, except when we ourselves break it off by our unbelief; for he possesses exhaustless power and an equal will to do good. Hence the Apostle justly animates the faithful to entertain good hope by the consideration of the former benefits of God.<sup>F3</sup> For the same purpose is the amplification which he makes; for he might have spoken more simply, “As he has freely given us all things.” But by mentioning “divine power,” he rises higher, that is, that God has copiously unfolded the immense resources of his power. But the latter clause may be referred to Christ as well as to the Father, but both are suitable. It may however be more fitly applied to Christ, as though he had said, that the grace which is conveyed to us by him, is an evidence of divinity, because it could not have done by humanity.

*That* pertain to *life and godliness*, or, as to life and godliness. Some think that the present life is meant here, as godliness follows as the more excellent gift; as though by those two words Peter intended to prove how beneficent and bountiful God is towards the faithful, that he brought them to light, that he supplies them with all things necessary for the preservation of an earthly life, and that he has also renewed them to a spiritual life by adorning them with godliness. But this distinction is foreign to the mind of Peter, for as soon as he mentioned life, he immediately added godliness, which is as it were its soul; for God then truly gives us life, when he renews us unto the obedience of righteousness. So Peter does not speak here of the natural gifts of God, but only mentions those things which he confers peculiarly on his own elect above the common order of nature.<sup>F4</sup>

That we are born men, that We are endued with reason. and knowledge, that our life is supplied with necessary support, -all this is indeed from God. As however men, being perverted in their minds and ungrateful, do not regard these various things, which are called the gifts of nature, among God's benefits, the common condition of human life is not here referred to, but the peculiar endowments of the new and Spiritual life, which derive their origin from the kingdom of Christ. But since everything necessary for godliness and salvation is to be deemed among the supernatural gifts of God, let men learn to arrogate nothing to themselves, but humbly ask of God whatever they see they are wanting in, and to ascribe to him whatever good they may have. For Peter here, by attributing the whole of godliness, and all helps to salvation, to the divine power of Christ, takes them away from the common nature of men, so that he leaves to us not even the least particle of any virtue or merit.

*Through the knowledge of him.* He now describes the manner in which God makes us partakers of so great blessings, even by making himself known to us by the gospel. For the knowledge of God is the beginning of life and the first entrance into godliness. In short, spiritual gifts cannot be given for salvation, until, being illuminated by the doctrine of the gospel, we are led to know God. But he makes God the author of this knowledge, because we never go to him except when called. Hence the effectual cause of faith is not the perspicacity of our mind, but the calling of God. And he speaks not of the outward calling only, which is in itself ineffectual; but of the inward calling, effected by the hidden power of the Spirit when God not only sounds in our ears by the voice of man, but draws inwardly our hearts to himself by his own Spirit.

*To glory and virtue,* or, by his own glory and power. Some copies have ἰδία δόξη, "by his own glory," and it is so rendered by the old interpreter; and this reading I prefer, because the sentence seems thus to flow better For it was Peter's object expressly to ascribe the whole praise of our salvation to God, so that we may know that we owe every thing to him. And this is more clearly expressed by these words, — that he has called us *by his own glory and power*. However, the other reading, though more obscure, tends to the same thing; for he teaches us, that we are covered with shame, and are wholly vicious, until God clothes us with glory and adorns us with virtue. He further intimates, that the effect of

calling in the elect, is to restore to them the glorious image of God, and to renew them in holiness and righteousness.

4. *Whereby are given to us.* It is doubtful whether he refers only to glory and power, or to the preceding things also. The whole difficulty arises from this, — that what is here said is not suitable to the glory and virtue which God confers on us; but if we read, “by his own glory and power,” there will be no ambiguity nor perplexity. For what things have been promised to us by God, ought to be properly and justly deemed to be the effects of his power and glory.<sup>F5</sup>

At the same time the copies vary here also; for some have δι’ ὧν, “on account of whom;” so the reference may be to Christ. Whichsoever of the two readings you choose, still the meaning will be, that first the promises of God ought to be most highly valued; and, secondly, that they are gratuitous, because they are offered to us as gifts. And he then shews the excellency of the promises, that they make us partakers of the divine nature, than which nothing can be conceived better.

For we must consider from whence it is that God raises us up to such a height of honor. We know how abject is the condition of our nature; that God, then, should make himself ours, so that all his things should in a manner become our things, the greatness of his grace cannot be sufficiently conceived by our minds. Therefore this consideration alone ought to be abundantly sufficient to make us to renounce the world and to carry us aloft to heaven. Let us then mark, that the end of the gospel is, to render us eventually conformable to God, and, if we may so speak, to deify us.

But the word *nature* is not here essence but quality. The Manicheans formerly dreamt that we are a part of God, and that ,after having run the race of life we shall at length revert to our original. There are also at this day fanatics who imagine that we thus pass over into the nature of God, so that his swallows up our nature. Thus they explain what Paul says, that God will be all in all (<461528> 1 Corinthians 15:28,) and in the same sense they take this passage. But such a delirium as this never entered the minds of the holy Apostles; they only intended to say that when divested of all the vices of the flesh, we shall be partakers of divine and blessed immortality and glory, so as to be as it were one with God as far as our capacities will allow.

This doctrine was not altogether unknown to Plato, who everywhere defines the chief good of man to be an entire conformity to God; but as he was involved in the mists of errors, he afterwards glided off to his own inventions. But we, disregarding empty speculations, ought to be satisfied with this one thing,--that the image of God in holiness and righteousness is restored to us for this end, that we may at length be partakers of eternal life and glory as far as it will be necessary for our complete felicity.

*Having escaped.* We have already explained that the design of the Apostle was, to set before us the dignity of the glory of heaven, to which God invites us, and thus to draw us away from the vanity of this world. Moreover, he sets the corruption of the world in opposition to the divine nature; but he shews that this corruption is not in the elements which surround us, but in our heart, because there vicious and depraved affections prevail, the fountain and root of which he points out by the word *lust*. Corruption, then, is thus placed in the world, that we may know that the world is in us.

<610105> 2 PETER 1:5-9	
5. And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge;	5. Atque in hoc ipsum omne studium applicantes, subministrate in fide vestra virtutem, in virtute autem scientiam;
6. And to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness;	6. In scientia verae temperantiam, in temperantia autem patientiam, in patientia verò pietatem,
7. And to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.	7. In pietate autem fraternum amorem, in fraterno verò amore charitatem.
8. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.	8. Haec enim si vobis adsint, et abunde, suppetant, non otiosos neque infructuosos constituent vos in cognitione Domini nostri Jesu Christi.
9. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.	9. Cui enim Haec non adsunt, caecus est, manu palpan, purgationis oblitus veterum delictorum.

5. *And besides this.* As it is a work arduous and of immense labor, to put off the corruption which is in us, he bids us to strive and make every effort for this purpose. He intimates that no place is to be given in this case to sloth, and that we ought to obey God calling us, not slowly or carelessly, but that there is need of alacrity; as though he had said, “Put forth every effort, and make your exertions manifest to all.” — For this is what the participle he uses imports.

*Add to your faith virtue,* or, Supply to your faith virtue. He shews for what purpose the faithful were to strive, that is, that they might have faith adorned with good morals, wisdom, patience, and love. Then he intimates that faith ought not to be naked or empty, but that these are its inseparable companions. To supply to faith, is to add to faith. There is not here, however, properly a gradation as to the sense, though it appears as to the words; for love does not in order follow patience, nor does it proceed from it. Therefore the passage is to be thus simply explained, “Strive that virtue, prudence, temperance, and the things which follow, may be added to your faith.” <sup>F6</sup>

I take *virtue* to mean a life honest and rightly formed; for it is not here ἐνέργεια, energy or courage, but ἀρετή, virtue, moral goodness. Knowledge is what is necessary for acting prudently; for after having put down a general term, he mentions some of the principal endowments of a Christian. *Brotherly-kindness*, φιλαδελφία, is mutual affection among the children of God. Love extends wider, because it embraces all mankind.

It may, however, be here asked, Whether Peter, by assigning to us the work of supplying or adding virtue, thus far extolled the strength and power of free-will? They who seek to establish free-will in man, indeed concede to God the first place, that is, that he begins to act or work in us; but they imagine that we at the same time co-operate, and that it is thus owing to us that the movements of God are not rendered void and inefficacious. But the perpetual doctrine of Scripture is opposed to this delirious notion: for it plainly testifies, that right feelings are formed in us by God, and are rendered by him effectual. It testifies also that all our progress and perseverance are from God. Besides, it expressly declares that wisdom, love, patience, are the gifts of God and the Spirit. When, therefore, the Apostle requires these things, he by no means asserts that

they are in our power, but only shews what we ought to have, and what ought to be done. And as to the godly, when conscious of their own infirmity, they find themselves deficient in their duty, nothing remains for them but to flee to God for aid and help.<sup>F7</sup>

**8. *For if these things be in you.*** Then, he says, you will at length prove that Christ is really known by you, if ye be endued with virtue, temperance, and the other endowments. For the knowledge of Christ is an efficacious thing and a living root, which brings forth fruit. For by saying that these things would make them *neither barren nor unfruitful*, he shews that all those glory, in vain and falsely, that they have the knowledge of Christ, who boast of it without love, patience, and the like gifts, as Paul also says in <490420> Ephesians 4:20,

“Ye have not so learned Christ, if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus, that ye put off the old man,” etc.

For he means that those who possess Christ without newness of life, have never been rightly taught his doctrine.

But he would not have the faithful to be only taught patience, godliness, temperance, love; but he requires a continual progress to be made as to these endowments, and that justly, for we are as yet far off from the goal. We ought, therefore, always to make advances, so that God’s gifts may continually increase in us.

**9. *But he that lacketh these things.*** He now expresses more clearly that they who profess a naked faith are wholly without any true knowledge. He then says that they go astray like the blind in darkness, because they do not see the right way which is shewn to us by the light of the gospel.<sup>F8</sup> This he also confirms by adding this reason, because such have forgotten that through the benefit of Christ they had been cleansed from sin, and yet this is the beginning of our Christianity. It then follows, that those who do not strive for a pure and holy life, do not understand even the first rudiments of faith.

But Peter takes this for granted, that they who were still rolling in the filth of the flesh had forgotten their own purgation. For the blood of Christ has not become a washing bath to us, that it may be fouled by our filth. He, therefore, calls them old sins, by which he means, that our life ought to be

otherwise formed, because we have been cleansed from our sins; not that any one can be pure from every sin while he lives in this world, or that the cleansing we obtain through Christ consists of pardon only, but that we ought to differ from the unbelieving, as God has separated us for himself. Though, then, we daily sin, and God daily forgives us, and the blood of Christ cleanses us from our sins, yet sin ought not to rule in us, but the sanctification of the Spirit ought to prevail in us; for so Paul teaches us in <460611> 1 Corinthians 6:11, “And such were some of you; but ye are washed,” etc.

**<610110> 2 PETER 1:10-15**

<b>10.</b> Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:	<b>10.</b> Quamobrem magis, fratres, studete firmam vestram vocationem et electionem facere: Haec enim si feceritis, non cadetis unquam:
<b>11.</b> For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.	<b>11.</b> Sic enim abundè subministrabitur vobis ingressus in regnum eternum Domini nostri et Servatoris Jesu Christi.
<b>12.</b> Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.	<b>12.</b> Itaque non negligam semper de iis commonefacere, etiamsi noveritis, et confirmati sitis in præsenti veritate.
<b>13.</b> Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance;	<b>13.</b> Justum autem arbitror, quandiu sum in hoc tabernaculo, vos admonitione;
<b>14.</b> Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.	<b>14.</b> Quum sciam brevi me depositurum hoc tabernaculum, quemadmodum et Dominus Jesus manifestavit mihi.
<b>15.</b> Moreover, I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.	<b>15.</b> Dabo autem operam, ut etiam semper post meum discessum possitis horum habere memoriam.

**10. *Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence.*** He draws this conclusion, that it is one proof that we have been really elected, and not in vain called by the Lord, if a good conscience and integrity of life correspond with our profession of faith. And he infers, that there ought to be more labor and diligence, because he had said before, that faith ought not to be barren.

Some copies have, “by good works;” but these words make no change in the sense, for they are to be understood though not expressed. <sup>F9</sup>

He mentions *calling* first, though the last in order. The reason is, because election is of greater weight or importance; and it is a right arrangement of a sentence to subjoin what preponderates. The meaning then is, labor that you may have it really proved that you have not been called nor elected in vain. At the same time he speaks here of calling as the effect and evidence of election. If any one prefers to regard the two words as meaning the same thing, I do not object; for the Scripture sometimes merges the difference which exists between two terms. I have, however, stated what seems to me more probable. <sup>F10</sup>

Now a question arises, Whether the stability of our calling and election depends on good works, for if it be so, it follows that it depends on us. But the whole Scripture teaches us, first, that God's election is founded on his eternal purpose; and secondly, that calling begins and is completed through his gratuitous goodness. The Sophists, in order to transfer what is peculiar to God's grace, to ourselves usually pervert this evidence. But their evasions may be easily refuted. For if any one thinks that calling is rendered sure by men, there is nothing absurd in that; we may however, go still farther, that every one confirms his calling by leading a holy and pious life. But it is very foolish to infer from this what the Sophists contend for; for this is a proof not taken from the cause, but on the contrary from the sign or the effect. Moreover, this does not prevent election from being gratuitous, nor does it shew that it is in our own hand or power to confirm election. For the matter stands thus, — God effectually calls whom he has preordained to life in his secret counsel before the foundation of the world; and he also carries on the perpetual course of calling through grace alone. But as he has chosen us, and calls us for this end, that we may be pure and spotless in his presence; purity of life is not improperly called the evidence and proof of election, by which the faithful may not only testify

to others that they are the children of God, but also confirm themselves in this confidence, in such a manner, however that they fix their solid foundation on something else.

At the same time, this certainty, mentioned by Peter, ought, I think, to be referred to the conscience, as though the faithful acknowledged themselves before God to be chosen and called. But I take it simply of the fact itself, that calling appears as confirmed by this very holiness of life. It may, indeed, be rendered, Labor that your calling may become certain; for the verb **ποιεῖσθαι** is transitive or intransitive. Still, however you may render it, the meaning is nearly the same.

The import of what is said is, that the children of God are distinguished from the reprobate by this mark, that they live a godly and a holy life, because this is the design and end of election. Hence it is evident how wickedly some vile unprincipled men prattle, when they seek to make gratuitous election an excuse for all licentiousness; as though, forsooth! we may sin with impunity, because we have been predestinated to righteousness and holiness!

*For if ye do these things.* Peter seems again to ascribe to the merits of works, that God furthers our salvation, and also that we continually persevere in his grace. But the explanation is obvious; for his purpose was only to shew that hypocrites have in them nothing real or solid, and that, on the contrary, they who prove their calling sure by good works, are free from the danger of falling, because sure and sufficient is the grace of God by which they are supported. Thus the certainty of our salvation by no means depends on us, as doubtless the cause of it is beyond our limits. But with regard to those who feel in themselves the efficacious working of the Spirit, Peter bids them to take courage as to the future, because the Lord has laid in them the solid foundation of a true and sure calling.

He explains the way or means of persevering, when he says, *an entrance shall be ministered to you.* The import of the words is this: “God, by ever supplying you abundantly with new graces, will lead you to his own kingdom.” And this was added, that we may know, that though we have already passed from death into life, yet it is a passage of hope; and as to the fruition of life, there remains for us yet a long journey. In the meantime we are not destitute of necessary helps. Hence Peter obviates a doubt by these words, “The Lord will abundantly supply your need, until you shall

enter into his eternal kingdom.” He calls it the kingdom of *Christ*, because we cannot ascend to heaven except under his banner and guidance.

**12. *Wherefore I will not be negligent.*** As we seem to distrust either the memory or the attention of those whom we often remind of the same thing, the Apostle makes this modest excuse, that he ceased not to press on the attention of the faithful what was well known and fixed in their minds, because its importance and greatness required this.

“Ye do, indeed,” he says, “fully understand what the truth of the gospel is, nor have I to confirm as it were the wavering, but in a matter so great, admonitions are never superfluous; and, therefore, they ought never to be deemed vexatious.” Paul also employs a similar excuse in <sup><451514></sup>Romans 15:14,

“I am persuaded of you, brethren,” he says, “that ye are full of knowledge, so as to be able to admonish one another: but I have more confidently written to you, as putting you in mind.”

He calls that *the present truth*, into the possession of which they had already entered by a sure faith. He, then, commends their faith, in order that they might remain fixed in it more firmly.

**13. *Yea, I think it meet,*** or right. He expresses more clearly how useful and how necessary is admonition, because it is needful to arouse the faithful, for otherwise torpor will creep in from the flesh. Though, then, they might not have wanted teaching, yet he says that the goads of admonitions were useful, lest security and indulgence (as it is usually the case) should weaken what they had learned, and at length extinguish it.

He adds another cause why he was so intent on writing to them, because he knew that a short time remained for him. “I must diligently employ my time,” he says; “for the Lord has made known to me that my life in this world will not be long.”

We hence learn, that admonitions ought to be so given, that the people whom we wish to benefit may not think that wrong is done to them, and also that offenses ought to be so avoided, that yet the truth may have a free course, and exhortations may not be discontinued. Now, this moderation is to be observed towards those to whom a sharp reproof would not be suitable, but who ought on the contrary to be kindly helped,

since they are inclined of themselves to do their duty. We are also taught by the example of Peter, that the shorter term of life remains to us, the more diligent ought we to be in executing our office. It is not commonly given to us to foresee our end; but they who are advanced in years, or weakened by illness, being reminded by such indications of the shortness of their life, ought to be more sedulous and diligent, so that they may in due time perform what the Lord has given them to do; nay, those who are the strongest and in the flower of their age, as they do not render to God so constant a service as it behooves them to do, ought to quicken themselves to the same care and diligence by the recollection of approaching death; lest the occasion of doing good may pass away, while they attend negligently and slothfully to their work.

At the same time, I doubt not but that it was Peter's object to gain more authority and weight to his teaching, when he said that he would endeavor to make them to remember these things after his death, which was then nigh at hand. For when any one, shortly before he quits this life, addresses us, his words have in a manner the force and power of a testament or will, and are usually received by us with greater reverence.

**14. *I must put off this my tabernacle.*** Literally the words are, "Short is the putting; away of this tabernacle." By this mode of speaking, and afterwards by the word "departing," he designates death, which it behooves us to notice; for we are here taught how much death differs from perdition. Besides, too much dread of death terrifies us, because we do not sufficiently consider how fading and evanescent this life is, and do not reflect on the perpetuity of future life. But what does Peter say? He declares that death is departing from this world, that we may remove elsewhere, even to the Lord. It ought not, then, to be dreadful to us, as though we were to perish when we die. He declares that it is the putting away of a tabernacle, by which we are covered only for a short time. There is, then, no reason why we should regret to be removed from it.

But there is to be understood an implied contrast between a fading tabernacle and a perpetual habitation, which Paul explains in <sup><470501></sup>2 Corinthians 5:1. <sup>F11</sup>

When he says that it had been revealed to him by Christ, he refers not to the kind of death, but to the time. But if he received the oracle at Babylon respecting his death being near, how was he crucified at Rome? It certainly

appears that he died very far from Italy, except he flew in a moment over seas and lands.<sup>F12</sup> But the Papists, in order to claim for themselves the body of Peter, make themselves Babylonians, and say that Rome is called Babylon by Peter: this shall be refuted in its proper place. What he says of remembering these things after his death, was intended to shew, that posterity ought to learn from him when dead. For the apostles had not regard only for their own age, but purposed to do us good also. Though, then, they are dead, their doctrine lives and prevails: and it is our duty to profit by their writings, as though they were manifestly present with. us.

<610116> 2 PETER 1:16-18	
16. For we have not followed cunningly-devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty.	16. Neque enim fabulas snbtilater excogitatas (vel, arte compositas) sequuti, notam vobis fecimus Domini nostri Jesu Christi potentiam et adventum; sed spectatores facti ejus magnificentiae.
17. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such n voice to him from the excellent glory: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.	17. Accepit enim à Deo Patre honorém et gloriam, allata illi à magnifica gloria hujusmodi voce, Hie Filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi complacui.
18. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we, were with him in the holy mount.	18. Et hanc vocem nos audivimus, dum essemus in monte sancto cum illo.

16. *For we have not followed cunningly-devised fables.* It gives us much courage, when we know that we labor in a matter that is certain. Lest, then, the faithful should think that in these labors they were beating the air, he now comes to set forth the certainty of the gospel; and he denies that anything had been delivered by him but what was altogether true and indubitable: and they were encouraged to persevere, when they were sure of the prosperous issue of their calling.

In the first place, Peter indeed asserts that he had been an eye-witness; for he had himself seen with his own eyes the glory of Christ, of which he

speaks. This knowledge he sets in opposition to crafty fables, such as cunning men are wont to fabricate to ensnare simple minds. The old interpreter renders the word “feigned,” (fictas;) Erasmus, “formed by art.” It seems to me that what is subtle to deceive is meant: for the Greek word here used, σοφί·ζεσθαι, sometimes means this. And we know how much labor men bestow on frivolous refinements, and only that they may have some amusement. Therefore no less seriously ought our minds to be applied to know the truth which is not fallacious, and the doctrine which is not nugatory, and which discovers to us the glory of the Son of God and our own salvation. <sup>F13</sup>

*The power and the coming.* No doubt he meant in these words to include the substance of the gospel, as it certainly contains nothing except Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom. But he distinctly mentions two things, — that Christ had been manifested in the flesh, — and also that power was exhibited by him. <sup>F14</sup> Thus, then, we have the whole gospel; for we know that he, the long-promised Redeemer, came from heaven, put on our flesh, lived in the world, died and rose again; and, in the second place, we perceive the end and fruit of all these things, that is, that he might be God with us, that he might exhibit in himself a sure pledge of our adoption, that he might cleanse us from the defilement’s of the flesh by the grace of his Spirit, and consecrate us temples to God, that he might deliver us from hell, and raise us up to heaven, that he might by the sacrifice of his death make an atonement for the sins of the world, that he might reconcile us to the Father, that he might become to us the author of righteousness and of life. He who knows and understands these things, is fully acquainted with the gospel.

*Were eye-witnesses,* or beholders. <sup>F15</sup> We hence conclude, that they by no means serve Christ, nor are like the apostles, who presumptuously mount the pulpit to prattle of speculations unknown to themselves; for he alone is the lawful minister of Christ, who knows the truth of the doctrine which he delivers: not that all obtain certainty in the same way; for what Peter says is that he himself was present, when Christ was declared by a voice from heaven to be the Son of God. Three only were then present, but they were sufficient as witnesses; for they had through many miracles seen the glory of Christ, and had a remarkable evidence of his divinity in his resurrection. But we now obtain certainty in another way; for though Christ has not risen before our eyes, yet we know by whom his

resurrection has been handed down to us. And added to this is the inward testimony of conscience, the sealing of the Spirit, which far exceeds all the evidence of the senses. But let us remember that the gospel was not at the beginning made up of vague rumors, but that the apostles were the authentic preachers of what they had seen.

**17. *For he received from God the Father.*** He chose one memorable example out of many, even that of Christ, when, adorned with celestial glory, he conspicuously displayed his divine majesty to his three disciples. And though Peter does not relate all the circumstances, yet he sufficiently designates them when he says, *that a voice came from the magnificent glory*. For the meaning is, that nothing earthly was seen there, but that a celestial majesty shone on every side. We may hence conclude what those displays of greatness were which the evangelists relate. And it was necessarily thus done, in order that the authority of that voice which came might be more awful and solemn, as we see that it was done all at once by the Lord. For when he spoke to the fathers, he did not only cause his words to sound in the air, but by adding some symbols or tokens of his presence, he proved the oracles to be his.

***This is my beloved Son.*** Peter then mentions this voice, as though it was sufficient alone as a full evidence for the gospel, and justly so. For when Christ is acknowledged by us to be him whom the Father has sent, this is our highest wisdom. There are two parts to this sentence. When he says, “This is,” the expression is very emphatical, intimating, that he was the Messiah who had been so often promised. Whatever, then, is found in the Law and the Prophets respecting the Messiah, is declared here, by the Father, to belong to him whom he so highly commended. In the other part of the sentence, he announces Christ as his own Son, in whom his whole love dwells and centres. It hence follows that we are not otherwise loved than in him, nor ought the love of God to be sought anywhere else. It is sufficient for me now only to touch on these things by the way.

**18. *In the holy mount.*** He calls it the holy mount, for the same reason that the ground was called holy where God appeared to Moses. For wherever the Lord comes, as he is the fountain of all holiness, he makes holy all things by the odor of his presence. And by this mode of speaking we are taught, not only to receive God reverently wherever he shews himself, but also to prepare ourselves for holiness, as soon as he comes nigh us, as it

was commanded the people when the law was proclaimed on Mount Sinai. And it is a general truth,

“Be ye holy, for I am holy, who dwell in the midst of you.”  
(<sup><031144></sup>Leviticus 11:44; 19:2)

<sup>&lt;610119&gt;</sup> 2 PETER 1:19-21	
19. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the daystar arise in your hearts;	19. Et habemus firmiorem propheticum sermonem, cui bene facitis attendentes, tanquam lucernae apparenti in caliginoso loco, donec illuceat dies, et lucifer oriatur in cordibus vestris;
20. Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.	20. Hoc primum cognito, quod omnis prophetia scripturae privatae (vel, proprii motus) interpretationis non est:
21. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.	21. Neque enim voluntate hominis allata est quondam prophetia; sed à Spiritu Sancto impulsì, loquuti sunt sancti Dei homines.

19. *We have also.* He now shews that the truth of the gospel is founded on the oracles of the prophets, lest they who embraced it should hesitate to devote themselves wholly to Christ: for they who waver cannot be otherwise than remiss in their minds. But when he says, “We have,” he refers to himself and other teachers, as well as to their disciples. The apostles had the prophets as the patrons of their doctrine; the faithful also sought from them a confirmation of the gospel. I am the more disposed to take this view, because he speaks of the whole Church, and makes himself one among others. At the same time, he refers more especially to the Jews, who were well acquainted with the doctrine of the prophets. And hence, as I think, he calls their word *more sure* or firmer.

For they who take the comparative for a positive, that is, “more sure,” for “sure,” do not sufficiently consider the whole context. The sense also is a forced one, when it is said to be “more sure,” because God really completed what he had promised concerning his Son. For the truth of the

gospel is here simply proved by a twofold testimony, — that Christ had been highly approved by the solemn declaration of God, and, then, that all the prophecies of the prophets confirmed the same thing. But it appears at first sight strange, that the word of the prophets should be said to be more sure or firmer than the voice which came from the holy mouth of God himself; for, first, the authority of God's word is the same from the beginning; and, secondly, it was more confirmed than previously by the coming of Christ. But the solution of this knot is not difficult: for here the Apostle had a regard to his own nation, who were acquainted with the prophets, and their doctrine was received without any dispute. As, then, it was not doubted by the Jews but that all the things which the prophets had taught, came from the Lord, it is no wonder that Peter said that their word was more sure. Antiquity also gains some reverence. There are, besides, some other circumstances which ought to be noticed; particularly, that no suspicion could be entertained as to those prophecies in which the kingdom of Christ had so long before been predicted.

The question, then, is not here, whether the prophets deserve more credit than the gospel; but Peter regarded only this, to shew how much deference the Jews paid to those who counted the prophets as God's faithful ministers, and had been brought up from childhood in their school. <sup>F16</sup>

*Whereunto ye do well.* This passage is, indeed, attended with some more difficulty; for it may be asked, what is the day which Peter mentions? To some it seems to be the clear knowledge of Christ, when men fully acquiesce in the gospel; and the *darkness* they explain as existing, when they, as yet, hesitate in suspense, and the doctrine of the gospel is not received as indubitable; as though Peter praised those Jews who were searching for Christ in the Law and the Prophets, and were advancing, as by this preceding light towards Christ, the Sun of righteousness, as they were praised by Luke, who, having heard Paul preaching, searched the Scripture to know whether what he said was true. (<441711> Acts 17:11)

But in this view there is, first, an inconsistency, because it thus seems that the use of the prophecies is confined to a short time, as though they would be superfluous when the gospel-light is seen. Were one to object and say, that this does not necessarily follow, because *until* does not always denote the end. To this I say, that in commands it cannot be otherwise taken: “Walk until you finish your course;” “Fight until you conquer.” In such

expressions we doubtless see that a certain time is specified. <sup>F17</sup> But were I to concede this point, that the reading of the prophets is not thus wholly cast aside; yet every one must see how frigid is this commendation, that the prophets are useful until Christ is revealed to us; for their teaching is necessary to us until the end of life. Secondly, we must bear in mind who they were whom Peter addressed; for he was not instructing the ignorant and novices, who were as yet in the first rudiments; but even those respecting whom he had before testified, that they had obtained the same precious faith, and were confirmed in the present truth. Surely the gross darkness of ignorance could not have been ascribed to such people. I know what some allege, that all had not made the same progress, and that here beginners who were as yet seeking Christ, are admonished.

But as it is evident from the context, that the words were addressed to the same persons, the passage must necessarily be applied to the faithful who had already known Christ, and had become partakers of the true light. I therefore extend this darkness, mentioned by Peter, to the whole course of life, and *the day*, I consider will then *shine* on us when we shall see face to face, what we now see through a glass darkly. Christ, the Sun of righteousness, indeed, shines forth in the gospel; but the darkness of death will always, in part, possess our minds, until we shall be brought out of the prison of the flesh, and be translated into heaven. This, then, will be the brightness of day, when no clouds or mists of ignorance shall intercept the bright shining of the Sun.

And doubtless we are so far from a perfect day, as our faith is from perfection. It is, therefore, no wonder that the state of the present life is called darkness, since we are far distant from that knowledge to which the gospel invites us. <sup>F18</sup>

In short, Peter reminds us that as long as we sojourn in this world, we have need of the doctrine of the prophets as a guiding; light; which being extinguished, we can do nothing else but wander in darkness; for he does not disjoin the prophecies from the gospel, when he teaches us that they shine to shew us the way. His object only was to teach us that the whole course of our life ought to be guided by God's word; for otherwise we must be involved on every side in the darkness of ignorance; and the Lord does not shine on us, except when we take his word as our light.

But he does not use the comparison, *light*, or lamp, to intimate that the light is small and sparing, but to make these two things to correspond,-- that we are without light, and can no more keep on the right way than those who go astray in a dark night; and that the Lord brings a remedy for this evil, when he lights a torch to guide us in the midst of darkness.

What he immediately adds respecting *the day star* does not however seem altogether suitable to this explanation; for the real knowledge, to which we are advancing through life, cannot be called the beginning of the day. To this I reply, that different parts of the day are compared together, but the whole day in all its parts is set in opposition to that darkness, which would wholly overspread all our faculties, were not the Lord to come to our help by the light of his word.

This is a remarkable passage: we learn from it how God guides us. The Papists have ever and anon in their mouth, that the Church cannot err. Though the word is neglected, they yet imagine that it is guided by the Spirit. But Peter, on the contrary, intimates that all are immersed in darkness who do not attend to the light of the word. Therefore, except thou art resolved wilfully to cast thyself into a labyrinth, especially beware of departing even in the least thing from the rule and direction of the word. Nay, the Church cannot follow God as its guide, except it observes what the word prescribes.

In this passage Peter also condemns all the wisdom of men, in order that we may learn humbly to seek, otherwise than by our own understanding, the true way of knowledge; for without the word nothing is left for men but darkness.

It further deserves to be noticed, that he pronounces on the clearness of Scripture; for what is said would be a false eulogy, were not the Scripture fit and suitable to shew to us with certainty the right way. Whosoever, then, will open his eyes through the obedience of faith, shall by experience know that the Scripture has not been in vain called a light. It is, indeed, obscure to the unbelieving; but they who are given up to destruction are wilfully blind. Execrable, therefore, is the blasphemy of the Papists, who pretend that the light of Scripture does nothing but dazzle the eyes, in order to keep the simple from reading it. But it is no wonder that proud men, inflated with the wind of false confidence, do not see that light with

which the Lord favors only little children and the humble. With a similar eulogy David commends the law of God in Psalms 19 and 119.

**20. *Knowing this first.*** Here Peter begins to shew how our minds are to be prepared, if we really wish to make progress in scriptural knowledge. There may at the same time be two interpretations given, if you read ἐπιλύσεως as some do, which means occurrence, impulse; or, as I have rendered it, interpretation, ἐπιλύσεως But almost all give this meaning, that we ought not to rush on headlong and rashly when we read Scripture, confiding in our own understanding. They think that a confirmation of this follows, because the Spirit, who spoke by the prophets, is the only true interpreter of himself.

This explanation contains a true, godly, and useful doctrine, that then only are the prophecies read profitably, when we renounce the mind and feelings of the flesh, and submit to the teaching of the Spirit, but that it is an impious profanation of it; when we arrogantly rely on our own acumen, deeming that sufficient to enable us to understand it, though the mysteries contain things hidden to our flesh, and sublime treasures of life far surpassing our capacities. And this is what we have said, that the light which shines in it, comes to the humble alone.

But the Papists are doubly foolish, when they conclude from this passage, that no interpretation of a private man ought to be deemed authoritative. For they pervert what Peter says, that they may claim for their own councils the chief right of interpreting Scripture; but in this they act indeed childishly; for Peter calls interpretation *private*, not that of every individual, in order to prohibit each one to interpret; but he shews that whatever men bring of their own is profane. Were, then, the whole world unanimous, and were the minds of all men united together, still what would proceed from them, would be private or their own; for the word is here set in opposition to divine revelation; so that the faithful, inwardly illuminated by the Holy Spirit, acknowledge nothing but what God says in his word.

However, another sense seems to me more simple, that Peter says that Scripture came not from man, or through the suggestions of man. For thou wilt never come well prepared to read it, except thou bringest reverence, obedience, and docility; but a just reverence then only exists when we are convinced that God speaks to us, and not mortal men. Then Peter especially bids us to believe the prophecies as the indubitable oracles of

God, because they have not emanated from men's own private suggestions.  
F19

To the same purpose is what immediately follows, — *but holy men of God spake* as they were *moved by the Holy Ghost*. They did not of themselves, or according to their own will, foolishly deliver their own inventions. The meaning is, that the beginning of right knowledge is to give that credit to the holy prophets which is due to God. He calls them the *holy men of God*, because they faithfully executed the office committed to them, having sustained the person of God in their ministrations. He says that they were — not that they were bereaved of mind, (as the Gentiles imagined their prophets to have been,) but because they dared not to announce anything of their own, and obediently followed the Spirit as their guide, who ruled in their mouth as in his own sanctuary. Understand by *prophecy of Scripture* that which is contained in the holy Scriptures.

# CHAPTER 2

## <610201> 2 PETER 2:1-3

1. But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.	1. Fuerunt autem et falsi prophetae in populo, sicuti et inter vos erunt falsi doctores, qui subinducunt sectas perditionis, et etiam Dominum qui eos redemit abnegantes, accersentes sibi celerem interitum.
2. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.	2. Et multi sequentur eorum exitia, per quos via veritatis blssphemabitur;
3. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you; whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.	3. Et in avaritia fictis sermonibus de vobis negotiabuntur; quorum iudicium pridem non cessat, et quorum perditio non dormitat.

1. *But there were.* As weak consciences are usually very grievously and dangerously shaken, when false teachers arise, who either corrupt or mutilate the doctrine of faith, it was necessary for the Apostle, while seeking to encourage the faithful to persevere, to remove out of the way an offense of this kind. He, moreover, comforted those to whom he was writing, and confirmed them by this argument, that God has always tried and proved his Church by such a temptation as this, in order that novelty might not disturb their hearts. “Not different,” he says, “will be the condition of the Church under the gospel, from what it was formerly under the law; false prophets disturbed the ancient Church; the same thing must also be expected by us.”

It was necessary expressly to shew this, because many imagined that the Church would enjoy tranquillity under the rein of Christ; for as the prophets had promised that at his coming there would be real peace, the

highest degree of heavenly wisdom, and the full restoration of all things, they thought that the Church would be no more exposed to any contests. Let us then remember that the Spirit of God hath once for all declared, that the Church shall never be free from this intestine evil; and let this likeness be always borne in mind, that the trial of our faith is to be similar to that of the fathers, and for the same reason — that in this way it may be made evident, whether we really love God, as we find it written in <051303> Deuteronomy 13:3.

But it is not necessary here to refer to every example of this kind; it is enough, in short, to know that, like the fathers, we must contend against false doctrines, that our faith ought by no means to be shaken on account of discords and sects, because the truth of God shall remain unshaken notwithstanding the violent agitations by which Satan strives often to upset all things.

Observe also, that no one time in particular is mentioned by Peter, when he says *there shall be false teachers*, but that all ages are included; for he makes here a comparison between Christians and the ancient people. We ought, then, to apply this truth to our own time, lest, when we see false teachers rising up to oppose the truth of God, this trial should break us down. But the Spirit reminds us, in order that we may take the more heed; and to the same purpose is the whole description which follows.

He does not, indeed, paint each sect in its own colors, but particularly refers to profane men who manifested contempt towards God. The advice, indeed, is general, that we ought to beware of false teachers; but, at the same time, he selected one kind of such from whom the greater danger arose. What is said here will hereafter become more evident from the words of Jude, who treats exactly of the same subject.

*Who privily shall bring in.* By these words he points out the craftiness of Satan, and of all the ungodly who militate under his banner, that they would creep in by oblique turnings, as through burrows under ground. F20 The more watchful, then, ought the godly to be, so that they may escape their hidden frauds: for however they may insinuate themselves, they cannot circumvent those who are carefully vigilant.

He calls them *opinions of perdition*, or destructive opinions, that every one, solicitous for his salvation, might dread such opinions as the most

noxious pests. As to the word *opinions* or heresies, it has not, without reason, been always deemed infamous and hateful by the children of God; for the bond of holy unity is the simple truth. As soon as we depart from that, nothing remains but dreadful discord.

*Even denying the Lord that bought them.* Though Christ may be denied in various ways, yet Peter, as I think, refers here to what is expressed by Jude, that is, when the grace of God is turned into lasciviousness; for Christ redeemed us, that he might have a people separated from all the pollutions of the world, and devoted to holiness, and innocency. They, then, who throw off the bridle, and give themselves up to all kinds of licentiousness, are not unjustly said to deny Christ by whom they have been redeemed. Hence, that the doctrine of the gospel may remain whole and complete among us, let this be fixed in our minds, that we have been redeemed by Christ, that he may be the Lord of our life and of our death, and that our main object ought to be, to live to him and to die to him. He then says, that their *swift destruction* was at hand, lest others should be ensnared by them. <sup>F21</sup>

**2. *And many shall follow.*** It is, indeed, no slight offense to the weak, when they see that false doctrines are received by the common consent of the world, that a large number of men are led astray, so that few continue in true obedience to Christ. So, at this day, there is nothing that more violently disturbs pious minds than such a defection. For hardly one in ten of those who have once made a profession of Christ, retains the purity of faith to the end. Almost all turn aside into corruptions, and being deluded by the teachers of licentiousness, they become profane. Lest this should make our faith to falter, Peter comes to our help, and in due time foretells that this very thing would be, that is, that false teachers would draw many to perdition.

But there is a double reading even in the Greek copies; for some read, “lasciviousness,” and others, “perdition.” I have, however, followed what has been mostly approved. <sup>F22</sup>

*By reason of whom the way of truth.* This I consider to have been said for this reason, because as religion is adorned when men are taught to fear God, to maintain uprightness of life, a chaste and virtuous conduct, or when at least the mouth of the wicked is closed, that they do not speak evil of the gospel; so when the reins are let loose, and every kind of

licentiousness is practiced, the name and the doctrine of Christ are exposed to the reproaches of the ungodly. Others give a different explanation — that these false teachers, like filthy dogs, barked at sound doctrine. But the words of Peter appear to me on the contrary to intimate, that these would give occasion to enemies insolently to assail the truth of God. Though then they would not themselves assail the Christian faith with calumnies, yet they would arm others with the means of reproaching it.

**3. *With feigned words.*** Peter endeavors by all means to render the faithful displeased with ungodly teachers, that they might resist them more resolutely and more constantly. It is especially an odious thing that we should be exposed to sale like vile slaves. But he testifies that this is done, when any one seduces us from the redemption of Christ. He calls those *feigned words* which are artfully formed for the purpose of deceiving. <sup>F23</sup> Unless then one is so mad as to sell the salvation of his soul to false teachers, let him close up every avenue that may lead to their wicked inventions. For the same purpose as before he repeats again, that their destruction delayed not, that is, that he might frighten the good from their society. For since they were given up to a sudden destruction, every one who connected himself with them, must have perished with them.

**<610204> 2 PETER 2:4-8**

<b>4.</b> For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;	<b>4.</b> Si enim Angelis qui peccaverant, Deus non perpercit, sed catenis caliginis in tartarum praecipitatos tradidit servandos in iudicium;
<b>5.</b> And spared not the old world, but saved Noah, the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;	<b>5.</b> Et prisco mundo non pepercit, sed octavum justitiae praeconem Noe servavit, diluvio in mundum impiorum inducto;
<b>6.</b> And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly;	<b>6.</b> Et civitates Sodomorum et Gomorrae in cinerem redactas, subversione damnavit, easque statuit exemplum iis qui impia acturi forent;
<b>7.</b> And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:	<b>7.</b> Et justum Lot qui opprimebatur à nefariis per libidinosam conversationem eripuit;
<b>8.</b> (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)	<b>8.</b> Nam oculis et auribus justus ille, quum habitaret inter ipsos quotidie animam justam iniquis illorum operibus excruciabatur;

**4. *For if.*** We have stated how much it behoves us to know that the ungodly, who by their mischievous opinions corrupt the Church, cannot escape God's vengeance; and this he proves especially by three remarkable examples of God's judgment, — that he spared not even angels, that he once destroyed the whole world by a deluge, that he reduced Sodom to ashes, and other neighboring cities. But Peter thought it sufficient to take as granted what ought to be never doubted by us, that is, that God is the judge of the whole world. It hence follows that the punishment he formerly inflicted on the ungodly and wicked, he will now also inflict on the like characters. For he can never be unlike himself, nor does he shew respect of persons, so as to forgive the same wickedness in one which he has punished in another; but he hates injustice and wrong equally, whenever it is found. <sup>F24</sup>

For we must always bear in mind that there is a difference between God and men; for men indeed judge unequally, but God keeps the same course in judging. For that he forgives sins, this is done because he blots them out through repentance and faith. He therefore does not otherwise reconcile himself to us than by justifying us; for until sin is taken away, there is always an occasion of discord between us and Him.

As to the *angels*. The argument is from the greater to the less; for they were far more excellent than we are, and yet their dignity did not preserve them from the hand of God; much less then can mortal men escape, when they follow them in their impiety. But as Peter mentions here but briefly the fall of angels, and as he has not named the time and the manner and other circumstances, it behoves us soberly to speak on the subject. Most men are curious and make no end of inquiries on these things; but since God in Scripture has only sparingly touched on them, and as it were by the way, he thus reminds us that we ought to be satisfied with this small knowledge. And indeed they who curiously inquire, do not regard edification, but seek to feed their souls with vain speculations. What is useful to us, God has made known, that is, that the devils were at first created, that they might serve and obey God, but that through their own fault they apostatized, because they would not submit to the authority of God; and that thus the wickedness found in them was accidental, and not from nature, so that it could not be ascribed to God.

All this Peter declares very clearly, when he says that angels fell, though superior to men; and Jude is still more express when he writes, that they kept not their first estate, or their pre-eminence. Let those who are not satisfied with these testimonies have recourse to the Sorbonian theology, which will teach them respecting angels to satiety, so as to precipitate them to hell together with the devils.

*Chains of darkness.* This metaphor intimates that they are held bound in darkness until the last day. And the comparison is taken from malefactors, who, after having been condemned, suffer half of their punishment by the severity of the prison, until they are drawn forth to their final doom. We may hence learn, not only what punishment the wicked suffer after death, but also what is the condition of the children of God: for they calmly acquiesce in the hope of sure and perfect blessedness, though they do not

as yet enjoy it; as the former suffer dreadful agonies on account of the vengeance prepared for them.

**5. *The old world.*** The import of what he says is, that God, after having drowned the human race, formed again as it were a new world. This is also an argument from the greater to the less; for how can the wicked escape the deluge of divine wrath, since the whole world was once destroyed by it? For by saying that eight only were saved, he intimates that a multitude would not be a shield against God to protect the wicked; but that as many as sin shall be punished, be they few or many in number.

But it may be asked why he calls Noah *the preacher of righteousness*. Some understand that he was the preacher of the righteousness of God, inasmuch as Scripture commends God's righteousness, because he defends his own and restores them, when dead, to life. But I rather think that he is called the preacher of righteousness, because he labored to restore a degenerated world to a sound mind, and this not only by his teaching and godly exhortations, but also by his anxious toil in building the ark for the term of a hundred and twenty years. Now, the design of the Apostle is to set before our eyes God's wrath against the wicked, so as to encourage us at the same time to imitate the saints.<sup>F25</sup>

**6. *The cities of Sodom.*** This was so memorable an example of Divine vengeance, that when the Scripture speaks of the universal destruction of the ungodly, it alludes commonly to this as the type. Hence Peter says, that these cities were made an example. This may, indeed, be truly said of others; but Peter points out something singular, because it was the chief and a lively image; yea, rather, because the Lord designed that his wrath against the ungodly should be made known to all ages; as when he redeemed his people from Egypt, he has set forth to us by that one favor the perpetual safety of his Church. Jude has also expressed the same thing, calling it the punishment of eternal fire.

**8. *In seeing and hearing.*** The common explanation is, that Lot was just in his eyes and ears, because all his senses abhorred the crimes of Sodom. However, another view may be taken of his seeing and hearing, so as to make this the meaning, that when the just man lived among the Sodomites, he tormented his soul by seeing and hearing; for we know that he was constrained to see and hear many things which greatly vexed his mind. The purport of what is said then is, that though the holy man was surrounded

with every kind of monstrous wickedness, he yet never turned aside from his upright course.

But Peter expresses more than before, that is, that just Lot underwent voluntary sorrows; as it is right that all the godly should feel no small grief when they see the world rushing into every kind of evil, so the more necessary it is that they should groan for their own sins. And Peter expressly mentioned this, lest when impiety everywhere prevails, we should be captivated and inebriated by the allurements of vices, and perish together with others, but that we might prefer this grief, blessed by the Lord, to all the pleasures of the world.

<610209>2 PETER 2:9-11	
9. The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished;	9. Novit Dominus pios ex tentatione eripere; injustos autem in diem judicii puniendos servare;
10. But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government: presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities:	10. Praesertim verò eos qui post carnem in concupiscentia pollutionis ambulant, dominationem despiciunt, audaces, prae fracti, qui excellentias non verentur probro afficere;
11. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.	11. Quum angeli, qui sunt robore et potentia majores, non ferant adversus illas coram Domino contumeliosum judicium.

9. *The Lord knoweth.* What first offends the weak is, that when the faithful anxiously seek aid, they are not immediately helped by God; but on the contrary he suffers them sometimes as it were to pine away through daily weariness and languor; and secondly, when the wicked grow wanton with impunity and God in the meantime Is silent, as though he connived at their evil deeds. This double offense Peter now removes; for he testifies that the Lord knows when it is expedient to deliver the godly from temptation. By these words he reminds us that this office ought to be left

to him, and that therefore we ought to endure temptations, and not to faint, when at any time he defers his vengeance against the ungodly.

This consolation is very necessary for us, for this thought is apt to creep in, “If the Lord would have his own to be safe, why does he not gather them all into some corner of the earth, that they may mutually stimulate one another to holiness? why does he mingle them with the wicked by whom they may be defiled?” But when God claims to himself the office of helping, and protecting his own, that they may not fail in the contest, we gather courage to fight more strenuously. The meaning of the first clause is, that this law is prescribed by the Lord to all the godly, that they are to be proved by various temptations, but that they are to entertain good hope of success, because they are never to be deprived of his aid and help.

*And to reserve the unjust.* By this clause he shews that God so regulates his judgments as to bear with the wicked for a time, but not to leave them unpunished. Thus he corrects too much haste, by which we are wont to be carried headlong, especially when the atrocity of wickedness grievously wounds us, for we then wish God to fulminate without delay; when he does not do so, he seems no longer to be the judge of the world. Lest, then, this temporary impunity of wickedness should disturb us, Peter reminds us that a day of judgment has been appointed by the Lord; and that, therefore, the wicked shall by no means escape punishment, though it be not immediately inflicted.

There is an emphasis in the word *reserve*, as though he had said, that they shall not escape the hand of God, but be held bound as it were by hidden chains, that they may at a certain time be drawn forth to judgment. The participle *κολαζομένου*, though in the present tense, is yet to be thus explained, that they are reserved or kept to be punished, or, that they may be punished. For he bids us to rely on the expectation of the last judgment, so that in hope and patience we may fight till the end of life.

**10. But chiefly them.** He comes here to particulars, accommodating a general doctrine to his own purpose; for he had to do with men of desperate wickedness. He then shews that dreadful vengeance necessarily awaited them. For since God will punish all the wicked, how can they escape who abandon themselves like brute beasts to every kind of iniquity? *To walk after the flesh*, is to be given up to the flesh, like brute animals, who are not led by reason and judgment, but have the natural desire of their flesh as

their chief guide. By the *lust of uncleanness* understand filthy and unbridled gratifications, when men, having cast away every virtuous feeling, and shaken off shame, are carried away into every uncleanness.

This is the first mark by which he brands them, that they are impure men, given up to wickedness. Other marks follow, that they despised government, and feared not to calumniate and reproach men whom God had favored with honorable stations in life. But these words refer to the same thing; for after having said that they held government in contempt, he immediately points out the fountain of this evil, that they were *presumptuous*, or audacious, and *self-willed*, or refractory; <sup>F26</sup> and lastly, that he might more fully exhibit their pride, he says that they did not fear nor tremble when they treated dignities with contempt. For it is a monstrous arrogance to regard as nothing the glory which shines forth in dignities appointed by God.

But there is no doubt but that in these words he refers to the imperial and magisterial power; for though there is no lawful station in life which is not worthy of respect, yet we know that the magisterial office excels every other, because in governing mankind God himself is represented. Then truly glorious is that power in which God himself appears.

We now perceive what the Apostle meant in this second clause, even that they of whom he speaks were frantic men, lovers of tumults and confusion; for no one can introduce anarchy (*ἀναρχίαν*) into the world without introducing disorder (*ἀταξίαν*.) Now, these with bold effrontery vomited forth reproaches against magistrates, that they might take away every respect for public rights; and this was openly to fight against God by their blasphemies. There are also many turbulent men of this sort at the present day, who proudly declare that the power of the sword is heathen and unlawful, and furiously attempt to subvert all government. Such furies Satan excites, in order to disturb and prevent the progress of the gospel. But the Lord hath dealt favorably with us; for he hath not only warned us to beware of this deadly poison, but hath also by this ancient example fortified us against this scandal. Hence the Papists act very dishonestly, when they accuse us, and say that seditious men are made so by our doctrine. The same thing might indeed have been alleged against the apostles formerly; and yet they were as far as possible from encouraging any such wickedness.

**11. *Whereas angels.*** He hence shews their rash arrogance, because they dared to assume more liberty than even angels. But it seems strange that he says that angels do not bring a railing accusation against magistrates; for why should they be adverse to that sacred order, the author of which they know to be God? why should they oppose rulers whom they know to be exercising the same ministry with themselves? This reasoning has made some to think that the devils are meant; but they do not thus by any means escape the difficulty. For how could Satan be so moderate as to spare men, since he is the author of every blasphemy against God? And further, their opinion is refuted by what Jude says.

But when we consider the circumstances of the time, what is said applies very suitably to holy angels. For all the magistrates were then ungodly, and bloody enemies to the gospel. They must, therefore, have been hateful to angels, the guardians of the Church. He, however, says, that men deserving hatred and execration, were not condemned by them in order that they might shew respect to a power divinely appointed. While such moderation, he says, is shewn by angels, these men fearlessly give vent to impious and unbridled blasphemies.

**<610212> 2 PETER 2:12-16**

<b>12.</b> But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;	<b>12.</b> Isti autem tanquam bruta animalia, naturaliter genita in capturam et perniciem, in quibus nihil intelligunt maledicentes, in sua corruptione peribunt
<b>13.</b> And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the daytime: spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you:	<b>13.</b> Recipientes mercedem injustitiae, pro voluptate ducentes in diem frui deliciis, labes et maculae, delicias in erroribus suis, conviventes vobiscum;
<b>14.</b> Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children	<b>14.</b> Oculos habentes plenos adulterae, et inquietos ad peccandum, inescantes animas instabiles, cor habentes exercitatum cupiditatibus, execrabiles: filii;
<b>15.</b> Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;	<b>15.</b> Qui relictam viam aberraverunt, sequuti viam Balaam, filii Bozor, qui mercedem injustitiae dilexit;
<b>16.</b> But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass, speaking with man's voice, forbade the madness of the prophet.	<b>16.</b> Sed redargutus fuit de sua iniquitate; animal subjugale mutum, humana voce loquens, prohibuit prophetae dementia. ( <b>&lt;042316&gt;</b> Numbers 23:16, 28.)

**12. *But these.*** He proceeds with what he had begun to say respecting impious and wicked corrupters. And, first, he condemns their loose manners and the obscene wickedness of their whole life; and then he says that they were audacious and perverse, so that by their scurrilous garrulity they insinuated themselves into the favor of many.

He especially compares them to those *brute animals*, which seem to have come to existence to be ensnared, and to be driven to their own ruin by

their own instinct; as though he had said, that being induced by no allurements, they of themselves hasten to throw themselves into the snares of Satan and of death. For what we render, *naturally born*, Peter has literally, “natural born.” But there is not much difference in the sense, whether one of the two has been by somebody else supplied, or by putting down both he meant more fully to express his meaning. <sup>F27</sup>

What he adds, *speaking evil* of the things that they *understand not*, refers to the pride and presumption he mentioned in the preceding verse. He then says that all excellency was insolently despised by them, because they were become wholly stupefied, so that they differed nothing from beasts. But the word I have rendered for destruction, and afterwards in corruption, is the same, *φθορὰ*; but it is variously taken: but when he says that they would perish in their own corruption, he shews that their corruptions would be ruinous or destructive.

**13. *Count it pleasure.*** <sup>F28</sup> As though he had said, “They place their happiness in their present enjoyments.” We know that men excel brute animals in this, that they extend their thoughts much farther. It is, then, a base thing in man to be occupied only with present things. Here he reminds us that our minds ought to be freed from the gratifications of the flesh, except we wish to be reduced to the state of beasts.

The meaning of what follows is this, “These are filthy spots to you and your assembly; for while they feast with you, they at the same time luxuriate in their errors, and shew by their eyes and gestures their lascivious lusts and detestable incontinency.” Erasmus has rendered the words thus, “Feasting in their errors, they deride you.” But this is too forced. It may not unaptly be thus explained, “Feasting with you, they insolently deride you by their errors.” I, however, have given the version which seems the most probable, “luxuriating in their errors, feasting with you.” He calls the libidinous such as had eyes full of adultery, and who were incessantly led to sin without restraint, as it appears from what is afterwards said.

**14. *Beguiling*,** or baiting, *unstable souls*. By the metaphor of baiting he reminds the faithful to beware of their hidden and deceitful arts; for he compares their impostures to hooks which may catch the unwary to their destruction. By adding unstable souls he shews the reason for caution, that is, when we have not struck firm roots in faith and in the fear of the Lord:

and he intimates at the same time, that they have no excuse who suffer themselves to be baited or lured by such flatteries; for this must have been ascribed to their levity. Let there be then a stability of faith, and we shall be safe from the artifices of the ungodly.

*An heart they have exercised with covetous practices,* or, with lusts.

Erasmus renders the last word, “rapines.” The word is of a doubtful meaning. I prefer “lusts.” As he had before condemned incontinence in their eyes, so he now seems to refer to the vices latent in their hearts. It ought not, however, to be confined to covetousness. By calling them cursed or execrable children, he may be understood to mean, that they were so either actively or passively, that is, that they brought a curse with them wherever they went, or that they deserved a curse.

As he has hitherto referred to the injury they did by the example of a perverse and corrupt life, so he again repeats, that they spread by their teaching the deadly poison of impiety, in order that they might destroy the simple. He compares them to Balaam, the son of Bozor, who employed a venal tongue to curse God’s people. And to shew that they were not worthy of a long refutation, he says that Balaam was reproved by an ass, and that thus his madness was condemned. But by this means also he restrains the faithful from associating with them. For it was a dreadful judgment of God, that the angel made himself known to the ass before he did to the prophet, so that the ass, perceiving God displeased, dared not to advance farther, but went back, when the prophet, under the blind impulse of his own avarice, pushed forward against the evident prohibition of the Lord. For what was afterwards answered to him, that he was to proceed, was an evidence of God's indignation rather than a permission. In short, as the greatest indignity to him, the mouth of the ass was opened, that he who had been unwilling to submit to God's authority might have that as his teacher. And by this miracle the Lord designed to shew how monstrous a thing it was to change the truth to a lie.

It may be here asked, by what right Balaam had the name of a prophet, when it appears that he was addicted to many wicked superstitions. To this I reply, that the gift of prophecy was so special, that though he did not worship the true God, and had not true religion, he might yet have been endued with it. Besides, God has sometimes caused prophecy to exist in the midst of idolatry, in order that men might have less excuse.

Now, if any one considers the chief things which Peter says, he will see that his warning is equally suitable to the present age; for it is an evil which prevails everywhere, that men use scurrilous raillery for the purpose of deriding God and the Savior; nay, they ridicule all religion under the cloak of wit; and when addicted, like beasts, to their own lusts, they will mingle with the faithful; they prattle something about the gospel, and yet they prostitute their tongue to the service of the devil, that they may bring the whole world, as far as they can, to eternal perdition. They are in this respect worse than Balaam himself, because they gratuitously pour forth their maledictions, when he, induced by reward, attempted to curse.

**<610217> 2 PETER 2:17-19**

**17.** These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.

**17.** Li sunt fontes sine aqua, nebulae quae turbine aguntur; quibus caligo tenebrarum in aeternum parata est.

**18.** For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.

**18.** Nam ubi plusquam fastuosa vanitatis verba sonuerint, inescant per concupiscentias carnis, lasciviis, eos qui verè aufugerant ab iis qui in errore versantur.

**19.** While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

**19.** Dum libertatem illis promittunt, quum ipsi sint servi corruptionis: a quo enim quis superatus est, huic in servitutem est addictus.

**17.** *These are wells*, or fountains, *without water*. He shews by these two metaphors, that they had nothing within, though they made a great display. A fountain, by its appearance, draws men to itself, because it promises them water to drink, and for other purposes; as soon as clouds appear, they give hope of immediate rain to irrigate the earth. He then says that they were like fountains, because they excelled in boasting, and displayed some acuteness in their thoughts and elegance in their words; but

that yet they were dry and barren within: hence the appearance of a fountain was fallacious.

He says that they were *clouds carried* by the wind, either without rain, or which burst forth into a calamitous storm. He thereby denotes that they brought nothing useful, and that often they were very hurtful. He afterwards denounces on them the dreadful judgment of God, that fear might restrain the faithful. By naming the *mist* or the blackness *of darkness*, he alludes to the clouds which obscure the air; as though he had said, that for the momentary darkness which they now spread, there is prepared for them a much thicker darkness which is to continue for ever.

**18.** *For when they speak great swelling words of vanity.* <sup>F29</sup> He means that they dazzled the eyes of the simple by high-flown stuff of words, that they might not perceive their deceit, for it was not easy to captivate their minds with such dotages, except they were first besotted by some artifice. He then says that they used an inflated kind of words and speech, that they might fill the unwary with admiration. And then this grandiloquence, which the ample lungs of the soul send forth, (as Persius says, <sup>F29</sup>) was very suitable to cover their shifts and trumperies. There was formerly a craft of this kind in Valentinus, and in those like him, as we learn from the books of Irenæus. They made words unheard of before, by the empty sound of which, the unlearned being smitten, they were ensnared by their reveries.

There are fanatics of a similar kind at this day, who call themselves by the plausible title of Libertines or free-men. For they talk most confidently of the Spirit and of spiritual things, as though they roared out from above the clouds, and fascinate many by their tricks and wiles, so that you may say that the Apostle has correctly prophesied of them. For they treat all things jocosely and scoffingly; and though they are great simpletons, yet as they indulge in all vices, they find favor with their own people by a sort of drollery. The state of the case is this, that when the difference between good and evil is removed, everything becomes lawful; and men, loosed from all subjection to laws, obey their own lusts. This Epistle, therefore, is not a little suitable to our age.

*They allure*, or bait, *through the lusts of the flesh*. He strikingly compares to hooks the allurements of the ungodly, when they make anything they please lawful; for as the lusts of men are headstrong and craving, as soon as

liberty is offered, they lay hold on it with great avidity; but soon afterwards the strangling hook within is perceived. But we must consider the whole sentence of the Apostle.

He says that they who had really escaped from the society of those in error were again deceived by a new kind of error, even when the reins were let loose to them for the indulgence of every sort of intemperance. He hereby reminds us how dangerous are the wiles of these men. For it was already a dreadful thing that blindness and thick darkness possessed almost all mankind. It was, therefore, in a manner a double prodigy, that men, freed from the common errors of the world, should, after having received the light of God, be brought back to a beastly indifference. Let us be reminded of what we ought especially to beware of, after having been once enlightened, that is, lest Satan entice us under the pretense of liberty, so as to give ourselves up to lasciviousness to gratify the lusts of the flesh. But they are safe from this danger who seriously attend to the study of holiness.

**19. *While they promise them liberty.*** He shews their inconsistency, that they falsely promised liberty, while they themselves served sin, and were in the worst bondage; for no one can give what he has not. This reason, however, does not seem to be sufficiently valid, because it sometimes happens that wicked men, and wholly unacquainted with Christ, preach usefully concerning the benefits and blessings of Christ. But we must observe, that what is condemned here is vicious doctrine, connected with impurity of life; for the Apostle's design was to obviate the deceptive allurements by which they ensnared the foolish. The name of liberty is sweet, and they abused it for this end, that the hearer, being loosed from the fear of the divine law, might abandon himself unto unbridled licentiousness. But the liberty which Christ has procured for us, and which he offers daily by the gospel, is altogether different, for he has exempted us from the yoke of the law as far as it subjects us to a curse, that he might also deliver us from the dominion of sin, as far as it subjects us to its own lusts. Hence, where lusts reign, and therefore where the flesh rules, there the liberty of Christ has no place whatever. The Apostle then declares this to all the godly, that they might not desire any other liberty but that which leads those, who are set free from sin, to a willing obedience to righteousness.

We hence learn that there have ever been depraved men who made a false pretense to liberty, and that this has been an old cunning trick of Satan. We need not wonder that at this day the same filth is stirred up by fanatical men.

The Papists turn and twist this passage against us, but they thereby betray their ridiculous impudence. For in the first place, men of the filthiest life, in public-houses and brothels, belch out this charge, that we are the servants of corruption, in the life of whom they cannot point out anything reproachful. In the second place, since we teach nothing respecting Christian liberty but what is derived from Christ and his Apostles, and at the same time require the mortification of the flesh, and the proper exercises for subduing it, much more strictly than they do who slander us, they vomit forth their curses, not so much against us as against the Son of God, whom we have as our certain teacher and authority.

*For of whom a man is overcome.* This sentence is derived from military law; but yet it is a common saying among heathen writers, that there is no harder or a more miserable bondage than when lusts rule and reign. What then ought to be done by us, on whom the Son of God has bestowed his Spirit, not only that we may be freed from the dominion of sin, but that we may also become the conquerors of the flesh and the world?

**<610220> 2 PETER 2:20-22**

**20.** For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

**20.** Nam si ii qui sufugerant ab inquinamentis mundi per cognitionem Domini et Servatoris Jesu Christi, rursum iisdem impliciti superantur, facta sunt illis postrema pejora prioribus.

**21.** For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

**21.** Melius enim ipsis esset non cognovisse viam justitiae, qum ubi cognoverunt converti ab eo, quod illis traditum fuit, sancto praecepto.

**22.** But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit, again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

**22.** Sed accidit illis quod vero proverbio dicitur, Canis reversus ad proprium vomitum; et sus lota, ad volutabrum coeni.

**20. *For if after.*** He again shews how pernicious was the sect which led men consecrated to God back again to their old filth and the corruptions of the world. And he exhibits the heinousness of the evil by a comparison; for it was no common sin to depart from the holy doctrine of God. It would have been better for them, he says, not to have known the way of righteousness; for though there is no excuse for ignorance, yet the servant who knowingly and wilfully despises the commands of his lord, deserves a twofold punishment. There was besides ingratitude, because they wilfully extinguished the light of God, rejected the favor conferred on them, and having shaken off the yoke, became perversely wanton against God; yea, as far as they could, they profaned and abrogated the inviolable covenant of God, which had been ratified by the blood of Christ. The more earnest then ought we to be, to advance humbly and carefully in the course of our calling. We must now consider each sentence.

By naming *the pollutions of the world*, he shews that we roll in filth and are wholly polluted, until we renounce the world. *By the knowledge of Christ* he no doubt understands the gospel. He testifies that the design of it is, to deliver us from the defilements of the world, and to lead us far away from

them. For the same reason he afterwards calls it the *way of righteousness*. He then alone makes a right progress in the gospel who faithfully learns Christ; and he truly knows Christ, who has been taught by him to put off the old man and to put on the new man, as Paul reminds us in <490422> Ephesians 4:22. F30

**21.** By saying that having forsaken *the commandment delivered unto them*, they returned to their own pollutions, he intimates first, how inexcusable they were; and secondly, he reminds us that the doctrine of a holy and virtuous life, though common to all and indiscriminately belonging to all, is yet peculiarly taught to those whom God favors with the light of his gospel. But he declares that they who make themselves slaves again to the pollutions of the world fall away from the gospel. The faithful also do indeed sin; but as they allow not dominion to sin, they do not fall away from the grace of God, nor do they renounce the profession of sound doctrine which they have once embraced. For they are not to be deemed conquered, while they strenuously resist the flesh and its lusts.

**22.** *But it has happened unto them.* As the example disturbs many, when men who had submitted to the obedience of Christ, rush headlong into vices without fear or shame, the Apostle, in order to remove the offense, says that this happens through their own fault, and that because they are pigs and dogs. It hence follows that no part of the sin can be ascribed to the gospel.

For this purpose he quotes two ancient proverbs, the first of which is found as the saying of Solomon in <202611> Proverbs 26:11. But what Peter meant is briefly this, that the gospel is a medicine which purges us by wholesome vomiting, but that there are many dogs who swallow again what they have vomited to their own ruin; and that the gospel is also a laver which cleanses all our uncleanness, but that there are many swine who, immediately after washing, roll themselves again in the mud. At the same time the godly are reminded to take heed to themselves, except they wish to be deemed dogs or swine.

# CHAPTER 3

## <610301> 2 PETER 3:1-4

1. This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance.	1. Hanc jam, dilecti, secundam vobis scribo epistolam, in quibus excito per commonefactionem vestram puram mentem;
2. That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior:	2. Ut memores sitis verborum quae predicta sunt a sanctis prophetis, et praecepti nostri, qui sumus apostoli Domini et Servatoris;
3. knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,	3. Hoc primum scientes, quod venient in extremo dierum illusores, secundum suas ipsorum concupiscentias ambulantes,
4. And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.	4. Ac dicentes, Ubi est promissio adventus ejus? Ex quo enim patres dormierunt, omnia sic permanent ab initio creationis.

1. Lest they should be wearied with the Second Epistle as though the first was sufficient, he says that it was not written in vain, because they stood in need of being often stirred up. To make this more evident, he shews that they could not be beyond danger, except they were well fortified, because they would have to contend with desperate men, who would not only corrupt the purity of the faith, by false opinions, but do what they could to subvert entirely the whole faith.

By saying, *I stir up your pure mind*, he means the same as though he had said, "I wish to awaken you to a sincerity of mind." And the words ought to be thus explained, "I stir up your mind that it may be pure and bright." For the meaning is, that the minds of the godly become dim, and as it were contract rust, when admonitions cease. But we also hence learn, that men

even endued with leaning, become, in a manner, drowsy, except they are stirred up by constant warnings. <sup>F31</sup>

It now appears what is the use of admonitions, and how necessary they are; for the sloth of the flesh smothers the truth once received, and renders it inefficient, except the goads of warnings come to its aid. It is not then enough, that men should be taught to know what they ought to be, but there is need of godly teachers, to do this second part, deeply to impress the truth on the memory of their hearers. And as men are, by nature, for the most part, fond of novelty and thus inclined to be fastidious, it is useful for us to bear in mind what Peter says, so that we may not only willingly suffer ourselves to be admonished by others, but that every one may also exercise himself in calling to mind continually the truth, so that our minds may become resplendent with the pure and clear knowledge of it.

**2. *That ye may be mindful.*** By these words he intimates that we have enough in the writings of the prophets, and in the gospel, to stir us up, provided we be as diligent as it behoves us, in meditating on them; and that our minds sometimes contract a rust, or become bedimmed through darkness, is owing to our sloth. That God may then continually shine upon us, we must devote ourselves to that study: let our faith at the same time acquiesce in witnesses so certain and credible. For when we have the prophets and apostles agreeing with us, nay, as the ministers of our faith, and God as the author, and angels as approvers, there is no reason that the ungodly, all united, should move us from our position. By the *commandment of the apostles* he means the whole doctrine in which they had instructed the faithful. <sup>F32</sup>

**3. *Knowing this first.*** The participle *knowing* may be applied to the Apostle, and in this way, “I labor to stir you up for this reason, because I know what and how great is your impending danger from scoffers.” I however prefer this explanation, that the participle is used in place of a verb, as though he had said, “Know ye this especially.” For it was necessary that this should have been foretold, because they might have been shaken, had impious men attacked them suddenly with scoffs of this kind. He therefore wished them to know this, and to feel assured on the subject, that they might be prepared to oppose such men.

But he calls the attention of the faithful again to the doctrine which he touched upon in the second chapter. For by *the last days* is commonly meant the kingdom of Christ, or the days of his kingdom, according to what Paul says, “Upon whom the ends of the world are come.” (<sup><461011></sup> 1 Corinthians 10:11.) <sup>F33</sup> The meaning is, that the more God offers himself by the gospel to the world, and the more he invites men to his kingdom, the more audacious on the other hand will ungodly men vomit forth the poison of their impiety.

He calls those *scoffers*, according to what is usual in Scripture, who seek to appear witty by shewing contempt to God, and by a blasphemous presumption. It is, moreover, the very extremity of evil, when men allow themselves to treat the awful name of God with scoffs. Thus, the first Psalm speaks of the seat of scoffers. So David, in Psalms 119:51, complains that he was derided by the proud, because he attended to God’s law. So Isaiah, in the 28th chapter, having referred to them, describes their supine security and insensibility. Let us therefore bear in mind, that there is nothing to be feared more than a contest with scoffers. On this subject we said something while explaining the third chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians. As, however, the holy Scripture has foretold that they would come, and has also given us a shield by which we may defend ourselves, there is no excuse why we should not boldly resist them whatever devices they may employ.

**4. *Where is the promise.*** It was a dangerous scoff when they insinuated a doubt as to the last resurrection; for when that is taken away, there is no gospel any longer, the power of Christ is brought to nothing, the whole of religion is gone. Then Satan aims directly at the throat of the Church, when he destroys faith in the coming of Christ. For why did Christ die and rise again, except that he may some time gather to himself the redeemed from death, and give them eternal life? All religion is wholly subverted, except faith in the resurrection remains firm and immovable. Hence, on this point Satan assails us most fiercely.

But let us notice what the scoff was. They set the regular course of nature, such as it seems to have been from the beginning, in opposition to the promise of God, as though these things were contrary, or did not harmonize together. Though the faith of the fathers, they said, was the same, yet no change has taken place since their death, and it is known that

many ages have passed sway. Hence they concluded that what was said of the destruction of the world was a fable; because they conjectured, that as it had lasted so long, it would be perpetual.

<b>&lt;610305&gt; 2 PETER 3:5-8</b>	
<b>5.</b> For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:	<b>5.</b> Nam hoe nesciunt volentes. quòd caeli jam olim fuerint, et terra ex aqua, et per aquam consistens, Dei sermone;
<b>6.</b> Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:	<b>6.</b> Per quae mundus qui tunc erat, aqua inundatus periit:
<b>7.</b> But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.	<b>7.</b> Qui autem nunc sunt coeli et terra, ejusdem sermone repositi sunt, et servantur igni in diem judicii et perditionis impiorum.
<b>8.</b> But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.	<b>8.</b> Porri, ne hoc unum nos lateat, dilecti, quòd unus dies apud Dominum perinde est ut mille anni, et mille anni ut dies unus.

**5. *For this they willingly are ignorant of.*** By one argument only he confutes the scoff of the ungodly, even by this, that the world once perished by a deluge of waters, when yet it consisted of waters. (<010102> Genesis 1:2.) And as the history of this was well known, he says that they *willingly*, or of their own accord, erred. For they who infer the perpetuity of the world from its present state, designedly close their eyes, so as not to see so clear a judgment of God. The world no doubt had its origin from waters, for Moses calls the chaos from which the earth emerged, waters; and further, it was sustained by waters; it yet pleased the Lord to use waters for the purpose of destroying it. It hence appears that the power of nature is not sufficient to sustain and preserve the world, but that on the contrary it contains the very element of its own ruin, whenever it may please God to destroy it.

For it ought always to be borne in mind, that the world stands through no other power than that of God's word, and that therefore inferior or secondary causes derive from him their power, and produce different effects as they are directed. Thus through water the world stood, but water could have done nothing of itself, but on the contrary obeyed God's word as an inferior agent or element. As soon then as it pleased God to destroy the earth, the same water obeyed in becoming a ruinous inundation. We now see how egregiously they err, who stop at naked elements, as though there was perpetuity in them, and their nature were not changeable according to the bidding of God.

By these few words the petulance of those is abundantly refuted, who arm themselves with physical reasons to fight against God. For the history of the deluge is an abundantly sufficient witness that the whole order of nature is governed by the sole power of God. (<010717> Genesis 7:17.)

It seems, however, strange that he says that the world perished through the deluge, when he had before mentioned the heaven and the earth. To this I answer, that the heaven was then also submerged, that is, the region of the air, which stood open between the two waters. For the division or separation, mentioned by Moses, was then confounded. (<010106> Genesis 1:6;) and the word *heaven* is often taken in this sense. if any wishes for more on this subject, let him read Augustine on the City of God. *Lib.* 20.

F34

**7. *But the heavens and the earth which are now.*** He does not infer this as the consequence; for his purpose was no other than to dissipate the craftiness of scoffers respecting the perpetual state of nature, and we see many such at this day who being slightly imbued with the rudiments of philosophy, only hunt after profane speculations, in order that they may pass themselves off as great philosophers.

But it now appears quite evident from what has been said, that there is nothing unreasonable in the declaration made by the Lord, that the heaven and the earth shall hereafter be consumed by fire, because the reason for the fire is the same as that for the water. For it was a common saying even among the ancients, that from these two chief elements all things have proceeded. But as he had to do with the ungodly, he speaks expressly of their destruction.

8. *But be not ignorant of this one thing.* He now turns to speak to the godly; and he reminds them that when the coming of Christ is the subject, they were to raise upwards their eyes, for by so doing, they would not limit, by their unreasonable wishes, the time appointed by the Lord. For waiting seems very long on this account, because we have our eyes fixed on the shortness of the present life, and we also increase weariness by computing days, hours, and minutes. But when the eternity of God's kingdom comes to our minds, many ages vanish away like so many moments.

This then is what the Apostle calls our attention to, so that we may know that the day of resurrection does not depend on the present flow of time, but on the hidden purpose of God, as though he had said, "Men wish to anticipate God for this reason, because they measure time according to the judgment of their own flesh; and they are by nature inclined to impatience, so that celerity is even delay to them: do ye then ascend in your minds to heaven, and thus time will be to you neither long nor short."

**<610109> 2 PETER 1:9-13**

<p><b>9.</b> The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count but is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.</p>	<p><b>9.</b> Non tardat Dominus in promissione, sicuti quidam tarditatem slackness; existimant; sed tolerantem se praebet erga nos, nolens ullos perire, sed omnes ad poenitentiam recipere (aut, colligi, vel, aggregari.)</p>
<p><b>10.</b> But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up.</p>	<p><b>10.</b> Veniet autem dies Domini tanquam fur in nocte, in qua coeli in modum procellae transibunt, elementa autem ardore solventur; et terra, quæque in ea sunt opera ardebunt.</p>
<p><b>11.</b> Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness;</p>	<p><b>11.</b> Quum Haec igitur omnia solvantur, quales oportet nos esse in sanctis conversationibus et pietatibus;</p>
<p><b>12.</b> Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, Wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?.</p>	<p><b>12.</b> Expectantes properando adventum diei Dei, propter quem coeli solventur, et elementa ardore consumentur?</p>
<p><b>13.</b> Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.</p>	<p><b>13.</b> Novos autem coelos et terram novam juxta promissum ejus expectamus, in quibus habitat justitia.</p>

**9. *But the Lord is not slack,*** or, delays not. He checks extreme and unreasonable haste by another reason, that is, that the Lord defers his coming that he might invite all mankind to repentance. For our minds are always prurient, and a doubt often creeps in, why he does not come sooner. But when we hear that the Lord, in delaying, shews a concern for our salvation, and that he defers the time because he has a care for us, there is no reason why we should any longer complain of tardiness. He is tardy who allows an occasion to pass by through slothfulness: there is nothing like this in God, who in the best manner regulates time to promote our

salvation. And as to the duration of the whole world, we must think exactly the same as of the life of every individual; for God by prolonging time to each, sustains him that he may repent. In the like manner he does not hasten the end of the world, in order to give to all time to repent.

This is a very necessary admonition, so that we may learn to employ time aright, as we shall otherwise suffer a just punishment for our idleness.

*Not willing that any should perish.* So wonderful is his love towards mankind, that he would have them all to be saved, and is of his own self prepared to bestow salvation on the lost. But the order is to be noticed, that God is ready to receive all to repentance, so that none may perish; for in these words the way and manner of obtaining salvation is pointed out. Every one of us, therefore, who is desirous of salvation, must learn to enter in by this way.

But it may be asked, If God wishes none to perish, why is it that so many do perish? To this my answer is, that no mention is here made of the hidden purpose of God, according to which the reprobate are doomed to their own ruin, but only of his will as made known to us in the gospel. For God there stretches forth his hand without a difference to all, but lays hold only of those, to lead them to himself, whom he has chosen before the foundation of the world. <sup>F35</sup>

But as the verb *χωρῆσαι* is often taken passively by the Greeks, no less suitable to this passage is the verb which I have put in the margin, that God would have all, who had been before wandering and scattered, to be gathered or come together to repentance.

**10. *But the day of the Lord will come.*** This has been added, that the faithful might be always watching, and not promise to-morrow to themselves. For we all labor under two very different evils--too much haste, and slothfulness. We are seized with impatience for the day of Christ already expected; at the same time we securely regard it as afar off. As, then, the Apostle has before reproved an unreasonable ardor, so he now shakes off our sleepiness, so that we may attentively expect Christ at all times, lest we should become idle and negligent, as it is usually the case. For whence is it that flesh indulges itself except that there is no thought of the near coming of Christ?

What afterwards follows, respecting the burning of heaven and earth, requires no long explanation, if indeed we duly consider what is intended. For it was not his purpose to speak refinedly of fire and storm, and other things, but only that he might introduce an exhortation, which he immediately adds, even that we ought to strive after newness of life. For he thus reasons, that as heaven and earth are to be purged by fire, that they may correspond with the kingdom of Christ, hence the renovation of men is much more necessary. Mischievous, then, are those interpreters who consume much labor on refined speculations, since the Apostle applies his doctrine to godly exhortations.

Heaven and earth, he says, shall pass away for our sakes; is it meet, then, for us to be engrossed with the things of earth, and not, on the contrary, to attend to a holy and godly life? The corruptions of heaven and earth will be purged by fire, while yet as the creatures of God they are pure; what then ought to be done by us who are full of so many pollutions? As to the word *godlinesses* (*pietatribus*;) the plural number is used for the singular, except you take it as meaning the duties of godliness. <sup>F36</sup> Of the elements of the world I shall only say this one thing, that they are to be consumed, only that they may be renovated, their substance still remaining the same, as it may be easily gathered from <sup><450821></sup>Romans 8:21, and from other passages. <sup>F37</sup>

**12.** *Looking for and hasting unto*, or, waiting for by hastening; so I render the words, though they are two participles; for what we had before separately he gathers now into one sentence, that is, that we ought hastily to wait. Now this contrarious hope possesses no small elegance, like the proverb, “Hasten slowly,” (*festina lente*.) When he says, “Waiting for,” he refers to the endurance of hope; and he sets hastening in opposition to torpor; and both are very apposite. For as quietness and waiting are the peculiarities of hope, so we must always take heed lest the security of the flesh should creep in; we ought, therefore, strenuously to labor in good works, and run quickly in the race of our calling. <sup>F38</sup> What he before called the day of Christ (as it is everywhere called in Scripture) he now calls the day of God, and that rightly, for Christ will then restore the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all.

**<610314> 2 PETER 3:14-18**

<b>14.</b> Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless	<b>14.</b> Quare, dilecti, quum Haec expectetis, studete incontaminati et irreprehensibiles ab eo inyeniri in pace:
<b>15.</b> And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you;	<b>15.</b> Et Domini nostri tolerantiam salutem existimate, quemadmodum et dilectus frater noster Paulus, secundum datam sibi sapientiam scripsit vobis;
<b>16.</b> As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things: in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.	<b>16.</b> Sicuti in omnibus Epistolis, loquens de iis in quibus sunt quædam difficilia intellectu, quæ indocti et instabiles invertunt (ut et caeteras Scripturas) ad suam perniciem.
<b>17.</b> Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware, lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness	<b>17.</b> Vos igitur, dilecti, praemoniti cavete, ut ne simul nefariorum errore abacti, excidatis à vestra firmitate.
<b>18.</b> But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both nom and for ever. Amen	<b>18.</b> Crescite autem in gratia et notitia Domini nostri et Servatoris Jesu Christi; ipsi gloria et nunc et in diem seternitatis

**14. *Wherefore.*** He justly reasons from hope to its effect, or the practice of a godly life; for hope is living and efficacious; therefore it cannot be but that it will attract us to itself. He, then, who waits for new heavens, must begin with renewal as to himself, and diligently aspire after it; but they who cleave to their own filth, think nothing, it is certain, of God's kingdom, and have no taste for anything but for this corrupt world.

But we must notice that he says, that we ought to be found blameless by Christ; for by these words he intimates, that while the world engages and

engrosses the minds of others, we must cast our eyes on the Lord, and he shews at the same time what is real integrity, even that which is approved by his judgment, and not that which gains the Praise of men. <sup>F39</sup>

The word *peace* seems to be taken for a quiet state of conscience, founded on hope and patient waiting. <sup>F40</sup> For as so few turn their attention to the judgment of Christ, hence it is, that while they are carried headlong by their importunate lusts, they are at the same time in a state of disquietude. This peace, then, is the quietness of a peaceable soul, which acquiesces in the word of God.

It may be asked, how any one can be found blameless by Christ, when we all labor under so many deficiencies. But Peter here only points out the mark at which the faithful ought all to aim, though they cannot reach it, until having put off their flesh they become wholly united to Christ.

**15. *The long-suffering of our Lord.*** He takes it as granted that Christ defers the day of his coming, because he has a regard for our salvation. He hence animates the faithful, because in a longer delay they have an evidence as to their own salvation. Thus, what usually disheartens others through weariness, he wisely turns to a contrary purpose.

*Even as our beloved brother Paul.* We may easily gather from the Epistle to the Galatians, as well as from other places, that unprincipled men, who went about everywhere to disturb the churches, in order to discredit Paul, made use of this pretense, that he did not well agree with the other Apostles. It is then probable that Peter referred to Paul in order to shew their consent; for it was very necessary to take away the occasion for such a calumny. And yet, when I examine all things more narrowly, it seems to me more probable that this Epistle was composed by another according to what Peter communicated, than that it was written by himself, for Peter himself would have never spoken thus. But it is enough for me that we have a witness of his doctrine and of his goodwill, who brought forward nothing contrary to what he would have himself said.

**16. *In which are some things.*** The relative *which* does not refer to *epistles*, for it is in the neuter gender. <sup>F41</sup> The meaning is, that in the things which he wrote there was sometimes an obscurity, which gave occasion to the unlearned to go astray to their own ruin. We are reminded by these words, to reason soberly on things so high and obscure; and further, we are here

strengthened against this kind of offense, lest the foolish or absurd speculations of men should disturb us, by which they entangle and distort simple truth, which ought to serve for edification.

But we must observe, that we are not forbidden to read Paul's Epistles, because they contain some things hard and difficult to be understood, but that, on the contrary, they are commended to us, provided we bring a calm and teachable mind. For Peter condemns men who are trifling and volatile, who strangely turn to their own ruin what is useful to all. Nay, he says that this is commonly done as to all the Scripture: and yet he does not hence conclude, that we are not to read it, but only shews, that those vices ought to be corrected which prevent improvement, and not only so, but render deadly to us what God has appointed for our salvation.

It may, however, be asked, Whence is this obscurity, for the Scripture shines to us like a lamp, and guides our steps? To this I reply, that it is nothing to be wondered at, if Peter ascribed obscurity to the mysteries of Christ's kingdom, and especially if we consider how hidden they are to the perception of the flesh. However the mode of teaching which God has adopted, has been so regulated, that all who refuse not to follow the Holy Spirit as their guide, find in the Scripture a clear light. At the same time, many are blind who stumble at mid-day; others are proud, who, wandering through devious paths, and flying over the roughest places, rush headlong into ruin.

**17. *Ye, therefore, beloved.*** After having shewn to the faithful the dangers of which they were to beware, he now concludes by admonishing them to be wise. But he shews that there was need of being watchful, lest they should be overwhelmed. And, doubtless, the craft of our enemy, the many and various treacheries which he employs against us, the cavils of ungodly men, leave no place for security. Hence, vigilance must be exercised, lest the devices of Satan and of the wicked should succeed in circumventing us. It, however seems that we stand on slippery ground, and the certainty of our salvation is suspended, as it were, on a thread, since he declares to the faithful, that they ought to take heed lest they should fall from their own steadfastness.

What, then, will become of us, if we are exposed to the danger of falling? To this I answer, that this exhortation, and those like it, are by no means intended to shake the firmness of that faith which recumbs on God, but to

correct the sloth of our flesh. If any one wishes to see more on this subject, let him read what has been said on the tenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians.

The meaning is this, that as long as we are in the flesh, our tardiness must be roused, and that this is fitly done by having our weakness, and the variety of dangers which surround us, placed before our eyes; but that the confidence which rests on God's promises ought not to be thereby shaken.

**18. *But grow in grace.*** He also exhorts us to make progress; for it is the only way of persevering, to make continual advances, and not to stand still in the middle of our journey; as though he had said, that they only would be safe who labored to make progress daily.

The word *grace*, I take in a general sense, as meaning those spiritual gifts we obtain through Christ. But as we become partakers of these blessings according to the measure of our faith, *knowledge* is added to grace; as though he had said, that as faith increases, so would follow the increase of grace. <sup>F42</sup>

***To him be glory.*** This is a remarkable passage to prove the divinity of Christ; for what is said cannot belong to any but to God alone. The adverb of the present time, now, is designed for this end, that we may not rob Christ of his glory, during our warfare in the world. He then adds, *for ever*, that we may now form some idea of his eternal kingdom, which will make known to us his full and perfect glory.

A TRANSLATION OF

CALVIN'S VERSION OF

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF  
PETER.

CHAPTER 1

- 1 SIMEON PETER, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained an equally precious faith with us, through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ;
- 2 Grace to you and peace be multiplied, through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord;
- 3 As his divine power has given us all things which *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who hath called us by his own glory and power;
- 4 By which also very great and precious promises have been freely given us, that through these ye might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.
- 5 And for this purpose using all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge;
- 6 And to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness;
- 7 And to godliness, brotherly affection; and to brotherly affection, love:
- 8 For if these be in you, and be abounding, they make you to be neither idle nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ;

- 9** But he in whom these things are wanting is blind, and cannot see afar off, having forgotten the cleansing of his old sins.
- 10** Therefore, brethren, strive the more to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:
- 11** For thus shall abundantly be supplied to you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
- 12** I will not, therefore, neglect always to remind you of these things, though ye know them, and have been confirmed in the present truth.
- 13** Yea, I think it right, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by reminding you;
- 14** Since I know that I am shortly to put away this tabernacle, as also our Lord Jesus Christ hath made manifest to me.
- 15** I will, however, endeavor, that ye may also be able to have these things always in remembrance after my departure.
- 16** For it was not cunningly-devised fables that we followed, when we made known to you the power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; but we were eye-witnesses of his majesty:
- 17** For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when such a voice as this came to him from the magnificent glory, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I have been well pleased."
- 18** And this voice we heard, when we were with him on the holy mount.
- 19** And we have the more sure word of prophecy, to which ye do well in attending, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts;
- 20** Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of a private suggestion:
- 21** For prophecy came not formerly by the will of man; but holy men of God spoke, being moved by the Holy Spirit.

## CHAPTER 2

- 1 There were, however, false prophets also among the people; as there will also be false teachers among you, who will stealthily bring in opinions of perdition, denying even the Lord who has redeemed them, bringing on themselves swift destruction.
- 2 And many shall follow their ruinous courses, through whom the way of truth shall be blasphemed.
- 3 And through avarice they shall make a trade of you by feigned words; whose judgment a long ago ceases not, and whose perdition does not slumber.
- 4 For if God spared not the angels who had sinned, but having cast them into hell in chains of darkness, delivered them to be kept for judgment;
- 5 And if he spared not the old world, but saved Noah, the eighth *person*, a preacher of righteousness, having brought in the flood on the world of the ungodly;
- 6 And if having turned into ashes the cities of the Sodomites and of Gomorrah, he condemned *them* with an overthrow, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly,
- 7 And delivered the righteous Lot, who was vexed by the wicked through their lascivious conduct;
- 8 For that righteous man, while dwelling among them, had by seeing and hearing his righteous soul daily tormented by their iniquitous deeds;
- 9 The Lord. knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust for the day of judgment to be punished;
- 10 And especially those who walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government: audacious *and* refractory, they fear not to blaspheme dignities,

- 11** When angels, who are greater in strength and power, bring no railing judgment against them before the Lord.
- 12** But these, as brute animals, naturally made to be taken and destroyed, blaspheming those things which they understand not, shall perish in their own corruption, receiving the reward of unrighteousness;
- 13** Deeming riot in the day-time a pleasure, *they are* blots and stains, rioting in their own errors, while feasting with you;
- 14** Having eyes full of adultery, which cease not from sin, ensnaring unstable souls, having a heart exercised in lusts, accursed children;
- 15** Who having left the right way, have gone astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Bosor, who loved the reward of unrighteousness;
- 16** But was reproved for his iniquity; a mute beast of burden, speaking with the human voice, restrained the madness of the prophet.
- 17** These are fountains without, water, clouds driven by a tempest, for whom has been prepared thick darkness for ever.
- 18** For when they speak most haughty words of vanity, they ensnare through the lusts of the flesh, by lasciviousness, those who had really escaped from such as live in error;
- 19** While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the slaves of corruption; for by whom any one is overcome, to him is he brought into bondage.
- 20** For if they who had escaped from the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, become again entangled with these, and are overcome, the last *pollutions* become worse to them than the former:
- 21** For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known *it*, and to turn away from the holy commandment delivered to them.

**22** But what is said in the true proverb has happened to them, "The dog has returned to his own vomit, and the washen sow to *her* wallowing in the mire."

## CHAPTER 3

- 1** This second Epistle, beloved, I now write to you; in both which I stir up your pure mind by admonition,
- 2** That ye may remember the words which have been foretold by the holy Prophets and the commandment of us who are the apostles of the Lord and Savior;
- 3** Knowing this first, that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,
- 4** And saying, "Where is the promise of his coming ? for since the fathers have slept, all things remain as from the beginning of the creation."
- 5** For of this they are wilfully ignorant, that by the word of God the heavens were formerly, and the earth, subsisting by water and through water;
- 6** Through which the world, which then was, perished, being overflowed with water.
- 7** But the heavens and the earth, which are now, are reserved by the word of the same, and are kept for fire against the day of judgment and of the perdition of the ungodly.
- 8** But of this one thing, beloved, be ye not ignorant, that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.
- 9** The Lord does not delay as to his promise, as some count delay, but is patient towards us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

- 10** But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens with a tempest shall pass away, and the elements shall melt with heat, and the earth and all its works shall be burnt up.
- 11** Since then all these things shall be dissolved, what ought we to be in all holy conduct and all godliness;
- 12** Waiting in haste for the coming of the day of God; on account of which the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall be consumed with heat.
- 13** But according to his promise we look for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.
- 14** Therefore, beloved, since ye look for these things, labor to be found by him in peace, unpolluted and blameless;
- 15** And regard the patience of our Lord as salvation, as also our beloved brother Paul has written to you according to the wisdom given to him; as also in all his Epistles, speaking of these things; in which there are some things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and the unstable pervert,
- 16** As also other scriptures, to their own ruin.
- 17** Do ye then, beloved, being forewarned, take heed, lest ye, being led away by the error of the wicked, should fall from your own steadfastness.
- 18** But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: to him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

# FOOTNOTES

## CHAPTER 1

- <sup>Ft1</sup> Simeon, and not Simon, is the name as here given, though a few copies and the *Vulg.* have Simon. His name is given both ways elsewhere; see <420508> Luke 5:8, and <441514> Acts 15:14. Why he called himself Peter in the first Epistle, and Simeon Peter here, does not appear. — *Ed.*
- <sup>Ft2</sup> It has been maintained by many, that the rendering of these words ought to be, “of our God and Savior Jesus Christ,” In this case the ἐν before “righteousness” would be rendered “in;” for it is more suitable to say that faith is *in* than *through* the righteousness of Christ. Christ is thus called here god as well as Savior; and so he is called “our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” in chapter 3:18, the article being used in the same manner. — *Ed.*
- <sup>Ft3</sup> The connection here is variously regarded. Our version and Calvin seem to connect this verse with the foregoing, in this sense, that the Apostle prays for the increase of grace and peace from the consideration of what God had already done, or in conformity with his previous benefits. Others, perhaps more correctly, view this verse as connected with the 5th, and render ὥς, “Since,” and the beginning of the 5th verse, “Do ye also for this reason, giving all diligence, add,” etc.; that is, “Since God has done so great things for you, ye also for this reason ought to be diligent in adding to your faith virtue, etc.” But ὥς and καὶ may be rendered *as* and *so*. See <440751> Acts 7:51. “As his divine power .... so for this reason, giving all diligence, add,” etc.-*Ed.*
- <sup>Ft4</sup> The order is according to what is common in Scripture; the chief thing is mentioned first, and then that which leads to it.-*Ed.*
- <sup>Ft5</sup> The received text no doubt contains the true rending. The word ἀρρῆ never means “power” either in the classics, or in the *Sept.*, or in the New Testament. *Beza* and also *Schleusner*, regard διὰ as expressing the final cause, to; it is also used in the sense of “for the sake of,” or, “on account of.” “Glory and virtue” are in a similar order as the previous words, “life and godliness,” and also in the same order with

the concluding words of the next verse, “partakers of the divine nature,” and “escaping the corruptions of the world.” So that there is a correspondence as to the order of the words throughout the whole passage.

With respect to δι’ ὧν, the rendering may be, “for the sake of which,” that is, for the purpose of leading us to “glory and virtue,” many and precious promises have been given; and then the conclusion of the verse states the object in other words, that we might by these promises become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the pollutions of the world. Escaping the corruption of the world is “godliness,” is “virtue;” and partaking of the divine nature is “life,” is “glory.” This complete correspondence confirms the meaning which *Beza* and our version give to the preposition διὰ at the end of the third verse. — *Ed.*

<sup>Ft6</sup> Some, like *Bishop Warburton*, have very ingeniously attempted to shew that there is here a regular order and gradation; but it is not the order of cause and effect. Different things are mentioned, and what is added, has in some way or another a connection with the previous word. To faith add virtue or moral conduct; that virtue may be rightly formed, add knowledge; that knowledge may be gained, add temperance; that temperance may continue, add patience or perseverance; that perseverance may be retained, add godliness or piety, that is, prayer to God; that godliness may not be alone, add brotherly-kindness; and that brotherly kindness may be enlarged, add love to all mankind. The word added has a connection with the immediately previous word, as the way, means, or an addition. — *Ed.*

<sup>Ft7</sup> The question of free-will does not properly belong to this passage; for the Apostle writes, not to those in their natural state, but to those whom he considered to be new creatures. The question of free-will ought to be confined to conversion, and not extended to the state of those who have been converted. The tenth article of the Church of England nearly meets the question, yet not wholly: it ascribes the will to turn most distinctly to God, and says that man cannot turn himself; but it does not expressly say whether man can resist the good-will given him, which is the very gist of the question. But it says further, that the grace of God by Christ “worketh with us when we have that good-will,” which seems certainly to imply, that the good-will first given is made thereby effectual. If there be, then, a cooperation, (as no

doubt there is,) it is the cooperation, according to this Article, of the good-will first given, and not of anything in man by nature. — *Ed.*

**Ft8** “He is blind, (*manu palpans*) stroking with the hand,” is Calvin’s; the *Vulgate* is *manu tentans*, “feeling with the hand:” but the original word means, “closing the eyes,” according to the Greek grammarians, *Hesychius* and *Suidas*: “He is blind, closing his eyes.” — *Ed.*

**Ft9** There is no sufficient authority for introducing them. Besides, there is no need of them, for the word **ταῦτα**, “these things,” has been often previously repeated, and refers to the things mentioned in verses 5, 6, and 7. — *Ed.*

**Ft10** The order is such as we often meet with, the visible effect first, and then the cause, as in <sup><451009></sup>Romans 10:9; confession, the ostensible act, is mentioned first, and then faith, which precedes it. So here, calling, the effect produced, is first mentioned, and then election, the cause of it; as though he had said, “Make your calling, which has proceeded from your election, sure.” — *Ed.*

**Ft11** Paul, at the beginning of this chapter, compares our state in this world in a fading body with our state above after the resurrection in a glorified body, and takes no account of the intervening time between death and the resurrection. By keeping this in view, the whole passage, otherwise obscure, will appear quite clear. He speaks of being unclothed and clothed, that is, of being divested of one body, and of putting on another; and consistently with this view he speaks of not being found naked, that is, without a body as a covering. — *Ed.*

**Ft12** It has been disputed, whether he refers here to what is recorded in <sup><432118></sup>John 21:18, 19, or to a new revelation. The latter was the opinion of some of the ancient fathers; and not without reason, for in John the manner of his death is what is mentioned, but here the near approach of it, — two things wholly distinct. — *Ed.*

**Ft13** The verb **σαφίζω**, once used by Paul in <sup><550315></sup>2 Timothy 3:15, means “to make wise,” and in this sense it is used in the Sept.; and it may properly have a similar meaning here, “myths (or, fables) made wise,” or made to appear wise a trade still carried on in the world. The idea of craft and subtlety is what is given to it in the classics. — *Ed.*

**Ft14** We have the same order as in several previous instances; “power” first, then “coming.” It is the peculiar style of Scripture. — *Ed.*

**Ft15** Spectators, **ἐπόπται**, lookers on, inspectors, surveyors it betokens those who not only see or behold a thing, but who attentively look on. It is more emphatical than **αὐτόπται**, “eye-witnesses.” — Ed.

**Ft16** Much has been written on this subject; and the difficulty has arisen from a wrong construction of the passage, which is literally as follows: — “And we have more firm the prophetic word,” **Καὶ ἔχομαν βεβαιότερον τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον**, that is, we have rendered more firm the prophetic word. This is confirmed by what follows; for the prophetic word is compared to “a light shining in a dark place,” and, therefore, not clear nor firm until it be fulfilled; but they were doing well to attend to this light until the full light of the gospel shone in their hearts. As *Scott* maintains, the reference here is clearly to the experience of Christians to their real knowledge of divine truths; for it was to be *in* their *hearts*, and not before their eyes.

A great deal of learning has been spent to no purpose on this passage. It has been by most taken as granted, that “the power and coming of our Lord,” mentioned in verse 16<sup>th</sup>, is his second coming, when the whole passage refers only and expressly to his first coming. And on this gratuitous and even false supposition is grounded the elaborate exposition of *Sherlock*, *Horsley*, and others. — Ed.

**Ft17** There is no command here: the Apostle only approves of what they were doing, “whereunto ye do well that ye take heed.” — Ed.

**Ft18** The Apostle does not speak of the perfect day, but of the dawn of it, and the day-star is that which ushers in the perfect day. The gospel is the dawn and the day-star, compared with the glimmering light of prophecy, and compared too with the perfect day of the heavenly kingdom. Prophecy is useful still; for its fulfillment, found in the gospel, greatly strengthens faith. — Ed.

**Ft19** There are in the main three renderings of this passage: — 1. “No Prophecy of Scripture is of a private impulse,” or invention; — 2. “No prophecy of Scripture is of self-interpretation,” that is, is its own interpreter; — 3. No prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation, that is, is not to be interpreted according to the fancies of men, but according to the word of God and the guidance of his Spirit. Now which of these corresponds with the context? Clearly the first, the two others have nothing in the passage to countenance them. The next verse is evidently explanatory of this sentence, which seems at once to

determine its meaning; and, as it is often the case in Scripture, the explanation is given negatively and positively. Prophecy *did not* come from the will of man; it *did* come from the Spirit of God. Besides, the importance attached to the announcement, “knowing this especially,” is not so clearly borne out as by the first exposition, because the fact that prophecy did not come from man, is everything in the question, while the other expositions contain only things of subordinate importance. Thus what goes before and comes after tends to confirm the same view.

Whether we take the conjectural reading (which only differs from the other in one small letter) or that which is found in all the MSS., it may admit of the meaning that has been given. There is either an ἐκ, “from,” understood, or the word *prophecy* is to be repeated: “No prophecy of Scripture is *from* one's own explanation;” or, “No prophecy of Scripture is a *prophecy* of one's own explanation,” or interpretation, that is, as to things to come.

*Calvin* has been followed in his view of this passage, among others, by *Grotius*, *Doddridge*, and *Macknight*. *Ed.*

## CHAPTER 2

Ft19 “Peter intimated that the heresies of which he speaks were to be introduced under the color of true doctrine, in the dark. as it were, and by little and little; so that the people would not discern their real nature.” — *Macknight*.

Ft20 The word here for “Lord” is δεδεσπότης, which is more expressive of power and authority than Κύριος, commonly rendered “Lord.” This seems to intimate the character of the men alluded to: they denied Christ as their sovereign, as they rendered no obedience to him, though they may have professed to believe in him as a Savior.—*Ed.*

Ft21 Few copies have “perdition,” or perditions, for the word is in the plural number; and very many have “lasciviousness,” and also the *Vulg.* and *Syr.* versions. Having before mentioned their destructive opinions or heresies, which involved the denial of the Lord who bought them, he now refers to the immorality which accompanied their false

doctrines; and that immorality is here referred to is evident from this, that the way of truth would be evil spoken of or calumniated. — *Ed.*

**Ft22** Either “feigned” or “invented” may be meant by **πλαστοῖς**: if “feigned,” then they were words used not conveying their real sentiments, but adopted for the purpose of alluring others, as is the case with those who pretend great zeal for truth and great love for souls, when their object is to gain adherents for filthy lucre’s sake. But if “invented” be adopted, then **λόγοι** must mean narratives or fables, — “invented (or fictitious) fables,” or tales. And this is the rendering of *Macknight*. And he says, that the Apostle had probably in view the fables concerning the visions of angels and the miracles performed at the sepulchres of departed saints, which the false teachers in the early ages, and the monks in latter times, fabricated, to draw money from the people. Similar are the devices of superstitious men, greedy of gain, in every age. — *Ed.*

**Ft23** The “if” at the beginning of the verse requires a corresponding clause. Some, as *Piscator* and *Macknight*, supply at the end of the seventh verse, “he will not spare thee,” or, “will he spare thee?” But there is no need of this, the corresponding clause is in the ninth verse; and this is our version. The deliverance of the just is there first mentioned, as that of Lot was the subject of the previous verse, and then the reservation of the unjust for judgment, examples of which he had before given. This sort of arrangement is common in Scripture. — *Ed.*

**Ft24** There is a difference of opinion as to the word “eighth:” some think that the sense is, that Noah was the eighth person who was saved at the deluge, being one of the eight who were preserved. Others render the words, “Noah, the eighth preacher of righteousness,” calculating from Enos, in whose time as it is said, “men began to call upon the name of the Lord.” (<010426> Genesis 4:26.) Lightfoot and some others, have held the latter opinion, though the former has been more generally approved. — *Ed.*

**Ft25** Rather, “self-pleasing,” **αὐθάδεις**, whose ruling principle was to please and gratify themselves, without regarding God’s will or the good of others whose god was self. In a second sense, the word designates those who are haughty, arrogant, supercilious, refractory; and such is commonly the character of selfish men. — *Ed.*

**Ft26** The words may be thus rendered, —

“But these, as natural unreasoning animals, born for capture and destruction, speaking evil of things which they understand not, shall utterly perish through their own corruption.”

They are compared to animals which are by nature without reason, and such as live on prey, wild and rapacious, which seem to have been made to be taken and destroyed; and they are often taken and destroyed while committing plunder. So these men, their wickedness would be the means of ensnaring and destroying them. — *Ed.*

**Ft27** It is better to connect the first words of this verse, “receiving the reward of unrighteousness,” with the foregoing, and to begin another period with this clause, and to render this verse and the following thus, —

“Counting (or, deeming) riot in the day-time a pleasure, they are spots and stains, rioting in their own delusions, feasting together with (14) you; having eyes full of adultery and which cease not from sin, ensnaring unstable souls, having a heart inured to covetous desires, being children of the curse.”

The various things said of them are intended to shew that they were “spots and stains,” disgraceful and defiling: they rioted in carnal pleasure, and rioted in delusion, and associated with the faithful, feasting with them; they were libidinous, and led unstable souls to follow their ways; they were covetous, and shewed that they were heirs to the curse of God. — *Ed.*

**Ft28** The words are, —

**“For uttering bombasts of vanity, they allure,” etc.**

The word ὑπέρογκα, being a neuter plural, may be rendered as a noun; literally, “over swellings of vanity;” but when applied to words, it means what is pompous, inflated, bombastic; but these bombasts were those of vanity, being empty, useless, unprofitable; or as some render the words, they were the bombasts of falsehood, according to the meaning of the word as used often in the *Sept.*; they spoke false things in a bombastic and inflated strain. — *Ed.*

**Ft29** Sat. 1:14.

**Ft30** The end of this verse is not explained, but the words of the version, *facta sunt illis postrema pejora prioribus*, seem to mean, that their last

pollutions would become worse to them than their former pollutions; and this is the rendering of *Macknight*. The sentence is commonly taken in the same sense as in <sup><401245></sup>Matthew 12:45, but the words are somewhat different. — *Ed.*

## CHAPTER 3

<sup>Ft31</sup> The Apostle evidently admits that they had a sincere or a pure mind, that is, freed from the pollutions referred to in the last chapter; but still they stood in need of being stirred up by admonitions: hence their minds were not, in a strict sense, perfect, though sincere.—*Ed.*

<sup>Ft32</sup> The construction of the passage is as follows: — “In *both* which I, by admonition, arouse your sincere mind to remember the words, aforetime spoken by the holy prophets, and the doctrine of us, the apostles of our Lord and Savior.”

The verb **μνησθῆναι** is connected with “arouse;” and it is in this tense used actively as well as passively. See <sup><402675></sup>Matthew 26:75, and <sup><441031></sup>Acts 10:31. There is in the noun **ἐντολή**, a metonymy, the commandment for what was commanded to be taught, the doctrine. It has this meaning, according to *Schleusner*, in <sup><431250></sup>John 12:50, and in this Epistle, chapter 2:21. — *Ed.*

<sup>Ft33</sup> It is literally, “the last of the days,” according to the Hebrew form **אֲחֵרִית הַיָּמִים**, “the extremity of the days,” (<sup><230202></sup>Isaiah 2:2; but the meaning is the same as “the last days,” as used in <sup><580101></sup>Hebrews 1:1, and In other places, that is, the days of the gospel dispensation. — *Ed.*

<sup>Ft34</sup> The two verses, the fifth and the sixth, have been differently explained. “The earth,” say some, “subsisting from water and through water,” that is, emerging from water and made firm and solid by means of water; which is true, for through moisture the earth adheres together and becomes a solid mass. Others render the last clause, “in water,” or in the midst of water, that is, surrounded by water; and this is the most suitable meaning.

The **δι’ ὧν** at the beginning of the sixth verse, refers, according to *Beza*, *Whitby*, and others, to the heavens and the earth in the preceding verse, the deluge being occasioned by “the windows of heaven being

opened,” and “the fountains of the great deep being broken up.” (<sup><010711></sup>Genesis 7:11.) “By which (or by the means of which) the world at that time, being overflowed with water, was destroyed.”

The objection to this view is, as justly stated by *Macknight*, that the correspondence between this verse and the following is thereby lost: the reservation of the world to be destroyed by fire is expressly ascribed, in verse seventh, to God’s word; and to the same ought the destruction of the old world to be ascribed. This is doubtless the meaning required by the passage, but “which” being in the plural, creates a difficulty, and there is no different reading. *Macknight* solves the difficulty by saying that the plural “which” or whom, refers to “word,” meaning Christ, and “God,” as in the first verse of this chapter, “in both which,” a reference is made to what is implied in “the second Epistle,” that is, the first. He supposes that there is here the same anomalous mode of speaking. But the conjecture which has been made is not improbable, that it is a typographical mistake,  $\omega\nu$  being put for  $\omicron\nu$  or for  $\delta\nu$ . Then the meaning would be evident; and the two parts would correspond the one with the other:

5. “For of this they are wilfully ignorant, that the heavens existed of old and the earth (which subsisted from water and in water,) by 6. the word of God; by which the world at that time, being over- 7. flowed with water, was destroyed. But the present heavens and the earth are by His word reserved, being kept for fire to the day of judgment and of the perdition of ungodly men.”

By “word” here is meant command, or power, or the *fiat* by which the world was created; and by the same it was destroyed, and by the same it will be finally destroyed. Instead of  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omega$  “the same” *Griesbach* has introduced into his text  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}$ , “His.” — *Ed.*

<sup>Ft35</sup> A similar view was taken by *Estius*, *Piscator*, and *Beza*. — *Ed.*

<sup>Ft36</sup> The previous word is also in the plural number, “in holy conversations.” What seems to be meant is, that every part of the conduct should be holy, and that every part of godliness should be attended to: “In every part of a holy life, and every act of godliness;” that is, we are not to be holy in part or pious in part, but attend to every branch of duty towards man, and every branch of duty towards God. — *Ed.*

- Ft37** All that is said here is, that there will be new heavens and a new earth, and not that the present heavens and the present earth will be renovated. See <sup><662011></sup> Revelation 20:11; 21:1. — *Ed.*
- Ft38** The first meaning of **σπεύδω** is to hasten, and it is often used, when connected with another verb, adverbially as proposed by Calvin; but when followed as here by an accusative case, it has often the secondary meaning of earnestly desiring a thing. It is so taken here by *Schleusner*, *Parkhurst*, and *Macknight*; “Expecting and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God.” — *Ed.*
- Ft39** He says, “Expecting these things, be diligent,” etc.; **σπουδάζατε**, hasten, make speed, diligently strive, earnestly labor, carefully endeavor: “Therefore, beloved, since ye expect these things, diligently strive to be found by him in peace, unspotted and unblamable;” that is, having no stain, and not chargeable with crime. — *Ed.*
- Ft40** Some say, “peace” with God; but the view of *Calvin* is more suitable here. — *Ed.*
- Ft41** It is in the feminine gender in some MSS. The authority as to the copies and versions is nearly equal. The difference is not much as to the sense, only “in which epistles,” reads better. So thought *Beza*, *Mill*, and others.

It has been a question as to the particular epistle referred to by Peter; for that he alludes to some particular epistle is evident from the manner in which he writes. The difficulty has arisen from connecting the reference made to Paul, only with the former part of the 15th verse, while that part ought to be viewed only as an addition to the former verse; and the former verse stands connected with the new heavens and the new earth. So that the subjects in hand are the day of judgment, the future state, and the necessity of being prepared for it; and that these are the things referred to is evident from this, that he says, that Paul speaks of them in all his epistles, which is not true, as to what is said at the beginning of the 15th verse. The passage then ought to be thus rendered: —

14. Therefore, beloved, since ye expect these things, diligently strive to be found by him in peace, unspotted and unblamable;

15. and deem the long-suffering of our Lord *to be for* salvation: even as Paul, our beloved brother, has, according to the wisdom given

16. to him, written to you; as also in all his epistles, when speaking in them of these things; in which (epistles) there are some things difficult to be understood,” etc.

Now the special epistle referred to was most probably the epistle to the Hebrews, one particular design of which was to direct the attention of the Jews to the country promised to their fathers. Some, indeed, hold that that epistle was written to the Jews in Judea; but others maintain that it was written to converted Hebrews generally, whether in Judea or elsewhere; and this passage seems to favor the latter opinion.

If the view given here is right, that is, that the subjects on which reference is made to Paul, are those mentioned in the 12<sup>th</sup>, the 13<sup>th</sup>, and 14<sup>th</sup> verses, then there is no epistle of Paul which could be more appropriately referred to than that to the Hebrews, as the new heavens and the new earth answer exactly to “the better and heavenly country,” mentioned in the Epistle to the Hebrews. See <581116> Hebrews 11:16. Besides, the exhortations and warnings of that epistle wholly coincide with the exhortation given here by Peter. — *Ed.*

**Ft42** “Grace” is the attainment, and “the knowledge” of Christ is the way and means. The chief thing is often mentioned first in Scripture, then that which leads to it: or the cause of it. — *Ed.*