



A COMMENTARY
AND AN
EXPOSITION
OF THE
EPISTLES OF JAMES, PETER,
JOHN AND JUDE.

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EUGENE S. SMITH, *Publisher*
P. O. Box 4427
Dallas, Texas

PREFACE.

FOR some years I have had in contemplation the preparation of a work giving what I esteemed a plain exposition of the Epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude. Heretofore I have refrained from the attempt, for one reason and another, chiefly for the lack of age and experience, and possibly the courage for such an undertaking. Having passed the sixty-fifth milepost in my life's journey, the same inclination has overcome all scruples, the work is completed, with what success is left to the future to determine. That I may not have possessed the requisite qualifications for so important an undertaking is frankly confessed, yet an earnest desire to see some such work was felt by me to be imperatively demanded. And since those possessing eminent abilities for such an undertaking seemed to overlook this great need, in much humility and some misgivings it was by me undertaken.

My first reason for the attempt is that in my associations with my religious neighbors I saw what I regarded as a studied effort to avoid these Epistles, and hence I concluded that they were more neglected than other portions of revealed truth. If neglected, as I imagined, of course some cause existed for the negligence.

A second reason that impelled me to the undertaking was that authors heretofore dealing with these Epistles in their various attempts at exposition appeared to be hampered by a desire to advance some special view or advocate a preconceived doctrine, adopting in their exposition a system of interpretation sufficiently elastic to accomplish the purpose desired. So governed, it was impossible to present to the reading public the mind of the Spirit as expressed in the words of the sacred text.

A third reason I had inducing me to undertake the work was that I firmly believed that greater simplicity than appeared in many expositions was the need of the hour—less exhibition of learning and greater plainness. A revelation of God to man must by man be understood, and, to be understood, it must be in language brought within his comprehension.

Entertaining these views, and for these reasons, the work was undertaken. I have applied the same rules of interpretation of evidence with which I have been familiar in a law practice covering a period of forty years. I make no claim for my performance except a sincere desire to ascertain and present the precise thought the inspired penman designed to communicate for our instruction and edification. Many authors have been consulted; from but few has any aid been received. Credit is hereby given to Macknight's Epistles, and to the scholarly work of H. A. W. Meyer, and even these have not been slavishly followed, for we wrote as the Lord's freeman.

Humbly praying the Lord's blessing upon this feeble effort to promote the cause of Christ, I submit, with all its imperfections, to my fellowmen for their use, and I hope their good, the following pages.

N. T. CATON.

SPRAGUE, Wash., Aug. 10, 1897.

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

INTRODUCTION.

IT is with some hesitation I begin to write this introduction to the Epistle of James. This hesitation grows out of the fact that so many writers, recognized as men of profound scholarship and eminent piety, have selected a different personage from the one I have chosen as the author of this letter. I have been for many years impressed with the belief that the author is none other than the apostle James, one of the Lord's chosen twelve, and all my study and reflection for a period of over sixty years confirms me in this belief. In my own plain way I shall proceed to give in brief some of my reasons for so believing.

1. The Author of the Christian faith selected twelve men whom he called his apostles, and upon them he conferred the authority of proclaiming the laws of his kingdom. The warrant of authority is couched in this language: "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." This was first spoken to Peter and afterward to all the apostles. After his resurrection from the dead he confirms his declaration by adding, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you," and to this he adds: "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." This power was subsequently conferred upon the apostle Paul. The twelve only, therefore, in the first instance, had the authority to exercise these great and exalted prerogatives. To these twelve men the Master had said: "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." I conclude, therefore, that the twelve were essentially ministers plenipotentiary. They

spake for the King, and when they spake it was the same as if the King had spoken. None others could be so recognized. Any attempt to exercise these functions so conferred upon the twelve alone—Paul alone excepted—can be regarded in no other light than that of presumptuous usurpation. Now, these very prerogatives were undoubtedly exercised by the author of this Epistle at the council of Jerusalem. (Acts xv.) The idea can not be entertained for a moment that the apostles to whom these powers were specially delegated would have tolerated the exercise thereof by one not clothed with like authority.

2. The internal evidence contained in this Epistle unmistakably indicates the bearing of one clothed with authority to speak in the name of the King. Citations would be useless. The Epistle can easily be read, and it will speak with no uncertainty and without the intimation of a doubt upon this point.

3. The Lord appeared to him alone, as mentioned by Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 7. This is a particular honor not likely to have been mentioned by Paul had it no special significance. But when we further reflect upon other language of Paul, its significance appears. He it was who said: "And when James, Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision" (Gal. ii. 9). "Perceived the grace given unto me" indicates their acceptance of Paul as an apostle, which prior thereto they were not willing to concede. Who else could make this concession but those possessed of like authority?

4. The statement of the Holy Spirit: "But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother" (Gal. i. 19). It seems to me that this declaration ought to settle the matter with all men of faith. Certainly no useless words were uttered by the pen of inspiration, and still more certainly none would be used calculated to mislead. From the foregoing reasons I conclude that the

Brother matth. 13:55; 1nb. 6:3

COMMENTARY ON JAMES.

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author of the Epistle was none other than James, the son of Alphaeus, sometimes called James the Less, and by Josephus James the Just. At all events, the foregoing reasons are sufficient to cause me to regard the author of this Epistle as an apostle, and such he is to me.

As to the question of the relationship of the author of this Epistle to the Master, we reserve for consideration when writing the introduction to the Epistle of Jude.

Lk 6:13-16; Jns. 14:21-23; Matth. 10:2; 1nb. 3:17
TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING.

Various dates are fixed at which the Epistle was written. While it may not be of special importance, I have carefully gone over all the data within my reach, including such light as Eusebius and Josephus throw upon the question, and come to the conclusion that the latter is probably as reliable as any. I quote from his "Antiquities of the Jews," Book XX., Chapter ix., Section 1, this declaration: "Festus was now dead, and Albinus was put upon the road, so he [reference is here made to Ananias the high priest] assembled the Sanhedrim of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others. And when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned." This was in A. D. 63. It is safe to say that the Epistle written by James had something to do with this outburst of passion against him. The letter must therefore have been written before this, certainly not later than A. D. 62, and this is probably the proper date. James was put to death in Jerusalem, and the last account we have of him from the sacred page was at that renowned city, and evidently from thence was written the document that bears his name.

CHARACTER OF THE EPISTLE.

While it is not doctrinal, it is full of practical instruction in the duties of life, and contains many convincing arguments and soul-stirring exhortations. The letter

abounds in brilliant illustrations as pleasing as they are brilliant. In all my reading, covering a period of more than sixty-five years, I have failed to find anything comparable in point of beauty with James' description of the brevity and uncertainty of human life. The boldness and energy appearing in many other figures and expressions are truly striking, which, had they appeared in any secular or profane writing, would have elicited the highest praise for sublimity.

CHAPTER I.

ANALYSIS.

James, a servant of Christ, writes this letter to the twelve tribes then in dispersion; and while some are mentioned as unbelievers and some as believers, the Epistle is intended mainly for the latter. He desires them to count the temptations to which they are subject as gain, advising them to ask wisdom of God, to the intent that their patience may be strengthened. He tells them that God imparts wisdom when the request is made in faith. This wisdom from on high enables the possessor to act properly, and also enables him to endure temptations. He warns them against the sin of imputing evil to God, or that he is the cause thereof, and assures them that the contrary is true; that all God's gifts are good and perfect. He shows them that temptations arise from man's own sinful desires and passions, and exhorts them to lay aside all sinfulness, and to receive and be guided by God's infallible Word, assuring them that the doers of the Word are saved; that the perfect law of liberty is the only safe guide; that one may think himself religious, but, failing to observe the requirements of the infallible guide in bridling his tongue, will find his religion a failure; that pure religion consists of benevolent acts to the orphan and widow, and in keeping one's self untainted by the vices of the world. Plainly, that religion is something to do—belief in action, faith in operation—rather than something to get.

COMMENTARY.

Verse 1.—A servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The expression is not identical with those of the apostle Paul to be found in his Epistle to the Romans, wherein he called himself a servant of Jesus Christ (Rom. i. 1), and the one to the Philippians, wherein he designates himself and Timothy servants of Jesus Christ (Phil. i. 1). The

similarity, however, appears in his letter to Titus, where this expression occurs: "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ" (Titus i. 1). In either case no difficulty appears in fully comprehending the meaning of the sacred text, and the only object I have in making a pause at this point is to call special attention to the peculiar language of the Holy Spirit, "James, a servant of God." If he is this, why add "and of the Lord Jesus Christ"? Would not this follow? Christians of the present day might so conclude, but a Jew in the days of the writer might not be so impressed. An unconverted Jew, should one such become a reader of the Epistle, would hereby understand that the writer was the servant of both equally, and that he recognized and acknowledged allegiance to both.

To the twelve tribes.

Speculation has arisen on this language of the sacred text, some persons claiming that it refers to the *spiritual tribes*. Under the Christian economy all are the children of Abraham by faith in Jesus Christ, and, to further strengthen this idea, the mistaken Bible view of the lost ten tribes of Israel is suggested. This I regard as a far-fetched theory, for which no necessity arises. I think it may be safely claimed that the Bible fails to disclose any loss occurring as to the tribes of Israel. They are simply dispersed among the nations of earth as God by the mouth of his servant Moses had foretold in case of their failure to obey his commands. Many of these Jews were converts to the faith in Christ, and to these—members of all the tribes—James addresses this Epistle. Proof that the twelve tribes were in existence in that day may be found in Acts xxvi. 7, where the apostle Paul, defending himself before King Agrippa, boldly asserted such to be the fact.

Greeting.

This is his salutation to the dispersed. It would seem that it was a characteristic method of salutation by this writer. The decrees of the Jerusalem council, supposed to

be dictated by the same author, contain the same salutation. (Acts xv.) It signifies simply that he wishes health, he wishes them joy.

Verse 2.—When ye fall into divers temptations.

This, I take it, at least in this place, means trials which assail in this life, and which at that time had visited those addressed. The believer must meet these trials, and that, too, almost any day. Being engaged in a warfare, the Christian must expect the enemy of souls to assail and harass. Love to God and faith in his Son will become the stronger and shine forth the brighter as we are put to the test. Abraham was tested. Why should the believer today be exempted? If the faith is such as will meet the approval of the Master, it stands the test. What believer is there among all the children of God who can not rejoice when he fully appreciates the fact that his faith has stood the test to which it has been subjected?

Verse 3.—Trying of your faith worketh patience.

It may be an unpleasant thought to contemplate all that is comprehended in the expression "trying of your faith." The idea is that your faith may be put to the test once and again—many times—and, while in this life, is to be expected. Faith that stands the test successfully not only worketh (produces as a result), but fosters and adds to that grace called patience, which Peter assures us is essential to an entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter i. 6.) Knowig that the trial of faith worketh patience is the reason the apostle exhorts in the second verse to count it all joy, Paul also exhorts to "patience in tribulation" (Rom. xii. 5), and he says further, "We glory in tribulation also," and gives the reason: "Knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed" (Rom. v. 3-5). The hardships and adversities of life, persecutions, trials and afflictions are to fall upon us in our earthly existence, not only as tests of our faith, but also for our good.

Verse 4.—Let patience have her perfect work.

If patience builds up, strengthens and perfects Christian character so that its subject shall be perfect and entire, or complete, wanting nothing, or, as the Revised Version has it, lacking nothing, the argument to the true disciple of Christ is simply conclusive that no let or hindrance ought to be interposed, even if such power was possessed. To be complete, wanting or lacking nothing in principle or practice, is approaching the likeness of our blessed Master, which all the faithful in Christ Jesus desire to attain.

Verse 5.—If any lack wisdom.

Lack wisdom for what? To accomplish the end named in verse 4, to become "perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Any one lacking this wisdom is exhorted to ask the same of God, who will not upbraid for your lack in this regard, but who will bestow this wisdom. In this particular God gives to all men, and that not sparingly, but liberally. When I say all men, of course I mean his believing children, for to such only does the exhortation apply. MacKnight translates the word from which we have "lack," and, in the Revised Version, "lacketh," with the term "deficient." I can not see that such translation adds anything to the clearness of the expression or casts any additional light upon the text. If any one lacks, to just that extent is he deficient? So that, in my view, it makes but little difference whether we read "lack wisdom," "lacketh wisdom" or "deficient in wisdom." The idea intended to be conveyed by the Holy Spirit is exactly the same.

Verse 6.—Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.

The Revised Version is clearer—"nothing doubting." Doubting conveys the idea evidently intended much more distinctly than the word "wavering." At least it so strikes my mind. The idea is that, in asking for wisdom which we lack in relation to our Christian duties and life, there should be no hesitation growing out of a lurking belief

that the request may not be granted. Such is doubt, and the same ought not to exist. Having doubts about God's willingness to bestow the needed wisdom simply exhibits a sickly, weak or defective faith, whereas a true faith never wavers, never staggers, never hesitates, never doubts. Here, now, for a moment let us consider the faith of Abraham, for it will drive away all lingering mists that hang about this question. Paul says of Abraham that not being weak in faith, "he staggered not at the promises of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God" (Rom. iv. 20). This is the faith James calls a faith nothing wavering. Such will receive a favorable response from the God of his salvation on his application for needed wisdom.

A wave of the sea.

A very beautiful figure. It so clearly outlines the doubter. A wave is created by the wind on ocean's bosom. The water of which it is composed is changed by the force that brought it as a wave into existence into another wave and driven into another locality, and so, moving from place to place, and from one form into another, is wholly unstable in any one of its forms.

Verse 7.—For let not that man think.

This is sufficiently set forth in the exposition of verse 6. The wavering man, that is, the man who asks for wisdom doubting God's willingness to grant his request, need not expect the divine bequest, for he shall receive no favorable response. He shall not receive anything.

Verse 8.—A double-minded man.

Of the kind of a man James calls double-minded; he affirms that he is unstable, not in one thing, nor in one way, but in all his ways.

It is important, therefore, to ascertain just what is meant by double-minded as applied to men. Dr. Macknight's translation has a "man of two minds." That throws some light upon the question, for if a man has two minds, one

mind would entertain one view, while the other mind could contend for an entirely different position. Rotherham's translation gives us, in lieu of "double-minded man," these words: "A two-souled man." The translation from the Latin Vulgate has it: "A double-minded man is inconstant in all his ways." Meyer, in his commentary on this verse, uses this language: "It thus describes the doubter, who has, as it were, two souls contending against each other, one of which is turned to God, and one of which is turned away from God" (thus to the world). In the same connection he says: "This double-mindedness [or, which is the same thing, division of soul] expresses the wavering to and from between faith and unbelief."

Verse 9.—Brother of low degree rejoice.

While the double-minded man is unstable, it is not so with the brother who, so far as worldly advantages are concerned, possesses few, and in that regard is of low degree when compared with his more favored neighbor, for he is exalted in that he is strong in his faith; let him therefore rejoice. Low in worldly estate, he is elevated in that he is a child of God and an heir of heaven.

Verse 10.—The rich, that he is made low.

The rich in this world's goods, if there be any among you claiming heirship in heaven, let such rejoice if circumstances should arise which should destroy their goods. The reasons are plain, and appear upon the very surface of investigation. Men are liable to be estranged in their allegiance to the cause of Christ by the consideration of worldly affairs, as the blessed Master assures us in the parable of the sower. (Matt. xiii. 7-22.) And, secondly, the rich ought to rejoice in having their goods despoiled, since, if such will but reflect, whether they be rich or not, their stay on earth is brief, and the *end* to the use of their riches as certain as the falling of the flower. They should from the strongest considerations be glad, and rejoice that any possible cause of their apostasy had been removed.

Verse 11.—A burning heat withereth.

In this verse the apostle enforces the idea advanced in the former verse by an expansion of the figure he there introduces. The rich must understand that no reliance whatever is to be placed in their belongings, for with riches and the owner the fate that the grass encounters from the rays of the burning sun, which all have observed, awaits the man. As the grass withers and its flower falls, and all its grace and fashion and beauty perish and melt away out of the sight of men, so it is with the rich man. Whatever his plans and purposes, and whatever may be the grandeur of his position among his fellowmen, the common vicissitudes of life, disease and death reach him, and he fades away as does the flower. His riches afford no protection. Meyer advances, to my mind, the idea contained in the apostle's words: "The prominent idea is that the rich man, overtaken by judgment, perishes in the midst of his doings and pursuits as the flower in the midst of its blossoming falleth a victim to the scorching heat of the sun."

Verse 12.—Blessed is the man.

That is, happy. The apostle here again takes up the thought of the results to the man who successfully resists temptations, and withstands all the trials to which his faith is subjected. This without regard as to whether he is of low degree or rich. If he endureth, stands firm in his faith, notwithstanding the temptation or trial, of such an one the apostle affirms he is blessed, he is happy.

He shall receive the crown of life.

This is the reward of his fidelity. This is the compensation God has promised to those that love him, to those who are loyal in their allegiance to God's beloved Son.

The crown of life.

Contemplate this reward, ye faithful. Can a greater stimulus be imagined, a stronger incentive to fidelity? The crown of life God's reward offered to his struggling,

afflicted children. Paul speaks of the same thing in view of his anticipated violent death at the block when he says: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness" (2 Tim. iv. 8). John also, in the revelations made to him on the lonely Isle of Patmos, is instructed to write Smyrna's suffering sons: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. ii. 10). The crown of life is the richest diadem in the coronet of heaven. It is an enduring or eternal blessed existence. A never-ending life, freed from trials, afflictions or sorrows. "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, ye may be also" (John xiv. 2, 3).

Verse 13.—I am tempted of God.

The Judaizer and the enemy of the cross may suggest the thought and urge its reception that because of the trials that befall us in this life, God is thereby seducing the believer from the path of rectitude. The apostle is emphatic in denunciation of this thought, and says, "Let no man say" this, and gives the reason that "God can not be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." God, in the purity of his character and in the infinity of his holiness and goodness, is incapable of being seduced by evil things; that is to say, he is unapproachable by evil, and therefore, being possessed of this exalted character, can not be the author of evil to his creatures.

Verse 14.—But every man is tempted.

Man is free and yet possesses passions and appetites. These appeal to man, and their influence upon him entice him and draw him from a virtuous course, and he is thereby induced to tread the paths of vice. These passions and appetites are by the apostle called "his own lusts." By these he is seduced or tempted, and by these he is led away, if at all, and not by influences from on high.

Verse 15.—Lust hath conceived.

First a begetting and then a bringing forth—that is, a birth. Lust is here personified. It is the begetter. Lust entices. Yielding to it is the conception, and the birth thereof is sin.

Sin, when it is finished.

Finished; that is, completed, run its course. Certainly a constant course of sin, repetition of sinful conduct and actions to the end of life's journey, forms a character fit only for but one end—destruction—hence it

Bringeth forth death.

Death eternal. "Depart from me, ye that worketh iniquity" (Matt. vii. 23). Where do they go when they depart? Into outer darkness with the unprofitable servant. (Matt. xxv. 30.) And, lastly, we have the end given by our Lord himself: "Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." "These shall go away into everlasting punishment" (Matt. xxv. 41-46). The inspired penman and the Lord Jesus have left us in no doubt about the death meant which is brought forth of sin. Let the world of intelligent creatures be informed and enabled to shun so fearful a calamity.

Verse 16.—Do not err, my beloved brethren.

Here is a solemn charge urged with much force by James, the writer of this Epistle. Now, in what respect were they liable to err? Evidently in the possible thought that God was the author of evil. This the apostle fully exploded in his former reasoning. The Revised Version, Dr. Macknight and Rotherham, in place of the word "err," use the word "deceived." I do not know that it is especially material to ascertain just which word the inspired penman would have us adopt to convey the meaning intended. Err is probably the stronger word, at all events it would be the legitimate result of deception. If we

do not err, it is a certainty that we have not been deceived by the false suggestion of temptation by the infinite One. Probably this view controlled the translators of the Peshito Syriac, the Latin Vulgate and the Common Version in causing them to retain the word "err" as they have done. The views of Matthew Henry are so opposite that I transcribe them in full: "We should take particular care not to err in our conceptions of God. Do not err, my beloved brethren, do not wander, that is, from the word of God, and the accounts of him you have there. Do not stray into erroneous opinions, and go off from the standard of truth, the things you have received from the Lord Jesus and by the direction of his Spirit. The loose opinions of Simon and the Nicolaitans (from whom the gnostics, a most sensual, corrupt set of people, arose afterwards) may perhaps by the apostle here be more especially cautioned against. Those who are disposed to look into these may consult the first book of Irenaeus against heresies. Let corrupt men run into what notions they will, the truth as it is in Jesus stands thus: God is not, can not be, the author and patronizer of anything that is evil, but must be acknowledged as cause and spring of everything that is good."

Verse 17.—Every good and perfect gift.

Gifts are here designated (1) good; (2) perfect. The same qualities in the gifts, whether applied to this life in temporal affairs or are related to our spiritual concerns, are present. View it as we may, God is the author of these gifts. Pardon of sin, the favor of our heavenly Father, the hope of eternal life—all these in which the Christian is most deeply interested—all are gifts of God.

Father of lights.

The word "lights" appears in the sacred text in the plural. And here is food for thought. Macknight may be right when he says: "It may denote spiritual and corporeal lights. To mention God's being the Father or author of the light of the heavenly bodies, as well as the light of

reason, was very proper, because the creation of these corporeal lights is a great instance of his goodness."

No variableness, neither shadow of turning.

The fountain of the light which reaches this earth is the sun. Its rays do not always reach us. They are turned aside by intervening clouds. Not so with the Father of lights. With him there is no change, no turning. He is unchangeable. He gives good gifts, and none other. He does not approach us, then retire. He is always near; all in all. It is simply blasphemous, as well as absurd, to entertain the suggestion of his being the Author of influences inciting to evil.

Verse 18.—Of his own will begat he us.

God is the author of the system of faith proclaimed to the world. The scheme of human redemption is the product of the infinite love of our Father in heaven. The gospel of his Son must be proclaimed. This heard, understood and received makes man alive. It imparts life. He is begotten

With the word of truth.

The gospel is the word of truth. The word of God is the seed of the kingdom; it is God's power unto salvation. It is this gospel, the word of truth, by which all the children of God are begotten, and become the first fruits of his creatures. First, a begetting, a making alive, or imparting life. This is done by the word of truth, and afterwards a birth. Life is then enjoyed.

Verse 19.—Wherefore, my beloved brethren.

For the reason that you are begotten of God by the word of truth, you are under obligations to be swift, prompt, anxious to hear not only the gospel, but all things connected therewith, so far as the same relates to duties you owe to God and to your fellowman. Slow to speak; that is, cautious, making no mistakes. Slow to wrath, for the reason the cause of the Master can not be advanced by exhibitions of anger, and personal hurt only results.

Verse 20.—For the wrath of man worketh not, etc.

Another reason is here given why the brethren should be slow to anger or wrath. The wrath of man worketh not—that is, it can not work or produce—the righteousness of God. It possesses no such power. The character of God's righteousness is such that the element of anger is forever banished. There is no place therein to be found for it; contrariwise, the love of God is prominently therein exhibited.

Verse 21.—Wherefore lay apart.

Simply lay aside. Entirely discard and put away from you.

All filthiness.

That is, all impurity which may arise from the lusts of the flesh, and all abounding or overflowing maliciousness; or, as expressed in the Peshita Syriac, the "abundance of wickedness"; or, as expressed in Rotherham, "remainder of wickedness."

And receive with meekness the engrafted word.

That is, with simple, docile, teachable spirits and dispositions, welcome the doctrine of the gospel which has power to save your souls.

Verse 22.—But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only.

One who is a hearer of the Word only, and not a doer, deceives himself, for he reasons that hearing only is sufficient. Our blessed Master, in the conclusion of his Sermon on the Mount, settled this matter for all time. "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock" (Matt. vii. 24). The hearer only was likened unto a foolish man who built upon the sand. The work of the former stood amidst the storms; the latter lost his work, the same being overthrown.

Verse 23.—For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer.

James illustrates such by the man that looked at himself in a mirror so negligently he could not soon thereafter describe his own personal appearance.

Verse 24.—He beholdeth himself.

That is, he saw his natural face in the mirror certainly, but even then he scanned it so negligently that he failed to discern the splotches or other prominent marks. They were overlooked just as we are liable to overlook our own defects; hence unable to describe himself. He forgot what kind of a man he was even after he had made his own examination.

Verse 25.—But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty.

God's blessed system for man's salvation—the gospel of Christ, the word of truth. This perfect law of liberty will show every man just what he is, and just what he may become. No room for mistakes, no fear of forgetting if followed as its blessed Author designed. He who continues looking into this perfect law of liberty as into the mirror, with the willingness to do its teachings, will be blest of God, and will assuredly become in character more and more like the Master.

Verse 26.—If any man among you.

There may be men among you that seem to be religious—that is, imagine they are worshiping God acceptably—and yet if such do not restrain their tongues, but continue to rail at those who may differ from them in opinions, all such deceive their own hearts. Their religion is vain, it is false. The religion of Christ does not countenance railing. It can not and will not allow the bringing of a railing accusation.

Verse 27.—Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this.

The word "religion" occurs but four times in the New Testament, as follows: "That after the most straitest sect

of our religion I lived a Pharisee" (Acts xxvi. 5). This was used by the apostle Paul in his defense before King Agrippa. "For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, . . . and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals" (Gal. i. 13, 14). The only other occurrence is now before us for consideration and study. The word "religious" occurs but twice; once it occurs in Acts xiii. 43, and once in James i. 26. Neither of these words occur in the Peshito Syriac.

Pure religion and undefiled.

That is, clean and without any admixture or adulteration, and therefore pure and holy.

Before God and the Father.

That is, in the esteem of God our Father—that which he regards or which comes up to his estimation, or is acceptable to him.

To visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction.

The term "visit" carries with it the idea of administering to their necessities, relieving their wants. This as contradistinguished from the observance of forms which are essentially Pharisaic. External duties may be all right, but hypocrites could observe these to whom the thought of a kind action never occurs. Doing good for good's sake, doing good from a loving heart, is what God requires.

Keep himself unspotted from the world.

Not tainted or touched by the vices of the world, abstaining from the evil, committing nothing prohibited by the gospel of the Lord. Macknight says of pure religion: "Tillotson thinks the apostle likens religion to a gem whose perfection consists in being clear; that is, without flaw or cloud. And Doddridge observes that no gem is so ornamental as the temper here described."

In short, religion consists in something to do in the divine life, as we learn from God's revealed will in the Bible, and not something to get, as is claimed by many

devout souls. Religion is faith in action, faith in operation, Christlike work, Christlike deeds, and nothing else.

CHAPTER II.

ANALYSIS.

A disposition existing among all people to give honor to persons of wealth, and those occupying stations of more or less prominence, not extended to the poor, intruding itself into the assemblies of the saints, meets the reprobation of the apostle in the first few verses of this chapter. Faith in Christ recognizes no such distinctions. It is having a respect for persons which God does not approve, and when observed elsewhere than in the church meets with no less favor by the Father of lights. To prevent this partiality in the future, the apostle recommends to the brethren the close study and observance of the rule to love one's neighbor as he loves himself, and this he calls the royal law. This he presents as a sure remedy for all such distinctions and partialities. The excuse that might be offered for unjust judgments in the claim that in observing the most important of the precepts which are enjoined, then we are excused in neglecting those not so important, the apostle shows to be unsatisfactory from the fact that the failure to perform any one of the precepts, however insignificant, was equally a disregard of the authority of the Law-giver, and therefore just as culpable as if all were disobeyed. Authority in each case is set at defiance. Therefore one is as bad as the other. One must offend in nothing to be approved. Another mistaken idea is next corrected. Some seemed to have fancied that the simple belief of a doctrine was all that was requisite in order to insure salvation. This idea is prevalent at the present day. The apostle shows the error of this position by a course of reasoning and by sundry illustrations, which, taken together, are simply irrefutable. One having the faith here condemned is like one who says to a person needing clothing and food, "Be clad and be fed," and offers nothing to either clothe the one or feed the other. The question would naturally arise, Does the simple remark of belief and sympathy supply the wants of the sufferer in such case? The apostle argues so it is with faith if it acts not. This kind of faith which does nothing is also entertained by the devils. The cases of Abraham and Rahab are exhibited to show how they were saved. They both had faith that acted. They showed their faith by what they did. Had either simply said, "I believe," and disregarded the things enjoined, their faith would have been unavailing. The conclusion from the whole premises is then drawn as follows: "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." This conclusion seems to be overwhelming. At all events, so argues the apostle in this chapter.

doubt it yourselves? If you make any difference in your conduct toward either class, it is partial.

Become judges of evil thoughts.

The apostle further urges the sin that is committed in making a distinction between the rich and poor by showing the brethren that in so doing they are making judges of themselves, assuming a prerogative belonging to God alone. Now, if this idea is seized by the brethren herein rebuked, they will at once comprehend that in so conducting themselves they were simply harboring evil thoughts.

Verse 5.—Hearken, my beloved brethren.

That is, listen to me. Give heed to what I say, my beloved brethren, while I show you the evil there is in the conduct which I so sharply, yet tenderly, rebuke.

Hath not God chosen the poor of this world?

The apostle assumes that the Christians he addresses knew of a certainty that God had chosen many that were poor in this world's goods to be heirs of the kingdom that he had promised to those that love and obey him. Such were rich in faith. Now, he argues if you are so informed and know that God esteems these poor, and has promoted them to be sons of God and heirs of the kingdom—if you know that the Lord himself preached to the poor, who heard him gladly, as did also his apostles—why, then, should you despise them, or treat them amiss or in any other way or manner than you freely and willingly accord to the rich?

Verse 6.—But ye have despised the poor.

Since you have been guilty of despising the poor, let me inquire why you show such high regard for the rich as such, because, in considering the answer to this inquiry, you will discover further evidence of the gross wrong in your conduct in being partial.

Do not the rich oppress you?

You, on reflection, must be painfully aware of the fact that the rich have in many ways oppressed you, have gone

COMMENTARY.

Verse 1.—My brethren, have not faith.

The apostle in this verse desires to impress the brethren with the idea that with God there is no distinction to be made among men growing out of the accidental circumstances of wealth or station, and that the brethren ought not therefore to hold the faith as applied favorably to the one class to the exclusion of the other, but to both alike, making no distinction. There is to be no difference made in the acceptance of persons. The faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, means no more and no less than the glorious faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. All is included therein so far as duty to God and our fellowman is concerned. The glory belongs to God. It is his.

Verse 2.—For if there come into your assembly.

The apostle commences an illustration of the thought he introduced in the first verse. I cannot concur with Macknight that the apostle has before him a trial in progress in which one of the litigants from appearances is a rich man and the other litigant a poor man, but, from the fact that James addresses Christians, I think he alludes to distinctions that are made in their places of worship when the two classes indicated appear. If such distinctions ought not to be made on other occasions, certainly the rebuke would apply on worshiping occasions with even greater force, and I am the more inclined to this latter view when I keep before me the "faith of our Lord Jesus Christ" idea of the first verse.

Verse 3.—To him that weareth the gay clothing.

The Jews, under the teaching they received and during the time of our Lord on earth, were liable to act in just this way; that is, give the good place to the rich, and, if any place at all, a footstool to the poor.

Verse 4.—Are ye not partial in yourselves?

In your recognition of the rich should you show a less cordial greeting to the poor? Are ye not partial? Can you

in their oppression to the extent of dragging you before tribunals—heathen tribunals at that—to be tried and punished because you entertain faith in the Son of God.

Do they not blaspheme that worthy name?

The ill-treatment you have received from the rich does not terminate with dragging you before heathen courts and judges. You well know that they have uttered impious speeches against and reviled the worthy, the excellent name of Christ by which you are called. The appellation of Christian is applied to you, and of it you are not ashamed. You are willing to suffer for it. Yet the rich revile and blaspheme it when they affirm that Christ, after whom you are named, was an impostor.

Verse 8.—If ye fulfill the royal law.

The royal law—that is, the law made by Christ our King, in which he says: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” If you observe this, you shall do well, and in observing it you will not be guilty of partiality in your judgments concerning men, and hence will not be a respecter of persons. Before leaving this point I desire to say that what is called the royal law by the Common and Revised Versions is designated by the Syriac as the law of God, for the reason, probably, that the precept herein spoken of was also enjoined by Moses. Macknight suggests that it was carried by Christ to such perfection, and such stress was laid upon it, that he called it a “new commandment” (John xiii. 34), and afterwards “my commandment” (John xv. 12).

Verse 9.—But if ye have respect of persons.

If, in disregard of the royal law, you continue to have respect of persons, and thus remain partial, you commit sin; you are convicted by the law as transgressors. “Convicted” in Revised Version is clearer. “Convinced” of the Common Version leaves the sense somewhat obscure. Convicted as transgressors because you have violated the royal law. Convicted the same as you would be of the violation

of any law, the provisions of which are by you disregarded. Plainly your guilt is established, is proven. The word "convinced" would not convey this thought.

Verse 10.—For whosoever shall keep the whole law, yet offend in one point.

To be an offender against the law, it is not necessary to violate every provision. If one precept or provision is set at naught, the violator can not escape punishment by entering the plea in defense that all the provisions of the law were not broken. This affords no exemption from the penalty. The punishment is just as certain as though the whole law had been violated. The law must be regarded as a whole. Hence keeping all of its provisions but one is no atonement for the wrong done. You have in effect violated the whole. About this matter the Jews entertained erroneous views, which James here corrects.

Verse 11.—For he that said, Do not commit adultery, also said, Do not kill.

The command here brought to view by the apostle are two of the original precepts spoken from Sinai's summit. Both were spoken by God. The apostle's argument appears in all its cogency when we reason that as God gave both these laws, now if you violate one and not the other, how can you claim exemption from punishment, or insist that you are innocent, since you set at defiance the authority of God? Have we the right to say one precept is proper and ought to be observed, and the other useless? By violating one we despise the authority that enjoined both, and are as guilty as though the whole law was disregarded, for the simple reason that under like circumstances neither would be observed, because not restrained in the one violation by a sense of right and virtue.

Verse 12.—So speak ye, and so do.

The exhortation is plain, and contains essential truth. It we so speak and so act from love of the right, and because it is right, then we speak and act as persons that are to be judged by the law of liberty, the royal law, the

gospel of Christ, and that law forbids judgment with respect to persons.

Verse 13.—For he shall have judgment without mercy.

This I regard as confessedly hard. The thought here possibly is connected with something mentioned before. At all events, by following the Revised Version, the obscurity partly vanishes. "For judgment is without mercy to him that showed no mercy." So far it is easy of comprehension. In strictness of law no mercy ought to be extended to one who in his conduct and actions exhibited no mercy. But what of the latter clause in the Revised Version, "Mercy glorieth against judgment"? Now, the Syriac uses the words: "By mercy you will be raised above judgment." After much reflection I have concluded the sense to be that one standing for judgment, who in his dealings showed mercy, that is, exercised it in his contact with his fellowman, will then and there have mercy extended to him rather than the full weight of punishment. In this view it may well be said mercy rejoiceth against judgment, or by the mercy we are raised above judgment.

Verse 14.—What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

Salvation all desire to secure. The conditions upon which it is suspended were known to the brethren addressed. James treats them as though they had for a time forgotten these conditions, or, at least, were allowing, by their negligence, the teaching they had received, and by which they had become Christians, slowly to escape from memory. To recall them to a full realization of their situation, two important interrogatories are by him propounded: (1) What profit has faith without works? (2) Can faith—that is, faith alone—save him?

To the answer to these questions and their full development the apostle devotes himself in the verses succeeding.

Verse 15.—If a brother or a sister be naked, and destitute of daily food.

The apostle for his illustration is careful to select members of the household of faith. The case so selected is a strong one with which to enforce the argument he desires to advance.

Verse 16.—And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled.

In that case do you relieve them from their necessities, if you fail to give them clothing and food? Certainly not. The needy brother or sister has no profit whatever. Notwithstanding your statement, they remain as they were before your utterance, both naked and hungry.

Verse 17.—Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

Now, if your simple statement to the distressed brother or sister did not clothe them, did not feed them, just that certain it is that faith, if it have no works, is dead also, being alone. Had you, with your saying to the brother or sister, "be ye warmed," at the same time given them raiment, and "be ye filled," given them food, the contrary would have resulted. It would have profited the distressed. So, faith exhibiting itself in works is not alone, consequently living, and not dead.

Verse 18.—Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith.

Further illustrating and enforcing the foregoing thought, one may say you have faith—that is, faith only—and I have works. Now, let us proceed to prove to one another the presence in each of the faith we claim to possess. I can show my faith by my works. This will be my method of proof. How are you going to proceed in order to assure me that you also have faith? What method will you adopt? What in this case is the necessary logical conclusion? The utter impossibility of producing any proof whatever of the presence of faith is apparent. No other proof can be or is possible in such a case than that of the fruits of faith. This, and this only, is the proof of which the case is susceptible.

Verse 19.—Thou believest that there is one God.

As though the one claiming to possess faith without works still insists in the correctness of his position, and in proof asserts that he believes in the existence of one God. The apostle retorts, "In this so far thou doest well," and immediately adds: "The devils also believe this, and tremble, yet it avails them nothing; they are not thereby saved." What can you expect from this simple declaration while you stubbornly refuse to do his will? You can show your recognition of God only by the observance of his commands.

Verse 20.—But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

From the foregoing reasoning and illustrations are you willing to understand that faith apart from works is useless, unavailing, barren, dead? It is the truth, nevertheless. You are foolish, silly and vain to think otherwise. However, to further show the strength and soundness of the position I occupy in this matter, I will give you two instances from the Scriptures which you hold as sacred and God-given, in order to show you that faith accompanied by works is the kind of faith which is acceptable to God, and this kind only.

Verse 21.—Was not Abraham our father justified by works?

You, brethren, are of Hebrew descent, and as such I assume that you remember the history of our progenitor, so sacredly and carefully taught you by your parents. I assume this, for I am of Hebrew descent myself, and hold in memory dear the lessons taught me from my youth up, as enjoined upon us all by the God of our fathers. God commanded our father Abraham to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice on an altar. You will well remember Abraham hesitated not, but proceeded to obey the command, and, had he not been arrested from on high, would have slain his son.

Verse 22.—Seest thou how faith wrought with his works.

Abraham proved his faith by what he did towards obedience. And this is the only way faith can be shown.

Faith, to be available, must be acted out; must show itself by operation; in short, must be actualized. Faith is thus made perfect. Works only can perfect it. Faith is like a fountain sending forth its stream of pure, limpid water. Seeing the stream demonstrates the existence of the fountain. When the fountain contains no water, the stream dries up and disappears. So it is with faith. It sends forth its stream of kind deeds, and where these are seen the existence of faith as the source is recognized and acknowledged. It is so ordained in the economy of heaven.

Verse 23.—And the Scripture was fulfilled.

It was after Abraham offered his son Isaac in sacrifice that the Scripture was fulfilled which said Abraham believed, and this belief was imputed to him for righteousness. And it was after this that Abraham was called the friend of God.

Verse 24.—Ye see, then, how that by works.

Now, from this history of Abraham, it is easily seen how a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. Abraham proved the existence of his strong faith by his obedience, by his works, by what he did.

Verse 25.—Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot.

You, my brethren of Hebrew descent, know the history of Rahab. It is found also in the books you esteem as sacred, along with the other books recognized and received by us all as of divine origin. I can, therefore, appeal to the case of Rahab with all confidence. She had heard of the doings of God to your fathers. She believed in God, and that he was with the children of Israel, and she exhibited her faith by hiding the messengers and sending them out another way, and this saved her and her household from the general destruction that overwhelmed her nation. Read Joshua ii.; also chapter vi. 22-25.

Verse 26.—For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Your own observation shows you, and you never doubt it for a moment, that the human body is dead when the

spirit is separated from it; your life's experience assures you of this fact. You regard it as simply certain, a fixed and an unalterable fact. So it is in the matter of faith as separated from works; it is equally and absolutely dead. Be assured, and let your minds be forever at rest on this point. As death ensues to the body on the separation of the spirit from it in the material world, so in the moral world faith is dead without works. Faith and works are joined together in an indissoluble wedlock by infinite wisdom. This is the appointment of Him who said, "Let there be light, and light was," and that should be the end of all controversy by every intelligent creature.

CHAPTER III.

ANALYSIS.

Some are inclined to press themselves forward as teachers, thus giving to them the appearance of leaders, or of more prominence than others among the brethren. This is an aspiration not to be greatly encouraged. The reason is this: One in the position of a teacher who fails to be strictly governed by the Spirit, in Christ Jesus subjects himself to the greater condemnation. Note this fact. One brought up in a different faith is liable to have some lurking regard for prejudices therein imbibed which, if urged in the assembly of the saints, might nullify the law of Christ and bring the cause into disrepute. Such may not be able to control their tongues in speech. The power wielded by the tongue is great. The danger of sinning by this member is pointed out and illustrated. It has power to produce wonderful results, either good or bad. In society it is like a fire. So hard is it to control the tongue, the writer of this chapter instances the fact that beasts may be tamed by the ingenuity of man, and yet the tongue, he says, no man can tame. He then shows the many contradictory uses that are made of this little member. We bless God by it, and by it we curse man made after the image of the same God we bless, which is contradictory. Blessing and cursing coming from the same mouth, sweet water and bitter from the same fountain, a fig-tree bearing olives, and a vine, figs. All these are, of course, contradictory and against nature. So the contradictory uses of the tongue are against its original design. An earnest exhortation follows, urging the control of the tongue by an exercise of wisdom, which is from above. That by which the contradictory use prevails is a wisdom that did not come

from heaven, but of earth, and is sensual, devilish, ruinous and destructive, while the true wisdom, the wisdom from above, is pure, peaceable and gentle, and always results in acts of mercy, good deeds and peace.

COMMENTARY.

Verse 1.—My brethren, be not many masters.

The Revised Version is in this case preferable; teachers in place of masters, and this rendering accords with Mac-knight and the Syriac. It is herein asserted that such shall receive the greater condemnation; that is, in case they err in their teaching. The thought is that the office of a teacher requires a more perfect knowledge than the many are likely to possess unless inspired. If the teacher errs in his teaching, the greater punishment will be visited upon him because he is a teacher.

Verse 2.—For in many things we offend all.

That is, we teachers offend all in many things. If we follow the Syriac, the expression is not limited to teachers, but applies equally to every Christian. The language is: "For we all offend in many things." I accept this as the mind of the Spirit, for it better accords with the succeeding paragraph, and is the most natural. The reason is this: all, whether teacher or taught, are possessed with the same natural infirmities.

If any man offend not in word.

Offenses in their character, nature and description are of two kinds: (1) Offenses growing out of words only; (2) offenses growing out of actions. Offenses most frequently originate from words. Now, the man who does not offend in his speech is a perfect, a complete man; not perfect in the absolute sense, but a man of great virtue, and, as compared with his fellowman, he is perfect. Such a one has reached a point in his Christian life that he is able to control his whole body; that is, so to keep it in subjection as to give offense to none. To such you can well apply the simile. He is able to bridle the whole body.

Verse 3.—Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths.

This is a well-known daily occurrence among men. By the use of the bit the movement of the horse is controlled. The horse obeys us. By it we turn the whole body of the horse as we may desire. Now, the bit is a little thing when compared with the size of the horse, yet much is accomplished by it. We have the apostle's idea, and soon we will see how he applies his comparison.

Verse 4.—Behold also the ships.

The ship considered by itself is very great in many ways. It is great in bulk, great in contrivance, great in the things within it, and especially great in what may be accomplished by it. Furthermore, it is constructed so that it will withstand fierce winds by which it may be driven, and yet by a very little helm its course is shaped by a pilot. Immense results from comparatively insignificant means.

Verse 5.—Even so the tongue is a little member.

Now the apostle begins his application of the thoughts advanced in his comparisons of the bit in the horse's mouth and the ship controlled by the helm. The tongue belonging to the human body is, as compared with the other members thereof, a little member, and yet it "boasteth great things"; that is, it exalts itself, or, as Macknight has it: "Yet it worketh mightily." The plain meaning is, although the tongue is a small member of the body, it exerts great power in governing the whole body, so far as its affections and actions are concerned.

Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth.

Loath to drop the power and force of comparison, James presents this additional thought. He says, in substance, that a whole forest may be consumed from a small spark as the source of such a destruction. So he argues a whole community may be aroused and wonderfully agitated by a few words from the tongue of slander.

Verse 6.—And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity.

The ungoverned tongue, by the pernicious influences it wields among mankind, is as great as a fire in the forest.

It is, therefore, properly comparable to a fire. It is a fire; more, it is a world of iniquity, a great volume, for it works a collection, a multitude, of wrongs.

So is the tongue among our members.

Placed as it is among the other members of the body, with the mighty influences it exerts, it defiles or mars, or, as Macknight has it, "spotteth" the whole body, and sets on fire the whole natural frame, which is as it were set on fire of hell. As much as to say that the whole man is so controlled by it, his passions aroused and inflamed to such a degree, that reason and judgment are completely subdued. One so controlled pushes his conduct and all his actions to an extent resulting only in destruction to both soul and body, a most fearful calamity, a most terrible result. What a wonderful power this little member of the human body possesses. How few of earth's sons and daughters realize the power of the tongue.

Verse 7.—For every kind of beasts and of birds.

The apostle here asserts what he knew would readily be admitted, that all kinds of beasts, birds and serpents have been, and are capable of being, tamed or brought into subjection to man. However wild the nature of some of these, yet it is known that the art and ingenuity of man have been successful in their management, and they have been brought into subjection, and, in one way or another, have proven useful to the subduer. They are tamed, at least sufficiently so for man's use.

Verse 8.—But the tongue can no man tame.

This is a plain, simple statement that the observant among men will not question. It is asserted by the apostle with much confidence—a confidence founded upon inspired knowledge. The contrast presented is strong and striking. Beasts, birds and serpents may be tamed, but man's tongue never. Now, I can not think the apostle desires us to understand this to be universally so, but only generally true—true as applied to men unrestrained by the doctrine

of Christ. The Christian must, under apostolic instruction, strive to control his tongue, and under divine guidance he can succeed.

It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

Speaking generally of the tongue, it is unruly. Being unruly, it is evil to the owner and to all others upon whom it may exercise its power, and so poisonous that in the effects it brings about it may, and often does, result in death. Instances of this any observant man or woman can easily call to mind. David says: "They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison is under their lips. Selah" (Psa. cxl. 3).

Verse 9.—Therewith bless we God, even the Father.

The tongue is used in offering our praises to the Most High. With it we thank God for his goodness and mercy; with it we utter the gratitude of our hearts to our loving Father in heaven for his manifold favors, for the gift of his Son, for the privilege and honor of becoming his children, and for the hope of eternal life, and yet with the same tongue we curse our fellowmen made in the image of God, the same God to whom we have offered our praises and thanksgiving, and made our supplications. This is a palpable inconsistency. Why it is inconsistent the inspired penman tells us in the succeeding verse, and yet to common intelligence it would seem unnecessary even to mention it.

Verse 10.—Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing.

While this is true, the apostle immediately adds: "My brethren, these things ought not so to be." If we love God and bless him, right reason would say so we ought to love and bless man whom the God we love made in his own image. Right reason could dictate no other course in the very nature of things. Failing herein, the inconsistency of action becomes apparent.

Verse 11.—Doth a fountain send forth at the same place?

Here a question is asked. Knowledge concerning the matter about which the interrogatory is propounded is so

common and so universal among men that the apostle well knew no doubt could possibly arise as to the character of the answer. All intelligent creatures with one voice answer it is impossible—impossible in the very nature of things. And yet so important is the answer considered by the writer of this Epistle that he repeats the question at the conclusion of the next verse, with but slight change in its form.

Verse 12.—Can a fig-tree, my brethren, bear olive berries?

Did the fig-tree bear olives, or the vine figs, it would be contrary to nature; it would be unnatural. Such an inconsistency is never beheld in all the realm of nature. Since, therefore, nothing so unnatural and inconsistent can be found in the entire domain of nature, neither should the like appear in the realm of mind. God, being the author of both, never so intended, and the same is, in consequence, contrary to his expressed will.

Verse 13.—Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge?

The thought the apostle would here inculcate is this: While we may not successfully contend with and subdue the tongues of others, the wise man among the brethren may bridle his own tongue, and to accomplish this his conversation must be good, followed by corresponding works and actions, and in all this exhibit therein the meekness of wisdom. Macknight, concerning the expression, "meekness of wisdom," says: "This beautiful expression insinuates that true wisdom is always accompanied with meekness or the government of the passions. The meekness of wisdom and the beauty of holiness are expressions of the same kind, formed to represent the excellency of these qualities." Before dismissing this verse I desire to say that in my judgment the Syriac expresses with more clearness the true meaning of the text. It is as follows: "Who is wise and instructed among you, let him show his works in praise-

worthy actions with modest wisdom." The thought the Spirit designed to communicate through the inspired penman appears with more clearness and certainty in this Syriac version. At least so it appears to me, for thereby I was enabled to grasp the thought to my entire satisfaction, and without a lingering doubt.

Verse 14.—But if you have bitter envyings and strifes.

One exhibiting envy in his speech can not boast of wisdom. In the estimation of the apostle, one properly instructed, and who becomes thereby wise, exhibits no envy and indulges in no strife. So if you do these things and boast of your wisdom, you will lie against the truth, for they are forbidden by the truth.

Verse 15.—This wisdom descendeth not from above.

The wisdom you boast of possessing while your heart is full of envy and a ready disposition to engage in strife, and your utterances show you possess these passions, comes not from above. The same comes not from heaven, where God reigns and angels dwell.

But is earthly, sensual, devilish.

They are earthly because on earth only are such to be found; sensual because suggested by animal appetites, and devilish because inspired by the enemy of souls.

Verse 16.—For where envying and strife is.

A general truth is here stated, and recognized to be such by all the observant. Where the evil dispositions of envy and strife exist, as a necessary consequence there confusion, tumult and every evil work will reign. This is where that wisdom that descendeth not from above is to be found.

Verse 17.—But the wisdom that is from above.

A different view of things is here now presented. The beauty and grandeur of another vision is spread before us. The wisdom which is from above exhibits no anger nor envy nor strife, consequently no confusion nor evil work, but contrariwise the persons under its benign control

exhibit as its happy effects first a pure, then a peaceable, then a gentle spirit and disposition, easy to be persuaded, full of mercy and compassion. The kind and charitable actions of those possessed of such graces of spirit are legion. Their deeds of love are bounded only by the territories of suffering and distress. Their munificence is never marred by the presence of partiality and favoritism. The charge of hypocrisy is forever excluded, for no profession of goodness is ever uttered. Deeds only are performed in quiet promptness, and no word is spoken but those of comfort and sympathy for the suffering and distressed. What a grand photograph of nobility is here held up to the gaze of men.

On this verse the language of Dr. Macknight is so expressive, I give it entire: "In this beautiful passage James describes the excellent nature of that temper which is recommended by the Christian religion, and the happy effects which it produces. It is the highest wisdom; it cometh from God, and makes those who receive it first pure, then peaceable, etc. All the apostles except Paul were illiterate men; but, according to their Master's promise, they had, by inspiration of the Spirit, a wisdom and eloquence given them far exceeding what they could have acquired by the deepest erudition. Of the fulfillment of Christ's promise the Epistle of James is a striking proof. Search all heathen antiquity and see whether it can produce any sentiments more noble or more simply or beautifully expressed than those contained in this chapter, and, indeed, throughout the whole of this Epistle."

Verse 18.—**And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace.**

Those who possess the wisdom from above, as described in the last verse, will sow in the hearts of others the fruits of peace. They alone practice peace, and they only can sow peace, and in stillness their labor of sowing is performed. There is no display, but modesty and quietness characterize every effort.

CHAPTER IV.

ANALYSIS.

Crimes are mentioned in this chapter that surely none claiming to be members of Christ's body (the Church) ever indulged in. They are possibly enumerated for the purpose of showing that every species of strife, and even wars, were the result of unbridled passions. James insists that success could not follow attempts to convert the heathen by violence, neither could they destroy their idol worship in that way. Their methods were not proper. Such could not ask God's help, because they would therein ask amiss, knowing their motives were wicked. The course they pursued was that of the world, and was at war with the course God proposed. If any of the Jewish brethren so acted, they were not only acting contrary to the teachings of the prophets whom they profess to venerate, but also contrary to the teachings of Christ and his apostles. They are then exhorted to be submissive to God, to resist the influences of the devil, who alone incited them to pursue the course they did. He assures them that if they heed his exhortation, God will accept their service and bless them therein.

Such as were exhibiting zeal without knowledge he counsels to cleanse their hands from all wrong-doing, and to cast out all impure thoughts and passions from within before they even presumed to offer worship to God. As a strong incentive to bring about the proper penitence, he foretells the miseries that will assail them. The apostle in great plainness forbade the joining in riots and insurrections which some had engaged in under the false assumption that it was to aid their religion. Then he seemingly addresses all sorts, whether Jew or Gentile, not to speak ill of one another on account of their differences, claiming that this was God's prerogative alone. Lastly, the apostle calls attention to the uncertainty of our stay here on earth, and warns against the dependence upon self and self-intentions; shows God's supreme right to govern future events, and rebukes all for their vain speeches as to what they will do, and where they will go, and how long they will stay, and directs them how they ought to express themselves in relation to these matters, so as to exhibit their knowledge of, and dependence upon, the will of God therein.

COMMENTARY.

A bird's-eye glance of the situation and surroundings of the Christians to whom this letter is written by the apostle James will greatly aid us in our exposition of this chapter. Now, these brethren were in dispersion among the many nations composing the Roman Empire, and were more or less surrounded by, and came in contact with, that class of

Jews who, if they did not directly deny the doctrine that the Messiah had already come, were at least unbelievers therein, and yet looked for this coming as foretold by the prophets, which were by them accepted and regarded as God's messengers. As they interpreted these prophecies, these Jews looked for him as a great and mighty monarch, and one who was to be all-powerful and their certain deliverer from all their oppressors. They further entertained the belief, as Jehovah had permitted them to drive out the Canaanites for their idolatry, they were still authorized to persecute idolaters, and this they continued to do whenever an opportunity presented itself. They carried their actions in this direction to the extent of violence, in order to suppress idol worship, and force the devotees thereof to embrace Judaism. The history of the Jews after the return from Babylonish captivity plainly discovers this inclination. During our Lord's sojourn on earth, during the persecution headed by Paul before his conversion, and the persecution of Paul himself by the Jews, subsequent to his conversion, is shown unmistakably the zeal of the Jews for their Mosaic belief. It carried them, in their devotion to their religion, or their pretended zeal for the cause of God, even to the extreme of murder. We further discover their zeal without knowledge in the strifes they fomented, in the seditions in which they were engaged and the numerous petty wars their conduct originated. Allusions to these seditions and wars are made in the New Testament history, and are fully described in the works of Josephus. The unbelieving Jew was enabled, by virtue of relationship to Abraham, to exercise more or less influence over the believing Jew in connection with these disturbances. The believing Jew was inclined to sympathize with, and offer encouragement to, the unbelieving Jew in his struggles with others, without pausing to reflect upon the question of right in the premises.

So that, in seeking to correct this conduct in the one as contrary to the doctrine of Christ, the apostle would be exposing the impiety and unreasonableness and positive sin therein on the part of the other. Now, keeping these

thoughts in mind, we may, with more certainty of understanding, approach the exposition of the chapter.

Verse 1.—From whence come wars?

The question is unambiguous. It is especially pointed, and just as bold as it is plain. Without waiting for either believing or unbelieving Jew to respond, the writer of this Epistle courageously himself launches forth the answer, and it comes with the force of a tornado, sweeping everything before it.

Come they not hence even of your lusts?

Who among you has the temerity to deny it? This is so plainly the case, that, upon the least reflection, none who are honest will dare dissent. We note that the word "lusts" is plural. Probably the pride, ambition and covetousness of the Jew are included. It may be doubtful whether this classification is exhaustive. But these, as operating causes, are supposed to produce what the Jew sought. These lusts war in the members of those who entertain them, and yet there is no sufficient reason why they should exist, especially in those illuminated by the gospel.

Verse 2.—Ye lust, and have not.

That is, ye covet, and fail to obtain what you desire.

Ye fight and war, yet ye have not.

Possibly you kill the heathen, desiring to make proselytes, but you fail in your misguided zeal to secure the end at which you aimed.

Ye fight and war, yet ye have not.

Your object in forcing the heathen to embrace Judaism has extended so far as to engage in personal combat and warlike struggle, and yet your purpose was not accomplished.

Because ye ask not.

Two reasons appear accounting for your failure in the respects mentioned. First, because your method is wrong; secondly, because you fail to ask of God for directions.

If God desires converts from heathenism, it is his of right, and his only, to direct how it shall be accomplished.

Verse 3.—Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss.

Even when you did ask you did not receive, because you asked that you might be enabled thereby to carry out a wicked purpose. Hence your asking was amiss. Your petition was wrong, and was therefore unheeded.

That you might consume it upon your lusts.

The thought here is not so obvious. If riches were asked for, then the use to which the same would be applied could easily be determined. I can not think from the apostle's reasoning that he intended to convey this idea. Yet if, in their zeal, a convert should be made to Judaism, money might the more easily be extorted from such, and then be appropriated in pandering to their appetites. And this is probably the idea.

Verse 4.—Ye adulterers and adulteresses.

The word "adulteresses" does not occur in the Syriac, neither does it appear in the Latin Vulgate. Singular to say, the word "adulterers" does not appear in Rotherham, nor yet in the Revised Version. The argument, however, loses none of its force in consequence of the absence of either of the words. While I freely admit that the term "adultery" in Scripture is frequently employed to designate idolatry, which is spiritual adultery, I can not accept that signification here. The argument of the apostle excludes it. The history of this people since their return from Babylon is opposed to such a thought, and the zealous devotion of the Jews to Mosaism, and their consequent crusade against idolatry, forever forbids any such conclusion. The appellations are, therefore, applied to those Jews because of their indulgence in the vices of the nations around them. That this is the sense becomes apparent by what follows in this verse.

Know ye not that the friendship?

By participating in the same vices indulged in by the world, you may form friendships thereby. This may be,

and no doubt is, true. But you ought to know from the teaching you have received, and the lessons you have learned, that such friendships—love of the world—is hostility toward God.

Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world.

Whosoever is a friend to the one is the enemy to the other. It is God, with all his goodness and love, on the one side, and the world of wickedness on the other. The dividing line is clearly, plainly and sharply drawn. The Savior said: "Ye can not serve God and mammon" (Luke xvi. 13). If you are a friend to the world, and this you prove by partaking of the vices of the world, you thereby demonstrate that you are the enemy of God, although you may at the same time make the specious pretense that your aim was to convert to Judaism, a religion which was God-ordained. This will not do. You were not so taught. You must be controlled by God's direction. Your will must be subject to the will and direction of God. You can not serve two masters at one and the same time.

Verse 5.—Do you think the Scripture saith in vain?

Now, suppose James calls special attention to these Scriptures, "For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity" (Psa. v. 4, 5); and this, "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day" (Psa. vii. 11); and this, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Psa. ix. 17); and this, "And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and I will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible" (Isa. xiii. 11), and then ask, Do these Scriptures speak falsely?

The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

In the Common Version this is a part of the former paragraph, and with it forms one sentence. In the Revised Version, as you can see, it is made a separate sentence,

and yields the sense more readily and clearly. It reads: "Doth the spirit which he made to dwell in us long unto envying?" This is in the form of an interrogation, and the answer must be that God never intended the spirit which he made to so long. Then, although with you, brethren, the spirit does so lust or long, it is wrong. That this is the sense intended, is confirmed by what follows.

Verse 6.—But he giveth more grace.

To reach a proper solution two questions may be propounded. Who is it that gives? To whom or on whom is the gift bestowed? Both these questions are pertinent, and when properly answered will go far in determining the meaning of language that is so manifestly elliptical. Let us present the matter to the eye as well as to the mind: thus:

Question 1.—Who giveth more grace? Answer.—God.

Q. 2.—To whom does God give more Grace? A.—To us, his children under the Christian system.

Q. 3.—Does God give grace merely? A.—No. He gives more grace, superior grace.

While in the Jews' religion grace was given, under Christ more grace is given, a greater degree of grace, or at least a superior grace. The covenant is better, the teachings are better. More light is bestowed. Hence we reach the heathen by a different method than the one you adopt. This, I think, is the idea. It appears to be the correct thought, and is so advanced by the Syriac version.

Wherefore he said, God resisteth the proud.

This is a quotation from Proverb iii. 34: "Surely he scorneth the scorners, but he giveth grace unto the lowly." Resisteth in that their schemes result in failures, and to the humble he accords gracious aid, for the humble are always found in the line of that duty which they owe unto God.

Verse 7.—Submit yourselves, therefore, unto God.

From the foregoing considerations James would say to the bretheren addressed: It is plain to you that the

course that you have been pursuing is wrong, and can not result in your good in this life, nor secure your happiness in heaven. I, therefore, urge you to turn to God, submit yourselves to him and to his guidance. Resist the devil, by whom you were heretofore beguiled, and he will flee from you. Paul, in speaking to the Ephesians in relation to the resistance to the wiles of the devil, advises them to put on the whole armor of God (Eph. vi. 11), and Peter tells those whom he addressed to be sober and vigilant, because the devil, as a roaring lion, was to be resisted only by being steadfast in the faith (1 Peter v. 8, 9). Upon this clause Dr. Benson observes: "We may chase away the devil, not by holy water, the sign of the cross, or any superstitious charm, but by steady virtue and resolute goodness."

Verse 8.—Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.

Like the former, this is a most urgent exhortation. The duty is plainly and strongly stated. Draw nigh to God. How? In the way he has so plainly and explicitly indicated in his blessed Word. Should I obey this injunction to draw nigh to God, what will be the result to me? God will draw nigh to you to pardon and to bless.

Cleanse your hands, ye sinners.

The allusion to the tabernacle service was well understood by the Jews.

Purify your hearts, ye double-minded.

The worship and service of God must be whole-hearted, must be in spirit and in truth. None other service is acceptable to God.

Verse 9.—Be afflicted, and mourn.

Your sins are great. From these a turning away must take place, for deep penitence is required for your sins.

Let your laughter be turned into mourning.

The mirth indulged in by you in your former wicked course must now be turned to grief for the wickedness by you therein shown. You must humble yourselves before God if you expect his pardon and acceptance.

Your joy to heaviness.

What you esteemed as your joy must now be turned into sadness for the evil of your ways.

Verse 10.—Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord.

Humble yourselves in God's presence, and he shall lift you up. He will exalt you by bestowing the blessings of his gracious pardon and salvation upon you and by accepting you as his son.

Verse 11.—Speak not evil one of another, brethren.

This great sin has prevailed in all ages of the Church, although directly forbidden. The blessed Master commands us to love one another. One can not love his brother while speaking evil of him. By speaking evil of a brother, you speak evil of the law. Now, what law? The law of Christ. You thereby condemn the law. You, in thus condemning the law, can not at the same time be an observer and a doer of the law. You are not a doer as you are commanded to be, but a judge, a condemner, and in this claim for yourself the authority of a lawgiver.

Verse 12.—There is one lawgiver.

There is only one lawgiver, Jesus the Christ, and there is none other. He, and he alone, is the author and finisher of the faith. He can save, and he alone, and he will save the obedient. There is none other name under heaven known among men that can save, and besides this he can destroy, and he will destroy, the disobedient. This being true, who are you that passes judgment upon thy brother? Are you not presumptuous in thus assuming the prerogative that belongs to Christ alone?

Verse 13.—Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow.

"Go to now," as an expression, may have been intelligible in the days of King James of England, when our Common Version was made, but it is not good, plain English now, for it does not yield its sense readily. The Syriac is less hidden. It reads: "But what shall we say to those

who say?" The idea is that there are those who consider their own wishes as the end of all inquiry in any matter pertaining to themselves. They determine what they intend to do, and this they consider final. As an example, they determine that they will to-day or to-morrow go to a certain city for a given purpose, having no regard whatever to God or his existence. Leaving God out of the calculation, feeling no dependence upon him, or at least for the time being having apparently forgotten their dependence upon him, they go further in their determination. They say: "In that city to which we go we will abide a year, engage in merchandising or other traffic, and accumulate riches." They thus fix a purpose in their minds, determine just when they will engage in carrying it forward, the place of operation, how long it shall continue, and the results. This all sounds very well. But one very important consideration has been neglected, something that seems to have been wholly banished and kept studiously out of view, taking not into account the existence of God, his control of human actions, their dependence upon him, and thus they assert that all events are in their own puny human hands. This is irreligious, and approximates infidelity. If any one of you are so indifferent to the obligations that you owe to God, listen.

Verse 14.—Whereas ye know not what shall be tomorrow.

It is not given to us poor mortals to look into or in any wise know the future. You as mortals can make no calculations as to the future, and the affairs thereof.

For what is your life?

Your own observation is a constant reminder that in the midst of life you are in death. No man can tell when his soul will be required of him. Suddenly and unexpectedly the call is often made, and none so powerful that they can offer resistance. The call can not be evaded or disregarded. It is peremptory, and must be obeyed, and by all mortals will be.

It is even a vapor that appeareth.

This is the answer to the question, What is life? Often early in the morning we see vapory clouds floating in the sky, and while with our natural eye we behold them, we need gaze only for a moment until we discover that they are dissolving, and in incalculably short time they are entirely gone, and we see only the blue vault above us. So of human life. It is comparatively soon cut off. Life is soon over, soon gone. There is no absolute certainty as to the length of our days. What a most beautiful, and at the same time powerful, illustration is here by the apostle brought before us. The Holy Spirit seems to have labored to enforce upon the world a most important truth—a truth no intelligent man or woman can afford to ignore.

Verse 15.—For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will.

For the reason that we know nothing of the future, and fully realizing our entire dependence upon God, we should say, If it is the will of the Lord, or if it shall please the Lord, and we shall live, we will do this or that. I understand this to mean that every determination on the part of the creature should be uttered, or if simply entertained having always in view our weakness and our dependence upon God, having in view God's will and pleasure in the premises, and not solely our own will and pleasure, disregarding our relation to him. (Prov. xvi. 9; Psa. xxxvii. 23.)

Verse 16.—But now ye rejoice in your boastings.

The reference here, I think, is to the vain boast contained in verse 13, wherein they asserted that to-day or to-morrow they would do certain things, having no reference to God, or to God's will and pleasure, but consulting only their own arrogant will and determination. Now, having shown them their entire dependence upon God, the uncertain tenure of life, and what intelligent creatures ought to say, and the sentiments which they ought to and

will entertain if guided by common sense and reason, the apostle declares that actions in disregard of these are simply sinful. He declares with emphasis that all boasting in which duty to God is not recognized, and his supremacy in the government of the world not acknowledged, is positively wicked.

Verse 17.—Therefore to him who knoweth.

They sin who know by God's revealed will what to do, and the doing of which is to do good, and refuse to do or neglect to do it. The best reason in the world herein appears. Submission to the divine will is required, if divine favor is expected, it is and can be nothing short of rebellion. Rebellion is sin. This is unquestioned. By it the angels fell. Intelligent creatures made in the image of God can not indulge in rebellion with impunity. Let no one be deceived. God is not mocked. Especially let Christians guard well all the avenues of approach, for they have to do with subtle enemy—the great enemy of souls.

CHAPTER V.

ANALYSIS.

The Jews that did not accept the Messiah when he came, and refused to accept the gospel as proclaimed by the apostles, generally speaking were covetous, and because of the success of their methods became wealthy. To these, and to all who because of their riches oppressed the poor, the apostle administers a severe rebuke, and calls them to penitence, foreseeing the calamities that await all such. This he does by painting these coming evils in the liveliest colors. Between the first and the sixth verses the apostle introduces several very bold figures and representations, which for beauty and sublimity have no parallels outside the Bible. He then urges patience, not only under afflictions, but at all times, by showing that in the most important avocations patience is required, and that because they may not appear as successful as others, this should be no cause for complaint, for the same Judge is over all, whose judgment will be righteous. Examples of patience under trying circumstances are given from the prophets and from the history of Job to show the God-given rewards. They are then cautioned concerning swearing, and oaths of all kinds falsely

taken, careless swearing being calculated to lead astray and bring condemnation. Prayer is enjoined for the afflicted, and singing of psalms by the merry. The efficacy of prayer is shown by the example of Elijah, and the results of his earnest invocation offered to God's throne. The duty of brethren to restore the falling and wavering among them is next presented. They are urged to use every effort to reclaim such, and the great reward to those who are successful in this direction is named that they shall thereby save "a soul from death and hide a multitude of sins."

COMMENTARY.

Verse 1.—Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl.

"Go to now," used before by this writer, or attributed to him by the Common Version as here used, amounts to a call which he makes to a class he designates as rich. He calls upon them that they may weep and howl. "Wail and mourn" conveys the idea to our minds that is intended to reach the Jewish mind. And I take it that here James intended his call to reach, especially, the unbelieving Jew. The inspired vision of the writer embraced in its sweep the calamity that would fall upon the Jews in a few brief years—the destruction of their city. They are called upon to wail and mourn because of coming judgments that were being brought upon them as a punishment for sins.

Verse 2.—Your riches are corrupted, and your garments moth-eaten.

Corrupted; that is, putrefied. Silver and gold as riches are not here referred to, because they are subsequently mentioned. Hence the riches here mentioned must have reference to other goods and accumulations, such as the products of the fields, vineyards and flocks. "Your garments are moth-eaten" is a very strong reminder to a Jew of God's providence, following and surrounding the fathers in their forty years' wanderings in the desert after their escape from Egyptian slavery until they crossed the Jordan and occupied the land of Canaan. During all that period their garments did not wax old. Now, in contrast, while your accumulations of rich attire may be great, God's protection in consequence of your continued transgression

being withdrawn, you will find it is moth-eaten, and rendered worthless for use as garments.

Verse 3.—Your gold and silver is cankered.

That is, the gold and silver they had treasured up had contracted rust, for they are in fact herein charged with having been engaged for a long period of time in hoarding this kind of treasure. Observe that it is not the use of these metals, but the non-use of the same, for which they are censured. The rust in this case is supposed to come from the failure to use. This failure to use showed beyond question that the proper use had not been observed, or, in other words, that the legitimate design of gold and silver, by its being hoarded, had not been accomplished. The employment of gold and silver in acts of beneficence would have prevented the rust. The unjust and wicked amassing from the love of such riches was covetous—was wrong. The rust accumulated on such hoarded treasure was itself a witness against those so hoarding it, and will eat their bodies as a fire. The conscience being irritated, your hoarded treasure is a curse to you.

Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

Another allusion to the coming destruction of Jerusalem. Suppose the accumulation to be immense, and yet all is lost in the general destruction, what avails it? What have you accomplished by your toil and labor? Absolutely nothing. You Jewish Christians, if you are so engaged, you make a great blunder. The author of the Christian faith gave explicit warning concerning these last days and the miseries that should follow. Your treasures will, like a bird, fly away, and you will be left destitute. Your time is wasted and you have failed to lay up treasures in heaven, as your plain duty was, and as you were so plainly and yet so tenderly admonished.

Verse 4.—Behold, the hire of the laborer.

To accomplish your unjust and wicked desire to hoard your gold and silver, you disregarded the law of God, and

have kept back the hard-earned wages of the laborer who reaped your fields and garnered your grain. These wages you withheld in fraud of the laborer's right. God had said in his law, "The wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning" (Lev. xix. 13), and the blessed Master said: "So when the even has come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto the steward, Call the laborers and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first" (Matt. xx. 8). This law, based upon infinite justice, you, by your covetous course, have flagrantly violated, and the cries of the wronged have been heard by the Lord of Sabaoth.

The Lord of Sabaoth.

Sabaoth. What idea or ideas are we to gather from this word? It is used in our Common Version but once elsewhere in the New Testament, namely, in Romans ix. 29. The use of this word in the text I regard as significant, and shall therefore give it more than a passing notice.

Dr. Smith, in his Bible Dictionary, informs us that the word "Sabaoth" is from a Hebrew term signifying "hosts" or "armies." James Comper Gray, in "Biblical Museum," says: "Hebrew word left untranslated twice in the New Testament. Lord of Sabaoth—Lord of hosts; *i. e.*, of the armies of heaven." Dr. James Macknight says: "In the original it is Lord of Sabaoth. But the Hebrew word 'Sabaoth' signifies hosts and is sometimes used to denote the sun, moon and stars, and also the angels. The Lord of Sabaoth, therefore, as one of the titles of Deity, marks his supreme dominion over the universe, and particularly over the different orders of angels, who, on account of their multitude and of their serving under the command of God, are named. (1 Kings xxii. 19.) The LXX. in the passages where this Hebrew word occurs commonly express it in Greek letters, in which Paul has followed them. So, also, James v. 4, supposing that it would be agreeable to Jewish ears. Ainsworth, on Exodus iii. 13, tells us that the Rabbins teach when God judgeth his creatures he is called Elohim; when

he showeth them mercy he is called Jehovah, and when he warreth against the wicked he is called Sabaoth."

Bro. M. E. Lard, in his commentary on Romans, passes the expression with these words: "The Lord of hosts, the Lord that rears them up and preserves them. The phrase is used with admirable propriety here." H. A. W. Meyer, the renowned German exegete, passes the phrase with even slighter notice, and our lamented Bro. B. W. Johnson fails to notice it at all. From the research I have made, this is the best that I can do. The unlearned sometimes exhibit an inquiring mind upon these matters which ought to be gratified as far as possible. Hence the search I have made.

Verse 5.—Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth.

The sense is that the persons addressed had lived luxuriously on the earth, had lived for pleasure only, had indulged in all sorts of excesses, spending their wealth—when they did spend any—in that way. And thus the apostle would argue they had feasted and reveled their bodies, as though they were being prepared for a day of slaughter. Beasts are fatted for slaughter and sacrifice. So these, in their conduct, would seem as though they were preparing themselves for the great slaughter soon to be their portion. Dr. Macknight leans to this view of the text, and, after much reflection, I adopt the same view. I think it is justified by the thought introduced in the succeeding verse.

Verse 6.—Ye have condemned and killed the just.

The Jews condemned and slew the just one, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the facts of history show that it was the rich and influential that were guilty of this most heinous crime. It certainly was not the poor. This was the crowning sin of the Jews, deserving the destruction which subsequently befell them.

And he doth not resist you.

Jesus of Nazareth, although God's beloved Son, although he could have delivered himself, offered no resist-

ance. The cruel nails were driven through his hands and feet without the least compunction on the part of the Jews, and without the least flinching on the part of the patient sufferer.

Verse 7.—Be patient, therefore, brethren.

What a relief it must have been to the writer to turn away from the contemplation of the grievous sins of the wicked Jews to his suffering brethren. Be patient, therefore, brethren. You have the high and exalted example of the blessed Master: "Continue, therefore, your patience unto the coming of the Lord." Then your persecutors will be punished. Reference here evidently is had to the coming of punishment upon the Jews in the destruction of their commonwealth, as may be seen in the following verse.

Behold, the husbandman.

A further incentive to patience, one that daily appears before the gaze of all, and in every age and clime—the patience of the tiller of the soil. He must, and does, wait with patience for the coming crop. He waits for the rains, both the early and the latter. Upon these he depends. If men exercise patience in the daily avocations of life and are so schooled, as men, and it will be more commendable in them, as believers, can exercise patience in matters pertaining to God, and the more ready and willing ought they to be when they are assured that the Lord, in whom they believe and in whom they put their trust, will soon come to their relief and terminate their sufferings and crown them with joy.

Verse 8.—Be ye also patient.

As the husbandman was patient, as our Lord was patient, be ye patient also, for the harvest that awaits the trustful sufferer is, beyond any doubt, certain.

Stablish your hearts.

That is, strengthen, fortify your hearts, for the reason that the day of your relief draweth nigh. It is not far away.

This assurance is enough to give you comfort in your affliction.

Verse 9.—Grudge not one against another.

That is, be not querulous, grudgingly complaining of one another. This is wrong, and will be condemned as wrong by the Lord, who is to be the judge. And remember that the judge is so close at hand that it may be said that he standeth at the very door. The application of this while intended more particularly for the brethren addressed, is equally applicable in all its force to every believer who shall live on the earth. It contains a lesson that many church members in the present day might study with infinite profit to themselves and with benefit to the cause of Christ.

Verse 10.—Take, my brethren, the prophets.

As Jews you know the prophets and their writings. You knew Isaiah and Jeremiah and Elijah, and many others. You know the history of these as the same has been handed down. These prophets spoke in the name of the Lord. They brought God's messages of mercy to our forefathers. Their examples are before you, and therein they show what may be borne from the very persons to whom they brought their messages of love and mercy. They also show the patience with which they endured the afflictions thrust upon them. They suffered and were patient, and endured unto the end, and God blessed them.

Verse 11.—Behold, we count them happy which endure.

"We"; that includes both the writer and the persons addressed. Count them blessed, or happy, that endure. This is said of the prophets who suffered and endured unto the end. We agree that, although they are now numbered with the dead, they having endured unto the end, received the final reward for their faith and patience.

Ye have heard of the patience of Job.

As we agreed that the prophets who endured patiently to the end under suffering were rewarded, let us all go one

step further. You know these prophets were all Jews. Now let me give you an example of patience in a Gentile. Your special attention is now attracted to the history of Job. Bitter was his affliction. Heavy beyond conception was the burden of suffering which he was called upon to bear. Behold the end, the happy end, the Lord put to all of Job's woes. This history exhibits the Lord's compassion and tender mercy to his children, even when he afflicts them. This is another example showing that patient endurance of affliction will be highly rewarded. I can not leave this verse without noticing the claim, by some asserted, that the character of Job is mythical. I believe Job existed on the earth as a man, and that he suffered, as set forth in the Book of Job. Ezekiel (xiv. 14) mentions Job in connection with Noah and Daniel. Now, having no doubt that Noah and Daniel lived on the earth as real persons, and performed the parts accredited to them, I can discover no just reason to question the real existence of Job. One is just as credible as the other. For belief in either case we are dependent upon history. But the history upon which in this case our faith is based is authentic because it is God-given.

Verse 12.—But above all things, my brethren, swear not.

When we remember that these brethren were undergoing persecution, and further that they were called upon to swear, and that some, to avoid punishment, were induced to swear falsely, the importance of the apostle's injunction becomes apparent. My opinion is that the apostle urges them to swear truthfully and not to swear falsely, neither by heaven, nor by earth, nor by any other oath, but let your oath be yea; that is, in perfect conformity to the truth. And your nay be also conformable to the truth. And your nay be also conformable to the truth. Your oath, then, will not be condemned as is that made by the hypocrite. I am aware of the fact that many regard this as an injunction to the believer in Christ Jesus to refuse to be sworn in the ordinary course of the administration of jus-

tice in our courts and refer to our Lord's words found in Matthew v. 33-37; but I think, fairly interpreted, such a meaning can not be placed upon the words of the Master. In many places on the pages of the Living Oracles a different view is definitely stated. These citations are deemed unnecessary to note here. What is known as profanity—using God's name in vain—recognized by all as a sin, is an entirely different matter to that alluded to in the text before us. Oath before tribunals is what the apostle brought to the attention of the brethren.

Verse 13.—Is any among you afflicted? let him pray.

In the place of denying the faith under oath, let such a one pray—pray for strength to bear the affliction and every persecution. God alone is the helper in all times of trial.

Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

I think the word "cheerful" or "joyous" gives a better and a more proper view. Any such is enjoined to show his joy in singing praise to God for his mercies. Prayer is the best means of producing within us patience and resignation under all oppressive circumstances, and singing the praises of God in psalms is the proper way of showing our cheerfulness rather than in ribald jest or lewd song.

Verse 14.—Is any sick among you? let him call.

It must not be forgotten that at the time this Epistle was written, miraculous gifts were still present with the Church. Upon the elders placed in charge of many of the churches, and upon many others were these gifts bestowed for the upbuilding of the cause. These powers were necessary to the establishment of Christianity in the world. James mentions these gifts as existing facts known to these brethren. Let these elders possessing the gift of healing be sent for. Let them pray over the sick, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, by the authority of the Lord. The power comes from him. The anointing with oil was a token that a miracle was to be performed. It was a symbol of the

Spirit, by whom the healing was effected. By reference to Mark's Gospel, sixth chapter, thirteenth verse, the twelve, when first sent out anointed the sick with oil and healed them. Hence I conclude the anointing the sick with oil was a command of the Master, although we have no record of the same.

Verse 15.—And the prayer of faith shall save the sick.

The prayer to be offered after the elders appear at the bedside of the sick must be in faith. Such prayer, and such prayer only, will the Lord receive, and the sick, after such prayer and in answer thereto, the Lord will raise up. That is, the sick shall be cured of his illness. If the disease be brought up in consequence of sins, the sins shall be forgiven him. The removal of the disease, or its cure, which is the same thing, indicates the forgiveness.

Verse 16.—Confess your faults one to another.

That is to say, where sickness exists, it may be occasioned by some injury done to a brother. A confession of such a fault will be forgiven by the injured brother, and he will join in the prayer for the sick that he may be healed. Repentance, confession and prayer are the conditions upon which an erring brother is forgiven.

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man.

The Syriac has this: "For great is the efficacy of the prayer which the righteous man prayeth." The expression of the inspired text is sufficient without searching for possible meanings. Miraculous cures ceased with the age of inspiration, and, while we have no assurance in the divine volume that such gifts remain in the Church, we gather the idea that all God-loving and God-fearing men and women should pray for the afflicted, and that such prayer is not unacceptable to our Father in heaven. While this I firmly believe, I can find no warrant for entertaining for a moment the idea that through the prayers of the righteous in this day a miraculous cure can be, or will be, effected.

Verse 17.—Elias was a man subject.

We are here referred to 1 Kings xvii. The prophet Elijah was by the Infinite given special powers. Miracles were wrought by him. His prayer was prevailing, causing rain to be withheld and again to descend. It is an example showing the power of prayer that may be exercised by a man in the flesh where the same is consonant with the will of God. Elijah prayed that thereby he might prove to king Ahab that the God he worshiped was the only true God. Such proofs were necessary in that day. Nothing of the kind is now required. The record, containing more than ample proof, challenges the consideration of every man. God does no unnecessary or superfluous act. Nothing further is necessary; nothing further will be given.

Verse 18.—And he prayed again.

In answer to the prayer of Elijah, rain was withheld for three and a half years. He then prayed again for rain, and God answered his prayer by sending the rain, that the earth might yield her fruits for the use of man. The lesson to be impressed upon us is the duty of prayer. That prayer is well pleasing to our Father in heaven, who in his own way gives the blessing as seemeth to him best for our good and to his own glory.

Verse 19.—Brethren, if any of you do err.

It is the duty of Christians to be solicitous for the welfare of each other, both in temporal and spiritual affairs. And in case a brother should do wrong, should be seduced from the path of Christian duty, and he should be turned or brought back to his duty from which he strayed by the watchful, careful, loving aid of a brother, the latter not only performs an act which meets the approval of the great Head of the Church, but will have an additional honor conferred upon him, concerning which we shall see in the succeeding verse.

Verse 20.—Let him know that he that converteth.

The honor of saving a soul from death. What death? Oh, my soul, it is not temporal death. This all must see.

This kind of death has passed upon all flesh. No, no; but spiritual death, eternal death. Saving the erring, inducing him to seek for pardon again, restoring such a one to the divine favor, and thus saving him from eternal death. What a heavenly work; what a godlike act! How great the honor! The ability to accomplish such a work as this is incentive enough to any righteous soul to make the effort whenever an occasion should offer.

And shall hide a multitude of sins.

Here we are liable to make a mistake. It is not that the worker of such a good act in restoring an erring brother will thereby have many of his own sins covered. I know this thought is occasionally retailed. This is not correct. This can not be the case in the economy of God, but the idea is that the restored one, however many the sins he has committed may be, has them all covered or forgiven, through the pious efforts of the loving one who induced him to return to his duty by repentance, confession and prayer. His return to God and his loyalty to Christ were accomplished by the earnest entreaty of a loving brother, and, on his return, God pardoned or canceled his sins, though they were a multitude. The phrase simply means what David expresses in Psalm xxxii.: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."

FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

INTRODUCTION.

The author of this letter leaves us in no doubt as to who he is. He says his name is Peter, and that he is an apostle of Jesus Christ. In the New Testament he is first mentioned in Matthew iv. 18, and yet it is possible that, in point of time, his appearance in connection with the history of Jesus is first mentioned in John i. 35. It is certain that upon this occasion the Savior bestowed upon him a name of much significance and full of promise—Cephas, a stone. Peter was a resident of Bethsaida, situated upon the Sea of Galilee, where abode his father Jonas and his brother Andrew. These two brothers, upon the preaching of John the Baptist, became his disciples, and heard the testimony given by him concerning Jesus, "Behold the Lamb of God," and were thereby constrained to follow Jesus. Peter was called by the Master as one of his twelve chosen witnesses. No brief sketch can do justice to this rugged character. All that is said of him in the sacred volume should pass before the mind before a just conception can be formed of him as a man or his importance and worth as a witness to the truth of Christ. It is enough to say that after his endowment by the Holy Spirit no flinching in the proclamation of the gospel is to be discovered. His boldness and courage at times, and his shrinking at other times exhibited before the Pentecostal morn, seem to have disappeared forever. He is the bold, yet humble, witness for Jesus.

WHERE WAS PETER AT TIME OF WRITING?

After carefully reading all that is said upon this point, no good reason appears why we may not take the expression contained in the fifth chapter, thirteenth verse, as set-

ting, for all practical purposes, this question. Peter, when he composed the letter, was at Babylon, properly so called. We know from sources that are reliable that large bodies of Jews were living there, and at the time the letter was penned those Jews would have more or less communication with their own kind at Jerusalem. Besides, there is not in all the Epistle any reason for assigning to this name a spiritual significance any more than there is to the other names mentioned, Sylvanus and Mark.

WHEN WAS IT WRITTEN?

Many reasons are given for the time fixed by various writers when Peter penned this Epistle. Should all be mistaken, I can see but little loss to any one. A mistake as to the time is certainly no cause for condemnation. After all, the reasons assigned have been fully considered. A. D. 63, named by Bro. B. W. Johnson, seems to be as near right as any. At all events, that date will serve all practical purposes.

TO WHOM WRITTEN AND WITH WHAT AIM?

To those Jews who had embraced the faith of the gospel, then residing in certain provinces of Asia Minor, in the Epistle enumerated, was this letter written primarily, and to Gentile believers incidentally. I base my view upon the history given of the preaching in these localities by the apostle Paul and his companions, and the establishment of churches by them, wherein it is certain were many Gentile converts. It is true many such were Jewish proselytes, but equally true there were others who had not accepted the Mosaic economy. With this view, although Peter was an apostle of the circumcision especially, he had been taught by a miracle that God was no respecter of persons, and thereafter he did not confine his ministrations to the seed of Abraham. It is safe to say that his object was not solely for the benefit of those only who were Jews by birth. The aim and object of the writing is plain. Sufferings and persecutions were upon them. To comfort, strengthen and

confirm them in the faith were the prime objects. To comfort in the day of trouble, and to so strengthen that none should apostatize, but remain steadfast in the faith, are the prime objects the apostle has in view throughout the letter. The great and glorious reward is grandly portrayed as one of the great incentives to fidelity, and the example of the Master is presented as all the assurance an honest, humble and sincere follower of the Lord could ask.

CHAPTER I.

ANALYSIS.

To comfort and strengthen the suffering Christians living in those regions mentioned in the first verse was the main design of Peter in writing this Epistle. To accomplish these objects in rugged sentences containing thoughts that blaze and burn, in a few words the writer first alludes to their conversion, and the incalculable cost thereof upon the resources of heaven. For therein is exhibited the great love of the Father in the gift of his Son, without which their conversion would have been impossible. Next their attention is called to the sublime grandeur of their relationship to God, which by their conversion was inaugurated. He calls their attention to the fact that they were begotten again into a lively hope by the resurrection of Christ; that by their conversion they became heirs to an unfading and incorruptible inheritance. This hope ought to be great strength to them in time of trial. All trials soon end. Trials should be regarded by them as tests of their faith. As gold is purified by melting, so trials improve the faith. Firmness under trial not only resulted in good to the sufferer, but had an effect upon the world for good; besides, the sufferer would be rewarded with great honor when Christ should come. They would be rewarded at that time. He then calls their attention to the fact that while they had not seen the Master, they had loved him and rejoiced in him, relying upon his promises, being assured that by and through him they would receive the reward. This salvation was so great and of so much importance that prophets desired to look into it, and even the angels were inclined to seek into its mysteries; Christ had suffered and was seated at God's right hand, and, following his example in doing the will of God, they might expect to be rewarded as he was. He then passes to earnest exhortation, to hope for the blessings brought to their attention through Christ. These were to be heired by them if faithful. To avoid lusts and imitate God's holy character, and to fear God in consideration of the fact that there was to be a judgment—to so act he reminds them that that purchase was not by silver and gold, but by

the precious blood of Christ. He tells them that they had purified their hearts by obeying the gospel. He hoped they would love one another as brethren, with pure hearts; that they were born of incorruptible seed, namely, God's word, and all thus became God's children. There should be no difference among them as to high or low; that the highest title of earth would fade as a flower, but the higher station is that attained by all who love and obey the Lord, for they will continue to abide throughout eternity.

COMMENTARY.

Verse 1.—Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ.

In the very outset the author of this Epistle gives his name—Peter. Around this name many sacred memories are entwined. The Lord himself chose the writer hereof, and selected him as the one who should first announce the gospel of peace to the awe-stricken Jew at Jerusalem and to expectant Cornelius and his invited guests, thus opening the doors of Messiah's kingdom to both Jew and Gentile. Yet the writer truthfully and modestly calls himself "an apostle," not "the apostle." He claims no pre-eminence over others. He is only one among the chosen ambassadors. All are equally clothed with authority. No one of the dozen is the superior of the other. Each is the Lord's minister and the Lord's sent. Each is to be without succession and without the power of substitution. All this is plainly deducible from the modest declaration of the apostle. Whom it may hurt or how bad the wound, we have no concern. This is clearly the mind of the Spirit, and that is all in which we are interested.

To the strangers scattered.

The Revised Version has, "Elect who are sojourners," while the Syriac uses this language: "Elect and sojourners who are dispersed." In any event, if the persons addressed were at a distance from the home of their nativity, they were strangers and among strangers, and while remaining away from their former residences they were sojourning whither they had gone, and so long as it appears that they were in different places, they were scattered or dispersed. That they were elect is evident in the character of the

letter written to them, and in the way and manner the writer accosts them.

Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia.

These are geographical divisions, provinces of Asia Minor, as then arranged by the authority of the Roman Empire. From the labors of the apostle Paul, as we gather the history thereof from the Acts of the Apostles and from Paul's many epistles, the gospel had been proclaimed in these provinces, and churches established. In some of the provinces more than one congregation existed, for Paul speaks of the churches of Galatia. (Gal. i. 2). Peter most probably writes to the believers composing these various congregations, Jewish believers specially, and Gentile believers incidentally. I express myself thus for the reason that the gospel is intended for all alike, no discrimination being therein made, and while Peter was to go specially to the circumcision (that is, the Jew) and Paul specially to the uncircumcision (that is, the Gentile), these addressed ones were gathered from both classes, which Peter evidently knew, and it is certain that he could not comfort, admonish and exhort the one without at the same time reaching and benefiting the other.

Verse 2.—Elect according to the foreknowledge of God.

Around this word "elect" have swept the wildest winds of religious controversy, and the gale is not in the least abated at the mention of the term "foreknowledge." While this is all true, I can see but little cause for the humble, teachable disciple of Christ to be in the least disturbed. The honest, sincere and prayerful study of God's revealed will leaves the student in no perplexity whatever. Elect means chosen. Who does the choosing? God. Who is chosen? Man. What is the procedure? It is set forth clearly in the gospel. Does the chosen one have anything to do in bringing about the result wherein the relationship is established? Yes, he is required to hear and obey. It must be plain to every reflecting mind that if the gospel of Christ, com-

manded to be proclaimed to the world, embraced the conditions upon which salvation is suspended, that when these conditions were performed then and in that case those obeying were chosen or elected. To state it differently, in obeying the conditions of salvation the obedient one is thereby pardoned of all past sins, and stands before God as one of his chosen. Such a one is elect. He has complied with all the terms upon which his election was suspended. This gospel of Christ, containing the terms upon which this election was suspended, was according to the foreknowledge of God.

According to the foreknowledge of God.

Looking back from the time when the Epistle was written to that period when our merciful Father conceived in his infinite wisdom the scheme of human redemption. Everything connected with the gospel plan of salvation is in strict accord with God's purpose determined in the past ages, that in the age in which Peter wrote, and in the age in which we live, it is said truly and correctly to be foreknowledge. God's conception and knowledge were many ages before he saw fit in his infinite wisdom to make the same known to the children of men in his revealed will—the Bible. God has made known to us in these last days how we may become his elect. The **how** was known to him ages before. This was his foreknowledge, or, if you prefer the expression, his predetermined purpose. Now, this is all there is of it. No mystery whatever to perplex or annoy any one who will humbly content himself with what God has seen fit to reveal.

Through sanctification of the Spirit.

To sanctify is to set apart. Sanctification is, therefore, the setting apart. The spirit is to be sanctified or set apart. Now, since the Savior has said that we hear with the ears and understand with the heart, it is plain that something must be heard before there can be a setting apart. Now, the gospel is heard, then understood, then believed. Setting apart, or sanctification, which is the same thing, is the

result of belief. Belief in action is obedience. Obedience is followed by pardon. Pardon, or the forgiveness of sins, brings about, or results in, the elect state. It is by obedience we are baptized into Christ, and, being in Christ, are new creatures. All such are elect.

Grace unto you.

To the elect, Peter wishes not only a continuance of God's gracious favors and the peace he can bestow, but he earnestly desires these favors and peace to be multiplied when he contemplates the fearful ordeal through which they must pass.

Verse 3.—Blessed be God.

The writer breaks forth in this ejaculation of thankfulness to God for the exhibition of his mercy to the children of men. It is called an abundant mercy; that is, an overflowing mercy, a great mercy. It is a marvelous mercy that God should beget us again to a lively hope—a living hope, not a dead hope. Being begotten of God, we are his children, and as children we have this living hope—a glorious hope of a blessed, eternal existence by or through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. By the resurrection of Christ from the dead, his divinity is demonstrated, and on this our hope is based.

Verse 4.—To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled.

Here the apostle describes that for which we hope, and he adds to the same the fact that the elect are heirs. The word "inheritance" conveys the idea of heirship. Think of it, ye elect—heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit, by the pen of Peter, uses no superfluous or misleading words. Notice, then, we are begotten again unto a lively or living hope, not only to an eternal existence, but we as the elect are heirs to an inheritance, and that inheritance is described as, first, incorruptible; second, as undefiled, and, third, as unfading. What a glorious hope! What a weighty incentive to fidelity to the cause of Christ! Here let our progress be slow and observant.

Incorruptible.

This is, imperishable. The grandest achievements of human genius give way to the withering touch of time. So of everything in this earth-life. This we all know by observation. Now, in bold contrast to this, in Christ we are assured that our divine inheritance as the elect is not thus liable to decay, but is imperishable.

Undeiled.

That is, it is untained by sin. What a stimulus to the struggling saint in his earth-life when he knows assuredly that, when once in possession of his divine inheritance, he reaches a condition in which he is above the power of sin.

Fadeth not away.

The divine inheritance of the elect has and possesses a beauty that is imperishable; possesses absolute permanence. The fountain of immortal youth is there, and in all the universe of God to be found there, and there alone.

Reserved in heaven for you.

The Syriac has it, "Which is prepared for you in heaven." How forcibly the glorious promise of the Master is here brought to our notice: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, ye may be also" (John xiv. 2, 3).

Verse 5.—Who are kept by the power of God.

Kept; that is, guarded. God, by his revealed will, has made provisions by which his elect are kept or guarded or defended against the prince of evil and all of his instrumentalities, through their faith.

Unto salvation.

Final salvation or deliverance. This is the evident thought from the language that follows: "Ready to be revealed in the last time." Some maintain that this referred

to a salvation or deliverance when Jerusalem should be destroyed. This destruction the Savior foretold. (Matt. xxiv. 16.) This is true, and the prophecy can only apply to those Jews living at Jerusalem at the time the same should be destroyed by Titus. By observing the admonition of the Savior, the Christian Jews would escape, and their salvation or deliverance from destruction be assured. Here, however, Peter addresses Jews in dispersion and not those in Jerusalem.

Verse 6.—Wherein ye greatly rejoice.

That is to say, in the living hope you have of this final salvation you are exceedingly glad, although it is true that now for a little time you are in heaviness; that is, you are sorry, or undergoing sorrow brought about by the afflictions with which you are visited. I take it that these brethren were at this time being persecuted on account of their faith. The expression "if need be," indicating a necessity, which appears both in the Common and Revised Versions, is somewhat confusing. The idea intended to be conveyed is possibly more apparent in the Syriac version, which reads: "Wherein ye will rejoice forever, notwithstanding ye at the present time are pressed a little by various trials that pass over you."

Verse 7.—That the trial of your faith.

"Manifold temptations" of the sixth verse are here referred to as trials of faith. Persecutions by stripes, imprisonment and death are the severest tests of one's fidelity to the cause of Christ. Maintaining loyalty throughout these trials, enduring without faltering, shows unmistakably steadfastness in the faith. Gold is tested and refined by fire. Faith tested by trials enduringly is more precious than gold in this: Gold itself will perish, but the faith that endures will eventuate in praise to God and honor and great glory to the victor at the appearing of the Master, when he comes to make up his jewels, crown the obedient and take his ransomed home to their inheritance.

Verse 8.—Whom, having not seen, ye love.

These dispersed ones had not seen the Savior while he was here on earth, and did not, at the time Peter wrote, see him with the human eye, yet they believed in him, and all accounts given by the apostles of him, and trusted him and relied unwaveringly upon his promises and the blessed hope of the gospel, and, so believing, were enabled to rejoice in the Captain of their salvation with a joy which was inexpressible and full in anticipation of the glory which should be their crown on the appearing of the Lord.

Verse 9.—Receiving the end of your faith.

The result you so greatly desire, the recompense or reward for your fidelity; that inheritance heretofore mentioned. That is, the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

Verse 10.—Of which salvation the prophets have inquired.

As the ages passed, God, from time to time, by words through the prophets and by their hands, exhibited types and symbols relating to the coming Christ and the salvation through the gospel for the world which the same prophets did not comprehend. They inquired and searched diligently while they prophesied of the grace that was to be given. They themselves desired further light concerning the things they spoke.

Verse 11.—Searching what or what manner of time.

Now, the Spirit of Christ that was in these prophets caused them to testify that the Christ would come, and of his sufferings and the consequent glory that should follow, both to the Christ and to the children of men. And yet they knew not in what character he would appear, nor the time of his appearance. It is very certain that the king the Jews expected bore no resemblance to the Jesus who did come. And the reason why they did not receive him when he did come was because they did not understand the prophecies concerning him. And the reason they did not

understand the prophecies was because the prophets were not permitted to make their utterances plainer.

Verse 12.—Unto whom it was revealed.

The prophets were taught that the things of which they spake concerning the coming One were to be in the future, therefore they, in so predicting, were not ministering unto themselves, but for future generations.

But unto us they did minister.

Now, we in this age have the benefits of the labors, predictions and ministry of the prophets in the things they predicted. How?

Which are now reported to you.

The coming of the Savior, his earth-life, his teachings, his wondrous works, his tragic death, his resurrection and ascension, the descent of the Holy Spirit, the establishment of his kingdom in the world, his invitation to all to become the subjects of his rule, the conditions upon which this relationship may be established and the blessed promises assured by a loving Father—all these are reported to you. By whom?

By them that have preached the gospel unto you.

Peter evidently refers to the labors of the apostle Paul and his colaborers, and it is within the range of judicious inference to say that Peter himself also is here included in the "them" of this verse; but whoever did the preaching had the assistance of the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. It is certain, therefore, that the report of these preachers made to the world in the proclamation of the gospel was attested by miracles and wonders, and in the exercise of spiritual powers and gifts. These miracles were the attestations of Heaven to the truthfulness and reliability of the divine message, and all were but the realization of the prophetic word.

Which things the angels desired to look into.

The declaration is plain. The predicted coming and suffering of the Christ, the setting up of his kingdom and the

nature of the salvation to be offered to man were mysteries too profound for the angels even to comprehend. These remained mysteries until God, in his infinite wisdom, saw fit to make a full revelation of his divine purpose. There is another thought I have at this point which is better expressed by Dr. Macknight, thus: "If our salvation and the means by which it is accomplished are of such importance as to merit the attention of angels, how much more do they merit our attention who are so much interested in them!"

Verse 13.—Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind.

While the expression is rugged, it is striking and bold, and characteristic of its author. The metaphor is drawn from eastern customs. The angel that delivered Peter from prison said to him: "Gird thyself, and cast thy garments about thee" (Acts xii. 8). We gather, then, that in that country and age garments were worn loose, and needed to be girded for convenience, so that a journey might be made without interference from the drapery. The persons addressed understood the figure. Now, as the loins are girded to strengthen them, and to prevent encumbrance from the flowing garment, so gird the loins of your mind. The faculties of the mind want to be prepared, so that all the powers thereof can be brought into activity. There must be no clinging drapery of vice, but every faculty must be placed on proper objects, and all the passions held in subjection and governed by the divine will. And this is girding the loins of the mind. Paul, in his letter to the church at Ephesus, said: "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth" (Eph. vi. 14). And the Master gave similar advice in these words: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning" (Luke xii. 35).

Hope to the end.

The exhortation is based upon the certainty of the reward at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Knowing the Lord will come again, and the crown of life will be bestowed upon

the faithful, the apostle urges the continuance and constancy in hoping to the end. The end; that is, until the struggling saint shall lay his armor down at the hour of death—death of the body.

Verse 14.—As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves.

Recognized as children—that is, children and heirs as set forth in verse 4. And more than children—obedient children; you must not fashion yourselves as you once did. You well remember that before you became children you followed a course of conduct and conversation fashioned after the world. The course then pursued by you was evil. Your present course must not be so fashioned, but fashioned after the teachings you now receive as obedient children.

In your ignorance.

Your course of evil, while you had no information of the demands of the divine Father upon the children of men, was the result of your ignorance; that is to say, you were ignorant of the divine requirements as to your course. Now, this can not be wholly applicable to a Jewish Christian. In his case he had knowledge of the one true and living God, and under the economy under which he was reared he learned that God required him to lead a holy life. Those commentators who claim that this Epistle was written to Jewish Christians only seem to have overlooked the plain teaching of this verse.

Verse 15.—But as he which hath called you is holy.

God called you. God is holy. Now, as you are called of God, and are his children, God is your Father. Every obedient child seeks to please, and, as far as in him lies, strives to be like that Father in character and conduct. His obligation and duty is to be holy, for these rest upon the relationship which subsists between father and child.

In all manner of conversation.

The holy character is to be exhibited in everything you say or do; your whole manner of living, your behavior in

every respect. In all this you must seek a close imitation of the divine model.

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

I take this to be a quotation from Leviticus xix. 2, which reads: "Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy." Twice before, God had uttered the same thought, in chapter xi. and in verses 44 and 45. In the latter verse occurs the expression: "Be holy, for I am holy." Mere verbal differences in quotations may be expected, as the prime object is always to advance and make prominent the thought only. Heathen deities were by their devotees regarded as patrons and practicers of every species of vice. The influence upon the worshipers would necessarily, therefore, be pernicious. Their morals would be corrupted, since they imitated their vile gods. Like god, like man. In strong contrast with all this, we, as Christians, have a different worship enjoined upon us, and which is to be observed by us. God being far removed from all evil, and being the author of all moral excellence, imitation of his lofty and holy character is enjoined upon his intelligent creatures for their good here, and as a necessary preparation for an entrance into, and the enjoyment of, his presence in the world to come.

Verse 17.—And if ye call on the Father.

The idea is, if God is called on as Father, which would follow as a matter of course if we be his children, then we should pass the time in fear. To call on the Father is to worship him as he directs. To observe his commands, doing just what he requires, and in the way he has enjoined, is exhibiting the fear mentioned by the apostle. Nothing less is the fear of God. What does Peter say of this Father, upon whom we, as children, are to call? "Who without respect of persons." God regards not the race or station of men. He judges them by their acts; by what they do and

say; by their works. Peter's utterance at the house of Cornelius obtrudes itself upon our attention at this point: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons. But in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him" (Acts x. 34, 35).

Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.

While living here on earth, before passing away in death, the common lot of all, we should pass the time in fear. This time of sojourning embraces the whole period of the natural life. In fear. Of this we have already spoken; but a thought or two more will not be amiss. Now, fear of what? The apostle has just spoken of God's impartial judgment. Evidently, therefore, he means that our conduct here in this life must always be such as will pass safely that impartial judgment. Acting with constant reference thereto is acting in fear. As we have said before, doing what he requires is the acceptable way to show fear.

Verse 18.—Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed.

This is as much as to say that the parties here addressed did know, for the sense is, since ye know how they were redeemed. The apostle states the manner of their redemption first negatively, and afterwards affirmatively. Redemption from what? The answer given is, from your vain conversation; that is, your foolish behavior, vile course of life. From whence came this vain conversation? From tradition handed down by their fathers. Now, from this they were not redeemed by corruptible things, that is, things that perish, and the most precious things known to man are named—silver and gold. Even these, however important in the affairs of life, could not accomplish the redemption of man. However powerful in the estimation of the world, they are wholly inadequate to redeem.

Verse 19.—But with the precious blood of Christ.

Here the manner of the redemption is stated affirmatively. Negatively, not with gold or silver; affirmatively, with

the precious blood of Christ. Under the Jewish economy a sacrifice had to be without blemish. (See Lev. xxii. 21-23.) So the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, is the means by which redemption is had, atonement is made. It behooves not the true follower of the Lord to stagger at this point, nor to philosophize as to how this precious blood could procure this redemption. It is enough for the trusting soul to know that the all-wise Father so ordained and announced the fact to be, and trustingly it ought to be accepted. The New Testament writers with a singular unanimity recognize and refer to Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God. "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. xiii. 8).

Verse 20.—Who verily was foreordained.

Christ as the sacrifice was foreordained. In the purpose of God as the sacrifice was determined upon, was appointed as the center and the soul of the scheme of human redemption. This appointment was made before the foundation of the world.

Manifest in the last times for you.

While the sacrifice of Christ was foreordained, it was not made manifest—that is, the sacrifice did not take place at the time it was so foreordained—until the end of the Mosaic economy. The Christ then died, then shed his blood. On Calvary's cross the sacrifice took place, the offering was made. This sacrifice was made for the whole world. All may, if they will, receive the benefits of this atonement. It is to be accepted and appropriated in the manner God has specified, and in no other way.

Verse 21.—Who by him do believe in God, who raised him up from the dead.

Who by him—that is, by Christ—do believe in God. Now, this can not be said of the Jew. He believed in God before Christ came. Of the Gentile, however, it can be truly said. It was through the gospel preached, and through this chan-

nel only, that the Gentiles were made believers in the God that raised up Christ from the dead; and that he not only raised him from the dead, but gave him glory by seating him at his own right hand, and constituted him both Lord and Christ; and, in addition to this, he gave him all authority, so that he now rules as King in and over the entire universe of God.

Your faith and your hope might be in God.

The result to the believer in this glorification of Christ is the assured foundation upon which rest both his faith and his hope—faith in Christ, hope of eternal life. Faith is essential to salvation. Ultimate salvation is God's gift, God's promise. These, we are here assured, are founded in the power and word of God. This power, and the veracity of this promise, we have demonstrated to us in the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

Verse 22.—Seeing ye have purified your souls.

This purification here referred to is moral, and includes the pardon of their sins, and, further, the living of a pure, chaste and holy life.

In obeying the truth.

The apostle tells them how the leading of pure lives was by them accomplished. It was in obedience to the truth, obeying the commands of the gospel. It is through the Spirit, because the word of truth comes to the world of mankind through that instrumentality, and is inseparable from it. In fact, the entire gospel age is the ministration of the Spirit.

Unto unfeigned love of the brethren.

The purity of their lives had reached to that extent that their affection for the brethren was sincere, and not a mere pretense. This all being true, the exhortation of the apostle comes with irresistible force: "See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." That is, in sincerity of heart; love them continually. This love enjoined

is the same in kind we find in the church of Jerusalem, when our author was in prison. "But prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him" (Acts xii. 5). On this point Dr. McKnight's description is worthy of commendation. He says: "Peter's description of Christian love is excellent. It springs up in a heart purified by truth through the assistance of the Spirit. it is sincere in its operation. It is unmixed with carnal passions, and it is permanent."

Verse 23.—Being born again, not of corruptible seed.

This may, and does, no doubt, refer the parties addressed back to their conversion. This is compared to a birth. Such a result is produced from an adequate cause—life first, birth afterward. Life is implanted by seed. The apostle says the seed was not corruptible, but incorruptible, and immediately adds "by the word of God" The cause is adequate; life is produced. God's word is living, and of course can impart life. God's word is in the gospel, and the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. This, heard and understood, moves to a new life, and birth follows. By obedience, born again.

Liveth and abideth forever.

God's word ever lives, for it is eternal, as God is eternal. Quotations from the sacred volume are wholly unnecessary. The thought is too plain.

Verse 24.—For all flesh is as grass.

To make the declaration that God's word is living and eternal to stand out with more boldness, the apostle presents by the way of contrast, a quotation from the prophet Isaiah, chapter xl. 6-8. Everything pertaining to man is weak like the grass, and his highest earthly glory like the flower of the grass. The grass withers and the flower falls. So man in his best estate, with all his earthly achievements, quickly decays. He is soon gone. James uses to some extent the same illustration. (James i. 11.)

Verse 25.—But the word of the Lord endureth forever.

The contrast brought forward in the former verse is now plainly seen. While man is like the grass, and his decay

is certain, it is far different with the word of the Lord. That Word endures, abides, remains forever.

And this is the word by which the gospel is preached.

They had heard this gospel. It was preached to them by Paul and his assistants, and it may also be gathered that Peter desired them to understand that it is the same Word proclaimed by all the apostles of the Lord, himself included.

CHAPTER II.

ANALYSIS.

Putting aside all the evils that are opposed to a holy and virtuous life, being therein as newborn babes in Christ, long after the unadulterated word, that ye may grow thereby. For, in fact, ye can not otherwise grow to the proper stature and strength of God's children. This you will do if you have tasted of the Lord's goodness in what he has already done for you, and will still do, if you walk in his commands. To him you come by your faith as unto a living stone. It is a precious stone, even a stone chosen by God himself, but was rejected by men. Acting as you have and should with regard to this stone, you yourselves are built upon it as a temple, and are made a holy priesthood in that same temple to offer spiritual sacrifices which God has ordained that you should offer to him through his Son. These are acceptable to him. In this you are a peculiar people in being chosen as a priesthood. In fact, you are a holy nation, and were purchased by Christ to be such. You were so purchased that you might show his praise and declare his perfections. In other words, you must let your light shine. In doing this, you are required to put away all evils that war against the soul. They are then exhorted to be good subjects of government, to obey all authorities over them, giving no occasion to have the cause of Christ evil spoken against or you as evil-doers, but that by your good acts not only prevent injury to the cause, but thereby work a conversion of others. Various duties are enjoined to magistrates and those in places of authority. How to act in the relations of life are pointed out. The example of Christ is then mentioned as a model. His patience under unjust suffering is mentioned as an incentive to steadfast devotion to the cause of right, knowing that the reward is as certain as it is great.

COMMENTARY.

Verse 1.—Wherefore laying aside all malice.

A necessary conclusion here follows. You have a complete view of the magnitude of the great salvation provided for you, and therein the great love of the Father, whose gift it is, and the certainty of the ground upon which your faith and hope rest, and the duties you owe to one another as brethren. All the vices of the alien must cease, namely, malice, guile, hypocrisies, envies, evil speakings. These belong not to the Christian character, and, on the other hand, listen to the following advice.

Verse 2.—As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word.

What a natural figure. How grand and beautiful it is when fully apprehended and applied. The Savior said, "Except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God," and in that connection added further: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter the kingdom of God" (John iii. 3-5). Born again, they are babes in Christ Jesus. I take it the apostle knew that some he addressed had lately been born into the kingdom. Babes, we all know, hunger and thirst for milk. This is their proper and necessary food. On this they grow. So with babes in Christ; they ought to desire the sincere or unadulterated milk of the Word. Peter says: "That ye may grow thereby." As milk is the proper food for babes in the physical world, so the word of God is the proper and only food in the spiritual realm for babes in Christ to insure their growth. And if in the one case growth will not follow without food, neither will it in the other.

Verse 3.—If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

The Vulgate uses the word "sweet" in lieu of the word "gracious." I can not see how that expression, even if adopted, throws any additional light on the text. The Lord is gracious because he is good. The word "good" is, there-

fore, in a sense its equivalent. Whatever word is used, it must be applied to the giver, and "sweet" strikes me as wholly inadmissible, and can be only tolerated because of the figure here used. The sense is that God has been good, has been gracious in providing this great salvation, and permitting his creatures to accept and enjoy it.

Verse 4.—To whom coming, as unto a living stone.

Coming to Christ Jesus in the way he has appointed. So coming, we reach what? A living stone. Here is food for thought. In the New Testament Scriptures the term "stone" or "rock" is ever after applied to the savior. He himself, speaking of his divine sonship which had just been confessed, announced: "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matt. xvi. 18). The Church is not only built upon this foundation, but children of God build their spiritual edifices on the same foundation. It is a living stone. It possesses life and can impart life. Notice the word "living." Study its meaning for a moment, and then turn and read what he says of himself to the lonely prisoner of Patmos: "I am he that liveth and was dead, and, behold, I am alive forevermore" (Rev. i. 18). No uncertainty there; the foundation is sure and unceasing.

Disallowed indeed of men.

Peter tells all about this disallowance in his defense before the Jewish high priest, rulers, elders and scribes. "This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner" (Acts iv. 11).

But chosen of God, and precious.

Rejected by men, yet chosen by God. Isaiah foretells the laying of this foundation stone under the image of a temple, and the apostle Paul, in his Ephesian letter, speaks of the Church of Christ built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. It is precious, then, for two reasons: First, because it was chosen by God to be the foundation of the

spiritual temple to be erected, and, secondly, because of its excellence and entire sufficiency for the purpose intended. All this is apparent.

Verse 5.—Ye also, as lively stones.

The Revised Version, Vulgate, Syriac, Macknight and Rotherham have it "living stones." Being born again, the Christian possesses the hope of eternal life. They are, therefore, living stones built into this spiritual temple; built upon Christ, their living foundation. The spiritual house mentioned in the text is, of course, the Church.

A holy priesthood.

The living stones are all priests. Christ is High Priest, and all these are by him anointed, and their duties made and plainly specified in the succeeding paragraph.

To offer up spiritual sacrifices.

None other than spiritual sacrifices will be acceptable to God. Spiritual sacrifices, by these living stones all made priests by Jesus Christ, are to be offered up to God. These spiritual sacrifices are all plainly designated in the Living Oracles, which may be briefly summed up in this: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts ii. 42).

Verse 6.—Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture.

Peter here appeals to the Scripture confirmatory of the truthfulness of his statement in making Christ a living stone and the foundation of the spiritual temple. The quotation is from the prophet Isaiah (xxiii. 16). God laid in Zion a chief corner-stone, and of it the prophet says it was "a tried stone, a sure foundation." Peter did not quote the prophetic utterance in full, but says of the chief corner-stone that it was elect, precious. It was elect because God made this choice. It was precious in that it was a sure foundation, and without it the spiritual temple could not have been erected.

He that believeth on him.

Here the apostle changes the figure, and shows that he alluded to a person, the Lord Jesus Christ, and faith is the basis of our salvation through him. Faith in Christ is necessary to become living stones to be built into his spiritual house, and thereby to receive the anointing by Christ that makes us priests.

Verse 7.—**Unto you, therefore, which believe he is precious.**

That is, on the believer is the honor conferred of being built on him, and of not being ashamed, and in that sense precious. Peter here applies the prophecy of Isaiah: But to the disobedient, or those who believe not, he is made the head of the corner. To those who do not believe, but are disobedient, disallow and reject the stone, to them it becomes a cause of stumbling, as seen in the following verse.

Verse 8.—**And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.**

Notice that to the believer he is said to be precious, to the disobedient a stone of stumbling and rock of offense; that is to say, the unbeliever stumbles at the Word, rather, against it, and falls. This is his proper punishment. "And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (Matt. xxi. 44). Thus spake our Lord in relation to this same matter.

Whereunto also they were appointed.

God having given his Son, and every possible evidence of his love, for his creatures, and the exceeding great and precious promises to induce belief and incite to repentance and acceptance of his Son, those therefore rejecting are the arbiters of their own future. God's appointment is not that man shall stumble and fall, but that the disobedient only, as such, shall stumble and fall. This is their punishment. Bro. Johnson, in his notes, I think, makes it clearer.

He says: "Whereunto unto stumbling over the stone, and falling. This is God's appointment to the disobedient."

Verse 9.—But ye are a chosen generation.

That is, an elected race or people. This was once confined to the Jew only; now to the whole world. See how the apostle piles up the high titles. Not only a chosen generation, or an elect race, but also a royal or kingly priesthood. More yet, ye are a holy nation, a peculiar people. These are all high and mighty honors to be enjoyed by God's children. However, it must not be forgotten that these honors impose corresponding duties.

To show forth the praises of him.

Tell of the excellencies, the goodness and perfections of Him who conferred these honors upon us, and called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. Heathenism is moral darkness. In this dwelt many to whom Peter wrote. By the gospel preached by Paul and others, they were called out of this darkness into the light of Christianity, and by comparison this latter state is called a marvelous light.

Verse 10.—Which in time past were not a people.

All those called out of darkness in the time passed, while in that darkness were not the people of God, but were worshipers of idols.

Which had not obtained mercy.

That is, in the time passed mercy had not been offered and its benefits were not yet received by you, but now the foundation stone is laid, and mercy has been tendered you, and by you accepted. You are now as living stones in the temple. You are God's children and members of the church.

Verse 11.—Dearly beloved, I beseech you.

The appeal is urgent and tender—I beseech you. Strangers and pilgrims. This the people of God while on earth must continue to be. We are strangers here; we are traveling, as pilgrims do, to another country, to the heavenly country. Why appeal to such? Why exhort to abstain from fleshly lusts?

Which war against the soul.

The natural disposition is to acquire earthly possessions, amass riches and engage in earth's pleasure. These, the apostle would have them understand, are deadly enemies to the soul, to purity of life, and obstacles to the upbuilding of the Christlikeness. They should abstain from these because they war against the soul. Strangers and pilgrims must leave these all behind when they pass into that heavenly country. Why not, then, abstain?

Verse 12.—Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles.

Conversation; that is, your behavior, your conduct. Let that be proper, honest, right and comely.

Speak against you as evil-doers.

This they do. They blaspheme the blessed Master and spread calumnies concerning his cause and people, but if your conduct be such as your profession commends, those that speak against you may, by your good conduct and works, be induced to glorify God in the day of visitation. That is, in the day of persecution, they may acknowledge the truth as to your good conduct. This proved to be the case in the persecution in the days of Pliny. The fortitude exhibited by the persecuted ones attracted his attention, and he was induced to await the emperor's advice. And the patience of these sufferers for their faith made such an impression upon the heathen who witnessed their fidelity that they embraced the gospel.

Verse 13.—Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man.

Be obedient to the laws of the government where you may sojourn. Christianity does not require any of its devotees to be insurrectionists; upon the contrary, it is the Lord's will that we as Christians obey human laws.

Whether it be to the king.

The addressed ones were subjects of the emperor at Rome. He is here called king. To him Peter tells them to submit.

As supreme.

The king is placed in authority. He is supreme, so far as the earthly power is concerned, and while living in his territory recognize his authority.

Verse 14.—Or unto governors.

These, as rulers, are placed over provinces by the emperor, and as such are sent by him to punish evil-doers, and to praise such as do not break the law.

Verse 15.—For so is the will of God.

You will put to silence the calumny that because of your faith you were law-breakers. Their calumny was in consequence of their ignorance, and also their wickedness. It is God's will that you silence these slanderers by your good conduct.

Verse 16.—As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak.

Christians are free from the law of sin. They are no longer under bondage to it, but you must not use this liberty as a covering for wrong-doing.

But as the servants of God.

You are the Lord's bondmen, and you live as his bondsmen, observing all of his laws. These lead you away from all evil conduct or wrong-doing.

Verse 17.—Honor all men.

That is, those to whom honor is due. Have respect to men in every station in life. Some may occupy stations of honor, some stations of profit. Show no disregard to any.

Love the brotherhood.

Our Savior has set us the example. It is his command; love the brethren.

Fear God.

Not in dread, but in reverence. God is our Father. He loves us. We fear him when we walk before him blameless, doing his will.

Honor the king.

This is done when we obey his laws, which are designed to restrain the lawless.

Verse 18.—Servants, be subject to your masters.

To such among the addressed believers as are in the station of a servant, I say to you it is your duty to be subject to the orders of those who are for the time being over you as masters. You must be careful not to discriminate. Some masters may be good and gentle; others, ill-natured and cross, even severe. Render faithful service alike to all. This is their due, considering your relations to each other.

Verse 19.—For this is thankworthy.

That is to say, this kind of a service meets the approbation of God, whether the master is satisfied or not. Service rendered for conscience' sake, although grief and suffering are endured wrongfully, God will approve.

Verse 20.—For what glory is it?

If one is guilty of faults and is punished, the punishment is just, and, while the suffering is borne patiently, no credit is due for the patience. But where one renders conscientious service, and is then buffeted and bears his punishment with patience, this is acceptable to God.

Verse 21.—For even hereunto were ye called.

Suffering for well-doing, when Peter wrote, seems to have been the experience of all, and it was to be expected. Believers had been warned, and are now warned, that suffering may arise at any time for the cause of Christ. Evil and good are in antagonism. Persecution may arise. Even so Christ suffered, and he is our great example. He has left his example with us, and left it that we should follow in his footsteps. That is, bear patiently suffering, when inflicted for doing right.

Verse 22.—Who did no sin.

His conduct was without a fault.

Neither was guile found in his mouth.

No false word was by him uttered, hence he suffered without cause. The sufferings endured by Christ he did not deserve.

Verse 23.—Who, when he was reviled.

When reviled by the Jews no words of resentment were by him used. When he was crucified, he did not threaten his persecutors, but meekly committed his cause to God, who judges a righteous judgment.

Verse 24.—Who his own self bare our sins.

The apostle is still considering the example left by Christ. He died for our sins. He did not die for his own sins, for he had none, but he bare ours on the cross. Our burden of sin was by him borne. A sacrificial offering was made, and thereby we have an opportunity, by his gracious provisions, to become dead to sin. We believe the gospel. We are baptized into his death, coming forth new creatures. We live new lives. We live and pursue a righteous course marked out by him by whose stripes the means were provided, by which we are healed of the wounds and bruises of sin and of its dominion.

Verse 25.—For ye were as sheep going astray.

That is, formerly led astray by the evil, but now are, as it were, found, and have returned from wandering by coming to Christ.

The Shepherd and Bishop.

He is the good Shepherd. This he has proven by his death. A good shepherd careth for his sheep. Of this we are assured, for he said of himself, "I am the good shepherd" (John x. 11-14), and Paul calls him "that great Shepherd of the sheep" (Heb. xiii. 20). Bishop, one that watches over the flock, and who will guide and defend it. None other could be depended upon with so much certainty as the one who died for them. No greater proof could be given.

CHAPTER III.

ANALYSIS.

All should know, who claim to be Christians, just how to conduct themselves in the walks of life, and in this chapter knowledge is therein imparted. Peter commenced by telling wives how they ought to conduct themselves in that relation. He even goes so far with his instruction as to include even the manner of dress. These things are of less esteem with the apostle as an adornment than a meek and quiet spirit. A proper conduct along this line will have a tendency even to win over to the cause of Christ an infidel husband. To straighten the view the apostle entertains, he cites the example of Sarah as a model wife. Husbands are also told how they should conduct themselves, and then to all Christian admonitions are given. They must be of one mind—no discords, no divisions; must love one another as brethren should; must be tender-hearted and affable in the place of being unsympathetic and cross and morose; must not retaliate for what they conceive to be wrong conduct in others, but should bless them even if they are enemies; must be forgiving in temper and disposition, for God called his children that they might inherit the blessing of pardon. It is the duty of every Christian to turn away from all evil, and only do good; and it is furthermore the duty of God's children to seek peace. God's eyes are upon us all the time, and his ears open to the cry of his people. Besides, those that do right are less likely to suffer than the evil; but if the right-doers suffer for doing right, they are happy, because they do not lose reward, and ought not therefore to fear the threats of the wicked. Hence you ought to honor God, and be always ready to give answer for the hope of eternal life you have. Hold fast a good conscience by never denying your faith. It is better to suffer for the right, if God wills, than to suffer for wrong-doing. Christ himself suffered even unto death. He was raised by the Spirit. By his Spirit Christ preached to the antediluvians by Noah. The spirits of these are now in prison. They were disobedient at the time of Noah's preaching, and because of their disobedience were all destroyed by the water of the flood. The same water that destroyed them saved Noah and his family. Baptism as an antitype of the water of the flood now saves us. This baptism is not washing away of filth from flesh, but is the answer of a good conscience. In this, Christ commanded baptism, we obey, and have the assurance of our conscience to our obedience.

COMMENTARY.

Verse 1.—Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection.

Having disposed of the duties a follower of Christ owes to earthly governments and to those entitled to service, he

now turns to the domestic relation, and those who sustain the relation of wife he admonishes the recognition of submission. In this case the apostle has in his mind a woman whose spouse is an unbeliever. While subjection to a believing husband would not be such a burden to a wife, the submission to one who ignored the claims of the gospel might become irksome. A wife so situated is urged to the faithful and conscientious performance of every duty growing out of the relation, having in view the hope of the conversion of the infidel husband. And the influences that may accomplish this result are pointed out.

Verse 2.—While they behold your chaste conversation.

That is, your conduct, the pure life you are living as a Christian woman. Possibly your course before your conversion appears before the husband's mind in contrast to the course now adopted. This is a mighty power, an argument irrefutable and irresistible.

Coupled with fear.

The disposition now shown of avoiding and shrinking from acts which before your conversion were performed with readiness and without hesitation.

Verse 3.—Whose adorning.

Even the dress of a Christian wife claims apostolic notice. Nothing seems to have escaped the attention of this servant of Christ.

Outward adorning of plaiting the hair.

Here an injunction to Christian wives is given. The plaiting of the hair, wearing of gold and putting on of apparel. Can it be that the apostle forbids comely attire? Modesty observed in this adornment can not offend the moral sense surely, and we must not forget that Peter had in view the winning over the husband to the cause of Christ. Now, I incline to think, keeping the context in view, the apostle desired these wives to understand that these adornings, being outward only, must not monopolize their

thoughts and attention. Such things are perishing, and have a tendency to lead astray from God. The adorning of the Spirit is to be the lifework of the Christian wife, and not outward show, exhibited to attract the fancy of the giddy, the vain and the foolish. Arraying the body in these things for show, or indulging in extravagance on the part of believing women, I have no doubt, is here forbidden, but that Christian women may but modestly attire themselves according to their station in life, I can not think for a moment was in the apostle's mind. He simply desires the believing wife to understand that there was something more for her to do than exhausting her time in dress; that there was a better adorning for her of which she ought to avail herself.

Verse 4.—But let it be the hidden man of the heart.

Here we have it. Time and patience and labor here should be bestowed. The hidden man of the heart, the real man, the spirit, the affections of the heart—this is the important part. This inner man, adorn that. In the sight of God this is of great worth, bodily adornments valueless. This is the view Peter desires the Christian wives to take.

Meek and quiet spirit.

Two words are here used as descriptive of the kind of a spirit recommended to Christian wives, and to which is applied in the Revised Version the words "incorruptible apparel." The meaning of these words, and the ideas intended to be conveyed, were, by the Spirit guiding Peter's pen, considered of importance. What is meekness, and what is quietness, as applied to the spirit? Is there any difference in the signification? There must be, or both terms would not have been employed. Meekness consists in bearing ill-treatment with patience, as in the case of the Savior in the hands of his murderers. Quietness indicates a state where no cause of ill-treatment can possibly arise by either act or speech. In this latter sense Jesus was not quiet. He rebuked the scribes and Pharisees, and thus provoked them. While

it should have been observed to their profit, evil as they were, it aroused their anger. Well may the apostle call the meek and quiet spirit an incorruptible ornament. To close our remarks upon this verse, I borrow from Macknight a quotation made by him from Blackwell's "Sacred Class":

"How must all the short-lived beauties, the shapes, features and most elegant and rich ornaments of the mortal body, which attract the eyes and admiration of vain mortals, fade away, and lose their charms and luster, when compared with the heavenly graces of a pious and regular temper, the incorruptible ornaments and beauties of the soul which are amiable and of high value in the eye of God, the sovereign Judge of what is good and beautiful."

Verse 5.—For after this manner in the old time.

The manner just described; that is, not with outward adorning, but in the cultivation of the graces of the Spirit. The holy women, the women who trusted in God, thus conducted themselves. The meekness and quietness of spirit so acceptable in the sight of God were the adornings of the women mentioned in Bible history.

Verse 6.—Even Sarah obeyed Abraham.

Sarah went so far in her submission to her husband as to apply to him the designation of "Lord." The Christian wives among the addressed, who were of Jewish birth, were supposed to be familiar with the history of their progenitors, and Peter says to them in this exhortation that they are the daughters of Sarah and of Abraham, as are the Gentile Christian wives, by faith so long as they do in kind as Sarah did; that is, do right, do well. This they can do if they keep in mind their duty to God, and are not driven therefrom by the fear or amazement of those without; fear from ridicule, amazement at their conduct in this regard exhibited on the part of the irreligious or heathen with whom they come in contact.

Verse 7.—Likewise, ye husbands.

Peter now turns to Christian husbands, and their duties receive attention. Christian husband are not to separate

from their wives because they are not converted to Christ. Very true it may be that the relation of husband and wife is the more strongly cemented where both are followers of Christ, yet where this is not the case no cause for separation exists; but they must be dwelt with according to knowledge. As though the apostle said to the Christian husband, your superior knowledge acquired through your belief as to the duties growing out of these domestic ties should cause you to make your home pleasant, for both you and your wife are designed by the heavenly Father to share alike the good of this earthly life, and to both alike are offered the grace of eternal life. While the wife may be in nature and constitution the weaker vessel, she is entitled to this respect, and, while so acting, your prayers for her conversion will meet with no hindrance.

Verse 8.—Finally, be ye all of one mind.

Summing up the duties enjoined upon you as Christian men and women, whether married or not, I say generally: 1. Be of one mind. Let harmony prevail. 2. Have compassion one of another. Have sympathy for those that suffer or are in any manner afflicted. 3. Love as brethren. Let unalloyed affection among you as brethren everywhere and at all times prevail. 4. Be patient. Have and extend mercy. Be tender-hearted. 5. Be courteous. In your demeanor be humble, and not arrogant or haughty. A kindly, affable greeting only is Christlike.

Verse 9.—Not rendering evil for evil.

Christians may be wronged by acts or words. Acts or deeds are the evil I mention. Words are the railing here mentioned. Christians must not retaliate in kind. Upon the contrary, they must return blessing. The Christian has received nothing but spiritual blessings from God, and in turn out of a loving heart should bless others.

Therunto called.

Called by whom? "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that

hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you" (Mat. v. 44). Thus spake the Master, and he is the author and finisher of the faith. By so acting we exhibit the possessions of those dispositions which are of God, which he desires and designed we should possess, and which renders us entitled to and fit for the blessing of eternal life.

Verse 10.—For he that will love life, and see good days.

I hardly think that we have the correct idea as embraced in the thought of loving life. To my mind the word "enjoy" would be better. I am induced to so think from the clause following, "And see better days." Now, I can not see how keeping the tongue and lips from speaking evil would create or increase love for life, and as a failure so to do would destroy a desire to live, and yet I can plainly see the enjoyment of life would be enhanced by such a wise course. The injunction to the Christian, however, is plain. Restrain the tongue, keep a close guard upon it, that no evil comes from that source, and nothing of a like character pass the lips.

Verse 11.—Let him eschew evil, and do good.

Turn away from every evil, either deed or word, no matter what the kind of character of the act or word may be, or its cause or provocation, and in place of such evil do good.

Let him seek peace, and ensue it.

Peace may, as it were, seem to be fleeing. It must be pursued. Peace with all mankind every Christian ought to maintain, and his efforts should be put forth to the attainment of that end.

Verse 12.—For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous.

The idea here advanced is, that God cares for his children without ceasing. His regard for them is great. His ears are open unto their prayers. God hears as well as sees. He sees their sufferings and their needs, and hears their cries for his strength and mercies, and he turns

not away from them. Not so with the evil-doers. His face is against them. He turns his face away from the wicked without granting them aid when their distresses are upon them.

Verse 13.—And who is he that will harm you?

There can be little fear of harm from any one, if you do good to those who do you evil. You, being a follower of good, it must in reason be observed, and, if so, no result of evil should befall you. But, whether or not, you are right, and God is with you, approving the right, and therefore no real harm can come upon you.

Here I desire to present some thoughts that may be of benefit in grasping in full the thoughts contained in verse 10, 11, 12, and 13. Logic is more or less in my line of thought and inquiry. The reason of things, as far as I deem proper, that is within my field of legitimate vision, I endeavor to discover. Now, as to these verses. The apostle, in my judgment, is presenting arguments designed to induce men to practice a virtuous course of life, at least so far as they come in contact with their fellowmen:

1. Happiness in this life may be attained by a strict compliance with the instructions in verses 10 and 11 contained. This is a strong argument in favor of pursuing the course therein indicated.

2. God's favor and protection are assured to one who pursues such a course. (See verse 12.) To name this as an argument of power is all that need be done.

3. Men must be hardened in iniquity indeed who are not softened, if not overcome, by such a course. (See verse 13.)

The potency of this argument is easily apprehended. Taken all together, the reasoning is strong for pursuing the course of conduct commended by the apostle .

Verse 14.—But if you suffer for righteousness' sake.

Notwithstanding all your efforts, afflictions may come upon you because of your faith. In that event esteem

yourselves happy, for great is your reward. Therefore, be not afraid; have no fear on account of the threatenings of your persecutors, neither be troubled at their rage.

Verse 15.—But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.

You sanctify God when you fear him more than men. You show by your obedience to him that you love him, and rely upon and trust him, and thus you sanctify him in your hearts. You sanctify him when you honor and reverence him. The Vulgate has "Lord Christ" in this verse instead of "Lord God" and the Syriac has "Lord the Messiah." I can not see that this effects the sense in any way.

In answer to any man that asketh.

The apostle enjoins it as a duty incumbent upon every Christian to give an answer to every man who asks for the reason we have of the hope of eternal life, and says we must give this with meekness and fear.

A wide field is here opened. My purpose in writing permits me not to enter. On trial before my tribunal we can answer confessing Christ.

In persecution for righteousness' sake, the confession must not be withheld. To this I incline to think the apostle referred when we consider the circumstances and surroundings of those by the letter addressed. He simply meant to tell them there should be no hesitancy in acknowledging Christ under whatever trying circumstances they might be placed.

Verse 16.—Having a good conscience.

By doing what a good conscience approves, we have a good conscience. This good conscience God approves. To keep or hold fast such a conscience is accomplished by never denying the faith and by being always careful to do what God requires at our hands. While in this condition we possess a tower of strength when assailed by persecution.

Accuse your good conversation in Christ.

When your Christian course and conduct are falsely called evil, the purity of your life, the strict conformity thereof to the Christ model is an all-sufficient answer, and fully enough to shame all your accusers.

Verse 17.—For it is better, if the will of God be so.

If we suffer for doing right, it is better than if we suffer for doing wrong. In the last case we suffer justly. In the other it may result in our good, for God may will to chasten his children. It may not be acceptable to some, and the reason may not be apparent because God has not revealed the reason for it, yet the man of faith accepts as a fact unquestioningly that God permits the wicked to do evil to the believers. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. iii. 12).

Verse 18.—For Christ also hath once suffered for sins.

Our great example (Christ) suffered. Once, however, and no more. It is, therefore, no proof that our cause is bad because we suffer. He suffered on the cross for sins not his own. He was just, and he suffered for the unjust. The object of his suffering was that he might thereby bring us to God.

Put to death in the flesh.

Nails were driven through his hands and feet. His side was pierced. All these wounds were inflicted on his flesh—his body suspended. He was upon the cross, the Roman method of capital punishment, and there his earth-life was terminated.

But quickened by the Spirit.

That is, made alive by the Spirit. The idea that Christ did not die, that some entertain, I regard as infidelity; bold, bald infidelity, and nothing else. The idea I here and now unhesitatingly repudiate. Let the Word of the living God speak. Paul to the Corinthians asserts clearly and plainly as a part of the gospel that he there preached the fact of his death. "How that Christ died" (1 Cor. xv. 3). This I believe, and here I stand and leave all consequences in the

hands of a merciful and loving Father. That Christ had life in himself I do not question. That he had power to lay down his life and power to take it again he affirms, and I believe I see no difficulties here to the humble believer. The veiled things are not for our mental vision. In God's own good time they may be made plain. It is enough for me to know that he was made alive by the Spirit, and that he arose from the dead. This much God desires me to know, for he revealed just this much, and with it I am content.

Verse 19.—By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.

By which? By the Spirit. The grammatical construction of the sentence requires this answer. The sense of the passage also demands it. He went. Who went? Christ, of course. How did he go? By the Spirit; same Spirit by which he was quickened, and by this Spirit Christ preached unto the spirits in prison. It is manifestly certain that at some time these spirits heard preaching. When did they hear it? is the question. Was it during the time which intervened between the death of Christ and his resurrection, or was it before? By whom was the preaching done? Was it by Christ in person, or by his Spirit in another? Before proceeding further in the investigation, it becomes necessary, to a clear understanding of the matter, to inquire something more about these spirits in prison. No doubt they were in prison at the time Peter wrote this Epistle, but were they in prison at the time of the preaching mentioned? Who were they, anyhow? Peter leaves us in no doubt on this question, for he fully enlightens us in a subsequent verse. They were the people who lived before the flood. They were the antediluvians. We can now safely proceed. Did Christ preach to these? It is an admitted axiom that what one does by another, he is recognized as doing by himself. Can this axiom be applied to the preaching of Christ to the antediluvians? Let this question be examined in the light of the sacred Scriptures: "And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the

Father" (Eph. ii. 17, 18). Now, Paul attributes this preaching to Christ, when it is absolutely certain that it was not done by him in person, but by the apostles. Nehemiah also, in the ninth chapter of his book and at the thirtieth verse, regards the Father as testifying against the Jews, and yet asserts that he did so by his Spirit in the prophets. The axiom is unquestionably a Bible principle. If Paul and Nehemiah were correct, may not Peter with equal propriety attribute to Christ what he did by his Spirit in Noah? This view of the matter, which manifestly is the correct one, answers all questions and solves all apparent difficulties. Remember that it is this same Peter who informs us that Noah was a preacher of righteousness. (2 Peter ii. 5.) The spirits to whom Noah preached were, at the time Peter wrote, in prison. The preaching was done while they lived on the earth. The same Spirit that quickened Christ inspired Noah, and by him preached to the antediluvians. Taking this view of the matter, we can fully comprehend the declaration contained in Genesis vi. 3, which reads: "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." Its striving was while Noah preached. Thus Christ may be said to do what he did by his servant Noah. With the language of the apostle Peter before us, this view, and none other, can, with safety, be assumed. In his style of expression the Spirit that inspired the ancient prophets was the Spirit of Christ (1 Peter i. 11.) In fact, he leads us to believe that, from the very beginning, the scheme of redemption, and the whole of it, as the ages passed, down to its complete revelation to humanity, was under the control and direction of Christ.

Verse 20.—Which sometime were disobedient.

The antediluvians refused to heed and obey the preaching of Noah. They disregarded his warnings. All this time God bore with them. His long-suffering was extended to them all the time Noah was engaged in building the ark.

Wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

In the ark Noah built, eight persons were saved—Noah and his three sons and their wives. The water that destroyed all other persons saved these eight.

Verse 21.—The like figure whereunto even baptism.

The saving of Noah and family by water, Peter says, is a figure of baptism, which he affirms doth also now save us. God saved Noah by water because he believed and obeyed God, and destroyed all others then living, because they believed not, and of course refused to obey. That was his appointment then. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark xvi. 16) is God's appointment now. Complying with God's appointment in baptism, we are safe; or baptism, the antitype of the waters of the flood, saves us. The prerogative is with God to name the conditions or means, and on the part of his creatures to accept. Comply and be saved, or reject and be destroyed.

Answer of a good conscience.

Toward God the answer of the conscience is good whenever our own consciousness assure us that we have done just what God required of us, without alteration or substitution. We mistake not when we take God at his word. Anything less leads to danger. And as if inspiration looking down the ages by anticipation would guard against all mistakes, utters its warning. Inspiration saw in the future partisan zeal, claiming that as the water of baptism only affected the body, it was unnecessary; that the office of baptism was to wash the body simply. The Spirit in Peter says this is a mistake. It is not commanded for that purpose at all, but for the answer of a good conscience. God commands baptism. Man complying has a conscience in that respect void of offense. His conscience is good. It could not have been good had he failed to obey the command. The mistake as to the office-work of baptism might occur, because the whole body is washed, but how on earth a mistake could occur as to its form, no one can rationally tell. The whole body enveloped in water is as far removed in action from any form of affusion as day is from night.

By the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

God demonstrated to the world the Messiahship of Jesus by raising him from the dead. He was determined by that

resurrection to be God's Son, and clothed with all authority in heaven and on earth. He it is who commands baptism. It is his appointment. By it he saves. He had the power to have suspended salvation upon some other terms, or upon something else, but he did not, and that is the end of the matter. We can not question his authority, and it is impious to doubt his ability and willingness.

Verse 22.—Who is gone into heaven.

Jesus Christ has gone into heaven. He is there seated at God's right hand. He is now the Governor of the universe. Angels and all human rulers and governments are now subject to his sway.

CHAPTER IV.

ANALYSIS.

This chapter is taken up wholly by exhortations to the brethren. In consideration of the fact that Christ had suffered, he urges them to arm themselves with the like mind and spirit that they might thereby bear their afflictions with more patience; that by so arming themselves they would no longer live as do men, wholly governed by the desires and appetites of the flesh, but as they ought to live—live as God desired them to live. He tells them their conduct before conversion ought to be sufficient to satisfy the Gentiles that since conversion some important change had occurred. They could see that your former course was abandoned. Not understanding your enlightenment, they think strange of you. The Gentiles pursue a course of conduct for which they shall answer before him who shall judge all that are now living, and also all that are dead. Because he will judge those that are dead, is the reason all such, at one time or another, had a message of love given to them. But the end will come, and, in view of that event, you must be sober and vigilant, exercising great love among yourselves, administering needful things to the brethren without hesitation, for you are only stewards of God, and carry away with you none of the gifts of God. In speaking, you should speak as the word of God directs, and give as the ability is bestowed upon you by the Father. In this way you will honor God through Christ. Be not astonished that trials beset you. By patient endurance you thus partake of the Savior's sufferings. Your reward will cause you great joy. You suffer ill for the cause of Christ, and in that case God's Spirit is with you and he is glorified. Be careful, however, not to

suffer for taking human life or the property of another, for then your punishment is just. The same is the case where you do any wrong or interfere with the affairs of others. But in suffering for the name of Christ do not be ashamed, but glory in that name. The judgment will come, and the righteous will be judged first, and if they are saved, requiring as it does the observance of all things imposed upon you, what suppose you will the sentence be to all those who obey not God as he has required of them in the gospel? Suffer, then, according to the will of God, and thereby commit the keeping of your souls unto him in all well-doing, for he is faithful.

COMMENTARY.

Verse 1.—**Forasmuch, then, as Christ has suffered.**

It being a fact that Christ suffered for us in the flesh, it is a strong reason why you should make every effort to secure your own salvation. You are engaged in a warfare. Your enemies are the world, the flesh and the devil. These must be resisted. You must be properly equipped for this struggle.

Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind.

The mind is the necessary means for successful resistance. Christ performed the will of his Father even unto suffering the death of the cross, and was afterwards seated in glory. Doing the will of the Father is to have and be armed with the mind of Christ. Like mind and like determination in us will result in our victory over all our enemies, and insure to us the consequent reception by the Father, and the bestowal upon us by him of the reward of eternal life.

Verse 2.—**That he no longer should.**

Having taken a stand for Christ, we thereby announce that sin has no longer any claims upon us. We cease to sin. This is our claim and our duty. We live no longer in the lusts of the flesh. We owe to them no allegiance whatever. It is now an enemy to us, and as such we are fighting against it. The will of God is against the lusts of the flesh, and we are living now as subjects to God's will, and by that will we are governed and controlled.

Verse 3.—For the time past of our life.

The life we lived before conversion in all the excesses indulged in by the Gentiles is here alluded to. These excesses were in accord with our wills and desires at the time we engaged with the Gentiles therein. For us that has been sufficient. Being enlightened now by the gospel of Christ, we no longer so walk, we no longer so conduct ourselves, and we can not and at the same time obey God.

Verse 4.—Wherein they think it strange.

The Gentiles think it strange that we do not continue to commit these excesses with them as we did before our conversion to Christ, and for this reason these Gentiles speak evil of us.

Verse 5.—Who shall give an account.

These unconverted ones who speak evil of us will be required to give an account, not only for the excesses in which they indulge, but also for the wrongs they do to us and for all their evil speaking against us.

To him who is ready to judge.

The account the Gentiles will be required to give will be to one appointed as Judge; even to Jesus Christ. Paul says: "He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath appointed; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts xvii. 31). Jesus will be the Judge. It is so ordained. God has appointed him to be the Judge.

The quick and the dead.

By the quick the apostle means the living. By the dead he refers to those who once lived on the earth, and have passed away in the ordinary and natural manner. All that once lived, as well as the living, will be judged.

Verse 6.—For this cause was the gospel preached to them.

The gospel was preached to them that were dead in Peter's day, because all men are to be judged, and thus no

partiality shown. There is no respecter of persons with God. All will be judged. Hence the gospel must be preached to all. Here we are liable to be misled by a word—gospel. When this word “gospel” is used, we are apt to think of the gospel of Christ. By the use made of the word by the religious world, it is so almost exclusively employed; become crystallized, so to speak. This exclusive sense is not inherent in the word “gospel.” From the days of Adam all along the ages until Christ came, from time to time a message was received by man from God. That message was news, joyful news, glad tidings, joyful message, gospel. This is the import of the word. The antediluvians received a message from the court of heaven. It was a gospel to them. After the flood, and during the days of Abraham and on down to the giving of the law from Sinai’s smoking summit, messages from God were received. These were glad tidings—a gospel—to be observed and obeyed. Finally, the full development of God’s gracious purpose in man’s salvation burst upon an astonished world when that most wonderful of all announcements was made: “Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts ii. 36). The development is complete now. The news is full. Partial light was given as God saw fit, and duties imposed to correspond to the light given.

It may be said truthfully, however, that in all ages the basis of acceptance with God has been the same. The same principle is to be found in every age. Faith and obedience God has always exacted; faith in God, and obedience to his commands. In this there has been no change. As God developed his purpose in regard to man’s salvation, more light was given and new duties imposed. Still, faith and obedience were required. No more was demanded of Cain than was exacted of his brother Abel. The same thing was not required, nor to be performed in the same manner, of the Jew in Solomon’s day that was exacted of Adam. As God saw fit, in his infinite wisdom, to give to the children of men additional light regarding his purpose, he imposed

additional duties. While each soul must account for the deeds done in the body, the same things will not be required of Achan that will be required of the sons of Eli, nor of either that there will be of the Athenian philosophers who heard Paul's discourse on Mars Hill. At the great day the books will be opened, and another book, which is the Book of Life, and the judgment will be from these books. As each man's message has been, so he will be judged. This is simple justice, and God is a God of infinite justice. God is no respecter of persons. You and I, having the same light—having the same gospel—will fare exactly alike. So much will not, however, be exacted of Adam, for he did not have the same message. Now, if all are to be judged by the gospel of Christ as promulgated by the apostles, then there must be a post-mortem preaching of the same, or else there would be a failure of justice. From this I can see no possibility of escape. This pernicious and soul-destroying doctrine of a message after death finds no warrant nor an intimation thereof in all the Bible, when the same is honestly and fairly interpreted, but finds its basis and its advocacy only in the desires, wishes and inventions of men.

I am impressed with the correctness of this view of the matter after a long and somewhat painful examination of the subject, and from a general view of God's dealings with his creatures, as the same is spread out before our vision in his revealed will, and from what I conceive to be the best, purest and most certain test of the original that has descended to us. It is in these words: "For to this end, even to the dead ones, was a joyful message delivered, that they might be judged indeed according to men in flesh, but might be living according to God in spirit." This is the translation of Joseph B. Rotherham from the Greek text of Tregelles. Others, however good and learned, may take another and a different view of this matter, as they have honestly and conscientiously done, and I am not finding any fault with them for so doing. I timidly and modestly suggest that the foregoing position relieves all perplexity and doubt, and dispels the mysticism thrown around the text by the enemies of the cause of Christ.

Verse 7.—But the end of all things is at hand.

The things that troubled and oppressed, the end thereof approached. It may be that the apostle, remembering that many of their troubles arose from Jewish opposition to the faith of Christ, had in view the destruction of Jerusalem. This would relieve them from the source of their bitterest opposition. And he might refer to the time of their departure hence, which would be the end to all things to them on this earth.

Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

A most proper exhortation in view of the approach of the end to their trials.

Verse 8.—Above all things have fervent charity.

Have above all things, as the most important of all, burning, continual love for the brethren. This makes you better and stronger. You will then see no little foibles among one another, for this kind of love covers or shuts out of view, not one foible or sin, but many, even a multitude of sins.

Verse 9.—Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

Hospitality is good. Use it towards one another, and while so using it do not murmur. Do not use it unhesitatingly. Regard not the expense or trouble your hospitality costs you.

Verse 10.—As every man hath received the gift.

A gift is something that has been received from another. In this case it is God who is the dispenser of the gift. The gift here mentioned may be either of a temporal or spiritual nature. The exhortation is applicable to either. Such gifts are held by the Christian as a steward of God's grace, and as such they are here enjoined to minister of the same to one another.

Verse 11.—If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.

Where one speaks in matters pertaining to Christian doctrine or duty, he must do so with the utmost fidelity to

God's word. This he is urged to do by the apostle with the greatest emphasis.

If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth.

This, I take it, refers to administering to the necessities of the saints. In such cases the giving is to be measured by the greatness of the supply from on high.

That God in all things may be glorified.

The prime purpose of speaking as the oracles of God speak, and of ministering to the saints liberally, is that therein God's will is observed, and God thereby revered and glorified.

Through Christ.

Every gift from God under the present economy is through his Son Jesus Christ, and to that gracious giver the apostle ascribes the doxology of praise and dominion forever. Amen.

Verse 12.—Beloved, think it not strange.

These Christians were being persecuted even to the extent of being burned at the stake for their faith. They might well wonder if their Christianity led them only into right-doing that they should suffer. Yet the apostle says: Wonder not; this trial of faith has happened to the people of God before. You are not an exception; you must expect to endure suffering.

Verse 13.—But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers.

So far from wondering at your affliction for the truth, I counsel you to rejoice. Your Savior suffered unjustly; you herby partake of the same. By and by that same Savior will come, and his glory will be revealed to you. Your reward then follows, when you will be glad, possessing a great and an exceeding joy.

Verse 14.—If ye be reproached for the name of Christ.

If you suffer continually for being a Christian, that is, bearing the name of Christ, happy are ye. Words spoken

in reproach or bitter ridicule. "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you" (Matt. v. 11). How be blessed or happy? Simply call up the reflection that the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. Then in that case the reviler is reviling God, and you are glorifying him by bearing with patient endurance the reproach cast upon God through you.

Verse 15.—But let none of you suffer as a murderer.

Taking the life of your fellowman, taking away his goods without the right to do so, or doing any forbidden thing, or meddling in any way with the affairs of your neighbors, are all wrong, and should you suffer punishment therefore, you suffer justly, and are not entitled to any sympathy, glory or credit, even if you bear the punishment courageously.

Verse 16.—Yet if any man suffer as a Christian.

Here the difference is apparent. One who suffers for the cause of Christ should not be ashamed of his suffering, however trying or ignominious it may be. He suffers unjustly. Hence he is told to give glory to God, because he is esteemed worthy to suffer in so great and noble a cause, and to bless his holy name for the strength imparted to endure the ordeal.

Verse 17.—For the time is come that judgment.

The sense of this verse becomes easier by discarding the supplied words "is come." The judgment begins at the Church of God; that is, the righteous are judged first. The Lord himself explains this matter, and leaves us no room for doubt. He tells us all about it in Matthew xxv., commencing at the thirty-first verse, and completes the explanation at the end of that chapter.

If it begin at us, what shall be the end?

If the righteous, as such, are to be judged, what can be the fate of the unrighteous, those who have not obeyed the gospel? They, of course, will be judged likewise. The sentence in each case will be measured by the conduct of each while here on earth.

Verse 18.—And if the righteous scarcely be saved.

I can not think the apostle here intimates any difficulty in the salvation of the righteous, for in his second Epistle he states plainly that the entrance into the everlasting kingdom shall be abundantly ministered. I think the thought is that, while in this life their hindrances are so great and the trial so heavy, their faithful endurance is hard to be sustained, and, if thy prove loyal and true to Christ and are saved, what hope can the ungodly and sinner have that obeyed not and suffered not for the cause of right?

Verse 19.—Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God.

The conclusion is enforced with emphasis. Those that suffer for the cause of Christ, suffer for the truth, suffer for living as God requires, continue faithfully so to serve God, committing their souls and the keeping thereof to him. God sees all. God cares for his children. His mercies are great, and his promises sure.

CHAPTER V.

ANALYSIS.

Herein the elders are charged to feed the flock under their supervision without arrogance, and to do so willingly and not for gain, and, by being examples for them to follow and as a reward for the faithful discharge of duty, a crown of glory that will not fade will be given them by the chief Shepherd when he comes. The younger brethren are advised to submit to the elders in all their instructions and to be submissive to one another, showing humble dispositions. The reason is given that God opposes the proud spirit, and shows grace to those that are humble. You must humble yourselves before God, and he will exalt you. God cares for you, and you can cast all cares on him. You must be sober and watchful, for you have an enemy who is no less than the devil. He walks around seeking to destroy the good. Resist his every approach. This you can do by closely adhering to your faith. In suffering you are not alone. Your brethren everywhere suffer affliction. I pray God he will make you perfect, and fully settle you in the faith of the gospel. I write this letter of exhortation by Sylvanus, and therein testify the gospel of Christ, which you have all obeyed and are striving to follow its precepts as the only true and

God-given course to pursue. Salutations are offered to you from the church at Babylon, and also from Mark. All that are in the kingdom and patience of Christ should greet one another with the kiss of charity.

COMMENTARY.

Verse 1.—The elders which are among you.

These elders were the bishops or overseers of the churches situated in the provinces named in the first chapter. This is evident from the duties imposed upon this office, as the same appears in second verse. Paul sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of that church to meet him at Miletus, and, among other things, he said to them: "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood" (Acts xx. 28). These officers were of like kind. Peter says he was one also; that is, he was both an elder and an apostle. I can not here avoid remarking that no pre-eminent claim is here by the apostle asserted, such as is claimed for him by some in the religious world. It was an opportune time to so claim if any such pre-eminence existed. He simply says he was an elder and witness.

Verse 2.—Feed the flock of God.

I, a fellow-elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, am apostle chosen by him, exhort you to feed the flock. In doing this you are exercising the bishop's office by teaching and exhorting them, and praying with and for them, and watching for their souls, not because you are overpersuaded by men to do so, but willingly and not for gain for the money to be given you for your services, but because of your love for God and his cause, and the salvation of your fellows.

Verse 3.—Neither as lords over God's heritage.

In your service be not arrogant and despotic. Macknight says: "This is a strong word, denoting tyranny, which the men of this world often exercise when they have obtained offices of power."

But being ensamples to the flock.

If the elder must not be despotic, but the reverse, then they must show a kindly, humble and charitable disposition. Their unselfish devotion becomes then easy of imitation. They are then proper ensamples, patterns, models to be followed by the flock.

Verse 4.—And when the chief Shepherd shall appear.

You elders, you shepherds, for thus faithfully performing the duties of your office, when the chief Shepherd shall come, will receive your reward. It will be a crown, but not such as is worn by the victor in races run by men in their human sports; such a crown will fade, but your crown will be one of glory that shall never wither.

Verse 5.—Likewise, ye younger.

Younger in years, and later inducted into the kingdom of Christ. To you, and to all such as you, I say be governed by the Christian advice, exhortations and instructions of the elders, for in this regard submission is proper and necessary to your well-being.

Yea, all of you be subject to one another.

The exhortation of submission to the younger applies to you all: Be clothed with humility, no matter what your relations to one another may be. This grace is necessary.

For God resisteth the proud.

The reason for the exhibition of humility is now made to appear. God resists the proud, but gives grace to those who are humble.

Verse 6.—Humble yourselves, therefore.

Since it is a fact that the humble only receive grace from God, humble yourselves. Take his corrections patiently. Show thereby your entire submission to his will, and in time he will exalt you to the possession of a home in heaven. This he will do in his own time.

Verse 7.—Casting all of your care upon him.

In any distress that comes upon you, submit to God. He will sustain you. The Psalmist says: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee. He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved" (Psa. lv. 22).

For he careth for you.

How consolatory is this declaration to the oppressed Christian heart; God cares for him.

Verse 8.—Be sober, be vigilant.

Observe temperance in all things. Rule with vigor all passions of the mind and passions of the body. Be vigilant; that is, careful, watchful, always on the guard. The occasion for this is that a conflict is before you, and the enemy whom I have disclosed is a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

Your adversary, the devil.

Knowing now with whom you come in conflict, you at once discover the necessity for the close observance of the admonitions given. Your adversary is the devil, the enemy of all righteousness and the author of all wrong. Like the lion, his approaches are stealthy, and, as the lion is powerful among the beasts of the field, so your adversary is exceedingly powerful and unscrupulous.

Verse 9.—Whom resist, steadfast in the faith.

When the devil is resisted he flees away. Oppose him, therefore, and be steadfast; that is, firm and unshaken in your faith.

Knowing that the same afflictions.

You are not alone in this warfare and in these sufferings. Your brethren in the Lord everywhere in the world are also visited in the same manner.

Verse 10.—But the God of all grace.

He is the God of all grace, for he alone can bestow the grace the suffering of earth need.

Who hath called us unto his eternal glory.

God is the author and provider of the great reward, and he it is who has called us by Christ Jesus. This reward will be bestowed after we have suffered a little while.

Make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

Make you complete in all the virtues. Support you in all Christian exercises. Add to your power to resist temptation, and settle you firmly in your belief of the gospel and its divine origin and inestimable rewards.

Verse 11.—**To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.**

Another doxology. To him, that is, God, the glory is ascribed and dominion forever, for none else in the universe has the right to control, and so, acknowledging God's supreme right, solemnly we say Amen.

Verse 12.—By Silvanus, a faithful brother.

This is the Silas who traveled and suffered with courageous Paul, and preached to the jailer at Philippi. By him Peter sends this letter, exhorting the brethren and testifying as an apostle that the faith of the gospel embraced by the brethren is the true grace of God. It came from God, and is worthy, therefore, of acceptance. All other religions in the world are false.

Verse 13.—**The church at Babylon, elected together with you.**

The brethren forming the church at Babylon, becoming members of the body of Christ as you also did, salute you. And so does Mark. This is the same Mark who wrote the Gospel bearing that name. I see no good reason for thinking that spiritual Babylon—that is, Rome—is here meant. The thought is therefore rejected. In passing I desire to say, I hesitate not to use the word "church," notwithstanding it does not appear in the Revised Version. It appears in the Syriac and Vulgate Versions which I have, and, besides, I can hardly believe that Peter refers to his wife, as some

suppose, when I consider that the Scriptures fail even to give her name. She would therefore be almost wholly unknown to the brotherhood anywhere, and hence her salutation would be out of place.

Verse 14.—Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity.

This was a testimony of affection common in those countries and those times.

Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Serenity and happiness to all you brethren, members of the body of Christ Jesus, and, in testimony that I sincerely mean this, I say amen to the utterance.

SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER.

INTRODUCTION.

The writer of this letter is none other than the same person who wrote the first Epistle. This the writer himself claims. To me it has been a matter of astonishment that this letter should have been refused a place in the sacred canon, while the former was accepted. However, now it seems to be of general acceptance. I can find nothing to indicate where Peter was at the time he composed this letter, and can only fix a time at which it was written, by inferences more or less doubtful. In the third chapter, sixteenth verse, he speaks of all the Epistles of Paul. Now, it is fairly safe to say that all of Paul's Epistles, except that of the second to Timothy, were written before A. D. 65. From this alone I conclude that Peter did not write this, his second letter, before the latter part of the year 65, or the first part of A. D. 66.

The aim is to keep the Christian mind stirred up with relation to the duties imposed upon them and the great reasons for diligence in the performance of these duties; to warn them of false teachers that would arise, and, in fact, of all the conflicts to which they would be subjected, and holding up to their gaze the glorious reward that awaits the faithful.

CHAPTER I.

ANALYSIS.

This letter is written to those who have obtained a like precious faith with the writer, and that they may be assured of the correctness of the gospel and its God-given source, and thereby the more strongly entrenched in its belief and not easily moved therefrom by false teachers, he assures them of the divine power of the gospel; that by it everything is given that pertains to right-doing in this life, and all that is necessary to secure acceptance in the world to come.

He exhorts them to add to their faith all the other virtues and graces he enumerates; assures them that by so doing a perfect Christian character will be produced; that they will not be either blind or unfruitful in the divine life, but that they would be both blind and unfruitful should they so neglect. He then assures them, by making these additions, that their entrance into the everlasting kingdom will be certain and richly rewarded. He tells them that he will not be neglectful, so long as he lives, to keep these things before their minds, although they know them; that Christ assures him that his end is near, and that he writes these admonitions that after his death they may have them to consult. He then assures them that the subject of his preaching and of his letters, namely, salvation by the gospel of Christ, is not a fable, and was not cunningly devised, but is the truth of God, and appeals to the confirmation given by the Father himself, which the writer himself and his companions saw and heard, and by this statement from the Father the prophetic word wherein all these things were foretold is made firm, which prophetic word shone as a light in a dark place, until Christ came, who is the day star. He gives them further to understand that the words of the prophets were not of their own invention, but that they were authorized and empowered to declare what they did by God's Holy Spirit.

COMMENTARY.

Verse 1.—Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle.

In the former Epistle the writer names himself Peter. The Master said to him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona," and subsequently said to him: "Thou art Peter" (Matt. xvi, 17, 18). Peter here uses both names, and calls himself both a servant and an apostle.

To them that have obtained like precious faith.

Here we are informed to whom the letter was written. To the saints; to the brethren in the Lord. "Like precious faith" is a very significant expression. Faith of God's elect—the faith entertained, embraced, loved and lived by every true child of God. Faith in God's Son, and living as he directs and hoping for the reward of eternal life, which he has promised, is the precious faith.

Verse 2.—Grace and peace be multiplied.

Paul quite frequently used this benediction. May these graces increase.

Through the knowledge of him.

Knowledge of God. The more we know of his word the more we know of him and of his Son. To know God aright is eternal life. Hence, the more knowledge we possess, the stronger we become in the divine life.

Verse 3.—According as his divine power.

From God everything relating to the Christian system, the plan by which man is reconciled and brought back to God, is derived. It is according to his plan. It is divine, and by divine power given. It includes everything pertaining to life and godliness. It is perfect, wanting nothing. To us it is given. By it we are called, and by it we may attain glory and virtue.

Verse 4.—Whereby are given unto us exceeding great.

By his divine power God expressed his will to men, and in that will God made promises to us. The Holy Spirit, through the pen of the apostle Peter, attempts to convey to and bring within the comprehension of our weak minds the moral grandeur, superlative excellence and priceless value of these promises by the words "exceeding great and precious."

That by these

Meaning the promises. Keeping these promises ever in view and God's infinite love, by whom they are bestowed, gathering knowledge of him as we struggle to know and do his will, we become more like him, more godlike, and are thereby made partakers of the divine nature. Being in Christ Jesus, we are new creatures, and have escaped from the corruption that is in the world. This escape took place when we were translated out of and from the kingdom of Satan. That kingdom and the sin that is in it no longer have dominion over us. We are freed from any allegiance to it; have absolutely escaped from it, and the bondage we there endured. We have, and can have, if we are true to our allegiance to God, no further affection for it.

Verse 5.—Besides this.

Now, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by being translated into the kingdom of God's dear

Son, accomplished by your faith carried out by obedience, the Holy Spirit points out your way step by step.

Giving all diligence.

The progress proposed to you in the divine life requires diligence. Your efforts must not be slothful, but industrious. Call up to your aid this disposition. No effort must be spared. God has done his part in your behalf, and this devolves upon you.

Add to your faith virtue.

The process is addition. Your faith made you a child of God. To this faith many additions are to be made. First, virtue; that is, courage. This is essentially necessary as an aid to your faith in your struggles in well-doing, as you will be most painfully apprised. This excellence of virtue—courage—ought to be, and is, a natural outgrowth of your faith. To this courage also add knowledge, knowledge of God; what he desires you to do; how you shall conduct yourself toward him, toward your brethren in the faith and toward the world. Your courage is heroism—moral heroism—and if this is controlled and governed by a knowledge from on high, it redounds to your good, and is pleasing and acceptable to your Father in heaven.

Verse 6.—And to knowledge, temperance.

Temperance. This virtue consists in an ability to control yourself in all your conduct. This may be, and no doubt is, difficult, but the Christian is admonished to make this addition to his other virtues.

And to temperance, patience.

To your temperance you must add an unwavering and unflinching endurance of all wrongs, evils and afflictions that come upon you for the truth's sake. A denial of the faith to escape suffering not only shows the absence of courage, but also of patience. So also bearing the wrong complainingly. Meekness shows patience.

And to patience, godliness.

Godliness. All your speech and all your deeds must

conform to the requirements of God in relation thereto. So doing, you reach nearer and nearer the divine model.

Verse 7.—And to your godliness, brotherly kindness.

Brotherly kindness is love of the brethren, love of the saints, members of Christ's body—the Church. This love is active, showing itself in kind acts continually, without questioning and without hesitation, as to cost or labor.

And to brotherly kindness, charity.

Charity is something more over and beyond brotherly kindness, otherwise addition could not take place, and would here be broken off. We have but to remember that brotherly kindness is love to the brethren, and is thus confined, while the charity or love we are enjoined to add to it extends beyond these limits, and includes all men. The difficulty at once vanishes. The distinction is plain. Love for the brethren is the most natural, and therefore the easier of accomplishment. Love for all men includes our enemies. This is not so easy. Yet Peter only follows the injunction of the Master: "But I say unto you, Love your enemies" (Matt. v. 44). If I were permitted to express an idea of the difference in the love we have for the brethren and for the rest of the world, I would say the one was a love of delight, and the other simply that of good will. I am, however, uncertain as to whether this distinction exists or not. Taken as a whole, all these virtues present with the follower of Christ makes a well-rounded, complete and perfect Christian character. Possessing all these as God intended constitutes holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Of them Macknight observes: "This chain of virtues the apostle begins with faith, because it is the root from which they must all spring, and ends with love, because it is the point to which they all tend. Dr. Wessel, of Groningen, one of the reformers, observed on this passage that the Spirit of God by Peter established this the only bull of indulgence whereby an entrance into the kingdom of God is obtained." The remarks of Meyer may be of service, and are here given: "Although the different virtues here are not arranged according to

definite logical order, yet the way in which they here belong to each other is not to be mistaken. Each of the virtues to be shown forth forms the complement of that which precedes, and thus gives rise to a firmly linked chain of thought."

Verse 8.—For if these things be in you and abound.

The qualities heretofore enumerated forming the perfect Christian character being in—possessed by—the saints to their fulness can not make the possessor barren of results for good, but, contrariwise, such a one is industrious, and achieves success for the cause of Christ.

Verse 9.—But he that lacketh these things is blind.

The one that does not possess the qualities named is blind, morally blind. As natural blindness prevents the seeing of objects, so one morally blind can not see afar off, so far as spiritual matters are concerned. His moral vision is so defective that he has even forgotten that he was pardoned, that he was once purged from his old sins.

Verse 10.—Wherefore the rather, brethren.

For the reason that, by adding the qualities named, you are fruitful, and for the further reason that, if you are wanting in these qualities, you are rendered morally blind, deficient in vision, and even faulty in memory, earnestly endeavor to make your calling and election to eternal life sure.

For if ye do these things.

Observing and doing the things named, which I have been careful to enumerate, you shall never fall. No danger of defective vision or of failing memory.

Verse 11.—For so an entrance shall be ministered.

Here, again, the apostle, in few words, says much. The entrance will be abundant. You will be fully, richly prepared for an entrance into the everlasting kingdom. That is, the heavenly kingdom; the mansions of God, where the Master has prepared a place for his children.

Verse 12.—Wherefore I will not be negligent.

Peter here speaks of his own duty to the brotherhood, and tells them he will not neglect to remind them of these things, although he assumes that they all know them as the truth in Christ.

Verse 13.—Yea, I think it meet.

Yet he feels it a duty he owes to the brotherhood, and the obligations he is under to the Master, to keep the saints stirred up to the necessity of perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Hence his many and earnest exhortations to the performance of Christian duties.

As long as I am in this tabernacle.

That is, as long as I live; as long as I am in the body.

Verse 14.—Knowing that shortly I must put off this tabernacle.

Peter here alludes to his own death. Of this he felt assured, for the Lord Jesus Christ had shown him that he must suffer, and he here states that the time for his death was not far distant: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself and walkest whither thou wouldest, but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he signifying by what death he should glorify God" (John xxi. 18, 19). No doubt Peter here refers to this prediction of the Master.

Verse 15.—Moreover I will endeavor.

A determination is here expressed of leaving behind him after his death the means by which these exhortations to, and reminder of, duties to be performed by the saints, shall always be kept in memory.

Verse 16.—For we have not followed cunningly devised fables.

The gospel of Christ is no fable. About it there is no myth. There is no mistake or room for doubt.

When we made known.

That is, when we apostles proclaimed the power and

coming of the Lord, we made no mistake. We were eye-witnesses. Being eye-witnesses, we were qualified to testify, and our qualifications are unquestioned by all enlightened jurisprudence.

Verse 17.—For he received from God the Father.

A such qualified eye-witness, and as a man shortly to die, I again assert the fact to be that Jesus Christ whom we preach was recognized by the Father with his own voice from on high to be his beloved Son, and that with him he was well pleased.

Verse 18.—And this voice which came from heaven.

And I further assert that the voice which we heard came from heaven, and that it occurred while we were with Jesus Christ in the holy mount. As witnesses, our senses of seeing and of hearing were called into requisition. I give you the place where what we saw and heard occurred, and the precise words spoken. This is our testimony. We heard God speak it.

Verse 19.—And we have a more sure word.

The language of the Common Version is in this place ambiguous. The thought is more clearly expressed either in the Revised Version or by Rotherham. The latter has it: "And we have more firm the prophetic word." The idea is that at least some of the brethren addressed have the prophecies that foretold the coming of Messiah, and our testimony makes that prophetic word more firm. It confirms it.

Do well that you take heed.

That is, to what the prophecies say on this matter, for those prophecies are as a lamp shining in a dark place, and as such light-bearers they continued to shine until the perfect day of revelation was ushered in by the arising of the day star; that is, until Christ came.

Verse 20.—Knowing this first.

While taking heed to the prophetic word, I desire you to know one thing in relation to prophecies; that is, that no

prophecy is an interpretation of the feelings and sentiments of the prophets who uttered them. They are expressions of God's will. They are therefore not self-solving.

Verse 21.—For the prophecy came not in old time.

I give you the reason now why the prophecies were not self-solving: because they came not as the will of man. But the prophet—the holy man of God—spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. Hence the prophecy is not an expression of man's words, but is in fact the words of God. The application is now easy of my former remark—that our testimony in regard to Jesus Christ conveying to you a statement from heaven coming from God the Father, is nothing but a confirmation of what God heretofore spoke by the prophets.

CHAPTER II.

ANALYSIS.

When prophecies were made to the world, even in those times there were false prophets. So in your time false teachers will come among you, slyly bringing to and urging upon your attention hurtful heresies—heresies that will condemn; going so far as to deny Jesus Christ as Lord, who bought them by his death. These bring upon themselves certain and fast destruction. Many will be persuaded by these false teachers to accept and act upon their teachings. By reason of those who go after these false teachers, the truth will be scandalized. These false teachers being avaricious, by hypocritical speeches they will try to win, so they can thereby make gain of you. To show you that their punishment is certain, I call your attention to God's dealings with angels that sinned, with the wicked in the days of Noah, and the fate of the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah: they were all overthrown for unrighteousness. Noah was righteous, and so was Lot. Both of these were saved. God knows how to save the good, while the punishment of the wicked comes upon them. Men that are wicked exhibit their characters by walking after the dictates of fleshly desires. They are presumptuous, depending upon their own powers. They speak against officers in authority. In this angels even never indulged, but these wicked act as beasts that perish. They are spots and blemishes on the body politic. So disposed are they that they can not cease from sin. They beguile unstable souls. Their hearts are set on doing everything that will bring them

gain. They are children of the curse, having given up the right way to act. In this respect they are like Balaam, who was anxious to receive pay for a bad act. His action was that of madness, and was reproved by the beast he rode. These wicked are fountains having no water, and clouds that give no rain—a cheat. To these the blackness of darkness is reserved as their final portion. They allure by appeals loudly made to the desires of the flesh. They promise liberty, while they themselves are in the veriest bondage. One escaping from all these pollutions through the gospel of Christ, and becoming again entangled, is worse off than if he had never believed. He is like a dog who goes back to his vomit, or a sow once washed to wallow again in mud and mire.

COMMENTARY.

Verse 1.—But there were false prophets among the people.

In paying heed to prophets, I meant, of course, true prophets—prophets of God. I now to you say that there were among the people of Israel false prophets. While that was true in the past as to prophets, I say to you that there shall be also false teachers among you Christian people, who will stealthily bring to your attention, and insist upon the acceptance thereof by you, heresies that are destructive. A heresy, being a schism, produces parties, and hence divisions. They will even go so far in their false teaching as to deny the Lord that bought them. They will deny that he is God's Son, and that he died for them; that he shed his blood to perfect the scheme of redemption, whereby we are to be saved; that he died for our sins, or that by his stripes we are healed. These false teachers will only bring on themselves certain and sudden destruction.

Verse 2.—And many shall follow their pernicious ways.

As a result of the teaching of the false teachers, however much to be regretted it may be, many will follow them. They will make converts to their false views. Many will follow their lead, and, by these many so following, the truth as it is in Jesus Christ will be scandalized, and held up to scorn by those who can see no difference between the true and the false faith.

Verse 3.—And through covetousness.

The false teachers, and those who follow their false teaching, will attempt by feigned words—that is, by fictitious tales, stories, by falsehoods and fables which they will tell you, having nothing in view but gain—to make merchandise of your labor and possessions. Be assured that the condemnation of all such will not be delayed. Their destruction is certain. And I will now proceed to give you proofs unmistakable of the truthfulness of my statement as to the certainty of their punishment.

Verse 4.—For if God spared not the angels that sinned.

You know that God spared not the angels who rebelled. He subjected them to punishment. They were cast out of heaven and into darkness. They are bound with chains, or “pits of darkness,” as the Revised Version has it, and are kept or reserved for judgment. This shows you, as one example, the certainty of punishment that awaits the false teachers and their followers. But I will give you other instances.

Verse 5.—But spared not the old world, but saved Noah.

Swift destruction came upon the old world. The flood slew all the wicked, only Noah and his family, who were righteous, being saved therefrom.

Verse 6.—And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

These cities were destroyed for the wickedness of the people who lived therein, God giving thereby an example or a warning to all who should subsequently live on the earth, including the false teachers, of the certainty of punishment that awaits the wicked.

Verse 7.—And delivered just Lot.

In the destruction of the cities God saved Lot. Keep before your minds that it is the wicked only that are punished. The righteous are always preserved. This is God’s way—punish the wicked and save the righteous.

Verse 8.—For that righteous man.

Lot was vexed. He was distressed every day he lived with the people of those cities by what he saw and heard of their evil deeds. He was righteous, and hence saved. "And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in which Lot dwelt" (Gen. xix. 29). Let these examples satisfy you of the certainty of the destruction that awaits the false teachers.

Verse 9.—The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly.

The examples given show that the Lord knows how to deliver those that love and obey him under every trial.

And to reserve the unjust.

Also that the Lord knows how to punish the unjust, or to hold them in reserve, to be punished at a later period.

Unto the day of judgment.

There is a day appointed—the day of judgment. Punishment will then be meted out to all those whom the Lord has reserved therefor.

Verse 10.—But chiefly to them that walk after the flesh.

A class of persons are here described minutely, false teachers heretofore mentioned included, and of the punishment that awaits them, the inspired penman asserts the certainty. The word "chiefly," indicating a greater punishment than others, is not, either in the Syriac or Vulgate, employed. There the word "especially" appears, which is followed by Dr. Macknight. Either indicates certainty and leaves no doubt upon the mind as to any ungodly escaping. As to degrees in punishment, or whether some will be punished more than others, or to a greater extent, I have only this to say: When one is punished by banishment from the presence of God and of his glory forever, I can see in such a state little room in which to discuss the question of degrees. At all events, it is a field I care not to enter, and shall therefore leave unexplored. No matter about that,

we are informed by inspiration that the ungodly shall be punished, and with that class our attention will now be engaged.

Walk after the flesh.

Those that follow and are governed by the passions and appetites, and thus live impure and unholy lives.

Despise government.

Those who recognize no authority either of God or man.

Presumptuous are they, self-willed.

They are audacious. They assume to do after their own wills or wishes, and so strong is this propensity that they have no fear to utter reviling speech against officers in stations of government in the exercise of their legitimate duties.

Verse 11.—Whereas angels, which are greater in power.

While the wicked here being described do all the things named without any hesitancy, heavenly messengers, superior in power and might, do not exhibit any such disregard or disrespect for authorities; do not bring a railing accusation against them before the Lord, an example of temperate language which mankind would do well to imitate.

Verse 12.—But these, as natural brute beasts.

These wicked ones, here being described, act as if they were irrational like the beasts that are destined to be slaughtered as food for men. So great, indeed, are their irrational and senseless actions that they speak evil of, and in opposition to, things which they do not understand.

Utterly perish in their own corruption.

Nothing can be plainer as to the end of such characters. Their destruction is full and complete.

Verse 13.—And shall receive the reward.

Their debauchery, riot and evil conduct in the day-time is considered by them as pleasure. Their destruction is the necessary and legitimate reward for such evil doings.

Spots they are and blemishes.

The apostle presents many figures as applied to the wicked ones. Spots and blemishes he calls them. These, as applied to things of beauty, mar and deface. So there are defacing spots and blemishes on the social fabric.

Sporting themselves with their own deceivings.

When they attend the feasts of the church, they convert, as far as they can, these solemn occasions into revelry and jest. False teachers do all these things.

Verse 14.—Having eyes full af adultery.

Their vision is lascivious to such an extreme that it is unceasing, and every effort is made by them to lead astray, by temptations to the sensual appetite, those not fully grounded in the faith.

A heart they have exercised with covetous practices.

Beside being lewd, they are excessively grasping, engaging in every practice by which they can secure gain to themselves. In short, they are children of the curse, and will heir the curse pronounced by Christ against the wicked: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv. 41).

Verse 15.—Which have forsaken the right way.

These false teachers have wandered from the strait and narrow way which leads to life.

Following the way of Balaam.

Balaam loved the wages given for wrong-doing. He suffered himself purchased to engage in an evil cause. He placed himself for gain against the Lord and his people. He exhibited in this regard a madness that was extraordinary.

Verse 16.—But was rebuked for his iniquity.

God put words in the mouth of the brute he was riding, and he was thereby forced to attend to the angel that blocked his passage.

Verse 17.—These are wells without water.

These teachers, although they profess to teach much of profit, in fact have no instruction to impart; they promise much, but the disappointment is great.

Clouds that are carried with a tempest.

Clouds are supposed to contain rain, and, when such appear, descending showers are expected, but the clouds are quickly driven away as by a tornado blast, and none whatever falls upon the parched earth. So with these teachers and wicked men, not a spray of enlightenment ever strays from their polluted lips. Dr. Macknight uses such expressive words in relation to these apostolic similes that I here transcribe them: "There being few wells and little rain in the eastern countries, it was a grievous disappointment to a thirsty traveler to come to a well that had no water. The husbandman was equally disappointed to see clouds arise which gave the prospect of rain, but, ending in a tempest, instead of refreshing, destroyed the fruits of the earth. By these comparisons the ostentation, hypocrisy, levity and perniciousness of false teachers are set forth in the strongest colors."

To whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever.

In announcing the doom of these apostates, the Holy Spirit seems to struggle with our human vernacular in order to give us a conception of the doom of these wicked ones. Where the Common Version says, "Mist of darkness," the Revised Version, Syriac and Dr. Macknight say: "Blackness of darkness." This is their dreadful doom forever.

Verse 18.—For when they speak great swelling words.

The sense is that these wicked ones used words utterly devoid of any knowledge of divine things. Their speech was in great flowing, high-sounding words, claiming an illumination they did not possess; words of falsehood calculated to allure those by lusts of the flesh and lasciviousness that had theretofore escaped from such practices. They hoped thereby to seduce those who at one time lived with them

in the indulgence in all these evils. It was an effort to cause to arise in rebellion passions held under restraint in obedience to the precepts of the gospel of Christ—an attack led by the enemy of souls against the supposed weakest point of the Christian citadel.

Verse 19.—While they promise them liberty.

The promise held out to those sought to be apostatized and drawn from the faith was liberty. This was the promise. Liberty in this, that men possessing appetites are, and of right ought to be, free to indulge them without restraint. These teachers claimed that restraint in this regard was bondage. Those enduring this restraint would be relieved therefrom by following the advice of these teachers. This Promise is made by those who are the veriest slaves. They are under bondage to corruption, which is an implacable tyrant.

For of whom a man is overcome.

This is a legitimate and necessary conclusion. So says the apostle Paul. "His servants ye are to whom you obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness" (Rom. vi. 16).

Verse 20.—For if, after they have escaped.

By being taught of God, and learning thereby what we must do to become his children, which includes a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ; in short, have put on Christ, become his subjects, and, by the means so graciously provided for us by a loving Father, have escaped from the world and all its pollutions. Now, in case we become entangled again; with the allurements of the world, and are thus overcome and apostatized, what of our condition then? This last state is worse for us than the state from which we escaped at our conversion to Christ. Inspiration has said it, and the God of Christianity knows.

Verse 21.—For it had been better.

Such as apostatize would have been better off had they never heard the gospel of Christ, for by their apostasy

their sin is made the greater and the chains with which they bind themselves are stronger than they were before. A man once knowing the way of life, and turning from it, sins knowingly and willfully. Before he heard the gospel he was walking in the darkness of ignorance, to whom sympathy was to be extended. Such, however, as sin willfully and knowingly, are in a most deplorable and uncertain condition. My soul turns away in a nameless terror from the contemplation of the thought. Says the blessed Master: "That servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes" (Luke xii. 47).

Verse 22.—But it is happened unto them.

Of the ones who apostasize, the apostle says it happened according to a true proverb of Solomon. (Prov. xxvi. 11.) The dog has returned to his vomit again. The comparison is a striking one. The apostle, not satisfied in giving one comparison to enforce the truth of his declaration, seizes one more, which is also within the knowledge of all. The apostate is likened to a sow which, after she is carefully washed from all impurity, returns to her wallowing in the mire.

The teaching here designed to be enforced by the pen of inspiration is plain, and appears upon the very surface. That, as it is difficult to change the nature of these animals—the dog and the sow—an equal difficulty will be encountered in changing the wicked dispositions of some men. A continued indulgence in certain vices and a general course of vice finally culminates in the formation of habits as strong as nature; are, in fact, a second nature, and equally as hard to overcome.

CHAPTER III.

ANALYSIS.

The object I had in writing this letter is to stir you up, that you may keep in mind the words of the prophets about the reign of Christ, and the commandment we apostles of Jesus Christ have given you.

One thing I desire you to know in the outset is that scoffers will come in the last days, who will object to our gospel and teachings. They will say, among other things, that we claim the second coming of Christ is near at hand, and they claim there is no sign of his coming. They will say that all things are just as they were from the beginning. In this they are mistaken, for the world as it was at the first was destroyed by water. Besides, their claim of delay is without foundation. They make a mistake in this. God does not measure time as man measures it. Days and years are alike to him in the accomplishment of his purposes. He is not slack, but is long-suffering, that men may have opportunities for repentance, and is not willing that any should perish. Be assured, however, the day of judgment will come, and just as unexpectedly as comes a thief to steal. At that time the heavens will disappear, making a great noise. Everything will melt with a great heat, and the earth and everything in it will be burned up. Knowing that these things are certain, you should be holy and pure in all your acts toward God and man. We, however, have the promise of a new heaven and a new earth; not wicked like the present, but one in which right-doing only will exist. Looking for this new heaven and new earth, I urge you, beloved brethren, to be earnest and careful, that when the Lord comes he will find you in peace and blameless. Paul also spoke of these things, and while he wrote some sentences hard to comprehend, the unlearned and those who are not sound in the faith only will wrest them to their hurt. I urge you to beware, and not to be led away by the bad acts of the false teachers or wicked persons, and you fall from your stability in the faith, but, contrariwise, grow in Christian character and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him we both ascribe the honor of this salvation, and forever.

COMMENTARY.

Verse 1.—This second epistle, beloved.

The expression contained in this verse not only shows that Peter is the author of the present letter and of one formerly written, but also that both letters were written to the same individuals.

In both of which I stir up.

The subject the apostle had in writing both of his letters was that he might therein exhort them to live a holy life. Their minds being pure, that is, honest and sincere, having these things called to their remembrance by apostolic earnestness and anxiety for their good, could have nothing but a salutary effect.

Verse 2.—That ye may be mindful.

One object in writing to them was that they might ever keep before their minds the words of the holy prophets and the imperative injunctions given by those that were chosen by the Lord and Savior as his apostles, who were by that selection made his witnesses and ambassadors to the world of mankind. Keeping these words and teachings in memory, the apostle feared not their holy living.

Verse 3.—Knowing this first, that scoffers.

Among other things, remember that both prophets and apostles have told you that in the last days of Judaism scoffers will appear. These, walking after their own passions, deride, ridicule and attempt to make sport of the doctrine of the cross, and the teaching therewith connected.

Verse 4.—And saying, Where is the promise of his coming?

Among other things, you Christians proclaim the coming of the Lord, and they scoffingly ask where is the fulfillment of that promise; for, say these scoffers, since the fathers died everything remains just as it was from the very first beginning of time. Your Lord promised to come again and reward you, his followers. So you have taught, and so you still insist. Now, we ask confidently, where is the promise of the coming of your Lord?

Verse 5.—For this they are willingly ignorant of.

In thus speaking they exhibit a willing ignorance of God's word, and of his dealing with the world in the past. They claim for the earth stability and permanence, and deride the idea of its destruction, whereas, if they were properly informed, they would know that the heavens, or aerial atmosphere, existed anciently, and that at that time the earth was standing out of and in water.

Verse 6.—Whereby the world that then was.

By the water that surrounded the earth, the earth as it was of old was overflowed and destroyed. The apostle here refers to the destruction of the world by a flood of water

in the days of Noah. This destruction is a refutation of the claim of stability being attached to the earth, so confidently assumed by these scoffers. The weakness of their argument at once becomes apparent.

Verse 7.—But the heavens and the earth which are now.

The world as it has existed since the flood by the word of the living God—the same Word which destroyed the old world—is now kept reserved for destruction, not by water, however, for God said he would not so again destroy it, but by fire. This destruction by fire will occur at the day of judgment, at which time perdition will overwhelm ungodly men.

Verse 8.—But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing.

The scoffers urge the stability of the earth because of God's delay in destroying it. When you reflect that God has eternity in which to execute his purposes, you will at once perceive that with him duration is nothing. Day and year are the same with him.

Verse 9.—The Lord is not slack.

What God has said, or what he has promised to do as to the time in which he will accomplish, the same must not be measured as men measure time. His delay simply evinces his long-suffering extended to men, giving thereby time for repentance. His delay shows his love for man, and his unwillingness that any should perish.

Verse 10.—But the day of the Lord will come as a thief.

The day of the Lord's coming is certain, and when it comes it will be as unexpected as the coming of one to steal.

In the which the heavens shall pass away.

At that day the heavens, being set on fire, are taken away with a great noise, and the elements of which they are composed are melted into liquid by fire, and thereby the earth and all the works, both of God and man, therein shall be consumed. This is a fearful statement. We take it as a fact to be however, and refrain from any reasoning thereon. God has spoken.

Verse 11.—Seeing, then, that all these things.

This is an interrogatory propounded to the brethren. All these things being sure to occur, what kind of persons ought we to be? The answer is plain. Pure and holy in all conduct toward men, and a walking before God blameless.

Verse 12.—Looking for and hasting.

We should act here as if we were expecting and earnestly desiring the coming of that day appointed of God for the burning up of the heavens and the earth, when the end of all things shall come as God has ordained.

Verse 13.—Nevertheless, according to his promise.

God has promised us a new heaven and a new earth after this has been burned up. Unlike those destroyed by fire, in them was evil. In the ones promised only righteousness shall exist. This new heaven and new earth we look for.

Verse 14.—Wherefore, beloved, seeing.

Since we look for this new heaven and new earth at the coming of Christ, brethren, earnestly endeavor—make great exertions—to be found by the Master when he comes spotless and without cause for reproach. Being thus spotless, you will be found of him in peace.

Verse 15.—And account that the long-suffering.

Consider that the delay in the coming of the Lord is his long-suffering with the impenitent, giving them an extension of time in which to secure their salvation.

As our beloved brother Paul.

Here Peter informs us of his knowledge, of some at least, of Paul's epistles. The churches of Galatia, Colosse and Ephesus were in Asia Minor. To these churches Paul had written. Peter evidently had seen these letters, and herein he gives them his apostolic commendation.

Verse 16.—As also in all of his epistles.

The apostle says that Paul spoke in all of his epistles the things in this his epistle announced. From this expression

we gather the idea that he had seen other writings of Paul than those addressed to the Christians in Asia Minor.

Some things hard to be understood.

Even at the present day there is not unanimity among writers concerning many things from Paul's pen.

Which they that are unlearned and unstable.

Those that are ignorant and those that are not fixed, but are vacillating in disposition, base false doctrine upon some of Paul's sayings, as they do upon other portions of Scripture, and thus bring upon themselves destruction.

Verse 17.—Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know.

Being forewarned, be on your guard, lest ye be seduced from your steadfastness in the gospel by the errors of these teachers, and are induced to give up the hope you have of eternal life through Christ.

Verse 18.—But grow in grace.

In place of apostatizing, or becoming unstable, grow in stature as Christians, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and his doctrine, daily. The growth in grace and in knowledge must keep pace with each other. The writer then solemnly ascribes to Christ all the glory, to which every honest and sincere disciple responds. Amen.

FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

INTRODUCTION.

This Epistle is attributed to the apostle John, without any question of which I am aware. He is the same John who is the author of the fourth Gospel, called by some the crown of all the Gospels. He was a son of Zebedee, and the brother of James. He needs no lengthy introduction to the reader. It is enough for us to know that special favors were bestowed upon him by the Master, among which were: Being permitted to be present at the raising from the dead of the daughter of Jairus, at the transfiguration and at Gethsemane, the privilege and pleasing duty to care for the mother of Jesus in her declining days, and, finally, to receive the last communication from the Master designed for the children of men. To these special favors, thus bestowed upon John for wise purposes, I think it is safe to add that he was the only one of the Lord's chosen witnesses who was permitted to die a natural and peaceful death.

TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING.

Both the place where John was at the time of writing this Epistle, and the year in which the same was written, can not be determined with even tolerable accuracy. He was evidently somewhere in Judea, and wrote the same immediately after his escape from Jerusalem. This escape occurred after the city was besieged by the Romans. Some statements contained in it lead me to this conclusion, which are not necessary to name, as the reader will, on reading the Epistle, easily discover the same. This view, being the correct one, fixes the date of the writing about the year A. D. 69.

TO WHOM WRITTEN.

In the first instance to Christians in Judea and the surrounding country, and, secondly, for all Christians in all the succeeding ages.

WHY WRITTEN.

The time had arrived predicted by the Master that false Christs would arise. They were then making themselves known, and were promulgating their false doctrines and subverting the faith of some. To prevent the success of their mission, and to encourage the disciples in their loyalty to the doctrine and the cause of Christ, was this Epistle written. These two important objects induced the apostle to write this grand and noble letter.

The rebukes administered to the false teachers are scathing, and the refutation and repudiation of their vicious teachings are cogent, convincing and fearless, while the exhortations to steadfastness in the faith on the part of disciples are the most tender and urgent. The great love of God for the children of men, the model life of the Master, and the inestimable reward to the faithful of eternal life are powerfully portrayed by a master mind and a loving heart.

CHAPTER I.

ANALYSIS.

The writer of this Epistle from the very outset seems to have before his mind some claim that is being put forth with more or less apparent candor, and urged as true with great zeal and persistence, which is regarded by him as heretical and subversive of the cause of Christ. In the very first utterance contained in the first verse of this chapter he begins a refutation of this pernicious doctrine. Affirmatively, the writer says in this chapter that the Word of Life was from the beginning. That living Word was manifested, and was seen, heard and handled by the apostles, and only what they had seen, heard and handled did they declare to the world; that those who accepted this message and acted upon it had fellowship not only with the apostles, but also with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, which, being a great honor, ought to render them joyful to completeness. The declaration is plainly stated that the message so declared by the

apostles was that God is light, and that to have and retain fellowship with him we must walk in the light. Those who claim this fellowship while walking in darkness lie, and have no regard for the truth. Those walking in the light, should they in an unguarded moment give way to temptation and sin, are therefrom cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Sin, of course, must be penitently confessed. The writer then says: "If we think we have no sin, we deceive ourselves; and if we say we have not sinned, we thereby make God a liar, who has already declared by his Word that all have sinned."

COMMENTARY.

Verse 1.—That which was from the beginning.

The peculiar characteristic of the writer of this Epistle is manifested in his very first utterance. When the same writer commences to write his memoirs, by us at the present day commonly called the Gospel by John, in the very outset of that production he asserts the majesty and moral grandeur of the Lord Jesus in this most astonishing announcement: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John i. 1). He thus boldly takes us back to the beginning of things, so far into the past of all existences as the great Creator has seen fit to make a revelation. Now, in this Epistle he desires his readers to understand that the living Word, about which he proposes a further discourse, is the same Word that was at the beginning of all things, and that so now he is the same Word at the beginning of the gospel age. The Word that was at the beginning has simply taken upon himself human flesh, and thus has become to us the living Word, and as the living Word we—that is, his chosen twelve apostles—have heard, seen and handled him.

At this point in the exposition of this verse more than ordinary care and caution should be invoked in order that we fail not in grasping in all its amplitude the force of the apostolic declaration. Think of it—heard, seen and handled. Three of the more important of the human senses are brought into lively exercise, and we are so clearly and definitely informed, for the purpose, no doubt to satisfy the reader or hearer, that he may rely upon the communications made with the most implicit confidence. However,

before proceeding further, it will be of advantage to have also before us the contents of verse 2.

Verse 2.—For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness.

This entire verse is parenthetical, and designed to be, at least to some extent, explanatory of the facts contained in verse 1. The idea is this: The Word was with God at the beginning of all things; that same Word took upon himself flesh and became the Living Word—became Jesus who was born at Bethlehem—and this Living Word we apostles heard whenever he spoke, saw whatever he did, and to make the matter more absolutely certain, we handled him while here on earth—hence we bear witness; that is, testify. We testify to what we heard, what we saw, and to the further fact that we handled the Word of life. We show to you by our testimony that this is the author of eternal life to all, for if he was with God at the beginning, and was God, he is eternal life himself, although for a time he abode here on earth in flesh. This brings us to a point where we can, with profit, apply the thoughts contained in the first verse. The essential qualifications of a witness are by the apostle plainly and boldly asserted. The issue is so sharply drawn that it can not be evaded. These qualifications are asserted, and may be investigated. If, however, the witnesses possess all these qualifications, their competency to testify must go unchallenged, and their testimony can not be either excluded or disregarded. The decision of sound reason and the combined wisdom and enlightened judgment of the ages is, that with the unimpaired faculties of seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting and smelling, the information these communicate to the human soul is to be accepted and regarded as conclusive. Sometimes only one of these senses may be called into exercise, and to that extent only will the testimony be admissible. Sometimes two. Sometimes all five of the senses are in lively exercise, as in the case of the miracle recorded in Matthew xiv. 15-21 verses, inclusive. It so happens that most generally two only of these senses—that of seeing and hearing—are in exercise, and these are considered all-

sufficient to render a witness competent to testify in the most enlightened tribunals. The apostles having heard, seen and handled (felt) the Word of life while in the flesh, their competency to testify in relation thereto is placed beyond question, and, if honest, their testimony must be received as absolutely and overwhelmingly true by every intelligent man and woman on earth.

Verse 3.—That which we have seen and heard.

We apostles have told you nothing concerning the Lord Jesus, what he came into the world for, his teachings, his miracles, his death, burial and resurrection, his world-wide commission to his apostles, the establishment of his Church in the world, his great desire that all should become his followers, be pardoned here, walk in life as he commanded and have eternal life in the world to come, but just what we have seen and just what we heard of the Lord; and nothing but this have we declared unto you, and we so declare it that you may participate with us in this knowledge. This is fellowship. God's love gave us a Savior, in fact, the whole Christian system. Jesus was sent by the Father; Jesus spoke the words of the Father and performed what the Father desired. We, his apostles, received the words of the Lord, and now we communicate to you, so that our fellowship—our participation in this knowledge and in these blessings—is with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. It might be well here to state that, in all the courts of judicature in all civilized lands and nations no one questions the competency of a witness to tell in a given case what he has seen, what he has heard, and, if the subject of inquiry admits of it, to tell what he has felt, tasted or smelt. It may be said that one witness might be deceived as to what he saw. This is true; but suppose one witness should testify that, at the same time, he also more than once heard plainly certain utterances. Think you that both senses could be deceived? Possibly, even this might occur, and mainly for this reason it is that more than one witness on some occasions is required in the courts to establish a given proposition, although not absolutely requisite in the proof of a will.

But what must be the evident conclusion where three or more, and even thirteen, as in the case of the resurrection of Christ, wherein all testify essentially to the same thing. Can it be possible that the sense of sight and hearing of so great a number could be deceived at one and the same time? Take now your own experience or that of any of your acquaintances—can you admit an illusion of both the senses of sight and hearing at one and the same time? But, admitting such a possibility, with your experience as a rule for guidance, what can you say when two, three or more all say that they saw, heard and handled at the same time a certain person whom they had known? If all such could be deceived, then there is no certainty in the evidence of sense, upon which the whole superstructure of our laws depend. Here I present a quotation from the introduction to the “Christian Preacher’s Companion,” written by Alexander Campbell, which I regard as absolutely convincing on this point. “But we speak of perfect testimony of a large number of witnesses having ample and repeated opportunities for examination of the most cautious, rational, discriminating character; most of them first opposed to the facts which they afterwards believed and reported, and withal having often two, frequently three, and sometimes all of the senses addressed in the same miracle. Such witnesses as these never were deceived, and not to believe them, who on such testimony changed their whole course of life, is to admit the chief of absurdities, viz.: an effect without a cause.”

Verse 4.—And these things write we.

I, it is true, write you, but in so doing you may feel assured that it is the same as though all the witnesses of the Lord were writing, and the object of writing to you concerning the things of the Lord and our fellowship with him is that your joy may be full and complete when you fully recognize the great honor that is thus bestowed upon you.

Verse 5.—This then is the message.

The message we heard of the Lord, and the one we declared unto you, I now repeat in another form, and this

I do because I have spoken to you of our fellowship with the Father and with the Son.

God is light.

God is the source and the dispenser of light—all light, both physical and moral. God being the head of our fellowship and the source of all light, he is, therefore, the dispenser of all moral light. He is light absolutely. In him is no darkness at all, no evil, no mistake. Moral light is possessed by him in infinite perfection. Bro. B. W. Johnson's notes here are especially clear. He says: "The term denotes luminous, clearness, the free and benevolent source from whence flow light, intelligence, purity and blessing, absolutely free from alien intermixture, since in him is no darkness at all. Light represents truth, knowledge, holiness; darkness represents ignorance, error, falsehood and sin."

Verse 6.—If we say that we have fellowship with him.

Should we claim to have fellowship with God, who is absolute light—light in infinite perfection—while we are walking in darkness—that is not doing right, not doing what we know God requires at our hands, acting wickedly; in so claiming we lie. This must be plain, and it is in accordance with the doctrine of the gospel, that if God is light and we walk not in the light, the fellowship is broken, we are not in accord, and we must be in accord with the will of God to have fellowship with him.

Verse 7.—But if we walk in the light.

If we claim fellowship with God while we walk in the light, we lie not. If we practice holiness in our lives because we are assured that God is holy, we thus keep before us the desire of the head of our fellowship, that all should be holy, as he is holy; then and in that case we do have fellowship with God and with one another; and also in that case the blood of Jesus Christ, which was shed for the remission of sins, shed as an atonement for sins, cleanses us from all sins. That is walking in the light all our days. At the last we need fear no punishment for sin; from this punishment

we are delivered. We are fitted to have a fellowship or communion with our God in the heavenly world.

Verse 8.—If we say that we have no sin.

We can not, however, claim that we have reached a sinless state in this life. Should we so claim we deceive ourselves and possess no knowledge whatever of the truth on that subject, as taught by Christ and his disciples. The Nicolaitans in the days of John, the writer of this Epistle, made this claim. They claimed that they could do no wrong, and hence indulged in all sorts of excesses, and yet they were promptly repudiated by the Master. (Rev. ii. 6.) All along the ages and in our own day there are those who, in one way or another, and to one extent or another, make the claim that they have attained to a state in which they sin not. Now the language of the apostle is in direct opposition to this claim.

Verse 9.—If we confess our sins.

Since it is that while we are in this life we are liable to sin, be it known to you, brethren, that God is faithful and just to forgive our sins if we confess to him. Admitting our sins and our firm determination to forsake them, God will pardon. We obtain this pardon through the blood of Christ, coming to God in penitence. Note carefully, the confession of sins must be made by the sinning one directly to God. Since the pardon comes from him, the confession must be made to him, exhibiting at the time of such confession the other requisites indicative of true penitence. True penitence is followed, as a matter of course, by a reformation in the matter wherein the sin occurred.

Verse 10.—If we say that we have not sinned.

We attempt to make God a liar when we say we have not sinned. This will appear evident to every mind when we reflect that on this subject God has spoken. He has said: "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23). "They are all gone aside; they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no,

not one" (Psa. xiv. 3). Or, as this Psalm is quoted by the apostle Paul: "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. iii. 10-12). Thus, God has spoken by his servants, and should we in the face of these declarations declare our sinlessness, we make God a liar and his word is not in us. We must observe that the verses 8, 9 and 10 are addressed to and intended for Christians, and the impression is intended by the Apostle John, to be left indelibly upon their minds, their constant dependence upon God; their great necessity for God's pardoning mercy day by day. The alien is elsewhere taught how to obtain the pardon of his sins, and become, by adoption, a member of God's family and an heir of eternal life. But the apostle, in the ninth verse of this chapter, points out the law of pardon to the erring Christian. These distinctions kept in mind, all is plain.

CHAPTER II.

ANALYSIS.

In the former chapter, having set forth the fact that God is light, and that those only who walk in the light have fellowship with the Father, and the great honor of such fellowship and the blessed privilege of being cleansed from sin, in this chapter he writes to them that these blessings are not to be taken as an encouragement to sin, but the contrary was intended, to present an inducement to them not to sin; but if any among them should be overcome by the allurements around them, not to despair, but to remember that they have an advocate with the Father—a powerful advocate, one who is essentially the righteous one. This righteous one made a sin-offering for you Christians, and not for them only, but for all the world who would be penitent and forsake their sins. A criterion is given whereby you may know whether you are God's children or not; that is, by keeping his commandments. He that says I know God, and yet does not keep his commandments, simply tells a falsehood when he so speaks, and in such an one there is no veracity, while one who observes all of God's requirements truly loves God. By this rule you can judge. One that abides in the fellowship of God walks as God

directs. In a sense, I write no new commandment, for God from the very beginning desired men to love one another, and yet in a sense I do write a new commandment. It is new in the rule by which to measure the love you entertain for your fellow-men. Formerly it was an eye for an eye. Now, it is to love even your enemies. This being so, you can not hate your brother. You must have love for him if you walk in the light and have fellowship with God. This Christian life is a new life. If you love not your brother, you are not in the light, but in darkness.

I write you because your sins are forgiven you for the sake of Christ's name. I write to fathers because they have known Christ from the beginning, and to the young men because they have overcome the world in obeying the truth. Now, to all of you I say, Love not the world, for in so doing you show that the love of the Father is not in you. The things of the world, that is the lusts of the flesh and eyes, and the pride of life, are not of God. All these will pass away, while God's will abides forever. The false teachers you heard were to come are already come. Those went out from us because they were not of us. He is an anti-Christ or false teacher, who denies that Jesus is Christ. You believe in Jesus as the Christ, and the promise of eternal life is assured to you. I write to you that you may not be led astray by these false teachers. Now, abide in Christ, so that when he comes again you will not be ashamed before him. This will be doing righteousness, and those only so doing will be like him, for he is righteous.

COMMENTARY.

Verse 1.—My little children, these things write I.

The tender and affectionate manner observed by the writer is most striking. John regards them as his children, and so far as authority is concerned, or it may be his advanced age, the persons addressed could and should look upon him as their father in the common faith. The authority, in either view he seeks to assert, is parental. To them he writes and the object of writing is given—that they sin not. It is as though he would say: While all are liable to sin you should strive to overcome all temptation to sin; and what I have written concerning God's faithfulness to forgive those that sin, I do not desire you should take as an encouragement to do wrong. Upon the contrary, God's mercy ought to be a strong reason why, in order to please

him, you should strive not to commit sin. Since, however, you are liable to fall, let such one not despair; let him not throw away his hope of eternal life and continue to sin habitually and willfully; but if he sin, let him come to God, penitently confessing and seeking pardon, remembering all the time he has an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous, the just one. Christ is our advocate, and he is just. He committed no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. He it is who intercedes with the Father for our pardon, as it was foretold by the Prophet Isaiah, in the following words: "And made intercession for the transgressors" (Isaiah liii. 12). Paul also assures us of Christ's intercession for the pardon of the erring disciple, in these words: "Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. vii. 25).

Verse 2.—And he is the propitiation for our sins.

Christ is all this. It may appear great and exceedingly momentous, yet it is a fact in the economy of God and his system by which intelligent creatures are to be reconciled to him and saved.

Propitiation.

So much has been written upon the subject of the propitiation in Christ, and so much senseless speculation is afloat in the world, I am not at all surprised that the simple meaning of the term has been overlooked. On the ark of the covenant, placed by Moses in the Most Holy Place by the command of God, was a covering called the mercy seat (See Exodus xxv. 10-21, and Exodus xxxvii. 1-9, and Exodus xl. 1-3). This was ordained by God's command and for the purpose, that there at the mercy seat God would meet man: "And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandments unto the children of Israel" (Exodus xxv. 22). This was called the propitiatory. The high priest approached this

mercy seat once each year with blood. God here met and communed with him for the people. Now, Christ is our mercy seat; he is our propitiatory; he is our altar and our high priest; his blood has been offered for us—for our sins. He is, therefore, our propitiation. Here it is that God meets the sinner, and nowhere else. In Christ, and not out of Christ, may pardon be expected.

For the sins of the whole world.

The blood of Christ, shed in his death, became a propitiation, not for our sins only who profess to be his children, but Christ is a mercy-seat, to be approached by every suffering son and daughter of Adam. The method of approach is made simple and easy. His blood must be applied, and can only be applied, when reached as he has commanded. Nowhere in the Scriptures can a declaration be found that Christ shed his blood for the elect only. The "whole world" means here just what the language imports. All throughout the world, from the first even to the end of time, may avail themselves of this gracious provision by accepting God's blessed Son, complying with his requirements, living obedient lives, and receiving at the last the same blessed reward.

Verse 3.—And hereby we do know.

To gather the thought here intended, just take the last clause first, thus: "If we keep his commandments." We by that means know—that is our evidence—that we know him. We know God, and the convincing evidence to our minds that we do know God is the fact that we observe, keep and do all that he has required at our hands.

Verse 4.—He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not.

Any one who asserts that he knows God, and does not keep his commandments, John says of such an one two things: 1. He is a liar. 2. The truth is not in him. These are fearful declarations. They come, however, from inspiration. "He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that heareth me, heareth him that sent me." The plainness of speech here is specially significant. Evidently, God intended that

his servant, John, should leave no ground for mistake or blunder.

Verse 5.—But whoso keepeth his word.

Any one who keeps God's word, is he that does what is therein required, and refrains from doing what is therein prohibited; in such an one the love of God is perfected. That is to say, we show our love to and of God by our obedience. It is the only possible method of proving our loyalty. It may be possible, since the singular number is here used, that it may have a special application. "Word" is singular. "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and, behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." "Hear ye him" is a command of the Father, and I have no doubt that those who obey the Savior, are at the same time obeying God, and do thereby show their love of God. If one, however, obeys all God's commands imposed upon us in this age, it is very certain that such will obey the one given on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Verse 6.—He that saith he abideth in him.

One may say, I am in the fellowship of God and his Son. That being true, such an one ought to show by his godly life that he walks as the Savior walked while here on earth. The Savior's conduct was irreproachable. With it God was pleased. So one claiming to be in the fellowship—that is, abideth in him—must conduct himself as Christ did. His conduct is better proof than a simple profession.

Verse 7.—Brethren, I write no new commandment.

It is no new commandment I write when I bid you to walk as Christ walked. This is an old commandment. Simply call up, in memory, what you heard from the beginning; how that the Father, at the baptism of his Son, declared himself well pleased with him, and that he again, at the Mount of Transfiguration, uttered the same words, with the additional injunction, to hear him. Now, we hear him when we walk as he walked, conduct ourselves as he conducted

himself. From the very beginning of the proclamation of the gospel, these things you heard as coming from the Father on high in reference to his Son, and you heard them that they might serve as a guidance to your action in life.

Verse 8.—Again, a new commandment.

New in a sense not fully understood, and not so fully taught until Christ came. While in substance it was old, in the sense I here now refer to, it is new. Love is the theme. Now, Christ taught us, we should even love our enemies. He showed his love for us and for the whole world by laying down his life. This he did willingly. He died for his enemies as well as for his friends.

Which thing is true in him and in you.

As it was true in Christ, that he loved his enemies by dying for them, which was the strongest demonstration he could possibly give to the world, so this kind of love is true as applied to you, when you walk as he walked, and, in this regard, do as he did.

Because the darkness is past.

The time when it was considered proper to say, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," has been suspended by a new era, when we are taught to love them who persecute us and revile us. That was comparative darkness. The teaching of Christ on this subject is light, which now shines.

Verse 9.—He that saith he is in the light.

When one asserts that he is in this light, governing himself by this teaching of Christ, to love our enemies, and yet hates his brother, such an one is self-deceived. He is still in darkness. He is not in fellowship with God, for God is light.

Verse 10.—He that loveth his brother abideth in the light.

The proof that one is in the light—that is, conforming his conduct to the new teaching of Christ—is to be shown

only by love for his brother. Brotherly love is proof that one abides in the light, and while so abiding no stumbling-block will appear. All cause or occasion for stumbling has been removed.

Verse 11.—But he that hateth his brother.

In this case the reverse is true. Occasion for stumbling is ever present. Here there is no light, all is darkness, and one hating his brother is walking in darkness; and so long as hatred for the brother remains, the darkness remains. Such an one can not know which way he goes; that is to say, the miserable end of such a course of life and conduct, being contrary to Christ's teachings and example, it can only result in failure of that reward promised to the faithful disciples, and will end only in ultimate condemnation.

Darkness hath blinded his eyes.

That is, the eyes of his understanding. He can not see the many dangers that beset him on every side. Safety only is assured in being governed by Christ in his commands. Doing as he did, obeying what he commands, is walking in the light; any other course is certain destruction, so far as Christian character and success are concerned.

Verse 12.—I write unto you, little children.

John calls all the followers of Christ little children. While to him they were a loving charge, I rather think the use of this phrase was designed by him to impress upon their minds his parental anxiety over their spiritual welfare, and his care for them in this respect. Taking the whole body of believers into account, this is the view he would impress upon them: The relation of the teacher and the taught of father and children. This view becomes the more apparent when we lay alongside of the common version the expression as it appears in the Syriac. It is, "dear children," or, as it is elsewhere, "children." John subsequently divides them into three classes, as we shall soon see.

Because your sins are forgiven.

The reason is here given for his writing to them, and the anxiety he manifests toward them. They were in covenant relation with God; they were in Christ Jesus. They had obeyed and thus came into Christ, and, as his children, their sins were forgiven; and through him, as their advocate, future sins would be forgiven upon confession, repentance and prayer.

Verse 13.—I write unto you, fathers.

Here, John begins the classification of those denominated. Little children, or dear children, or simply, my children. First, it is to those of them somewhat advanced in age, if, in fact, it may not be said of them, fathers, as respect the time of their service in the cause of Christ; to you I write because you have known him, that is walked with him, recognizing, realizing, and enjoying his presence.

I write unto you, young men.

Those who became obedient to the faith at a later period than those whom I denominate fathers, I write to you, because you overcame the wicked one when you threw off his yoke and accepted the leadership of Christ, and now abide in him by resisting the temptations of your former master.

I write unto you, little children.

John's third classification of believers: These are later converts to the Master; they are the babes in Christ; they are written to because they have become acquainted with the Father, his great love for the children of men, manifested in the gift of his Son.

Verse 14.—I have written unto you, fathers.

A repetition to those fathers contained in verse 13. I fail to see, as some do, any additional injunction herein contained, over and above former exhortations. I take it to be simply a system of enforcement of the same thought common among Hebrews.

I have written unto you, young men.

Here, young men are again addressed, but additional reasons are given. Those reasons are three in number. 1. Because ye are strong. 2. Because the word of God abides in you. 3. Because you have overcome the wicked one. Here we have a magnificent commentary on the beauty, strength, and grandeur of the Christian religion. A power that can so transform our humanity is demonstrative of its divine origin. Youth is the vigor of manhood. These young Christians were vigorous Christians. They embraced the teachings of Christ, abode in his love, and in his light; they were, therefore, strong in the faith and impervious to the shafts and evil machinations of the devil.

Verse 15.—Love not the world.

This exhortation is intended for all three classes of believers before mentioned. Love not the world, meaning the wicked practices of men in the world; nor the things that are in the world, meaning not only the treasures and ambitions of the world, but also all the evils thereof, such as unrestrained desires of the flesh, pleasures of appetite and passion; in short, all evils that lead astray from the love of God, and the right way which he commands—that right way in which Christ, our great model, walked before God, doing his will.

If any man love the world.

Here we have an unqualified declaration. One seeking the ambitions and things of this world, and the pleasures of life only, has no love of the Father. That love is not in him. Make no mistake here. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Love of God does not show itself in struggles for the things of this world, or in pursuit of its pleasures.

Verse 16.—For all that is in the world.

Here, as before, the word world comprehends the men of the world. This is apparent from the succeeding clause.

The lust of the flesh.

This expression is one component part of what the

apostle calls the world, and since it applies only to man, I take it that, by the world, the writer desires us to understand him to mean the wicked men of the world—are not of the Father. These he embraces in the classification, as follows: 1. Lust of the flesh. 2. Lust of the eyes. 3. Pride of life.

In the first may be included every desire which has its source in the appetite. In the second, every desire aroused by objects which make their appeal through our sense of sight. In the third may be included, what is displayed vainly in the world, such as ambitions for place and power, and thus gratify our own vanity to be great among men, without regard to virtue and merit. Avarice, greed, selfishness and pride are included in the third classification, and it is very doubtful whether even then we have exhausted all that is included in the pride of life. However, all these are not of the Father. They came not from him. They are not in consonance with his divine character. They are not such as his children exhibit. He is holy. His children must be holy. These are all evil. In the succeeding verse another view is to be had of these things, well to be pondered.

Verse 17.—And the world passeth away.

Here we are informed that the world and all the lust thereof is transient; nothing permanent or abiding about it. Certainly a poor foundation upon which to build.

But he that doeth the will of God.

Here quite a different foundation is presented. Doing God's will insures something abiding; something enduring; no danger of being swept away; the only foundation that is essentially permanent.

Verse 18.—Little children, it is the last time.

As to what is meant by the last time, different views are had. Dr. Macknight thinks it refers to the end of the Jewish commonwealth. With this view I can not agree. My reason is, the writer knew that the Jewish age had ceased when the Master said, "All authority is given unto

me," and he could not refer to the fall of Jerusalem, because, if I be not mistaken, at the time of this writing that noted city was in ruins. In my judgment, he meant to have them understand, the Christian age would be the last dispensation of mercy God would vouchsafe to the world. Salvation must be had in this age, and in accordance with the provisions therein tendered, or not at all. No other presentation would be offered to the children of men.

That antichrist shall come.

They had been told that a certain thing would take place, and when it did, thereby they should know that it was in the last time or age. Christ means the anointed one. One claiming to be the Christ, and not being the one born at Bethlehem, would be a false Christ or an antichrist. Now, since the antichrist was foretold by the Master himself, and the time of coming being fixed in the last time, and John, affirming that already in his day there were many antichrists, we may know assuredly that we live in the last time or age—an age which will continue until the final consummation of all things. From the time of Christ until the end of the world will the Christian age continue.

Verse 19.—They went out from us.

The meaning here is clear. All these antichrists are simply apostates. They sprang up from the Church of Christ; and yet, while this is true, they were not of us. They were not genuine converts; they were simply wolves in sheep's clothing. Their profession of faith in Christ was a mere pretense, for had they the whole-hearted faith in the Son of God, so requisite to citizenship in his kingdom, they would have continued humble, loving disciples. As it is, their going out from among us, and their bitter opposition to the doctrine of Christ, is an exhibition of the fact that they never were really and truly converted. They only made a pretense of conversion, the better to enable them to carry out their own designs.

Verse 20.—But ye have an unction.

Anointing is a better word than unction. The anointing

is from the Holy Spirit; and, being so anointed, they are qualified to discriminate between the true and the false teachings and teachers. Because of this anointing or unction, they were enabled to know all these things.

Verse 21.—I have not written unto you.

It was not because they were ignorant of the truth that the Word was made flesh, but because they knew this as the truth, and that they were capable of discerning the difference between the truth and a lie. If these false teachers or antichrists promulgated their heresies, they should be prepared to resist the same, and their utterances would be heresies if they denied that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh.

Verse 22.—Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?

To deny that Jesus is the Christ is to be guilty of falsehood. These apostates lyingly deny him. They reject the testimony he gave of himself in his teachings and in his miracles, and thereby deny both Father and Son. Such are antichrists.

Verse 23.—Whosoever denieth the Son.

Any one who shall deny that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, does not acknowledge the Father, but rejects his testimony given by him at the baptism of Jesus and on the Mount of Transfiguration. And any one who acknowledges that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, thereby acknowledges both God and his Son.

Verse 24.—Let that therefore abide in you.

What the apostles preached from the beginning of the gospel age, that the Word was made flesh, which you believed, and by which you were controlled in your actions subsequent to your whole-hearted reception of this truth, let that abide in you. Continue to embrace trustingly that teaching; you heard it from the beginning. If this remain

in you as your firm belief, you will continue in the fellowship of the Father and the Son.

Verse 25.—And this is the promise.

The result of this steadfastness in the faith preached from the beginning, and which is lovingly entertained in this fellowship with the Father and Son, is this eternal life; an unending enjoyment of companionship with the Father and the Son in heaven's blessed abode.

Verse 26.—These things have I written.

The things concerning antichrists, opposers of Christ, false teachers—those that would lead you astray—these things, so written, commence at the 18th verse and continue to the end of the chapter, and should be carefully studied, and the warnings therein mentioned implicitly observed and followed.

Verse 27.—But the anointing which ye have received.

The Lord had promised the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles into all truth. The apostles were empowered to confer spiritual gifts in the first age of the church. This was a necessity until all things should be perfected. Those to whom John wrote were possessed of these gifts—these anointings—and were thus provided with an infallible guide to know the truth and to detect the error, and needed no teaching from man. They had a teaching from on high, which was the very truth and no lie. Hence, all they needed was an exhortation to abide by this teaching.

Verse 28.—And now, little children.

The exhortation is earnest. Abide in him—that is, in Christ, in his teaching, doctrine, and precepts, for he shall appear once again to judge the world. At that time, if we abide in him, do his bidding, building up thereby characters fitted for companionship with God, and the Son, and the holy angels, and the good of all ages, we shall have confidence of our acceptance of him, and will not appear before him in fear, doubt, or shame.

Verse 29.—If ye know that he is righteous.

As through the apostle would ask a question: Do you know that God is righteous? He has promised that every one who obeys his Son shall inherit eternal life. The doing of righteousness, then, is required of those who lay claim to this promise. They only are the heirs of this inheritance. You need make no mistake if you believe God to be righteous, and that he has promised eternal life to those who do righteousness; such only are heirs of that promise, and all such are begotten of him, belong to his family, and none others.

CHAPTER III.**ANALYSIS.**

God shows a great love to you in bestowing upon you the great honor of being called his children. You are the sons of God, and yet there are greater blessings for you in store. You shall be like him, and see him just as he is. This is a great hope and a strong reason for striving to be pure. A violation of law is sin. Christ came to take away sin; those who abide in him do not sin. One who sins does not know Christ. To be righteous, you must act right. One who sins does so at the dictates of the devil, who sinned from the first. Christ came to destroy the works of the devil. One born of God does not commit sin habitually, and so long as God's will and desire are present with him, he will not sin. You can tell the children of God from the children of the devil in this; he that sins habitually and loves not his brother is not a child of God. From the beginning of the gospel of Christ, this is the message: "Love one another." Cain did not love his brother, for he slew him, because his brother's deeds were right in God's sight, and he thus condemned the works of Cain as evil. I give you a criterion by which you may know whether you have passed from death unto life, if you love the brethren. In this we see God's love. Christ laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. Such a love as this can not exist in one who refuses to administer to the needs of his brother. We must not love in profession only, but in fact, showing it by acts. Otherwise our hearts will condemn us, and God is greater than our hearts. But if we obey his commandments, believing on the Son of God, and loving the brethren, we know assuredly that God abides with and in us, and we with him, by this his Spirit which he hath given us.

COMMENTARY.

Verse 1.—Behold, what manner of love.

Remembering that the last thought in the foregoing chapter introduced was the fact that we were born of God. How wonderful has been the love of God in permitting and making provisions whereby we might thus become his sons. Here is a wide field for meditation. It would be quite a condescension for an earthy king to make provisions, whereby his subjects might become members of his royal family; it would be quite an exhibition of love. How, then, can we comprehend that love, whereby the King of all kings provides the means of earth's born subjects being inducted into his family, and becoming his sons and heirs of his glory. Well may the inspired writer exclaim, Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!

Therefore the world knoweth us not.

It follows, as a matter of course, that if the world know not the Father—that is, did not recognize and acknowledge him—that it will not know us, who are his children.

Verse 2.—Beloved, now are we the sons of God.

The announcement that we have the exalted privilege of being the sons of God is followed by a still greater and more important fact, which is connected with that relationship, viz.: that it does not appear what we shall be. Our future reward and glory are not yet manifest, yet we know something great is to follow. The revelation already is assurance enough to us, that when the Lord shall come we shall be like him, both in body and in moral character. We shall see him as he is in glory, and just such image as he possesses will by him be conferred on us, that where he is we may be also.

Verse 3.—And every man that hath this hope.

Every faithful Christian has this hope. The hope of being like and dwelling with the Lord of glory will cause us to strive to be like him. Christ was, and is, pure; therefore, every faithful Christian will strive to be pure.

Verse 4.—Whosoever committeth sin.

The idea is, habitually or continually does wrong. This idea must be borne in mind in order that we may fully understand other statements contained in this chapter and thereby insure perfect harmony. Doing, working, or committing sin is a transgression of the law, and will surely be followed by punishment.

Verse 5.—And ye know that he was manifested.

One of the objects of Christ's coming into the world was to take away our sins, by remitting the same; but a second object had in that coming was, by his example and the course of instruction given by him, which, if pursued by us, would take away even our disposition to sin. He could be our example, and give this kind of instruction, because he was himself without sin.

Verse 6.—Whosoever abideth in him.

Keeping close to his example, trustingly, lovingly following his instructions, we abide in him, and thus, abiding in him, sin not; have no disposition or desire to sin.

Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him.

We cease to abide in him when we engage in sinning. Such an one hath not seen Christ; that is to say, had no true insight into his character, or that of his doctrine, for no experimental knowledge is by such an one exhibited. It is safe to say of such that they have not known Christ, for if they had, the same would have been manifested in their conduct.

Verse 7.—Little children, let no man deceive you.

Exhortation is here made to prevent delusion or deception. Those claiming to be righteous are those only who do righteousness. Works are demanded in the economy of heaven to show the existence of faith. Those who abide in Christ do righteousness because Christ was righteous.

Verse 8.—He that committeth sin is of the devil.

Since sin emanates from the devil, and is, therefore, of

him, those who work sin, who exhibit a sinful life, give, thereby, all the proof sound reason can demand that they are under the dominion and control of the devil. From the very beginning of the world the devil sinned.

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested.

That he might destroy sin and its punishment, which are the works of the devil, is the purpose for which the Son of God came into the world and appeared among men in the flesh. Dr. Macknight says: "Demolish that horrible fabric of sin and misery which the devil, with such art and industry and malice, hath reared in our world. From this text some have argued that all moral and penal evil will, at length, be extirpated from the universe."

Verse 9.—Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.

Here some have failed to catch the apostle's idea. It is not that those born of God become so far out of the reach of sin that temptation can not assail them, but those who are born of God do not habitually sin or live a life of sin. One can not sin and at the same time remain a child of God. Yet, while in the flesh, the old nature may for a time exert an influence in the wrong direction, requiring the constant watch-care of the Christian. He, however, can not lead a sinful life while the principle of the divine life remains in him. Paul gives us a thought, throwing light along this line of investigation, well to remember for our good. "Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me." (Romans vii. 20-21).

Verse 10.—In this the children of God.

Here, a sure mark of distinction is drawn between the children of God and the children of the devil. It is easy to tell one from the other. The child of God habitually performs good acts, deeds and works, and with a real affection loves his brother, while the children of the devil manifest no such fruits. The rule of measurement is plainly designated. The children of God show by their pure lives, their

constant endeavors to do good, their affection not only for the distressed, but for all, who their Father is. By the same rule the parentage of the evil may be easily determined.

Verse 11.—For this is the message that ye heard.

Christ brought from the Father, and we apostles proclaimed the message from the establishment of the kingdom on earth, that we should love one another. This message is God-given; it came from him, and this was evidently God's will from the beginning of time.

Verse 12.—Not as Cain, who was of that.

This is the opposite of love—it is hate. Hate is of the devil. Cain was, therefore, begotten by the devil—that is to say, so controlled as to do the works of the devil. The child of God—one begotten of God—loves and does not hate. "This hater and murderer is condemned far more severely in the Scriptures than the disobedient Adam." (Johnson's Notes.)

And wherefore slew he him?

Cain's offering was not accepted, because it was offered in disobedience. His works, therefore, were evil, while the works of his brother were righteous, because offered in obedience. His brother being accepted, and he rejected, he therefore hated him. So, the Savior foretold, would be the result to all righteous lives—hatred by the world. It hated him. Why should his followers escape?

Verse 13.—Marvel not, my brethren.

The apostle here says: We should not marvel—wonder—if we be hated by the world. While no reason is given, the former verse indicates the source of all hatred. The conflict between good and evil had its origin early in the history of the race. That conflict is still going on, and will to the end of time. It is the common lot of all the righteous to be hated by the wicked from the beginning.

Verse 14.—We know that we have passed from death.

While we are hated by the world, this should not be

regarded by us, since we know that we have passed away from a state the final end of which is eternal death, into a state the end of which is life eternal.

Because we love the brethren.

The reason is here given for the knowledge we possess of having passed from death into life. Love of the brethren is the test. This is the surest mark by which we can know our state. This disposition is enjoined by our holy religion. There is no danger that the humble disciple, because of the high encomiums bestowed on this virtue by the sacred writers, shall ever conclude that love of the brethren exhausts all of his Christian duties. He knows better; he has always before him the example of his Master and his blessed teachings, and these unmistakably require at his hands many other duties which embrace those not of the brotherhood.

Abideth in death.

The test by which one may know that the hope of eternal life is not entertained. When one hates his brother, the test is sure. Such an one is still under the condemnation of death; in other words, he is in that state which will ultimate in eternal death.

Verse 15.—Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.

One who hates his brother is in a state or condition, under slight provocation influenced by his passion of hate, to slay him. His hatred is the seed or germ from which murder is produced. The instance of Cain, given in a former verse, clearly illustrates this. It was his hatred which led him to slay Abel. As it influenced Cain, so hatred will, in like manner, influence others.

No murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

Here is the announcement of a great truth. It is simply impossible that one who cherishes such a hatred of his brother as will, under any circumstances, lead to the taking of his life, justly or unjustly, has, or can have, the capacity

for eternal life abiding in him. The states of love and of hate are opposites.

Verse 16.—Hereby perceive we the love of God.

Christ, by the appointment of God, showed his love when he laid down his life on the cross. Having his example before us for our guidance, should occasion require it, we should lay down our lives for the brethren.

Verse 17.—But whoso hath this world's goods.

A plain contrast is here presented. If it be true that we should lay down our lives for the brethren, what shall be said of one who has an abundance, and yet refuses to furnish a needy brother those things necessary for his present succor? It is utterly impossible that the love of God could dwell in such a man. It can in no sense abide in him.

Verse 18.—My little children, let us not love.

We may claim to love our brethren, and many proper occasions present themselves where no outward manifestation is given. If such a thing were possible, this would be loving in word or tongue. Such love is not acceptable. The love must be shown by deeds; if it be true love, it will so manifest itself; empty professions will not do.

Verse 19.—And hereby we know that we are of the truth.

When our love exhibits itself in deeds, when it is operative or active, we may know assuredly that we are in the fellowship of God.

Verse 20.—For if our heart condemn us.

If we are deficient in love to our needy brethren, we know it; our own conscience so informs us. We thus condemn ourselves. God is greater than our hearts, for he knows all things; his condemnation is therefore certain, because he is a more perfect and impartial Judge.

Verse 21.—Beloved, if our heart condemn us not.

But if our conscience does not condemn us—that is, does not accuse us of being deficient in love to our needy brethren

—we have a conscience void of offense toward God, and we are assured that he will hear us, for he knows that we have not failed in duty.

Verse 22.—And whatsoever we ask.

Having kept Gods commandments, by loving our brethren in deed and in truth, and thereby acting in a way well pleasing to God, we know that whatever blessings we ask of him, agreeably to his will, we shall receive.

Verse 23.—And this is his commandment.

The commandment that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another; believe that God sent his Son into the world; the same Jesus that was born in the manger; that he was sent to save us; take him, accept him as our Prophet, Priest and King; follow him as our Leader, trusting and relying upon him for salvation, and, in addition, love the brethren in deed and in truth. This is God's commandment.

Verse 24.—And he that keepeth.

By keeping God's commandments we have fellowship with him. We dwell with him, and he with us.

That he abideth in us.

The spirit of the Master that is given to us manifests itself in our daily walk. If we be led by his spirit, we show its fruits in our lives, and by this spirit we know that we are the sons of God.

CHAPTER IV.

ANALYSIS.

Believe not false teachers that urge the acceptance of their false doctrines upon you, for such are in the world. First try them. Here is a certain test. If they do not confess that Jesus Christ came to earth in the flesh, they are antichrist, and are of the world and speak for the world. We apostles are of God, and speak for God. This is the plain and certain test between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. Love is of God, and we shall know that we are begotten of

God if we have love one for another. God declared his love for us in sending his Son into the world, that we might live through him; and if God so loved us, we ought to love one another. While it is true that no man has seen God, yet it is equally true that if we love one another, God dwells with us, and by this we know that we dwell in him, because we have this spirit of love, which is his. One that confesses that Jesus is God's son, dwells with God, and God with him, and while we do all his commandments, including his commandment to love one another, our love is made complete, and we will have assurance of acceptance at the day of judgment. With such an one no fear of rejection will be present; love being complete, such fear is banished. We love God because he first loved us, and no one can say that he loves God while at the same time he hates his brother, for in so saying he is a liar. The reasoning is plain; we see our brother, and yet hate him. How can we love God whom we have not seen? Loving the unseen, we must love the seen, for the unseen whom we love has commanded it.

COMMENTARY.

Verse 1.—Beloved, believe not every spirit.

Here a solemn injunction is laid upon the brethren to whom this epistle is addressed. We must first understand just what is exacted of us before we can comply with the injunction. What is it to believe but to have faith in? We are not to believe—what? Every spirit is the answer. But spirits exhibit their presence by acts. Cain exhibited the spirit of a murderer. Hence it is that we must watch the exhibitions of those we come in contact with, and, until known to be good, we must not have faith in them. The apostle says, try the spirits, and the reason is given, making all things plain. False prophets have gone out in the world. These may make loud pretensions of piety. In them we must not place our faith until tried.

Verse 2.—Hereby know ye the spirit of God.

There is, then, a spirit which is of God, and a spirit not of God. The former only are we to place faith in, and the latter reject. That we may know assuredly the spirit which is of God, this shall be the criterion, the crucial test—the spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God. None other is, and none other is to be believed.

Verse 3.—And every spirit that confesseth not.

The crucial test being given, and the spirit tried by this test refusing to confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, you may know, beyond question, is not of God, but is of antichrist. It was not only foretold that antichrist would come, but be it known, such are already in the world. As it was in the days of John, so it is now in our age. Some of these false teachers claim to be inspired. They did then, and they do now.

Verse 4.—Ye are of God, little children.

These, here called little children, were the servants of God, had received God's spirit, were enabled to detect and refute these false teachers, because they believed in and relied upon God. The spirit that was in them was greater and mightier, being from God, than the spirit in the false prophets, which was from the wicked one.

Verse 5.—They are of the world.

These false teachers are of the world. They belong to the world, and, speaking only from the principles of the world, all of their own kind, the wicked in the world, listen to and receive their utterances with pleasure.

Verse 6.—We are of God.

Here, I think, the writer, by the word "we," means the apostles. They were clothed with miraculous or God-given powers, by which they could demonstrate that their message was from God. Now, a teacher who knows God, will hear us apostles and acknowledge our authority. A teacher that will not hear us as God's messengers is not of God.

Hereby know we the spirit of truth.

By this mark we can know whether the teachers that come among us are inspired by the spirit of God, or the spirit of the devil.

Verse 7.—Beloved, let us love one another.

We must not in any manner imitate the false teachers, for they would lead us astray, but be governed by the

example and spirit of our Master. We show, as he did, by doing the will of God, our love of God. His command, repeated over and over again, is that we love one another, and we are assured that it is a certain evidence that we are begotten of God and that we know him, when we exhibit love, for love comes from God. Its source is in the Infinite One.

Verse 8.—He that loveth not, knoweth not God.

We may pretend what we please, and yet if we do not love our brother, we do not know God aright, for

God is love.

God is essentially love. Here there is no mixture of malevolence whatever. As he is infinite in his other attributes, so in this—God is infinite in love.

Verse 9.—In this was manifested the love of God.

The highest and grandest possible demonstration God could give to the world of his love is the sending of his Son—his only begotten Son—that through him the world might be saved—might have life. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16).

Verse 10.—Herein is love.

The highest and grandest exhibition of love ever known, or that can be known in the universe, God manifested to man. While man loved not—while man was an enemy to God—God sent his Son into the world to die for man, that thereby a way might be opened up by which man—the enemy of God—might attain eternal life. Poets' loftiest strains afford but feeble conceptions of the divine love. The voice of description is hushed into eternal silence. Mortals can only hear, learn and adore.

Verse 11.—Beloved, if God so loved us.

Now, if God so loved us while we were sinners, we at least ought to show our gratitude for his matchless mercy by imitating his example in loving one another.

Verse 12.—No man hath seen God at any time.

By our mortal eyes we can not see God. He has not been so seen by any one at any time. He is invisible. We, however, may have a sense of his presence in us, and this we know when we are assured that we love the brethren, for this is of God. His nature abides in us. We partake of his nature as we follow his will, and become more and more like him as we carry out the virtues enjoined upon us to perfection.

Verse 13.—Hereby know we that we dwell in him.

The term "we," it would appear, more particularly applies to the apostles than to believers generally. I so conclude from the statement "he hath given to us of his Spirit." It is true, all believers have the Spirit, but when the next verse is consulted you discover the same "we" had special need for the gift of the Spirit in a different degree. Yet it is true that we know that God dwells in us, by the Spirit which is given to us, one of the fruits of this Spirit being that of love. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal. v. 22-23).

Verse 14.—And we have seen and do testify.

This is certainly personal. By the "we" John means himself and fellow apostles. They saw the Son when he was here on earth—saw his miracles; heard his teaching; saw him die. Saw him, and heard him, and handled him after his resurrection. Received from him power from on high, enabling them to testify with infallible accuracy, and "we do testify to all these things"; and they were further authorized to say, that there is "none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

Verse 15.—Whosoever shall confess.

This is largely a repetition of verse 2; the only difference being that in verse 2, one coming and confessing that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh would be proof that the one so confessing did not possess the spirit of a false prophet;

whereas, in the verse before us, the confession that Jesus is the Son of God is evidence to us that the one so confessing has God dwelling in him and he in God. God dwelling in us and our abiding in him is, I take it, practically the same thing.

Verse 16.—And we have known and believed.

Whether we love God or not is a matter of knowledge. That God loved us we believed when we heard the message of love his inspired apostles brought to us. And keeping the divine model before, and observing all God's requirements, increase our confidence to such an extent that it is exalted in us to the height of personal knowledge. God being love, and loving God, that love binds us to God. So of a truth we dwell in God and he in us.

Verse 17.—Herein is our love made perfect.

By the operation of God's love in our hearts we are enabled to love our brethren and our neighbor, exhibiting the fruits of our love all around us, and so perfecting our love that when the great day of judgment shall come, we shall stand before him in all confidence.

Boldness.

Want of fear; having observed his will by obeying his command to love, we shall have no fears in his presence, because as he is, so we are; for so we conducted ourselves while in the world.

Verse 18.—There is no fear in love.

The word fear is here used in the sense of terror. Now, this kind of fear is banished when love appears. There may be, and there is, and there ought to be the fear of reverence.

Perfect love casteth out fear.

Where one truly loves God and his fellow-man all fear is expelled. Where that sort of love exists, no fear of the judgment is present. Fear only exists where there is peril or danger of punishment. This is the torment mentioned herein. Now, where this fear exists, it is proof conclusive

that love is not perfect; that is, that he does not truly love God and his fellow-man.

Verse 19.—We love him, because he first loved us.

Love begets love. God's wonderful love, exhibited through Christ, fills every redeemed soul with love, and we show our love and gratitude to God by loving our brethren.

Verse 20.—If a man say, I love God.

How can any one say he loves the unseen One, and yet hates his brother, whom he sees and knows. Such a claim is mere pretense. The one so claiming, the apostle says, is a liar. Here, then, we need not be deceived. Should one claiming to be a teacher, claim that he loved God and hated his brother, that teacher is a deceiver, an antichrist; should he be a private person, he is simply a hypocrite. The brother we see, and know by our natural senses all his excellencies of character; he is God's image; him we hate. Now, how can it be said, while we hate him, we love the unseen God, whom we know only by the manifestations of himself that he has seen fit to give?

Verse 21.—And this commandment have we from him.

Besides, we all have God's will, expressed in a command given by him, that every one who loves God must love his brother also. This is the end of the matter. No command can be obeyed in part. A rejection of a part is the rejection of the whole, and is at the same time a rejection of the authority of the law-giver, and subjects the offender to his displeasure.

CHAPTER V.

ANALYSIS.

Reasoning further on the last idea in the former chapter, it must be plain to you, that in believing that Jesus is the Christ, you are thereby begotten of God, and in that case, if you love him that begat you, you will naturally and necessarily love all those likewise so begotten. This is an infallible rule by which to determine whether you are the children of God or not. Keeping his commandments will

decide the question. God's requirements are not burdensome. Those born of God are thereby empowered to, and do, overcome the world, and this great success is dependent upon the correctness and the observance of the requirements of our faith. Our faith is embodied in the declaration that Jesus is God's Son. Of this proposition the Spirit bears witness—bore witness by water when Jesus was baptized—for it was when he was baptized that the Spirit descended upon him. The Spirit also bore witness by blood—it bore witness by raising him from the dead after he had shed his blood and died. While the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit in heaven bear witness to the Messiahship of Jesus, there are three on earth that likewise bear the same testimony—the Spirit, the water, and the blood. They are God's appointments to attest the fact of his Sonship. Men are willing to receive the testimony of men. Much more willing ought we to be in receiving the testimony God gives concerning his Son, and especially so, since by God's record we are assured of eternal life through his Son. John writes these things to the believers, that they might know that eternal life was theirs as an assured reward for accepting, trusting and following Christ. And, during the age of miracles, he then assures them that God will grant their request in miraculous cures when he is approached by petitions according to his will, calling their attention to the fact, that while all unrighteousness is sin, there is sin which is not unto death; that where there is a sin which is unto death, for that he does not advise prayer, assuring them that there is no danger of sinning so long as they observe God's will, and that, while so observing, the wicked one can not touch them. John lovingly and urgently entreats his children in the faith to keep themselves from idols, for in worshiping idols, even in the slightest particular, they subject themselves to the snares of the wicked one.

COMMENTARY.

Verse 1.—Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ.

The history of apostolic preaching given by the sacred penmen shows that the burden of their message was to induce belief in God's Son. The belief that Jesus is the Christ, accepted whole-heartedly, confessed with the mouth, followed by obedience to the command to be immersed, as the same Jesus enjoined, makes one a child of God—is born of God. If we love the father by whom we are begotten and have thus become his children, we love also all those likewise begotten.

Verse 2.—By this we know that we love.

To test the question whether we love our brethren or

not, and to know the truth of the same, we can ask this question of ourselves—do we love God and keep his commandments, one of which is that we love the brethren? If we are assured that we do love God and keep his commandments, then we may feel assured that we love the children of God.

Verse 3.—For this is the love of God.

The natural expression of our love of God—that is to say, its outward expression—is in obedience. We obey the commands; this shows our love. By this standard we can measure our love of God. This is the sure test.

Not grievous.

His commandments are not burdensome; that is as much as to say they are not difficult for God's children to observe, generally speaking, and the difficulty only appears to our human nature when we are called upon to suffer for his name's sake; and, even in this case, the early disciples rejoiced when they were required to so suffer for the cause of Christ.

Verse 4.—For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world.

The Syriac has: "Because whoever is born of God," in the place of "For whatsoever is born of God." The allusion is to persons, so no mistake need be made. Persons born of God overcome the world in the sense that they do not obey the dictates of the world—work iniquity. We are here represented as in a conflict—the children of God against the world. A victory is achieved by the former; they have overcome and discomfited the world, and that victory is attributed to their faith. Faith was the cause of victory. It was faith that enabled the children of God to become victors in that great struggle.

Verse 5.—Who is he that overcometh the world.

Here a question is asked and the answer given. The victor was a man of faith—faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son.

Verse 6.—This is he that came by water and blood.

He, through whom the victory over the world was achieved, the Son of God—he came by water. He was first announced by the Father as his Son, at his baptism. As he came up out of the water, then it was that the heavens were opened, and God spake from his throne: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 17).

Blood.

On Calvary's mount he shed his blood. Without his death there could be no resurrection. By that resurrection he was "declared to be the Son of God, with power" (Rom. i. 4). But it was while on this cross both water and blood flowed from him. "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water" (John xix. 34). Hence, we have two rites, both of which are commemorative and monumental, and so long as time shall be, both give their testimony to the Lord Jesus. We are baptized into his death, and we partake of the Lord's Supper. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Rom. vi. 3.) "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying: This cup is the New Testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (I Cor. xi. 23-26). Both these institutions are monumental and bear testimony—not one, but both. Besides these, the Spirit also testified. He came on Pentecost, and spoke through the apostles, and his testimony we have now of record for our study and guidance.

Verse 7.—For there are three that bear record in heaven.

This verse is omitted in the Revised Version by Rother-

ham and by the Syriac. Dr. Macknight contends for its authenticity, and after a long citation of proofs, he decided to retain it, as being contained in St. John's autograph letter. At all events, he retains it. The Father, Word, or Son, and the Spirit are represented in John's time in heaven, and while there, bearing record, or as giving testimony. The best I can gather, is this: That the Father testified that Jesus was his Son; that the Son likewise so testified, as also the Spirit; and that their testimony was one, or agreed—was alike, so far as the question of the Messiahship of Jesus was concerned.

Verse 8.—And there are three that bear witness in earth.

That the Spirit, and the water, and the blood testify here on earth, we endeavored to show in our exposition of verse 6. They all bear testimony that Jesus of Nazareth is God's beloved Son. Their testimony fully agreeing, being just alike, they are one therein.

Verse 9.—If we receive the witness of men.

As reasonable creatures we receive, trust and fully rely upon our fellowmen. This, for a distinction, we call human testimony. Now, if this kind of testimony is accepted, is there not less ground for questioning divine testimony? Divine testimony is the greater. God testified concerning his Son; we have it on record, and it is being constantly borne and repeated in his transforming grace. Every new convert to the cause of Christ is a new and further demonstration of God's testimony. The apostle then proceeds to tell us what God testified concerning his Son.

Verse 10.—He that believeth on the Son of God.

Every man who is brought to believe on the Son of God has the witness in himself. In this he knows that a change occasioned by that belief has taken place in his own heart, life and conduct. One who disbelieves what God has declared concerning his Son, thereby rejects his testimony and regards God as a liar, or attempts to make God a liar by his rejection of his testimony.

Verse 11.—And this is the record, that God hath given.

The important part of God's testimony, the most important to man, is that God bestowed upon us eternal life through his Son. We know that we possess this, because we know that we possess a new life; one entirely dissimilar to the one possessed before believing in the Son of God and taking him for our Savior and guide.

Verse 12.—He that hath the Son hath life.

Life is bestowed when we believe on and accept the Son. It is then begun in us, and it is made sure to us by the practice of those virtues which he enjoins. One not accepting the Son, has no reason to expect eternal life.

Verse 13.—These things have I written.

The object the apostle had in writing these things to the believers in Christ is to make them fully understand how they may know of a certainty that they have eternal life. In this letter he gives them many infallible tests and examples by which they can, with certainty and accuracy, determine this matter.

That believe on the name of the Son of God.

Not only that they may continue to believe, but that they may, with absolute safety, put the fullest possible trust in the name of Christ.

Verse 14.—And this is the confidence.

Whether the word should be confidence or boldness, will make but little difference, as I view it, for if we be God's children and ask for blessings, the petition being according to God's will, we have the word of the Father, that none should doubt, that he will hear. We may, therefore, come with boldness, and in all confident assurance, to his throne of grace designed for his children.

Verse 15.—And if we know that he hear us.

That is, if we know that he hears us as with open ears, then we know that he will grant our petitions; the things that we asked will be by us received.

Verse 16.—If any man see his brother sin a sin.

Along this line there has been much speculation. We will give our exposition in numerical order.

1. *Brother sin.* This shows that a Christian is liable to sin; liable to be overtaken by sin, notwithstanding the idea of some, that no child of God can sin.

2. *Not unto death.* Then there is a sin that is unto death, and a sin that is not unto death.

3. *He shall give him life.* That is to say, the brother who has sinned a sin that is not unto death, may be restored. This restoration is to be secured by prayer. "He shall ask, and he shall give him life." Thus, we have the assurance that a brother can be restored by prayer.

4. *I do not say he shall pray for it.* That is, pray for the brother who has committed the sin which is unto death. John says: "I do not say, that for this sin you shall pray." Of course, it is understood that in that class of sins for which prayer may be offered, with the hope of the restoration of the offender, the offender must first be reached, as in the case of Simon, the sorcerer, mentioned in the eighth chapter of Acts. The prayer must be according to the will of God. The will of God is, that a sinner must repent and turn. If this does not exist, prayer for the restoration of the sinning one would be useless, because not according to the will of God.

5. An example of each of the two classes of sins. While this is not strictly in line with the duty of the expositor of this epistle, being suggested by the verse in hand, it may not be out of place.

(a) Sin not unto death.

"Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. vi. 1). See also 1 Cor. v., 2 Cor. ii. 7-10, and Rev. ii. 4.

(b) Sin unto death.

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made

partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6). "Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men" (Matt. xii. 31). Many are the speculations upon what is called the unpardonable sin. What it is, and the danger in this age of committing it, are questions that have engaged the thoughts of many. My own notion is that all such discussions are unprofitable. Striving to know and to do God's will is more important.

Verse 17.—All unrighteousness is sin.

All wrongdoing is sin; every coming short of that which is right is sin, and, of course, if persisted in, must result in death. Where one steels his heart against the right, against Christ, who alone can bestow life, such an one can never attain eternal life; and yet, as there is a sin not unto death, such may be restored.

Verse 18.—We know that whosoever is born of God.

One born of God sinneth not; that is, does not sin habitually, does not live a life of sin. He will not sin the sin which is unto death because overtaken in a fault. Being begotten, he guards himself, and the wicked one can not lay hold upon him, so as to enslave him, or make him his subject. Such an one may be restored.

Verse 19.—And we know that we are of God.

By keeping ourselves from sin, we know that we are of God, that we are God's children, belong to his family, the church of Christ. While this is true, the world, those who refuse to confess Christ, and accept, obey and follow him, are under the dominion of the wicked one.

Verse 20.—And we know that the Son of God is come.

That Christ is come in the flesh we know, not only from the testimony of men, but by the testimony God has fur-

nished us, by himself, his Son, and the Holy Spirit. Thus we have the witness of ourselves that we have life in Christ, and that Christ dwells in us. We have this understanding. All this we know to be true, because we are in him who is true, and we know from these immovable sources, that in Christ Jesus the only true God is revealed to the children of men, and that in him, and in him alone, is eternal life, and that through him alone God's children have eternal life bestowed upon them.

Verse 21.—Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

Keep yourselves from worshiping idols is the thought. Flee from it! There have been idols in every age of the world's history; there are idols now; these, the Christian must shun. Whatever leads us away from the true worship of God is an idol to be avoided. John, having so spoken, concludes his letter with a solemn Amen.

SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN.

INTRODUCTION.

The author of this epistle is recognized as John the apostle, and the same identical person who penned the former letter. The style and tone are sufficient to convince any fair-minded person of this fact. It is written to an excellent lady, residing somewhere in Asia Minor, the precise locality being unknown. This excellent lady was a disciple of the Master. The object of writing this letter was two-fold. The first object being to confirm the lady and her children in the faith of the gospel, and to make them strong therein, and especially strong in resistance to the false teachings which were prevalent at the time. The second object was to warn her, not only against false teachers, but also to charge her not to receive such into her house, nor to bid them God-speed in their mission. Where John was, at the time of writing, or the date of the epistle, are matters of mere conjecture.

ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE.

This letter is addressed to a woman and her children, who had accepted the Savior and became his disciples. The writer expresses his sincere affection for them in the gospel and salutes them accordingly with his benediction. He then expresses his great satisfaction at learning that the children of this excellent lady were steadfast in the faith. He then beseeches the lady to observe the great commandment of the Christian system—love for the brotherhood—and explains that the commandment, to love one another, came from the very first of the proclamation of the gospel of peace. He urges upon her the duty to be in constant observance of this command. The next reason given for writing to her at this time, was to warn her against deceivers, who deny that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. He tells her such is antichrist. He tells her such a teacher she must not

receive into her house, and not even so much as wish them Godspeed, for in so doing she would become, to some extent, a partaker in their wrong-doing. He tells her that he has many things to say to her along this line, but would not write them, but would give her full information concerning the same when they should meet face to face. He concludes his letter by communicating to the excellent lady the salutation of a sister she had residing at the place from whence John wrote, this sister being also a believer in Christ.

COMMENTARY.

Verse 1.—The elder unto the elect lady.

The first thing that attracts attention is the designation the writer applies to himself. Peter and Paul both call themselves apostles. John nowhere calls himself an apostle. The Vulgate has the word "ancient" in the place of elder. I can not think, as some do, that John would have us understand that he occupied the position of an official by his use of the term elder; but that he simply alludes to his age, and it may be, that thereby he desired to leave the impression on the mind that he was the only one of the chosen twelve who then survived, if, in fact, he did not mean that he was the only surviving personal disciple of the Lord.

Elect lady.

The person addressed was a member of the church and one whose Christian deportment met with the commendation of the aged writer. So much is certain. Some have thought that the words here used, "elect lady," were intended as the proper name of a person, while some hold that it meant a church. The better and safer thought, I think, is simply to regard it as a proper name, that view of the case being more in keeping with the scope of the letter. This idea is further enforced from the deduction necessarily to be drawn from the last verse, "The children of thy elect sister greet thee." This view is taken even by the annotator of the Vulgate. His words are: "Some conjecture that Electa might be the name of a family, or of a particular church, but the general opinion is, that it is the proper name of a lady, so eminent for her piety and great charity as to merit this epistle from St. John."

Whom I love in the truth.

Both the lady addressed and her children are objects of that affection of the apostle which is enjoined by the truth—that is, the teaching of the gospel. This affection for the lady and family is not confined to the writer, as he informs us, but extends to and embraces all that are of like faith.

Verse 2.—For the truth's sake.

Those that love, as enjoined by the gospel of truth, love because they love the truth, and such love is for the truth's sake. Being true to the gospel, this love of truth dwells in the believer and will continue so to dwell for all time, and will also extend into eternity.

Verse 3.—Grace be with you, mercy, and peace.

This verse contains a benediction which is common in all apostolic writings.

Verse 4.—I rejoiced, greatly.

It was a source of great satisfaction to the writer that the children of the lady addressed were walking in the truth. They were observing the commandment of the Father. This word commandment, being in the singular number, must refer to one single command, and taking into view the whole scope of the letter, we conclude that the command was love. In this their whole duty was summed up.

Verse 5.—And now I beseech thee, lady.

The exhortation is earnest. "I beseech thee." The reason for this was, the fear and anxiety entertained by the apostle that, as false teachers were abroad, danger menaced the lady and her family, and to guard them against all possible evil influences that might arise, he here shows his great solicitude.

Not as though I wrote a new commandment.

Do not misunderstand me. I do not wish you to think that I have a new injunction to impose, or a new revelation to impart. It is the same we had from the very first proclamation of the word of life, "That we love one another."

This includes everything. It is very broad and full. It embraces all Christian duties, the observance of which insures the continued favor of the Father.

Verse 6.—And this is love.

We know one possesses this love whenever we see its demonstration. One, therefore, who knows by acts that he loves, shows at the same time that he walks after the commandments. We hear the Lord when we obey what he commands, and no other love is acceptable to the Father on high. This commandment was given, and was heard at the very beginning, in order that it might be observed along the pathway of life.

Verse 7.—For many deceivers.

The reason for the earnestness of his exhortation to stability in the faith is here brought to the front. There are deceivers in the world—not one, but many. These must be guarded against, that no apostasy is caused, and the worthy lose their reward.

Who confess not that Jesus Christ.

These deceivers refuse to confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh; that is to say, these persons whom I designate as deceivers. You may know them by their statements. They say that the Jesus foretold by the prophets, and who was born at Bethlehem, baptized of John; who taught in Palestine, healed the sick, cast out devils, gave sight to the blind, and speech to the dumb, and raised the dead; who was crucified, dead, and was buried in Joseph's tomb; arose from the dead, ascended on high, sent down the Holy Spirit, commissioned his apostles, of whom I am one, to preach the gospel—that all these things did not occur; that there is no truth in all this; Jesus has not yet come, and we refuse to obey this Jesus that John his apostle preaches. Of these, and such as these, the writer affirms—deceiver, antichrist—opposer of Christ.

Verse 8.—Look to yourselves.

With relation to these deceivers, this antichrist, be careful; be on your guard as to their specious stories, their plausible speeches; be led not astray by them; cling to the faith of Christ. You have already begun your work for the reward of the righteous; this you do not want to lose; continue faithful and the full reward assured to all the finally faithful is yours.

Verse 9.—Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not.

Plain, it must be, that a life of transgression can not be pursued, and one so acting be in Christ; on the contrary, one so doing is not in Christ—that is, does not abide in Christ; and as all blessings are in him, the danger of loss or failure of reward is apparent. One not in Christ hath not God; that is, God's favor and presence. One abiding in Christ, observing his doctrine, possesses both Christ and the Father, the favor and presence of both.

Verse 10.—If there come any unto you.

Such as described, who do not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, receive them not into your house. He may claim to be a brother; but no difference, give him no welcome as such, extend to him no such hospitality; and further, extend to him no wish for his success, and no encouragement in his work of deception. In short, such are not to be fellowshipped in any manner by the brethren.

Verse 11.—For he that biddeth him God speed.

In wishing a deceiver success, or offering to him encouragement and aid in his false and wicked course, you become a partaker of his evil deeds to the extent of the help given and aid afforded.

Verse 12.—Having many things to write unto you.

The apostle closes his epistle by the statement, that he withheld many things he desired to tell her, but the subjects were of such a nature he preferred not to impart them by pen and ink; having a hope to meet her soon, such things

could await a personal interview. At such interview all restraints from conferring upon her full knowledge concerning the false teachers in his possession would be removed, and he could then more fully point out the insidious methods of their attacks, and the better fortify her and her children against their approaches. They could rejoice together—the lady at her escape, and the writer that he had preserved her from apostasy.

Verse 13.—**The children of thy elect sister.**

The children of a sister to whom the letter was addressed resided at the place from whence John wrote, and he, possibly at their request, sends the good wishes, a common salutation at that time. The speculation afloat about this elect lady and her elect sister scarcely warrant attention. It is claimed by some that their election was far back—even before time began; God of his own free will foreknew them and elected them to life eternal. If this be true, either John did not know it—although an inspired man—or he was grossly derelict in his duty, in failing to communicate that fact for the benefit of future ages and the millions of people yet unborn. And so of all other inspired writers. None of them have recorded the fact that so important an election had ever occurred. The truth is, they were elected just as were all the saints that have become elect since the day of Pentecost, when the proclamation of a risen Savior was first made known to man. All are required to hear the gospel, believe it with the whole heart, turn away from their former course in life, confess with the mouth the faith believed, be baptized in obedience to the command of the Author and Finisher of the faith; and being thus inducted into the body of Christ, which is his church, they are thus elected, and thereafter are entitled to be designated as elect. There happens to be no other way disclosed by God's blessed book by which this election takes place, and with this all God-loving and God-fearing people ought to be content.

THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN.

INTRODUCTION.

The thought and language of this epistle are so similar to the second, and the style and tone so similar to the first, that no question, it seems to me, can arise as to the identity of the authorship of all three. John undoubtedly wrote this letter, as he did the first and the second. The purpose had in writing was much the same as it was in writing the former letter. To commend Gaius for his Christian conduct, and to exhort him to a faithful continuance therein, cover all the purposes indicated in the epistle. As to the date of this epistle, as it was with the second, so of this, but little certainty can be stated. It was probably written, as was also the second, at a later period of the apostle's life than the first epistle. He designated himself again as the elder. This must surely point to the advanced age of the writer. He hesitates not in applying to himself this designation, and it strikes me that it is done by him as though he were claiming some pre-eminence therein. It can not apply to him as an official officer of a local congregation. The authority of an apostle would, in this particular, be all that could in any possible contingency be required. Hence, I conclude that the term elder is used by the apostle by way of reference to his age merely, if it does not denote the matter of his being the last survivor of the twelve. The epistle was not written earlier than A. D. 90.

ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE.

John writes to Gaius, and first expresses the fact that, in his estimation, his character is lovable, and that the writer has great affection for him in the gospel. He then shows his great desire that Gaius may prosper both in body and in spirit. Following this, he expresses the great satisfaction it was to him to learn from brethren who came to him, that Gaius was loving and walking in the truth of

the gospel which he had received. He tells Gaius that it is his greatest source of joy to know that those he has induced to follow the Master are so doing faithfully. He tells him that his conduct in receiving the brethren and strangers is commendable, and his helping the laborer in the Lord's vineyard in the proclamation of the truth, is well-doing; in this you become a fellow-helper. Diotrophes, who acted contrary to this view of Christian duty, and even went so far as to revile the apostle with words of malice, will be remembered when the apostle shall come to that place. He admonishes Gaius to follow the good and not the evil, assuring him that the good is what God requires, while those that do wrong have no true conception of God. He then commends Demetrius, who is also commended by all. All spoke favorably of him, and to this good reputation the apostle adds his own testimony to the good character of Demetrius. The apostle then declares that many things he desired to communicate to Gaius he would do in person and not by pen, and expresses a hope that they should soon meet. Wishing him peace, he then expresses the salutation of friends, and closes by desiring the friends to be greeted in his name.

COMMENTARY.

Verse 1.—The elder unto the well beloved Gaius.

This is a repetition of what was said in the second epistle by the writer as to himself. He calls himself here, as there, the elder. It may be an allusion to his age; in any event, it exhibits the same modesty that his brother apostle, Peter, showed in his writings. For this characteristic the apostle John was specially noted.

Well beloved Gaius.

Whether it be of importance to know something of the person to whom the aged apostle pens this letter or not, it can not be amiss to notice what the inspired text says of one having a similar name. "And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre" (Acts xix. 29). This was at Ephesus, the place where the writer of this epistle is supposed to have resided after the destruction of Jerusalem. A companion of Paul in his labors and travels would sufficiently indicate a character devoted to the cause of the gospel as would entitle him to the endearing words applied

to him by the disciple whom Jesus loved, "the well-beloved Gaius." And, notwithstanding his rough treatment at Ephesus, he continued in the company of Paul in some of his subsequent journeyings, as we learn from Acts xxiv. 4. Before his sufferings for the cause of Christ, he is mentioned as a householder at Corinth, where of him the apostle Paul, in his letter to the Romans, makes mention as follows: "Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you" (Rom. xvi. 23). The character here given of the man is in keeping with the view that the writer of the third epistle of John would doubtless have us entertain. He is one of the few Corinthians that was baptized by the apostle Paul in person. (I Cor. i. 4.) Take the history all in all, I am inclined to believe that these mentions of the name of Gaius, however few they may be in number, refer to one and the same individual. With these references to the well-beloved Gaius, the curtain of sacred history drops upon him forever, and no further view is permitted of one so highly esteemed for his devotion to and steadfastness in the faith by our Lord's last surviving ambassador on earth. Enough, however, is outlined by his Christian character to justify John, in our judgment, for his expressions of love for him in the truth. More of like character in the church of Christ would render that church a much greater factor in accomplishing the moral reformation of the world.

Verse 2.—Beloved, I wish above all things.

The writer unbosomed himself to the person he addresses by showing his warm affection for him in the expression: "I wish above all things." The wish is, that he may prosper and be in health, and the extent of that prosperity and health which he wished Gaius to enjoy, he measures by the prosperity of his soul. This was a measure Gaius would easily comprehend by his own consciousness. Gaius would know within himself how unselfishly he was devoted to the Lord and his cause; and just to the extent he prospered spiritually, he was to understand that just to that extent John wished him to prosper and have good health.

Verse 3.—For I rejoiced greatly.

John now gives Gaius a view of how the reports the brethren brought him of the conduct and conversation of Gaius affected him. He was overjoyed to learn that Gaius exhibited all these unmistakable evidences of being a true follower of the Master, notwithstanding his evil surroundings.

Verse 4.—I have no greater joy than to hear.

John's life was wrapped up in his desire to have all men learn, and know, and obey the truth. For this he lived; for this he labored; for this he suffered. And when he heard of men and women who had taken upon themselves the name of Christ, acting in accord with the instruction they had received, it gave him great pleasure. This is the compensation he sought, all the reward he seemed to care for on earth.

My children walk in truth.

How tenderly the aged apostle looked upon the children of his Master. He calls them "My children." They may have been such when age is taken into the account, or with reference to the time they became servants of the Lord, as compared to his own service, or with regard to the relationship, spiritually, that existed—the same close, tender ties that exist between father and son.

Walk in truth.

The course of conduct enjoined by the inspired instructors. The Master had said, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. xxviii. 20). *First.* Preach the gospel. *Secondly.* All who believe the gospel so preached and trustingly accept—baptize. *Thirdly.* The baptized ones teach how they shall conduct themselves throughout their life's journey. *Fourthly.* Assuring them by such conduct of the reward of eternal life. All such as observe the inspired instruction given them after becoming members of Christ's body, the church, are said in Scripture to be walking in the truth.

Verse 5.—Beloved, thou doest faithfully.

Here, the apostle commends the conduct of Gaius. His hospitality extended not only to the brethren known to be such, but also to those who were unknown—those who were strangers. The contrast of this conduct with the men of that age was marked. In this hospitable conduct, Gaius was faithful, zealous, unremitting.

Verse 6.—Which have borne witness.

Persons upon whom these Christian favors had been bestowed by Gaius, the recipients of his Christian charity, had given the apostle information concerning it. It should, therefore, be no surprise to Gaius that the writer should speak of the matter in this epistle. These informants also testified before the church about this exhibition of love which Gaius had for the cause of Christ. I take it, that many of these recipients of the hospitality of Gaius had been out upon missions of one kind or another connected with the church—possibly upon evangelizing tours—and while the apostle not only rejoices at and commends Gaius for receiving these into his home, he also adds the additional method of helping the proclamation of the word in this, by aiding the proclaimers in going from place to place. These journeys are attended with labor and more or less expense. Gaius may aid in lessening the one or the other by his contributions. In this, should you thus act, you will do well.

After a godly sort.

This would be well pleasing to God. It is as God would have you do. This will meet the approbation of the Master. The meaning is this: in addition to your hospitality to brethren and strangers, if you add such additional help as you can to those who are away on missions for or on behalf of the church, thus making their labor or expenses lighter on their journeys, you will also be performing acts well pleasing to God.

Verse 7.—Because that for his name's sake.

Those whom I desire you to help on their journey went

forth to sound the praises of the Master, the love of God to the world, that those who should be hearers might become the sons of God. Now, these went forth on this mission of love without calling upon the unconverted for assistance in the performance of the duties thereof. They went forth in the name of Christ, and for his cause; hence, could not call upon the Gentiles for aid or assistance. The meaning is not that the Gentiles had tendered aid which was rejected, as some suppose.

Verse 8.—We therefore ought to receive such.

Since it is not prudent for those who go out upon evangelizing tours to ask for aid from the Gentiles, we who are members of Christ's body, the church, ought to receive such and aid them to the extent of our ability. We thus become fellow-helpers in spreading the truth.

Verse 9.—I wrote unto the church.

That is, John wrote a letter to the church of which Gaius was a member. This letter has not come down to us; it is presumably lost.

But Diotrephes.

Here is the first mention of this man; nowhere else is he mentioned on the sacred pages. The same character he seems to have exhibited is frequently met with in others, even in our own day.

Who loveth to have the pre-eminence.

Diotrephes assumed to be a leader. He was ambitious of prominence; he attempted to lord it over God's heritage; he, as far as in his power lay, controlled. He was enabled to assume the exercise of this authority by virtue of being a church official. Men assuming dictatorial powers are generally unscrupulous.

Receiveth us not.

This man Diotrephes refused to be governed by the suggestions contained in John's letter, which, probably, among other things, suggested hospitality and aid to those

journeying in the cause of the gospel. Against this, Diotrephes rebelled.

Verse 10.—Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds.

Here, in my judgment, the apostle asserts authority. The founder of the Christian faith had selected John as one upon whom authority was conferred to establish the kingdom and publish all the laws necessary for its government; and while he remained on earth he was the superior of Diotrephes, or of any other, as to the proclamation of ways to be pursued in Christian conduct.

Remember his deeds.

I will arraign him, call him to an account; no suggestion of deposition or excommunication, but that of correction.

Prating against us with malicious words.

Diotrephes justified his course by uttering words against John, possibly denying that John was an apostle; possibly asserting that John assumed to be an apostle when he was not. He thus calumniated and maligned his character, and thus impeached his Christian integrity. While it was John's duty to forgive, it was equally his duty to correct in love, and hence he said he would remember his deeds, if he came, herein intimating that it might not prove necessary for him to come.

Not content therewith.

Diotrephes was not satisfied in disregarding the contents of John's letter, and rebelling against his authority, and prating against him, but he went so far as to refuse to receive and extend hospitality to those engaged in the work of the church, and proceeded further, and did forbid other members of the church in receiving such into their homes. He even carried his foolish idea of control to such an extent, having for the time being official authority, as to cast out of the church such members as did extend hospitality to the traveling proclaimers of the word, after he had forbidden

such to be done. That is to say, that he, to the extent of his ability, denied to some Christian fellowship on this account.

Verse 11.—Beloved, follow not that which is evil.

The course pursued by Diotrephes he regarded as evil. His desire was that the saints should pursue an exactly opposite course—that which is good—and he proceeds to give the all-important reason.

He that doeth good is of God.

He is begotten of God. God is good, and that which is begotten of him must necessarily be good.

But he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

That is to say, possesses no right knowledge of God, for God is good, and one who knows God must of necessity do good if he seeks acceptance with God. Doing evil, the reverse of what God desires, shows a fearful lack of knowledge of God, of his character, and of his requirements.

Verse 12.—Demetrius hath good report.

Here the apostle brings into view a very different character to Diotrephes. He calls him Demetrius. He says the testimony concerning him from all sources is good. His benevolence, his meekness, his humility, meet with universal commendation. The gospel itself commends him, in that his acts are conformable to its precepts; and lastly, I praise him. My testimony to his perfect Christian character I freely give; and you, Gaius, to whom I write, and all others, know that my testimony is true. Have I not given instruction how all the saints shall conduct themselves to meet with God's approbation? Was not this a duty imposed upon me by the Master? Have I not told you that, in giving these instructions, I was guided, so I might not mistake, by the Spirit of the living God? Since, therefore, Demetrius has unerringly followed these commands, I praise him—praise that I withheld from that opposite character of Diotrephes.

Verse 13.—I had many things to write.

John thought of other things concerning the church—its

members, Diotrophes, Demetrius, and all—but forebore writing with pen and ink, lest it fall into improper hands.

Verse 14.—But I trust I shall shortly see thee.

Here he expresses the hope that some time in the near future he can meet Gaius, when he can, face to face, talk over the things about which he forbears to write, and since having the hope of so meeting, it would be needless to write.

Peace be to thee.

John's loving benediction.

Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.

The friends here salute thee. Everywhere else the New Testament writers use the words brethren or saints. A friend is close in intimacy, a brother is nearer, while the relationship indicated by the word "saint" carries with it a holy association. On this closing verse, Macknight says: "This appellation is singular, being nowhere else found in the Scripture, but it applieth excellently to the primitive Christians, as it denoteth in the strongest manner the love which in the first age subsisted among the true disciples of Christ. Let it not then be pretended that the gospel does not recommend private friendship." Here we part with the beloved John. We can only praise the Lord for the lessons of love he has left upon record, and so live here on earth that the study of the blessed theme of love may be resumed in company with the Master and the beloved disciple in heaven's blest abode.

EPISTLE OF JUDE.

INTRODUCTION.

After all my investigations, and after fully considering everything that has fallen under my observation, I am still of the opinion that everyone of the epistles to the churches and to individual Christians, from Romans to Revelation, were written by apostles. This, of course, includes the Epistle of James, and the one of Jude now before us.

My first reason for believing that the writer of Jude was one of the chosen twelve is to be found in the character of the document itself. The appearance therein of the claims of the right or authority to speak in the name of the Lord certainly cannot be questioned. His failure to call himself an apostle makes but little difference, since he assumes to speak as one. No true man, no trusting and loving follower of Christ, would assume to speak as his ambassador, as Jude evidently does in this epistle, without possessing that authority from his divine head.

My second reason is, that in the selection of his chosen witnesses, whom he designates apostles, we find the name of the writer of this epistle mentioned: "And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom he also named apostles; Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alpheus, and Simon called Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor" (Luke vi. 13-16). This is a paragraph from Luke separate by itself and follows immediately upon a night of prayer on the mountain. Jude, in this epistle, says

he was the brother of James, and so it appears in the above list of apostles. Now, by turning to the first chapter of the Acts, and at the thirteenth verse, you will discover exactly the same names and in the same order, Judas Iscariot only being left out. Considering now that all the evangelists agree that twelve only were chosen, it will prove of advantage to see the list of names given by the other writers. In Matthew, tenth chapter, commencing at the second verse, he says: "Now the names of the twelve apostles are these"; and then in the following verse, after James the son of Alpheus, he adds: "and Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddeus." Two by the name of James and but one Judas. Consulting the third chapter of Mark, commencing at the fourteenth verse, where Christ ordained twelve to be with him, in the succeeding verses they are named; and in the eighteenth verse we have: "And James the son of Alpheus, and Thaddeus." Again, two named James and but one Judas. Matthew has Lebbeus surnamed Thaddeus, while Mark says nothing about his being called Lebbeus. I therefore conclude that Jude or Judas, the brother of James, the son of Alpheus, was none other than Lebbeus whose surname was Thaddeus. That he must have been an apostle seems almost certain by his continual presence with the Master, and the privilege he exercised as such, which appears from John's statement. (John xiv. 21-23.)

Third reason: The writer says he was a brother of James. Now, this was not the James who was a son of Zebedee, for all are agreed that this James was slain by Herod. It must, therefore, have been the James who presided at Jerusalem at the council, and we have the authority of Paul that he was an apostle, and being one of the twelve, he was James, the son of Alpheus.

The expression of "the Lord's brother," as applied to James and Jude, contains no valid objection to this view. This may mean no more than that they were cousins, for it would appear that this term "brother" is so used in Scripture.

TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING.

Here all is conjecture. It appears that some things contained in the letter would indicate the knowledge of one written by Peter, or that Peter had knowledge of this letter written by Jude. Both speak of the same subject, and both use almost the same identical language. Be this, however, as it may, since it is fairly certain that Peter wrote his last letter about A. D. 65, it can not be that Jude's was written much earlier or much later. Where the writer was at the time of writing is unknown. He wrote to Christians, most probably Jewish, who were at the time passing through serious trial in the various countries in which they were sojourning, and the main object of the epistle was to warn them of the dangers menacing them, which were calculated to lead to apostasy, and to comfort, strengthen and establish them in the faith.

ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTLE.

In this letter the writer tells, first of all, who he is, thus exhibiting his authority for writing, and follows this by saying to whom he addresses himself—to the sanctified, to the called. In this he means the true members of Christ's body, the church. In the outset he wishes them an increase of love and peace. He next explains why he writes to them. The salvation God has designed for the whole human family engrosses his attention, and in relation to this he urgently exhorts them to earnestly contend. He calls it the faith once for all given to the saints. He informs them that the necessity for writing at this time, is because false teachers will appear among them. He fully describes them, shows their proud and presumptuous claims to inspiration; shows the falsity of their claims by their evil conduct, and, while they have slyly crept into the church without their characters being fully known, that will not exempt them from certain punishment. Illustrates this point by a reference to the Hebrews brought out of bondage, and their subsequent destruction for disobedience; the punishment of angels even for their wrongdoing, and also the cities of the plain. While these false teachers pretend that they are free from punishment, they say and do things that even Michael the archangel did not even pretend to have the right to say or do. These false teachers are compared to spots that mar any white surface—clouds having no rain, trees that bear no fruit—actually plucked up—waves of the sea casting up dirt and mire, wandering stars—so unstable are they. He shows them that the coming

of these was foretold, and the certainty of their punishment. He then exhorts them to faithful adherence to the words of the apostles of Christ, to build themselves up in the most holy faith, praying always in spirit to keep themselves in the love of God until the coming of the Lord, that the eternal life promised should be their reward. He charges them to aid in the salvation of others to the extent of their ability, and closes with a most sublime ascription of praise to God.

COMMENTARY.

Verse 1.—**Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ.**

The author first gives his name, and then proceeds to give the means by which he may be identified. He first says, a servant of Jesus Christ. This expression can mean no more nor no less than the same means when used by Paul or John, viz.: an apostle of Jesus Christ. His omission to add the word "apostle" can not militate against this view, otherwise we must conclude that some of the epistles attributed to Paul were written by others, particularly the letters to the Philippians, Thessalonians, Philemon and Hebrews, and those of John, viz.: the first, second and third epistles. The writer, however, proceeds to place his identity beyond cavil by adding, "the brother of James." On this point for further remarks, see introduction.

Sanctified.

Set part—that is, by obedience to the gospel they are sanctified, or set apart to the service of God.

Preserved in Jesus Christ.

Remain free from vices, unspotted from worldly sins, by the observance of those precepts which are through or in Christ given to the world. Thus preserved and—

Called.

The gospel was preached; they heard, accepted and obeyed, and were thus called.

Verse 2.—**Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.**

By God's mercy they were pardoned; the apostle desires a continuance of this pardoning mercy, and the other things

relate to their lives here, and may be summed up by saying he wishes them an increase of happiness here, temporal and spiritual.

Verse 3.—Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you.

Just what the apostle meant by giving all diligence may be gathered from some things subsequently mentioned. I take it that he desires them to understand that it had been his intention to write them, possibly taking more leisure and bestowing more pains, but from some circumstances that then surrounded them, he was induced to write in haste.

Of the common salvation.

Not common as being of little importance, but common in the sense that it was for all—Jew and Gentile—for all people. Salvation is a deliverance from evil. In this instance it relates to a deliverance from the state of guilt and dominion of wrong-doing in this life, and includes the eternal deliverance in the world to come. All this is included in the gospel plan of salvation, and is offered to every son and daughter of the human race.

It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you.

The necessity for so writing and exhorting at this time is given in the succeeding verse.

That ye should earnestly contend.

Not to violence. This is not included in the exhortation. Earnestly contending may only include properly urging and maintaining in the face of opposition. The thought is, that when opposition arises you are not to observe silence, and say and do nothing for the gospel, but in earnestness and in all sincerity you are to contend as God requires at your hands, to show strenuously by your speech and by your godly walk that there is truth in the profession you make. What they were earnestly or strenuously to contend for is told us in the next clause.

For the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

A figure of speech is here used—faith in the place of the whole scheme of human redemption. Paul so uses the term in his letter to the churches of Galatia. (Galatians iii. 23-25.) So here the doctrine and precepts of the gospel exhibiting God's love to the children of men, and the provisions made therein by him whereby we can become his children, all are included in the word of faith. For this they were to strenuously contend, and for this only, without additions, adulterations, or changes of any kind or character whatever. And they are not exhorted to contend for anything else—this, simply this, no more, no less.

Once delivered.

The scenes of Pentecost being kept before the mind, none need to be led astray. There the full blaze of gospel light burst upon an astonished world. The faith was delivered to the saints there and then. No full delivery was made until then; none other need be expected. What was then delivered will never have any additions. God has spoken, the sacrifice was once made. Many, after long and prayerful study of the Bible containing God's revelation to his creatures, have tried to formulate a brief exposition of the scheme of human redemption. To the careful and God-loving and God-fearing student of the blessed volume, it appears certain that God designed, by his revelation, to communicate to the children of men his existence, his authorship of the world, and all things therein contained—his object in the creation of man to be for his glory and man's good; the fall of man and the necessity for the adoption of a plan by which he might be reclaimed, and again come into a blessed union with his Creator; and after years of development the coming of the promised one, his sojourn on earth, his crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection and ascension to heaven—after having made special provisions for the furtherance of God's will concerning man, and the establishment of his kingdom or church on earth, and the final proclamation of the terms upon which man can be brought again into the favor of his

God, and how to live in this life, that in the world to come the enjoyment of a blessed immortality shall be his—if this be the object of God in giving us the blessed book, it is but reasonable to suppose that from it we can gather in epitome a view of the whole scheme or plan. This, as suggested, many have done. Generally, it is said that the scheme is divided by infinite wisdom into two parts—the part which the divine mind designed that God was to and has performed, and a part which the same divine mind requires man to perform, and upon man's compliance with what is exacted of him, what further God will do in that event. The conception is all from the divine mind, and superinduced by divine love and mercy, and, coming from that source, is perfect and not the subject of modification on the part of man, however exalted he may be in wisdom and intelligence. The sermon of Peter on Pentecost, when the kingdom of Christ on earth was set up, contains in outline the whole scheme. That the eye may aid the mind in grasping that outline, we say that a careful study of that sermon will show that the scheme of redemption presents—

1. Facts.
2. Commandments.
3. Promises.

The facts contain in minute form what God has done to make our salvation possible; things, of course, which we could not do for ourselves. These embrace a Savior, one that was with the Father and became incarnate—his life, death, burial, resurrection, and therein the atonement for sin. The commandments embrace what man on his part must do to be good. These are:

1. Faith in God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Repentance for past sins, and therein a determination to do what is right carried out in a reformation of life.
3. A confession by the mouth of the faith of the heart.
4. Immersion into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in obedience to Christ's command.

The promises embrace what God will do for those who obey, as follows:

1. Remission of past sins.
2. Gift of the Holy Spirit.
3. Heirship in God's family resulting, in case of continued fidelity, to a home in blessedness after death.

Thus it is easily to be seen that these facts that are given to be believed, and the commandments which are given to be obeyed, and the promises which God has given to be enjoyed by the obedient, present in miniature the whole scheme of human redemption. They present both the divine and the human side of the plan for man's recovery from sin. In short, this epitome tersely brings before our vision the faith once delivered to the saints, and for which we are exhorted by Jesus to earnestly contend. This is the revelation as it is made, and will not be again repeated. No adding to or taking from can for a moment be thought of or tolerated. Just as delivered, so it is to be embraced and strenuously contended for, if the Lord's approbation is sought.

Verse 4.—For there are certain men crept in unawares.

The reason for the haste in writing and the urgency of the exhortation are here given. Unawares, or slyly, certain men, false teachers, had crept into the church. The word "unawares" implies that the character of these certain men that crept in was not known, otherwise they might have been rejected, kept out, or failed to obtain recognition as members of the body of Christ. The writer, in his description of these men—while he denominates them as ungodly, which is a general description—proceeds to lay two specific charges against them, and this is necessary that thereby the brethren may the more easily identify them and detect their ungodly approaches: 1. Turning the grace of God into lasciviousness. 2. Denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. Now these which slyly crept into the church use the favor which God designed to bestow through this agency to its perversion. They insist that all manner of lewd practices are allowable to the sanctified in spirit; such

habitation assigned them; and, although higher in many respects than man, God visited punishment upon them. They were cast out, and by him are reserved, bound as strongly as chains can bind, and kept under darkness until that great day which God has fixed, when their final doom will overwhelm them.

Verse 7.—Even as Sodom and Gomorrah.

Cited by a former writer, it is now urged again by Jude to show the certainty of the punishment that awaits the ungodly. But one single righteous man was found in these cities. Their wickedness was so exceedingly great and so utterly disgusting, naught but the swift destruction by fire could, in the wise judgment of God, adequately punish.

Verse 8.—Likewise also these filthy dreamers.

Well may the apostle call these false teachers “filthy dreamers.” Their thoughts, awake or asleep, are impure. Their punishment shall be as sure as that of the Sodomites whom they imitate.

Despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

These false teachers go further in their ungodly course. They set at naught and totally disregard all authority, and in their recklessness and temerity rail at and revile those placed in official positions, however closely such may observe the law they are called upon to administer.

Verse 9.—Yet Michael the archangel.

That it may plainly appear why you should ignore the false teachers in their attempts to seduce you from the path marked out for your career as Christians, I call to your attention the conduct imposed by the Father of Lights upon one even as mighty as an archangel—even Michael. He dare not bring a railing accusation against the arch-enemy of man, the devil. He was required to leave even a rebuke of this most vile of all beings to the Lord. In the archangel's contention with the devil over the body of Moses, he simply said, “The Lord rebuke thee.” So you Christians can easily perceive that the course pursued by these false teachers is

practices are only of the flesh, and do not disturb their spiritual relations with the Master. These practices may be, and are, forbidden to those not of the one body, but to the sanctified it is different. These that slyly crept into the church further insist that Christ had not come in the flesh, because, say they, the flesh is sinful, necessarily, naturally, and without the possibility of change. Macknight seems to think that the denying relates to a denial in the face of persecution, and the denial being made to avoid the punishment under persecution inflicted. This view can not account reasonably for the apostle's haste in writing, and his anxiety to warn against this class of false teachers. That this can not be the correct view is further evident from some additional characteristics given elsewhere in the epistle, some of which we now proceed to enumerate:

1. They were of old ordained.
2. Their condemnation was fixed.

The coming of this class was foretold; at the time of such foretelling, their condemnation was also asserted. As an inspired writer, Jude, further along, asserts that Enoch, before the flood, made known this class and the certainty of their punishment.

Verse 5.—I will therefore put you in remembrance.

I call your attention to the fact, which you all know, while the Lord saved the Hebrews—that is, brought them out of bondage, a great exhibition of his loving-kindness—yet even after this he destroyed them because of their unbelief. If this be God's dealings with men who refuse to obey, what think you will be the reward of those who pervert the truth of God? Of the certainty of the punishment that awaits these false teachers, listen while I give you further illustrations of God's dealings with the wicked and disobedient.

Verse 6.—And the angels which kept not their first estate.

Here, it is asserted as a fact, that heavenly messengers at some time in the past had sinned, deliberately left the

not from on high. Should you follow such guides, you would be led away from Christ and from his glorious reward surely in store for the faithful.

Verse 10.—But these speak evil of those things.

While Michael would not bring a railing accusation even against the devil, these false teachers, pretending to have superior knowledge, speak ill of things concerning which they absolutely know nothing. And as to things pertaining to the flesh—as the appetites and all animal desires, known naturally not only by men, but by brutes—in these respects these false teachers act as though they possessed no more reason than the brute, for herein they debase themselves by their indulgence.

Verse 11.—Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain.

Woe only is their portion; in destroying the souls of their brethren, their course is that of the murderer, as it is the same in effect as was the act of Cain, who killed his brother Abel. They that run in the course of error and sin as did Balaam, who sought the wages of wrong-doing, and pretending a superior knowledge and a spiritual illumination in opposition to the inspired teachings of the apostles of the Lamb, it is simple rebellion, and will meet with the same punishment meted out to Korah, who opposed the authority of God through Moses and Aaron. (Numbers xvi. 3-13.) Jude's comparison of these false teachers with Cain, Balaam, and Korah indicates clearly that he regards them as guilty of the three heinous crimes of murder, covetousness and rebellion.

Verse 12.—These are spots in your feasts of charity.

The gathering of the saints together at stated times, the duty of Christians. When wicked men meet with you, their excesses are so great they are like black spots upon a clean white surface. They regard not the holy character of the feast, and the love for the Master in obedience to whose commandment it is observed, but as gluttons feed without

reverence. They make pretensions to a holy life, yet by their acts and speech they demonstrate the contrary; in this respect they are like a cloud containing no water, and easily dispelled and driven away. They are like trees exhibiting an apparent prospect of much fruit, yet a fruit that never comes to maturity, but always withers and drops from the boughs; withered autumnal fruit; they are twice dead; once they died in the Jewish faith, now they have died since the faith of the gospel has been proclaimed, and there is nothing left to them but to be plucked up by the roots. What a climax! How striking in its description of false teachers. The final end of all such is to be rooted up as trees utterly barren, utterly worthless.

Verse 13.—Raging waves of the sea.

Another view of these creatures is presented. When the sea is lashed into fury by the winds, her waves dash and boil into mountains of white foam. These false teachers are likened thereunto. They were turbulent and furious, attempted to place no restriction whatever upon their evil temper or tongue, or upon their lewd and dissolute actions, even when among disciples at their sacred feasts, and even here showed the filthiness of their own habits, and thus exhibited their own shame and disgrace. The evangelical prophet speaks of just such characters in the following language: "The wicked are like the troubled sea when it can not rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt" (Isa. lvii. 20).

Wandering stars.

Not fixed, unstable, unsettled, irregular.

Blackness of darkness forever.

A fearful doom. Lived where the light was shining in all its God-given splendor, and suddenly all shut out and midnight's dark pall settled over them for all eternity. What a fearful ending to contemplate.

Verse 14.—Enoch also, the seventh from Adam.

We have here the announcement of Enoch as a prophet, not to be found elsewhere in the Bible. To make it plain, the

party so named as a prophet is the Enoch seventh in line of descent from the first man, Adam. Why this particularity is observed will be seen by a simple inspection of the history of the race, as given in Genesis. "And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch" (Gen. iv. 17). Now it is evident that this is not the Enoch to whom Jude refers, because he is only the third in descent from Adam. In the fifth chapter of Genesis we have the genealogy traced, from which we read and gather the following information: Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch. Of this last, we have this further historic declaration: "And Enoch lived sixty and five years and begat Methuselah: and Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters; and all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him" (Gen. v. 21-24). The recital is short, but contains much. God seems to have used Enoch as he did Noah in the proclamation of his word, his promises, and his threatenings; and among the rest of his utterances, an inspired writer, the apostle Jude, tells us of a prophecy which he uttered.

Behold, the Lord cometh.

Here is one of the statements Enoch, inspired of God, told the people of his day. He warned them of a general judgment, when the Lord would come. He assured them that the Lord would come, accompanied by ten thousands of his saints; or, as the Syriac has it, "with myriads of his saints."

Verse 15.—To execute judgment upon all.

The object of the coming of the Lord is here given. To execute judgment is to pass sentence. This was to be upon all. I take it, the "all" here means the "all" upon whom a judgment of condemnation shall be rendered. While it is true all, in its full sense, will appear before God and be judged, all will not receive the same sentence, for all will

not be condemned; only the guilty will suffer punishment. See the succeeding clauses.

To convince all that are ungodly.

That is, convict. This, of course, follows a righteous investigation. No guilty will escape; no innocent will suffer.

1. The ungodly will be convicted of all their ungodly deeds.
2. The ungodly will be convicted of all their false, profane, impious and blasphemous speeches made by them as ungodly sinners against Christ; sentence follows this conviction.

The sentence is the righteous judgment of God and includes the punishment. It brings before our vision once more the Savior's declaration concerning the sheep and the goats at the last day. All these things Enoch, the seventh from Adam, brought to the attention of the people in his day. So affirms the apostle Jude.

Verse 16.—These are murmurers, complainers.

To make the idea intended to be communicated in this verse stand out more prominently, I have given the Syriac translation. "These are they who murmur and complain of everything, while they walk according to their lusts, and their mouth speaketh shocking things, and they flatter people for the sake of gain." Now, it is plain that after Jude dismisses the prophecy of Enoch, he returns to the consideration of the false teachers, against whom he was warning the brethren, and this verse contains a further portraiture of the character of such. They were murmurers and complainers. They murmur at God, and they complain that their lot is not different. They walk in their own filthy and besotted way while so complaining, and at the same time are uttering pompous and self-laudatory speeches, claiming super-excellence of knowledge, and all the time are hypocritically praising and flattering people, with the hope of extorting from them worldly gain.

Verse 17.—But, beloved, remember.

The utterances of these false teachers ignore, and this you will do, if you but remember, as I exhort you to do, the

words spoken by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is our Lord. He and he only has a right to rule and have dominion over us. He bought us with his own blood, and that we might receive the benefits of his offering, he chose his own witnesses. Now these, his chosen, have spoken, and they spoke as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance. They spoke the words of the Father, given by him to his Son, our Savior, and by the Son intrusted to his chosen witnesses. They made no mistake; they spoke with infallible accuracy. Remember ye the words they spoke.

Verse 18.—How they told you there should be mockers in the last time.

This is now what the inspired apostles had declared would occur. In the last time—that is, about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem—mockers should appear—men professing superior light and knowledge, disregarding the teaching of the chosen witnesses of Christ, setting it at naught, ridiculing and scoffing at it as of human invention and not God-given; and these mockers, although professing superior excellence, would conduct themselves after the low and beastly patterns set by the pagan idolaters.

Verse 19.—These by they who separate themselves.

The class mentioned in preceding verse separate themselves from those who walk as Christ's apostles instruct, because they claimed superior virtue. Claiming superior virtue, they opposed apostolic teaching, saying that the disciples were not walking according to the Spirit. While they thus talked, and thus separated themselves for that pretended reason, they were observing their own selfish and sensual appetites and passions, contrary to the teaching of the Spirit.

Verse 20.—But ye, beloved, building up.

The apostle now turns to the brethren in earnest exhortation: You are built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ; you are a part of his spiritual edifice, the temple he erected in the world. The faith you have is a most holy faith; you

believe Jesus Christ to be God's Son; you take him for your Prophet, Priest and King; you acknowledge him to be your Savior, your guide. Now, you can build yourselves anew, day by day, by keeping up your connections and relations with your living head, by your prayers in the Spirit. This is not only your duty, but the blessed privilege of disciples of Christ who are God's children.

Verse 21.—Keep yourselves in the love of God.

Constantly keeping before our minds what we owe as a duty to God for his wondrous mercy and love to us, we will do cheerfully, willingly and gladly what he requires of us, and thus we show our love to him and keep ourselves in his love by this course. While so doing, we are constantly keeping in mind that mercy which will eventuate in the greatest of all rewards—eternal life, which was made possible of attainment by our blessed Master.

Verse 22.—And on some have compassion.

While it is our duty to do all in our power to save sinners, the common version says that in our efforts a difference is to be made. Here, I confess, for a time I was greatly puzzled, and am not certain that I have reached the correct solution, yet I believe that I now grasp the idea the Holy Spirit, by the pen of the apostle, would have me entertain. Before, however, presenting my views as to the meaning intended, I shall lay before the reader some of the versions at hand, after introducing the succeeding verse, so that the whole subject may be before the mind.

Verse 23.—And others by fear.

The Syriac for the foregoing verses 22 and 23 reads as follows: "Verse 22. And some of them snatch ye from the fire. Verse 23. And when they repent, have compassion on them, with fear, hating even the tunic that is defiled by the flesh." Macknight has the following translation: "Verse 22. And making a difference, have compassion indeed on some. Verse 23. But others save by fear, snatching them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the

flesh." Rotherham reads thus: "Verse 22. And some, indeed, be convicting, such as dispute. Verse 23. But others, be saving out of fire, snatching [them], and on others have mercy in fear, hating even the garment spotted from the flesh." The Latin Vulgate reads thus: "Verse 22. And some, indeed, reprove being judged. Verse 23. But others save, pulling them out of the fire. And on others have mercy in fear, hating also the spotted garment, which is carnal." Tischendorf reads thus: "Verses 22-23. And of some, who waver, have compassion, and others save, pulling them out of the fire, and of others have compassion with fear." Now, the similarity of all these versions is apparent. The word "difference" in the common version, in the days of King James, may have conveyed a different thought to that which it does at the present day. It is certain, I think, that the apostle simply presents a method of approach in attempting the conversion of sinners. He has in his mind different characters, all of which can not be successfully approached in the same way. These different classes may be arranged thus:

1. Some that waver, that are in doubt.
2. Some that are willfully corrupt.
3. Some that are ignorant and controlled by others. The first class are entitled to compassion, and are to be treated gently. Instruction proper to an honest doubter, or one willing to know the truth, is the method of approach the apostle suggests in this case. The second class are like the false teachers; to save such, if possible, is a Christian duty, and yet how to do so may be hard to determine. Stern rebuke and God's threatenings to the ungodly might possibly reach such, and if thereby they are saved, it would be snatching from the fire. The third class are to be approached in the fear of God, with all mercy for their frailty, exhibiting the light of the gospel to dispel the gloom, so that the only pathway to happiness and to God may appear to their benighted vision. Tenderness for the one class, vigor for the second, and mercy for the third, mercifully showing them their danger. This, I think, conveys the idea intended

to be inculcated in these verses, and whether there be yet an idea that we have not discovered, so much as we now see is of great importance to the believer, exhibiting the duty we are under to our fellowmen in their downward course to ruin.

Verse 24.—Now unto him that is able.

That is, unto God. To him is this doxology addressed. God only is capable of so guarding our footsteps that we neither stumble nor fall. The Christian life is, metaphorically, called walking, so that falling into sin would be to a Christian, metaphorically, stumbling, and stumbling is the word here used. God guards and preserves us in our Christian walk, and so conducting ourselves here, we are presented faultless in the presence of his glory—glorious presence—with joy to ourselves and the redeemed hosts.

Verse 25.—To the only wise God our Savior.

He that guarded and guided us, even God, to him who is only wise—that is, wise without deriving his wisdom from any other source than himself—who conceived in his own infinite love the plan by which we are saved, and therefore our Savior—be ascribed the glory of infinite perfection and majesty—that is, honor throughout the entire universe, dominion and power, the right and authority to rule, both now and throughout eternity. Amen. Thus closes Jude's epistle, and while many grand and striking doxologies appear from the pen of the heroic Paul, it strikes me that nothing in the English language can be found that is equal to this one of Jude's in point of beauty, grandeur and sublimity.

We have now done. The effort is unpretentious, the production humble. We have written with only one view before us, and that was to learn the mind of the Spirit. This, with prayerful patience, we pursued for many weary days. And now, with the earnest prayer to the Father of all mercies, that it may be in his hands an instrument for good, we commend it to all honest and thoughtful readers.



