A

POPULAR COMMENTARY

ON

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

BY ENGLISH AND AMERICAN SCHOLARS OF VARIOUS
EVANGELICAL DENOMINATIONS.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS.

EDITED BY

PHILIP SCHAFF, D.D., LL.D.,
RALDWIN PROFESSOR OF SACRED LITERATURE IN THE UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, NEW YORK.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

The Epistle to the Hebrews, The Catholic Epistles,
and Revelation.

EDINBURGH:

T. & T. CLARK, 38 GEORGE STREET.
1883.
COMMENTARY

ON

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS,
THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES, AND REVELATION.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

HEBREWS.
Prof. Joseph Angus, D.D.,
Regent's Park College, London.

JAMES.
Rev. Paton J. Gloag, D.D.,
Galashiels.

I. AND II. PETER.
Prof. S. D. F. Salmond, D.D.,
Free Church College, Aberdeen.

I. II. AND III. JOHN.
Prof. William B. Pope, D.D.,
Didsbury College, Manchester.

JUDE.
Prof. Joseph Angus, D.D.,
Regent's Park College, London.

REVELATION.
Prof. William Milligan, D.D.,
Aberdeen.

EDINBURGH:
T. & T. Clark, 38 George Street.
1883.
CONTENTS OF VOLUME IV.

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS—INTRODUCTION TO .......................... 1
"                  COMMENTARY ON ..................................... 23
EPISTLE OF JAMES—INTRODUCTION TO ................................. 95
"                  COMMENTARY ON ..................................... 107
EPISTLES OF PETER—INTRODUCTION TO ................................. 144
FIRST EPISTLE—COMMENTARY ON ...................................... 151
SECOND EPISTLE—COMMENTARY ON .................................... 241
EPISTLES OF JOHN—
FIRST EPISTLE—INTRODUCTION TO .................................. 261
"                  COMMENTARY ON ..................................... 292
SECOND AND THIRD EPISTLES—INTRODUCTION TO ...................... 323
"                  COMMENTARY ON ..................................... 325
EPISTLE OF JUDE—INTRODUCTION TO ................................... 331
"                  COMMENTARY ON ..................................... 334
REVELATION OF ST. JOHN—INTRODUCTION TO ......................... 343
"                  COMMENTARY ON ..................................... 369

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

MAP OF ASIA MINOR—Frontispiece.

JERUSALEM .................................................. 23
MAP OF ISLE OF PATMOS ........................................ 343
EPHESUS ................................................... 369
CONTRIBUTORS

TO COMMENTARY ON THE NEW TESTAMENT.

VOLUME I.

INTRODUCTION, AND THE GOSPELS OF MATTHEW, MARK, AND LUKE.


VOLUME II.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN, AND THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.


VOLUME III.

THE EPISTLES OF PAUL.

Galatians. By Prof. Philip Schaff, D.D.
Ephesians. By Prof. Matthew B. Riddle, D.D.
Colossians. By Prof. Matthew B. Riddle, D.D.
VOLUME IV.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES, AND REVELATION.


MAPS AND PLANS.
By Prof. Arnold Guyot, Ph.D., LL.D., Professor of Geology and Physical Geography in Princeton, N.J.

ILLUSTRATIONS.
INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

I. THE AUTHORSHIP.—II. THE ARGUMENT.

THE authorship and the argument of this Epistle are questions of peculiar interest. The argument creates no special difficulty; the authorship has given rise to much discussion. The whole question indeed is specially deserving of attention, and we may be excused for giving space to it.

1 Was the Epistle written by Apollos? In commenting on Gen. xlviii. 20, Luther says incidentally: 'The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, whoever he was, whether Paul, or, as I think, Apollos.' This opinion he repeats in his sermon on 1 Cor. iii. 4, suggesting that from the eloquence of Apollos, his knowledge of the Scriptures, and the general esteem in which he was held in the early Church, he was competent to write it. The opinion therefore first appeared in the sixteenth century, and now numbers amongst its adherents Tholuck, Alford, and others, all of whom are dissatisfied with the evidence of the common theory that it was written by Paul, and all concur in accepting a theory which is without any external evidence whatever. To maintain that Apollos might have written it is just enough; but to maintain that he did write it, or that he probably did, on the grounds assigned, is to overlook some of the first principles of historical investigation.

But not only is there no proof; there are several serious objections to the theory itself. Apollos was a Christian Jew of Alexandria (Acts xviii. 24). He had many devoted adherents among the early Christians (1 Cor. i. 12), and shared their attachment even with Paul himself. It is also clear from the Epistle that the author was

1 Though this was Luther's opinion, it was not shared by his colleagues. Calvin, indeed, supposed that Luke might have written it, or Clement; but Beza and the other reformers maintained its Pauline origin; and in 1658 the younger Spanheim wrote an elaborate treatise on the whole subject, examining the external and internal evidence, and showing that Paul was probably the writer, and that he had the very qualities of which the Alexandrian scholars were proud.

2 The two internal arguments upon which Dean Alford insists to prove that the Epistle was written by Apollos, are—(1) That it is said of Apollos he began to speak 'boldly' (νεώμενος ζῆλως), Acts xviii. 26; and therefore it was very likely he should tell the Hebrews not to cast away their νεώμενος, x. 35. And yet this is the very thing which Barnabas tells us Paul did (Acts ix. 27) in Damascus; the very thing he did in company with Barnabas at Antioch in his last address to the Jews before turning to the Gentiles (xiii. 46); the very thing he did for three whole months at Ephesus (xiv. 8); the very thing he did before Agrippa (xxvi. 26), and at Rome, where he preached for two whole years 'with all boldness.' Once the description is used of Apollos, seven times in the Acts it is used of Paul. Four times this boldness is commended in the Hebrews, and ten times by Paul in other Epistles which are confessedly his. The idea is intensely Pauline. (2) The second proof is, that when Apollos first met Aquila and Priscilla, he knew only the Baptism of John, and therefore he was well qualified, says Alford, to speak of baptism as the foundation of the Christian life; but so was any baptized Jew, and Paul as much as any.
known to his friends (cf. xiii. 18, 19, 23); and yet we are required to believe that
the secret was so kept that it was never guessed till the sixteenth century, and that
the church at Alexandria, the most learned church in Christendom, with a school
(founded, it is said, by Mark, who was certainly pastor there) which sent forth a
succession of men eminent for their erudition and research, allowed a distinguished
Alexandrine teacher to be despoiled of his honour, and uniformly ascribed the
authorship (as we shall see) to another. Apollos may have been the author, that is,
he was learned and eloquent enough to write it; but the fact, if fact it be, is
absolutely without evidence, and is on other grounds highly improbable.

(2) Was it written by Barnabas? The chief argument in favour of this theory is
the statement of Tertullian (about 220), and the theory itself has been supported by
Ullmann and Wieseler. ‘There is extant’ (says Tertullian) ‘an Epistle to the
Hebrews under the name of Barnabas, a man,’ he adds, ‘sufficiently authorized by
God, inasmuch as Paul associated him with himself in maintaining the doctrine of
self-denial’ (namely, that he declined wages for preaching); ‘and verily,’ he adds,
‘this Epistle of Barnabas is more generally received among the churches than the
apocryphal Pastor’ (the Shepherd of Hermas, whom he supposes to be too lax in his
views and discipline). He then quotes Heb. vi. 4–8, and adds: ‘The men who
received this doctrine from the Apostles, and taught it with them, had never learned
that a second repentance was promised by the Apostles to adulterers and fornicators.’
This seems strong testimony, and is the stronger from the fact that if Tertullian had
supposed that the Epistle could have been attributed to Paul, he would have attrib-
uted it to him so as to gain for his views on the non-restoration of the fallen the
greater authority.

But on the other hand, when Tertullian lived it is now known that there was no
Christian Latin literature (see Wordsworth on Hippolytus and the Church at Rome),
so that his opinion on a literary question is not entitled to great weight. It never
gained acceptance in Christendom. It was not received in Cyprus, the country of
Barnabas. Epiphanius (A.D. 367), Bishop of Salamis in Cyprus, knows nothing of it,
and ascribes the Epistle to Paul. In Africa, the country of Tertullian, it was not
received. The greatest African writers, Augustine and Athanasius, ascribe it to
Paul, as do the African Councils of Hippo (393) and Carthage (419).

Besides, if Barnabas had written the Epistle, he would naturally have prefixed
his name to it. Barnabas took part with Peter at Antioch in the debate concerning
the ceremonial law (Gal. ii. 13), and his name would have commended any Epistle
to all Hebrew Christians, as did the names of Peter and James. And further, it is
a constant tradition that Barnabas wrote one Epistle, and that Epistle is expressly
stated by Eusebius and Jerome not to form part of the Canonical Scriptures.
Whether it be the same Epistle as is now known by his name, is doubtful. If it be
his, no one can doubt that the acknowledged Epistle of Barnabas is in all respects
a very different composition from the Epistle to the Hebrews; and it is certain that
the one Epistle which the ancient Church attributed to Barnabas is not the Epistle to
the Hebrews which both Eusebius and Jerome place in the Canon.

How Tertullian’s opinion originated it is impossible to say, but the phraseology
he employs is very peculiar, and may suggest an explanation. Instead of speaking
of the Epistle of Barnabas, he speaks of the ‘titulus Barnabe,’ a book with the
name of Barnabas upon it as an inscription. It is very possible he may have had a
volume inscribed ‘Barnabe’ containing the Epistle of Barnabas and the nameless
Epistle to the Hebrews. It was not uncommon in ancient times to bind together
compositions of different authors. The Epistle of Clement is now appended in this
way to the Alexandrine ms., as is the Epistle of Barnabas to the Sina
tic, and so, curiously enough, is the Epistle of Barnabas to one of the oldest mss. of Tertullian.
Some of the most remarkable discoveries of modern times—by Cureton, for example—
have been made by the examination of different works bound up under one name.

3 Was it written by Clement, Paul's fellow-labourer (Phil. iv. 3), afterwards
Bishop at Rome? The ancient testimonies on this question, Origen (220), Eusebius
(330), and Jerome (380), say only that some persons were of opinion that the
language of the Epistle was from him, and that the substance was Paul's: either he
clothed the thoughts of the apostle in the dress they wear, or he translated it out of
the Hebrew. That he was the author of the Epistle is an opinion maintained by no
ancient authority.

In fact, Clement has frequently quoted from the Epistle in his own Epistle to
the Corinthians, written it is generally admitted twenty or thirty years later, and
quoted it with passages taken from Holy Scripture. Of course he would hardly have
made those quotations if he had been himself the author. His own Epistle, moreo-
ver, addressed to the Church at Corinth, and intended to allay the spirit of division
that prevailed then, is a good specimen of early Christian writing, but it is very
different, as any one may see, from the Epistle to the Hebrews.

4 Was it written by Luke? Here again the question has to do only with the
form; no ancient writer ascribing anything to him but the words; the form, and not
the substance. The reason for this supposition is that the style is thought to be
unlike Paul's and to be like Luke's. This question we shall look at by and by.
Meanwhile, note that Luke was not of Hebrew origin, nor was he probably even a
Hellenistic Jew. Eusebius and Jerome speak of him as a Gentile Christian, and as a
native of Antioch, the capital of Syria, and the country of Gentile Christianity.
It is hardly likely that a Gentile or even a Hellenistic Jew would have written an
Epistle to Hebrews. If Luke had written it, the fact would have been known to the
Christians of Syria and Asia, and to the Church at Antioch; and yet the Bishops
assembled at that city in 269 to examine the teaching of Paul of Samosata who was
bishop there, quote the Epistle (Heb. iv. 15, xi. 26. See Routh's Rel. iii. 298, 299),
and expressly ascribe it, not to Luke, but to Paul.

5 Was it written by Paul? In considering this question, the canonical
authority may also be settled, and the subordinate question, Is the language Paul's,
or only the thoughts, or both? And it may be convenient to divide the question
into two—the external testimony, and the internal evidence.

Alford objects that Clement does not say when quoting the Hebrews that it is Scripture he is
quoting, and certainly he does not say that it is from Paul he quotes, and hence Alford concludes
Clement's quotations do not prove the Pauline origin of the book, nor even its Divine authority; but
this statement is only half the truth, and it really misleads. The fact is, that he quotes the Hebrews
as he generally quotes Paul's Epistles. He quotes Romans, Ephesians, 1 Tim. and Titus, and never
speaks of Paul's name in connection with any of them, nor does he introduce the quotations with any
reference to their inspired authority. Once he does refer to the Corinthians as the Epistle of the
blessed Paul, but this is a single case. No Apostolic Father has quoted so largely from the New Testa-
ment as Polycarp. In nine pages of his Epistle to the Philippians he has quoted forty-five passages,
but only once does he mention a name (Paul's) in connection with his quotations (chap. xi.); nowhere
is there any mark of quotation or formal acknowledgment of the Divine authority of the passage he is
quoting; nor is there any example of a quotation from the New Testament with the formula common
in citing from the Old Testament, 'It is written,' earlier than the Epistle of Barnabas, which was
written subsequent to A.D. 130 (see Ante-Nicene Apostolic Fathers, p. 107). The fact is, that if
Clement had known Paul to be the author, and had meant to quote the book as authoritative, he
would not have quoted it in any other way. The true conclusion is that he did regard it as authori-
tative, for he quotes it to settle religious questions. Whether he regarded Paul as the author no one
can say on either side.
INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

The Epistle to the Hebrews was no doubt written during Paul's lifetime. It speaks throughout of the Temple as still standing, and of the Temple worship as still going on. This is the natural meaning of the perfect tense throughout, as most of the Greek commentators note; and though it warns the readers of the doom hanging over Jerusalem (x. 25), there is nothing to indicate that the war waged by Vespasian and Titus had yet commenced.

This war began in the reign of Nero, and Paul was martyred in the last year of the Emperor's life (see Pearson, A.D. 60–67, and Clinton's Fasti Romani, 44–48). Therefore Paul was alive when the Epistle was written. Since also the writer promises to visit the Hebrews with Timothy (Heb. xiii. 23), it would seem to have been written before Timothy settled at Ephesus, an event that is said to have taken place some time before Paul's own martyrdom. This is the old tradition, and agrees with the general tenor of the Epistle. This mention of 'Timothy my brother' has been thought by some to be sufficient to identify the author with Paul, for Paul often joins Timothy with himself in the addresses of his Epistles (Phil. i.; 1 Thess. i.; 2 Thess. i.), speaks of him as his workfellow (Rom. xvi. 21), and three times as his brother (2 Cor. i.; Col. i.; Phil. i.); nor is Timothy ever so called by any other writer of Holy Scripture.

Why Paul should write to Hebrews, and why he should omit his name, are questions that belong more naturally to the division of Internal Evidence; but I may note here that it was no part of the writer's purpose to remain concealed. Those to whom the Epistle is addressed knew the name of the writer (Heb. xiii. 22). Alford indeed maintains that, besides the omission of the name, the Epistle is wanting in that authorization which he says Paul affirms is found in every Epistle of his—the message written in his own hand—'The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand, which is a token in every Epistle: so I write' (2 Thess. iii. 17). But surely this is a mistake. The authorization is there. In all the thirteen acknowledged Epistles of Paul, the authorization is added: 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.' This is the authorization he everywhere sends. These words formed the token by which his Epistles were known. No such close is found in any other New Testament Epistle written in Paul's lifetime. Thirty years later Clement used it in his Epistle to the Corinthians, as thirty years later John also used it in the Revelation; but in the Epistles it is used by Paul alone, and it is found at the close of the Hebrews. Whether this reasoning be admitted or not, it is clear from the Epistle that the writer was known to those whom he specially addressed.

To whom then did Paul write? To believing Hebrews certainly. Whether to Hebrews in Galatia, in Thessalonica, in Corinth, in Asia Minor, or in Palestine, critics do not agree. Most have held, as nearly all the ancient churches held, that it was written to Hebrews in Palestine. Alford thinks that it was written to Hebrews in Rome. To believing Hebrews at all events it was written.

The Second Epistle of Peter was written a short time before the death of that Apostle, as most hold, later than the Epistle to the Hebrews. It was addressed by him, like the first Epistle, to the Hebrew converts in the East. In that Epistle, which was written about a year and a half after the first, and about the same time after what we have supposed to be the date of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Apostle speaks of an Epistle written by Paul, and written by Paul to Hebrews, 'as our beloved brother Paul according to the wisdom given unto him hath written to you; as also in all his Epistles.' Hence, it has been said, Paul wrote to the Hebrews, and he wrote to the Hebrews in a distinct Epistle, and Peter claims for the whole inspired authority—'which the unstable and unteachable wrest, as they do
INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.' Several competent scholars [Pearson (Opera Posth. Diss. i. p. 59) and Wordsworth] have regarded this language as a
distinct inspired testimony to the authorship and claims of this Epistle. Even if
2 Pet. be of later date, it gives early testimony to the authorship of the Hebrews.

Before proceeding to give other testimonies, it may be worth while just to notice
the testimony of the Apostolic Fathers, as they have been called. This testimony has
increased of late years through the discovery of fragments of their works, and though
those fragments are not all certainly genuine, the preponderance of evidence in favour
of their genuineness is considerable, and the fragments are, at all events, of great antiquity.

Clement's quotations are not new. His Epistle was written, it is said, in A.D. 68,
or, as most hold, in 97. He quotes Heb. i. 3–7, xi. 5, 37, etc., xii. 1, and probably
iii. 2, 5, vi. 18, x. 37, etc. The passages may be seen side by side in Jacobson's
edition of the Patres Apostolici; in Stuart's Epistle to the Hebrews, i. 77, 94; in
Forster's Apostolical Authority of the Hebrews, sec. 13. The passages are quoted as
passages from Scripture, and are generally quoted by Clement without any indication
of quotation, and without any name. They are proofs of the existence of the Epistle,
and of its authority. His silence as to the authorship has been differently inter-
preted. If he knew the author, and knew his reason for not giving his name, it was
natural he should not assign it to Paul. Besides these quotations, it may be added
that the allusions to the Epistle are so numerous that Dr. Westcott says, it is not too
much to affirm that the Epistle must have transfused itself into Clement's mind.

Ignatius has not generally been reckoned among the writers who quote the Epistle,
but in two of the Ignatian Epistles which are generally regarded as genuine, which
exist in Syriac and have been published by Cureton, he quotes as Scripture x. 29,
and especially xiii. 17. These letters were written between 107 and 120 (see Ante-

Barnabas (130–150) quotes iii. 5; and though this may be a quotation from the
Old Testament, the argument of his Epistle touches upon many questions which are

Polycarp, the teacher of Irenæus, and the disciple of John, quotes it (see Routh,
Opusc. Ecl. i. p. 24). He wrote probably about 150.

Irenæus (130–200) is described by Alford as not quoting the Epistle, but in fact
he quotes two passages at least, i. 3 and xiii. 15, ascribing the last passage by
name to Paul. This last quotation is found in one of the recent fragments of Irenæus
(Ante-Nicene Fathers, i. 238 and 176). For an account of those fragments, see i.
p. 20 of the same series. Many of his writings, it may be added, have been lost.

Justin Martyr (103–147) is one of the early Apologists. He was of Greek descent,
and resided near Sichem. He reasoned with Jews at Ephesus, and taught the Gospel
at Rome. He quotes from several Epistles, and from the Hebrews (i. 9, xiii. 8, 7).
The passages may be seen in Westcott, p. 147.2

1 The Epistle of Barnabas contains thirty-five pages and twenty-one chapters. No one ascribed it
to the Barnabas of the New Testament till the days of Clement of Alexandria; and Eusebius reckons
it among the non-canonical books. But there is very good reason for regarding it as belonging to the
middle of the second century. By the discovery of the Cod. Sin. the whole Epistle is now known in
Greek. Previously we had only a Latin translation of part of it. It discusses the meaning of the
Jewish sacrifices, the near approach of Antichrist, the New Covenant as founded on the sufferings of
Christ, the spiritual significance of the Ancient Law, and the abrogation of the Ceremonial Law.
Every chapter may be paralleled from one or other of the Gospels or of the Epistles, and yet the
New Testament is never quoted except twice.

2 It is not creditable to our English scholarship that it should be said that Justin Martyr never
quoted from the writings of St. Paul. German editions of his works give some fifty passages which
are quoted really from Paul's writings.
INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

Considering that two at least of these Apostolic Fathers (Clement and Irenæus) were Westerns, and resided in a district where the Epistle was least known, the amount of testimony is really considerable, and is much more than has been hitherto supposed.

The other testimonies to the authorship of the Epistle are divided into those of general or local Councils, of members of the Eastern Churches, viz. in Palestine, Syria, Alexandria, Asia Minor, and Constantinople, and those of the Western Churches including Africa.

The earliest Council is that held at Antioch A.D. 269, which quotes the Epistle as Paul's (see Routh, iii. 298). The second is the Council of Nice (A.D. 325), where it was received as the production of Paul (Wordsworth's Introduction, p. 365). The third is the Council of Laodicea (A.D. 363), where it was decided that the uncanonical books are not to be read in the churches, but only the following: Genesis... etc... Paul's fourteen Epistles (Westcott, p. 483). The fourth is the Council of Carthage (A.D. 397), where it was ordered that none but the canonical Scriptures should be read in the churches, and among those are 'the thirteen Epistles of Paul, and also the Epistle of the same to the Hebrews.' In the next council held at Carthage twenty years later (A.D. 419), they are called 'the fourteen Epistles of Paul' simply; and so the phrase goes in later Councils.

If the Epistle was addressed to believing Hebrews at Jerusalem,—the common view,—we may begin our testimonies with Cyril, who was bishop in that city. He wrote his Catechetical Lectures in 349, and gives the names of the books of the two Testaments. Among them he recites the fourteen Epistles of Paul, affirming that the books themselves were delivered by apostles and primitive bishops (Westcott, p. 491).

In the same century Jerome was living at Bethlehem. He had come from Rome to fit himself for translating the Scriptures into his own tongue, and brought with him the prejudice of the Latin Church of his age against the Epistle and its translations, a prejudice that was occasioned in part by the fact that the doctrines of the Montanist Novatian teachers in the West concerning the renewing of the fallen to repentance were grounded on their interpretation of the early verses of the sixth chapter of the Hebrews. He states that it was received as Paul's by all the churches of the East, and by all previous Greek-Christian writers. Though many attributed it to Barnabas or to Clement, he adds, that he himself receives it as Paul's, but thinks the question of authorship a small one, since the book itself is read every day in public reading (Epist. ad Dardanum, Words, p. 31). Elsewhere (de Vir. Illust. p. 30) he says that the style created difficulty, and that some therefore thought that while the Sententiae were Paul's, Barnabas, or Clement, or Luke had arranged and written them in his own style (Words, p. 30; Delitzsch, p. 12). There are several smaller mistakes in this statement, which, however, we need not notice.

Eusebius was Bishop of Cæsarea (A.D. 340), the town where Paul was for two years confined. He says that the 'fourteen Epistles of Paul are manifest and evident' (E. H. iii. 3), and elsewhere states that he is disposed to think that the substance of the Epistle is Paul's, but the diction from another hand, Clement's (E. H. iii. 38; Words, Introduction, p. 364; and Del. p. 10). Elsewhere he reckons it among the Homologoumena (iii. 25), and quotes it as Paul's (Words, Introduction). His testimony is the more important, because he was inclined to favour the Arians. 'If,' says Theodoret, Bishop of Cyprus (393), 'the Arians are not willing to listen to us concerning the benefits which the Church has received from the Epistle to the Hebrews, let them listen to Eusebius of Palestine, to whom they appeal as an advocate of their own dogmas; for Eusebius admits that this Epistle is the work of the Divine apostle, and
that all the ancients entertained this opinion concerning the authorship of it’ (Procem. to his *Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*).

Besides these Palestine authorities, Gregory Thaumaturgus (Bishop of Caesarea, A.D. 212–270) is now quoted by Cardinal Mai as assigning it to Paul, as does Basil the Great, Bishop of the same place (A.D. 371–380). Chrysostom (A.D. 347–407), Bishop of Antioch, and afterwards at Constantinople, speaks of the fourteen Epistles of Paul. Herein also Epiphanius (A.D. 367) of Cyprus, Theodoret of Cyrus, Gregory of Nyssa (A.D. 332–396) all agree.

In Asia Minor, Gregory of Nazienzum (A.D. 391) reckons among the ‘God-inspired writings’ ‘the fourteen Epistles of Paul.’ Amphilochius (A.D. 380), Bishop of Iconium, puts his reasons into verse, and reckons among the words of truth and inspired Scriptures the twice seven Epistles of Paul. Some, adds he, say that the Epistle to the Hebrews is spurious, ὀκεν εἰς λέγοντες, γνωρία γὰρ ἡ χεῖρ. So says also Theodore, Bishop of Mopsuestia in Cilicia (A.D. 394), and a hundred and twenty years earlier Archelaus, Bishop of Cashara in Mesopotamia (A.D. 278), in his controversy with Manes, quotes Heb. i. 3 and iii. 5, 6. The passages may be seen in Routh, v. 127–149. The testimony of Ephrem of Syria (A.D. 439) and of Severian Bishop of Galata in Syria may be seen in Larner, II. 482, 620.

As yet I have said nothing of Alexandrian writers. The church in that city was of primitive origin. It is said to have been founded by Mark, who was with Paul in his first imprisonment at Rome (Col. iv. 10; Philem. 24), and perhaps also at his martyrdom (2 Tim. iv. 11). The church was also distinguished by the ability of its pastors, and Jerome says that the Catechetical school there began a *Marco Evangelista.* One of the chief teachers of the school, a presbyter of the church, was Pantaenus (A.D. 155–216), the teacher of Clement of Alexandria (see Routh, i. 376). He ascribes the book to Paul, and gives reasons why the apostle omits his name (West. p. 309; see Delitzsch, p. 8). Clement (A.D. 200) of Alexandria taught (according to the summary of his Hypotyposeis or Outlines as given by Eusebius) that the Epistle to the Hebrews is Paul’s written in Hebrew, and that Luke, having carefully (φιλοπαίμως) translated it, published it for the use of the Greeks. Hence, he adds, the similarity of colouring (χρώμα) between this Epistle and the Book of Acts. In his *Adumbrationes* (Comments on the Canonical Epistles) he expressly assigns the Hebrews to Paul, adding that Luke translated it. He regularly quotes it in the *Stromata* as Paul’s (West. p. 311; Words. p. 365).

Origen, a pupil of Clement’s, holds substantially the same view. See Wordsworth’s translation of the passage ‘on the Can.,’ p. 237, and Stuart, i. p. 127. The meaning of this passage has been questioned, and Alford quotes it as affirming that no one can know who wrote the Epistle; but not only does the passage itself correct this rendering, the rendering is contradicted by two facts. First, after writing this passage, Origen always quotes the Epistle as Paul’s, or as the apostle’s (see Stuart, i. 133). Secondly, in a passage given by Westcott as containing Origen’s mature judgment on the Epistle, he says (A.D. 240) that he has written elsewhere ‘to show that the Epistle is Paul’s’ (West. p. 318).

These facts are important. They show that in the second and third centuries there was a uniform and constant tradition at Alexandria that the substance of the Epistle was Paul’s, and that there was a difference of opinion as to the person who reduced the Epistle to writing. Pantaenus gives no hint that the diction had one author and the matter another. Clement suggests a Hebrew original and a Greek translation. Origen differs from his master, and suggests that Paul arranged the materials and another wrote, Clement or Luke. The discrepancy shows how all
agreed as to the substance; and in all the subsequent testimony at Alexandria, the distinction between substance and language ceases. Hence Dionysius of Alexandria (A.D. 247) ascribes the Epistle to Paul (Delit. p. 10; Words. p. 366); as does Peter, a celebrated Bishop of that city (A.D. 300) (see Routh, iv. p. 35), and his successor Alexander (A.D. 313) (see passage in West. 319; Lardn. ii. 302); and so, finally, do the two great leaders in that city, Athanasius (A.D. 373) and Cyril (A.D. 412). The passages may be seen in Lardner, ii. 400, 401, iii. 9; and a confirmation of the statement may be seen in a recently published Catena of Dr. Cramer (A.D. 1844), in which Cyril, Athanasius, and others all speak of the Hebrew as Paul's.

It may be added, to complete this Eastern testimony, that nearly all the most ancient Greek mss. place the Epistle to the Hebrews among Paul's Epistles, not after the Pastoral Epistles as is done by the Vulgate, and in the A. V., but before them. In the Alex., the Sinaitic, the Vat., the Cod. Eph., the Codex Coislianus, in several ancient Cursive mss. (see Tisch. N. T., ed. 1858, p. 555), and in older mss. still, the Epistle to the Hebrews is placed immediately after the Epistle to the Galatians, and before that to the Ephesians. This fact appears from the present numerals of the sections in the Vat. (see Cardinal Mai's note, p. 429). In the most ancient Sahidic version it is inserted before the Epistle to the Galatians.

It may be added, as bearing upon the question of canonicity, that the Epistle is found in the earliest versions of the New Testament, the Syriac, and the old Italic; and those versions were made as early as the end of the second century at latest, or about a hundred and thirty years after the Epistle was written.

While the evidence of the Eastern Churches (Palestinian, Syrian, Arabic, Alexandrian, the last half Latin and half Syrian or Greek) is thus decided, the evidence of the Western Church is in a very different position. The history of the Epistle in this respect is the very opposite of that of the Book of Revelation. That book was received unanimously by the Western Church, and questioned in the East. The Hebrews, on the contrary, was received unanimously in the East, and questioned in the West. The amount and value of this Western questioning we now proceed to discuss.

Here again I may remark the question has been unfairly represented, either by inadvertence upon the part of readers, or by forgetfulness of facts upon the part of writers.

Dr. Westcott, for example, says of Cyprian that he makes no reference to the Epistle, and that he implicitly denies that the work is Paul's (p. 325). In the same way Victorinus is quoted as rejecting it. The grounds for these statements are—(1) that Cyprian does not quote the Epistle, and (2) that he speaks of Paul's Epistles to Seven Churches only. So also in the case of Victorinus. To the first reason I reply that Cyprian quotes comparatively little from the New Testament, that there are several other Epistles not quoted from, and that in fact he does quote from Heb. xii. 6 (see Works, p. 36). As to Victorinus, nothing remains of his but a brief fragment of half-a-dozen pages of a commentary on Genesis apparently, entitled, 'On the making of the World' (Routh, iii. 455). In those fragments he refers to only six books of the New Testament, and his non-quotations from the Hebrews proves nothing. The second argument is, that both writers speak of Paul's letters to seven churches only, and of course, it is concluded, the Hebrews is not included among them. The statement of both is in substance:—Behold the seven horns of the Lamb, the seven eyes of God, the seven spirits before the Throne, the seven lamps, the seven candlesticks, the seven women in Isaiah, the seven deacons, the seven trumpets, the

1 On the other hand, the Cod. Clar. reckons the Epistle as canonical, but speaks of it as the Epistle of Barnabas. This is an African ms. of the eighth century.
seven angels who sounded, the seven seals which were broken, the seven pairs which
Noah took into the ark, the sevenfold vengeance promised to Cain, the seven pillars
of the house of Wisdom of which Solomon speaks, and of course the seven churches
to whom John wrote, and the seven churches of Paul (apud Paulum). Each writer
is commenting upon the number of seven, its significance, and its completeness, and
on the impossibility of there being more than the four Gospels, and seven Epistles to
as many churches. Now, in fact, Paul did write to seven churches only, as John did,
but the very place of the Epistle to the Hebrews, standing as it does among the
Catholic Epistles, and after the Epistles to particular churches, shows that it was
regarded, not as an Epistle to a Church, but to Hebrew believers; and the implicit
denial, as it has been called, of the Pauline authorship based on these facts, is really
without foundation. Perhaps the favourite theory may be saved, and no dishonour
be done to any Epistle by the later discovery of more than one Father that there are
Epistles to seven churches, and that Paul wrote twice seven Epistles in all, including
the Hebrews! Of course I am not quoting Cyprian or Victorinus as saying anything
in favour of the Epistle, except that Cyprian once quotes it. I only affirm that their
authority against it amounts really to nothing.\footnote{This is the more clear when it is remembered that ten years after the death of Victorinus the Council of Hippo (A.D. 393), and then the Council of Carthage, placed this very book among the canonical Scriptures under the title of ‘The Divine Writings’ (see West. p. 483).}

Another similar statement is, that no Latin Father before Hilary (A.D. 368) quotes
the Epistle as Paul’s (West. p. 331). This statement may sound startling, but it
really amounts to very little. There is no Latin Father before Hilary to quote it.
Clement, as we have seen, quotes the Epistle, as he quotes most of the Epistles,
without mentioning the author; but he is not properly a Latin Father. Tertullian
quotes and speaks of it as a book included under the title of Barnabas; and he is
rather to be reckoned a heretic Father of the North African Church, as he certainly
was when he wrote the treatise \textit{De Pudicitia}, in which the Epistle is quoted.
Apollonius and Victor are Latin Fathers, but they have left no works behind them.
Minucius Felix is the only author of any note before Tertullian. He wrote \textit{Octavius},
a book on Evidences, but, like most of the books of the early Apologists, it contains
no quotations from the Christian Scriptures; while the Letters of Cornelius given in
Cyprian quote only one passage out of the whole of the New Testament (Matt. v. 8).
The Latin literature of the first three centuries is, in fact, exceedingly scanty, and
what we have supplies little or no evidence in the way of quotation upon the question
of the Canon at all. It may be worth noticing, after these sweeping statements about
Hilary, that the Epistle to the Hebrews had been translated into Latin, and had
received its place among the Latin Scriptures a hundred years at least before
Hilary’s day.

Among Western writers who were not Latin Fathers, however, are Irenæus and
Hippolytus. The former was Bishop at Lyons, and though he is mentioned as not
having quoted the Epistle, he has really quoted it, and according to the Pfaffian
fragments has ascribed it to Paul. As to Hippolytus, who was Bishop at Portus
Romanus, we have fragments only of his works, though they are considerable. His
Refutation of all Heresies fills a volume in the \textit{Ante-Nicene Fathers}, and it may be
said that though perhaps he does not quote the Epistle, in three passages he quotes
remarkable Old Testament passages which are quoted in the Hebrews: ‘Our God is
a consuming fire,’ for example; and, ‘The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent.’ At
the same time much cannot be made of his silence. His quotations from the New
Testament are, considering his subject, exceedingly few,—not more, I suppose, than
INTRODUCTION TO THE EPistle TO THE HEBREWS.

80 in 500 pages; and he gives no quotations from the First of John and Philemon (Westcott). His quotations, it may be added, are not always distinguishable from his own composition.

But though no importance is to be attached to the silence of Latin writers, there are two or three testimonies in relation to the Epistle which deserve special attention. Eusebius states that Caius, an ecclesiastical man, as he calls him, and of great reasoning power (λογικωτάτος), mentions only thirteen Epistles of Paul, not enumerating the Hebrews with the other Epistles, and he intimates that he does this in a treatise against Montanism. This Caius was a presbyter of Rome, and flourished (about A.D. 196) towards the end of the second century (Eus. vi. 20; Words. 367).

There is a similar omission in the Muratorian Canon, as it is called, a list of the canonical books of Scripture belonging probably to the latter part of the second century, and ascribed by some to this Caius. The manuscript which contains that canon was written in the eighth century, and is a Latin translation from the Greek, as is proved by the Grecisms of the style. It is most carelessly written, and there are several lacunae in the mss. If this is the authority to which Eusebius refers, it partly corroborates his statement, though in fact it merely says that Paul writes to no more than seven churches by name, and shows by this sevenfold writing that there is only one Church spread abroad through the whole world (see Ante-Nicene Fragments, p. 161). If this Muratorian fragment was not by Caius, then it is an additional confirmation of the statement of Caius. It illustrates very well how the canon was now taking a definite form. It detracts from the value of the document that it does not contain the First Epistle of John, and that the Epistle of James and one Epistle of Peter are omitted.

A hundred and fifty years later (A.D. 380), Philastrius, Bishop of Brescia, and a friend of Ambrose of Milan, speaks of some heretics who say that Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews was not written by him, but is either by Barnabas the Apostle, or by Clement, while others say that it is Luke's. There is also an Epistle written to the Laodiceans, and because in it are certain things of which they do not think well, therefore it is not read in the church. 'Though it is read by some, it is not read in the church to the people, but only the thirteen Epistles of Paul and occasionally the Epistle to the Hebrews. They think it not Paul's because the author has written in a rhetorical style, and because it speaks of Christ as man (iii. 3); therefore it is not read as well as because of what it says on the impossibility of restoring the fallen (vi. 4), a passage that might favour the Novatians' (Words. p. 16). Here he ascribes the opinion to heretics, though he says also that the Epistle was not commonly read in the churches.

These two authorities (Caius and Philastrius) are confirmed by the language of Jerome. He says that the Epistle was received as canonical by all the churches of the East, and by all early Greek Christian writers, though some ascribed it to Barnabas and others to Clement, while they read it in their churches nevertheless. He adds that the Latinorum Consuetudo did not regard it as canonical, just as the Graecorum Consuetudo did not regard the Revelation as canonical; and yet, he continues, we receive both as canonical, following herein the authority of ancient writers (Westcott, p. 403).

How the Epistle got this repute at Rome it is not difficult in some measure to explain. Let me repeat that there was a very scanty literature, and very little knowledge of theology or Scripture, at Rome during those early centuries, that the Roman Church up to the time of Augustine always admitted fewer canonical books than the Eastern, that in the ancient Latin lists just named the Epistles to Jews are all
omitted (Hebrews, James, and 1 Peter), and we have some explanation of the facts. It may be added that the great controversy in Italy in the first century was in relation to Montanism and Novationism, both heresies maintaining that the fallen could not be restored to the Church. The list of Caius, giving to Paul thirteen Epistles, is expressly said by Jerome to be in his Treatise on Montanism (see Jerome's testimony in Words. p. 32, App.), and Philastrius states that the Epistle was read in the churches only 'sometimes,' because of the teaching of the Epistle, and the support it seemed to give to the Novatian heresy. At the same time this was not the only reason; for Tertullian, who was a Montanist, does not quote the Epistle as Paul's, though stating that the doctrine of the Epistle was received from the apostles.

While there is this negative testimony up to this date, there are on the other side other facts connected with the Western Church: (1) Clement quotes it largely, as he does other New Testament books; (2) the Epistle is included in the old Italic version of Scripture (A.D. 150 to 200, Stuart, i. 144); (3) it is quoted by Irenaeus; (4) by Rufinus, one of the few Latin writers of this century, the Hebrews is ascribed to Paul, and is said to be among the books which the Fathers included in the Canon (Words. p. 20, App.). In the Decretals of Damasus (A.D. 366–384) the Pope, who sent Jerome to Palestine to complete his revision of the old Latin versions, the Hebrews is reckoned as Paul's, and is said to be one of those Divine writings which the universal Catholic Church holds (Words. p. 38). Other Decretals by Innocent (402), and by Gelasius (492), to the same effect may be seen in Words. pp. 38, 39, App. Their genuineness, however, is questioned.

From the time of Jerome the Epistle was generally received in the Latin Church, though with some misgivings upon the part of some authorities. Hilary of Poictiers (A.D. 368), and Pelagius (A.D. 425), both speak of it as Paul's (Westc. p. 401), as do Ambrose of Milan (A.D. 340, 397), Lucifer of Cagliari in Sardinia (A.D. 370), and Augustine, though not without some hesitation. The lists of Jerome, Augustine, and the old Latin version all agree with our modern Canon, except that the last omits the two shorter Epistles of John. Cassiodorus (A.D. 468–560) appeals to all, and affirms that the Canon had been long since settled. The Middle Age writers agree in these conclusions—Primasius, Isidore, Alcuin, and Aquinas; and in the year 1546 the Church of Rome pronounced an anathema on all who denied the canonical or the Pauline origin of the Epistle. The evidence is not strengthened by her denunciations, but the decision has value as showing how she sided with Jerome and Augustine, the writers with whom the Latin literature of the Western Church really begins.

Internal evidence, though often regarded as very decisive, is really often delusive. A few years ago the literary world was startled by the discovery of an alleged poem of Milton's, and the highest literary authorities pronounced it impossible that it should be his. No one, on comparing the L'Allegro and the Paradise Lost of the same author, would guess them to be by the same author. Johnson, it is well known, had three styles, and between the first and the last there is a wide difference. The style of the Letters of Junius has been traced in half-a-dozen contemporaneous writers, and all have been charged in succession with the authorship of these volumes. And when we go back and examine literature which belongs to another country and another age, with scanty materials to guide us, conjecture becomes much more unsatisfactory. The Book of Job has been ascribed on internal evidence by the most eminent authorities to Moses, and to the time of the Captivity. The Pentateuch has been divided among a dozen writers, and each critic has sought to set aside the theories of his predecessors. I am speaking only of general impressions when I say that the Hebrews does not differ more from the rest of Paul's Epistles than the
INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

The hopeful tone of First Thessalonians differs from the sadness of Second Timothy, than the style and general spirit of the Galatians differs from the style and spirit of the Ephesians, or than the Book of the Revelation differs from the Gospel of John.

The question needs, however, to be examined in detail.

Let me premise that the question of the authorship differs from the question of the canonical authority. Clement, for example, quotes the Epistle as he quotes other parts of Scripture, but without mentioning the author's name. Origen, who maintained that the thoughts were Paul's, held that the words were by another, and yet he has written Homilies upon the whole book, expounding it as Scripture. The ancient versions, the Italic and the Syriac, place it in the sacred volume without giving evidence of its authorship. In other words, whilst there is extensive external evidence of its Pauline origin, there is still more extensive evidence in favour of its canonicity. It is very conceivable that we may admit the second without admitting the first, being either in doubt, or disposed to think, though without external evidence, that the thoughts are Paul's, and the composition partly Luke's or Apollos's, and partly in the closing chapter Paul's—a view that has found favour with some German scholars. Even Alford, who questions strenuously its Pauline origin on internal evidence chiefly, does not scruple to admit its canonical authority. Calvin and Beza, who question its Pauline authority, also maintain strenuously its canonicity.

Let me revert to the language of Peter in relation to Paul's Epistles (2 Pet. iii. 15)—words that were long since quoted as referring to the Hebrews. This second Epistle is said to be written to strangers of the Dispersion, i.e. to believing Jews who alone answer the description; and its purpose is to exhort them to patience amid the trials of their faith. This lesson is the very lesson of the Hebrews, the readers of which are exhorted to be followers or imitators of those who through faith and patience (μακροθυμία) are inheriting the promises (vi. 12; see xii. 2, ii. 18, iv. 15, 16). This interpretation has been as vigorously questioned as maintained, but no one seems to have considered whether there is not evidence in the Second Epistle of Peter of his knowledge of the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is admitted that he has taken expressions largely from Paul's writings generally, and it might be expected that if he had referred to the Hebrews he would have taken expressions from it too.

There is a remarkable sameness of expression in the Epistle to the Hebrews and in the Epistles of Peter. Phrases are found in both, and in no other books of the New Testament to an extent and in forms which make it clear the sameness cannot be accidental. A comparison between them will often throw light upon the meaning of each, and it will be found to have interest in connection with the authorship of the Epistle. Peter's pointed reference to Paul's writings, and the fact that he addressed his Epistles to Hebrews scattered abroad, and exhorted them to practise the same patience in suffering upon which the Epistle to the Hebrews insists, all combine to make the Pauline origin of the thoughts at least probable.

The following are the more important parallelisms:—

Heb. i. 1, and 2 Pet. iii. 2, where both describe God as having spoken to the Fathers by prophets, and as giving the Gospel through His Son. Both also use the phrase 'in the last days,' or 'at the end of these days.'

Heb. ii. 7, 9, and 2 Pet. i. 17, where each speaks of glory and honour as ascribed to Christ, quoting apparently from the 8th Psalm, and combining terms found only here.

Both speak of Christ as 'without spot' (ἀμώμος), and as offering Himself without spot unto God (Heb. ix. 14, and 1 Pet. i. 18–20).

Both speak of Him as dying once for all (ἀγαθός) for sin (Heb. ix. and x., and 1 Pet. iii. 18)—a description found only here.
INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

Both speak of the sprinkling of His blood (βαπτισμὸς)—a familiar idea in the Law, but found only in these two Epistles, Heb. ix. 13, and 1 Pet. i. 2.

Both speak of the sympathy which Christ has for us, and which we ought also to have for one another (Heb. iv. 15, x. 34, and 1 Pet. iii. 8)—expressions found only in these Epistles.

Both speak of Christ as the Chief Shepherd, or as the Great Shepherd—a comparison found only here.

Both speak of the entrance (εἰσόδος) into Christ's kingdom and glory (Heb. x. 19, and 2 Pet. i. 11), and both speak of angels as subject to the Son (Heb. i. 6, ii. 5, and 1 Pet. iii. 22)—expressions found nowhere else in the New Testament.

Similarly Christians are described in both Epistles, and nowhere else, as strangers (παρεκκλήσεως); as having tasted that the Lord is gracious, or as having tasted the good word of life (Heb. vi. 5, and 1 Pet. ii. 3); as 'fed with milk, and not yet fit for solid food' (Heb. v. 12-14, and 1 Pet. ii. 2). In both, Christians are exhorted 'to exercise oversight lest,' 'to look carefully lest' (ἐπισκόπησις) (Heb. xii. 15; 1 Pet. v. 2); the only places where the verb is found. In the passages where the awful results of apostasy are described the thought is alike in both, and the guilt is made to depend upon the fact that the men whom they warn had received a fuller knowledge (ἐπιγνώσεως) of the truth (Heb. vi. 4-6, x. 25-29, and 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21).

The prayer of the two apostles is that God Himself would be pleased to perfect them (καταργήσαι ὑμᾶς), or in the revised text of Peter καταργίζει simply, a phrase found in this sense in these Epistles alone (Heb. xiii. 21; 1 Pet. v. 10). Here are fifteen descriptions of Christ and of Christian men peculiar to these Epistles, and they seem to lead to the conclusion that the writer of the Epistles of Peter must have seen the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Why should he write to Jews at all? Is there not prima facie evidence against his writing? True, Peter was the apostle of the Circumcision, as Paul was of the Gentiles; but this did not exclude the one or the other from the care of any part of the Church. Peter was the first to win the Gentiles to the Church. Paul always visited the synagogues and preached to the Jews in every city to which he went. Nay, he himself says that he was the servant of all that he might gain the more. To the Jews he became as a Jew, that he might by all means save some of them. Nay, he was even specially interested in their salvation. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. Therefore he says, Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer unto God for Israel is that they may be saved. And if this was his feeling for all the seed of Abraham, how much more for those among them who were endeared by their fellowship in the Gospel! He had made collections in all parts of Europe for the relief of the bodily wants of the saints at Jerusalem: how natural that he should think of their temptations and strengthen their hearts to meet them!

Besides, as no one was more zealous than Paul to promote the salvation of his kinsmen, none was more capab: He was a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee, had been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of his fathers. After the straitest sect of their religion he had lived a Pharisee. He was therefore eminently qualified to reason with his own nation on the true nature and end of the Mosaic Institutes, and to handle them with all the learning and wisdom which the Epistle to the Hebrews displays.

But why should he write anonymously? His thirteen Epistles all commence with his name, which occurs nowhere in this Epistle. Like the First Epistle of John, it is anonymous: is that a proof that it is not of apostolic origin?

The Epistles to which Paul has prefixed his name were all addressed to Gentiles;
and as he was the apostle of the Gentiles he magnified his office, and claimed to be heard by them in virtue of it. But in addressing Hebrews his position was different. It is true that the person from whom the Epistle came should be known, for how else could its reception be ensured? They whom the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews desired to assure of the fact knew well the hand from which that Epistle came.

‘Pray for us that I may be restored to you the sooner;’ ‘Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty? with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.’ These expressions prove that they to whom the Epistle was sent in the first instance knew from whom it came; and the bearer of the Epistle would naturally inform them by whom it was sent. Hence, as we find from external evidence, all the Eastern and ancient churches ascribed it to Paul. So says Eusebius; so says Pantaenus a hundred and fifty years earlier.

Clearly, therefore, the name of the writer was not withheld from any desire to maintain entire secrecy, much less for any unworthy purpose; for the author was well known to his friends, and could be known by all who cared to inquire of them. Alford indeed remarks on the gaucherie of the writer in concealing his name, and yet telling them substantially who he was, and concludes that Paul would never have done this; but this gaucherie, if it be such, is chargeable upon the writer, whoever he was; and as Alford has the highest opinion of his profound sagacity, why charge him with what may be no gaucherie at all, but may be the soundest wisdom?

The case is that the Epistle was written not only for steadfast friends, but for waverers, for Judaizing Christians, and even indirectly for unchristianized Jews. To two-thirds of this last class he was specially odious—to the Judaizing Christians because he had rebuked Peter openly to his face, and maintained the equality of all Christians, whether Jews or Gentiles, under the Gospel; and to unchristianized Jews as the renegade whose life they sought, and whose name would have deterred them from reading anything he had written. In the last two cases his name would have frustrated the very design with which the Epistle was sent.

His Master, who ‘witnessed a good confession before Pontius Pilate,’ had set him the example. He withdrew from districts that refused to receive Him. He charged those who witnessed His mighty works not to make Him known, lest they should provoke prematurely the jealousy of His enemies. He carefully abstained from putting stumbling-blocks in their way, lest they should sin. Paul caught the same spirit. He sought to give no offence either to Jew or to Gentile, or to the Church of God. He never compromised truth, indeed never concealed the Cross, or corrupted the simplicity of the Gospel by human additions, or by worldly wisdom; but if the withholding of his name was likely to gain his end, He was the first to withhold it. If Paul had been the author of this Epistle, there are good reasons why he should have withheld it; and as those reasons do not apply with anything like the same force to any one else, the very withholding of the name, instead of diminishing, does, in fact, increase the probability that the Epistle is his.

Upon the question of the internal evidence we cannot enter at length. It may be enough to state briefly the objections and the answers given to them under the heads of single words; or combinations of words; the mode of quotation, and the general style of argument and thought.

1. De Wette quotes a list of words used only in the Hebrews, and not found in the recognised Epistles of Paul. He takes the list as Schultz gives it (see Stuart’s Introduction to the Epistle, pp. 38 and 289). The total number of such words is 118, or, omitting six that are found in quotations from the LXX, 112. The Epistle covers about twenty pages in the Oxford Revised Text, so that words peculiar to this Epistle
amount to about five and a half in each page. In fact, words of this class amount, according to Forster, to 151, or about seven and a half in each page. Now, in First Corinthians there are 230 words peculiar to that Epistle. The Epistle covers twenty-seven pages, so that they amount to eight and a half per page (see the list in Stuart, pp. 298, 299). If we take First Timothy, the case is much stronger. That Epistle is one-third of the length of the Hebrews, and it contains 74 words found nowhere else in Paul’s writings—nearly half the number found in the Hebrews. The number of peculiar Pauline words found in the entire New Testament (excepting the Hebrews) is 791, of which 614 are found but once, or in only one Epistle of his. These Epistles cover 132 pages, and the peculiar words amount to six in each page. The peculiar words of the Hebrews amount, according to Forster, to seven and a half per page, and yet it is on this ground that De Wette questions the Pauline origin of the Epistle itself.1

But we may go further. There are 54 words taken from the LXX. which are found only in the Hebrews and in Paul’s Epistles. There are 21 words peculiar to the Hebrews and Paul’s Epistles or speeches, and found elsewhere neither in the New Testament nor in the LXX. (ἀβαίνω, etc.—φιλοξενία), and there are 38 words which are occasionally found in the New Testament, but which in frequency of usage are peculiar to the Hebrews and to Paul’s Epistles (ἀγιωμός, used eight times by Paul in Romans, Corinthians, Thessalonians, Timothy, and Hebrews, and only once elsewhere). These are all characteristic words, and are found in the Hebrews and in Paul’s acknowledged Epistles. There are indeed 177 more which occur more than once in his acknowledged Epistles (φιλοξενία, πολιτεία, etc.), none of which are found in the Hebrews, and great stress has been laid upon this fact. Here again, however, we need only to complete the statement of the facts, and the objection is answered. There are 172 words which are acknowledged to be Pauline, and yet are not found in the Corinthians; and there are 159 which are not found in the Romans; while in the shorter Epistles the number of omitted words is proportionately much larger. These figures are subject to correction, as may be gathered from the note below; but they will be found in any case to supply but a feeble reply to the external evidences.

2. The quotations in the Epistle to the Hebrews are objected to by various writers, and on various grounds. De Wette objects to the number of them, and refers to the fact that in Ephesians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, and Titus, there are not more than four or five quotations in all; but the answer is plain. In an Epistle to the Hebrews quotations from the Old Testament are the very things we should expect. In fact, while there are 34 quotations in the Hebrews, there are 48

1 I have adopted these figures from Stuart and Forster. Dr. Abbott of Harvard has re-examined the Epistle to the Hebrews and the First Epistle to the Corinthians. See Smith’s Dictionary (American edition) under Hebrews. He states that the words peculiar to the First Corinthians are 217, and the words peculiar to the Hebrews are about 300. I have roughly examined Bruder’s Concordance for the entire New Testament, with the result that, in First Corinthians, the words used in that Epistle are about three and a half to the page; in Hebrews, six to the page; and in all the rest of Paul’s Epistles, five. But two facts appeared very obvious in that examination: (1) In many of Paul’s Epistles—1 and 2 Tim. and Titus, for instance; Eph. and Col.; 1 and 2 Cor.—the same subjects are discussed, and the number of words that occur twice in what are practically parallel passages is very considerable. But for those passages these words would be found only once, and the difference in the proportion of unusual words in the Hebrews and in the confessedly Pauline Epistles would be largely diminished. (2) The peculiarly Pauline phrases found in the Hebrews are both numerous and striking:—ἀγιωμός (1 Tim. vi. 12; 2 Tim. iv. 7; Heb. xii. 1), ἰδανικός (2 Cor. i. 12; Eph. ii. 3; Heb. x. 33; xiii. 18), ἰδίως, ἵνα, γῆ (in its metaphorical sense), ἱλικίως, ἵππον, and ἱππότηρα, ἱπποτηρία, ὑδαίνη, ἱπποτηρία (confidence), ἰδανικός, etc.
in the Romans, an Epistle unquestionably Paul's, and addressed to a mixed church—Jewish only in part. The quotations in the Hebrews are 3:5 per page: the quotations in the Romans are rather more.

De Wette maintains also that the symbolical use and occasional accommodation of the Old Testament passages and ordinances to the argument in hand is foreign to Paul's manner, though like Philo's. But the facts are really the other way. Paul uses the Old Testament in his acknowledged writings in the very way in which the Jews were accustomed to use it. He sometimes appeals to direct prophetic utterances; sometimes to similarity of sentiment; sometimes he accommodates passages which in their original reference have a local or temporary meaning to describe things that happened at the time he wrote. Sometimes he appeals to the Old Testament for ana
galogical cases to confirm or impress the doctrine which he inculcates, and sometimes he uses Old Testament language as the vehicle of thought in order to express his own ideas. In particular, and to meet De Wette's objection, he employs the Old Testament ex concessu in what seems an allegorizing sense. It is thus he allegorizes on the history of Sarah and Hagar (Gal. iv.); on the command of Moses not to muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn (1 Cor. x.); on the veil over the face of Moses (2 Cor. iii.); on the declaration that a man should leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife (Eph. v.). All these examples are found in Paul's accepted writings, and all have their parallels in the Hebrews.

Schulz, and after him De Wette and Alford, object to the manner of citing the Old Testament by Paul, and by the writer of the Hebrews, as different. Paul, it is said, always appeals to the Old Testament as a written record, whereas the writer of the Hebrews quotes it as the immediate word of God, or of the Holy Ghost. Paul's phrase is, 'It is written;' the Hebrew phrase is, 'God says,' or 'the Spirit says;' and, it is added, Paul never uses the phrase, 'God says,' which, it is said, is found in this Epistle.

Now the facts are that in twenty-one cases the quotation in the Hebrews, 'He says' (ἀρέ, λέγει, φθορί), is used generally without any nominative; in thirteen of these God, or the Lord, is probably the nominative; four have 'Christ' implied; in two other passages 'the Spirit' is expressed; and once we have 'the Scripture saith;' and once 'that which was commanded.' In Romans, 'It is written,' or a similar form, is used sixteen times; 'the Scripture saith' is used eight times; 'Isaiah saith,' 'Moses saith,' 'the oracle saith,' is used fourteen times. So the Hebrew usage preponderates even in the Romans.

The statement that Paul never used 'God saith' is contradicted by the fact that 'God' is the nominative in two passages in the Romans, in four passages in the Corinthians, and in one in the Galatians. Thrice only, indeed, is 'God,' or 'Lord,' expressed (2 Cor. vi. 16, 17, 18); but then in Hebrews, out of fourteen passages, it is expressed only once (vi. 14).

The Epistles to the Corinthians may be taken as a specimen of the formula of quotation. In First Corinthians 'It is written' is always used, except in one passage (vi. 16), and four times there is no formula. In Second Corinthians 'It is written' is thrice used; 'He saith' thrice; and there are two quotations without any formula. There is in fact no great difference between the Hebrews and other Epistles, except that 'He saith' is there the preponderating form, as elsewhere 'It is written' is the preponderating form. Even of these differences there is an obvious explanation. The common form of quotation from Scripture among the Jews was, and still is, 'It is said,' or 'According as it is said.' To a Greek this phrase would be very ambiguous: to a Jew it is perfectly natural and clear. Of course this reasoning does not prove
INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

that Paul wrote the Hebrews; but it proves that, whoever wrote it, wrote as to Jews, and as one who knew their ways. It proves, moreover, that the difference of quotation between the Hebrews and other Epistles is trivial, and is explained by facts with which Paul was perfectly familiar.

3. But what of the argument from these quotations? Who could imagine, it has been said, that the second Psalm, for example, had anything to do with the resurrection, or that the eighth Psalm had anything to do with our Lord, or that the 110th Psalm, with its reference to Melchizedek, applies to the Divine priesthood of our Redeemer? These quotations, it has been said, are not made in the proper sense of the passages quoted. And again the answer is at hand. The second Psalm is quoted in the New Testament, and is applied to our Lord by the apostles (Acts iv. 25); and the very verse quoted in the Hebrews to prove the resurrection of Christ is quoted for the same purpose by Paul (Acts xiii. 33), being quoted by no other New Testament writer.

The eighth Psalm is quoted by our Lord as fulfilled in Himself ('Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings,' etc.); and is made the basis of a similar argument by Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 27 ('and hast put all things under His feet').

As for the 110th Psalm, which contains the allusion to Melchizedek, our Lord has quoted it as fulfilled in Himself, and it is recognised as Messianic by His Jewish hearers. 'Jesus answered and said, How say the Scriptures that Christ is the Son of David? for David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on my right hand till I make Thy foes Thy footstool. David himself therefore calleth Him Lord.' If this use of the Psalm is Philonistic, as some have stated, it is also scriptural.

In brief, the common arguments based on internal evidence against the Pauline origin of the Epistle prove little, and certainly cannot be regarded as setting aside the external authority.

That when the writer of the Hebrews expresses thoughts found elsewhere in Paul's writings, he often employs forms of expression that differ from those of his acknowledged Epistles, is admitted, and what the most satisfactory explanation of those differences may be is a question open to discussion. A later expression of the same thoughts by the same writer, a Hebrew original, the employment of the pen, and, in some degree, of the style of another, all have been suggested as explanations. We are not bound to decide on any of these explanations. What may be safely affirmed is, that there is nothing in this difficulty that justifies us in setting aside the historical evidence, which is very decidedly to the effect that in its substance the Epistle is Paul's.

II.—THE ARGUMENT.

The Epistle consists of two parts: the first part chiefly doctrinal (chap. i.—x. 18), the second part chiefly practical (x. 19—xiii.)—the whole abounding in warnings against apostasy and unbelief.

1. DOCTRINAL.—In the first part, the supreme authority of the gospel and the inferiority of the law and of all other dispensations, are proved by comparing the heralds or teachers of these dispensations, their servants or priests, their covenants, their worship, and their sacrifices (i.—x. 18).

2. PRACTICAL.—Upon this doctrinal argument are based exhortations to patient endurance and trust. Faith is shown to be the essential and permanent grace; its
power and blessedness are traced through a long line of heroes and confessors, ending in Christ Himself; and the Hebrew Christians are encouraged to endure trials as fatherly chastisement common to all true sonship, and fitted to promote their holiness. The blessedness of the new covenant is then used, as often in the earlier part of the Epistle, to set forth the awfulness of apostasy (x. 19–xii.); and the Epistle closes with exhortations to special duties and virtues, blended with personal allusions, and ending with the apostolic benediction (chap. xiii.).

Doctrinal Outline (chap. i.–x. 18).

Christ, the author and teacher of the gospel, is superior to prophets, to angelic messengers, and to Moses, the mediator of the law.

1. Christ is superior to prophets, not in time, indeed (i. 1, 2), but in the unity and completeness of His teaching (vv. 1, 2), and in His personal dignity as 'Light of light,' Son and Lord or heir, through whom the worlds were made and are still sustained (ver. 3), and as Redeemer and King (vv. 2, 3).

2. Christ is superior to angels, as proved by His Divine origin, which differs from that of angels (vv. 4, 5), by the worship they pay Him (ver. 6), by His office as eternal King (vv. 8, 9) and as Creator (ver. 10), by His unchangeableness, and by His mission to preside and reign, as it is theirs to serve (vv. 13, 14).

Hence the practical lesson, Give the more earnest heed to this gospel which Christ introduced, which apostles and others attested, and which God Himself confirmed by every form of miracle, and by the varied gifts of the Holy Ghost (ii. 1–4).

And yet this Son is 'man' also, a fresh proof of His superiority to angels, and of His fitness for His office. For it is 'man' who is to have supremacy (ii. 5–8), and it is by His manhood our Lord becomes our brother and helper and sympathizing priest (ii. 9–18).

3. Christ is superior to Moses, one of the most faithful of God's servants. Moses was apostle, messenger, only; Christ was apostle and priest (iii. 1). Moses was part of a great economy; Christ was the founder of the economy itself (ver. 3, 'house'). Moses and his economy were creations; Christ was the creator (ver. 4). Moses was a servant in the house; Christ was son (v. 5, 6)—the first in another's house, the second in what was His own.

Again the lesson is plain, Be faithful and obedient and true—a lesson enforced by solemn examples and appeals. The Israelites perished through unbelief (iii. 7–11), and a like spirit will bring a like punishment and create a new example (ver. 12). The writer reminds his readers that we share in salvation only if we persevere (ver. 14). He appeals again to the case of the Israelites (vv. 15–19). They had a promise and a gospel (iv. 1–3) as well as we, and yet they missed 'the land' and the rest that were promised them. So David assures us that there is a truer rest, and a better Canaan, which later generations, and it may be we with them, may also miss through the same unbelief (vv. 4–11). Great caution is needed, for the Divine word discriminates, and God Himself, who knows all, is judge (vv. 12, 13). And yet there is hope even for the feeblest believer. Our High Priest is Son of God and Son of Man. He is therefore as prompt to pity as He is mighty to save.

4. Christ's priesthood superior to Aaron's (chap. v.–vii. 28).—Every high priest (a) must be one with those he represents (ver. 1); (b) must have the 'considerate mildness,' the 'sweet reasonableness' of one who knows his own weakness and ours; (c) must be prepared to offer sacrifices for others (vv. 2, 3); and having to act in matters relating to God (d), must be appointed by God (ver. 4). The first of these qualifica-
INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

tions he has insisted upon already (chap. ii.); the third he discusses later (chap. ix. 15–x. 18); the fourth and the second (d and d) he now proceeds to prove.

Christ, it is clear, did not take upon Himself this office, as is shown from the second Psalm, and from the hundred and tenth (vv. 5, 6). His fitness to exercise compassion is proved by His own trials and prayers and tears, and by the efficacy of them (vv. 7–10).

Digression on the priesthood of Melchizedek, with warnings and exhortations. The digression necessary, partly because of the rudimentary knowledge of the persons addressed, partly because of the mystery of the truths themselves (vv. 11–14). Progress in knowledge essential (vi. 1–3): a truth confirmed by the danger of apostasy (vv. 4–6), and the miserable recompense of unfruitful professors (vv. 7, 8), and by his own hope of better things for them, founded on the Divine faithfulness and on their own love (vv. 9, 10). But he desires them still to persevere. Strengthened by the example of those who are fellow-heirs with them (vv. 11, 12), by the example of Abraham, and by the promise given to them, which promise comes to us with a double confirmation, and introduces us to even greater blessedness (vv. 19, 20).

The argument is now resumed. Christ being a priest after the order of Melchizedek, is superior to Aaron. Melchizedek was king and priest (vii. 1, 2). His priesthood was not hereditary or temporary, and he received homage from Abraham, and virtually from Levi (vv. 3–10). And in all this superiority Christ shares, and shares pre-eminently. In dignity and in authority He is superior, and also in the perfection of His work. The Levitical priesthood perfected or justified none, and it was finally set aside on the ground of its unprofitableness. Christ's priesthood, on the other hand, offers a sacrifice once for all, and saves to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him (vv. 11–19). There are also other proofs. Christ was appointed with an oath, with a double oath, with higher sanctions (vv. 20, 22), and holds a permanent office, while His character and sonship give power to His office both with God and with man (vv. 23–25, 26–28).

5. The Superiority of the New Covenant.—The efficacy, sacrifices, and worship contrasted with the imperfect and typical institutions of the law.

Christ, as priest, is seated at God's right hand, the minister of a true tabernacle, not a typical one, and has offered a divine and heavenly sacrifice (viii. 1–6), whence it is clear that we have a better covenant, based upon better promises, and pronounced by God Himself to be superior to the old (vv. 8, 9); for it is written on men's hearts (ver. 10), gives its blessings to all (ver. 11), and provides for the forgiveness of sin (ver. 13). Divine and beautiful as were the temple and its services (ix. 1–5), they belonged rather to an earthly state (ver. 1) than to a heavenly one (ver. 11); and showed that the way into the holiest was not yet open, and that consciences were not at rest. The whole was at best a type or parable of a coming reality, which last alone could set completely right what was disordered (vv. 6–10). All this Christ has realized by the offering up of Himself (vv. 11–14), ratifying the new covenant by His death (vv. 15–17) as the old typical covenant was ratified by the blood of its victims (vv. 8–21). Hereby He has obtained forgiveness (vv. 21, 22), and has effectually opened the way into heaven, where He now appears for us (ver. 24); whence He will come again as judge, and complete His work as the Saviour of all who believe.

The superiority of His sacrifice is further proved by the inefficiency of the sacrifices of the law, which only revealed, and did not remove sin (x. 1–4, 11), by God's repudiation of the victims and offerings of the law (vv. 6–8), and by the preparation and substitution of the offering of the body of Christ (vv. 5, 7, 9), and by the reality of the efficacy of His sacrifice. It requires and admits of no repetition—a repetition that is
INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISODE TO THE HEBREWS.

forbidden alike by Christ's position in glory (vv. 12, 13), by the perfect sanctification of all who believe, and by the completeness of that forgiveness of which prophets have long since spoken (vv. 15–18).


Grounds for steadfastness: An open door into heaven (x. 19), a new way of access (ver. 20), and Christ's appearance in heaven for us (ver. 21).

Stedfastness is strengthened by a fuller faith in Christ, who has freed us from guilt and impurity (ver. 22), by hope in the Divine faithfulness (ver. 23), by love of the Church, and continued fellowship with it (vv. 24, 25).

Motives that ought to confirm us in stedfastness and guard us from apostasy: The impossibility of finding another sacrifice (ver. 26), the danger and imminence of final condemnation, and the heavier punishment that awaits apostates under the gospel (vv. 28–31). The same lesson is enforced by the memory of past struggles and losses, which are vain unless we persevere, by the certainty of our reward if we are faithful, and by the fact that a life of loving trust and expectancy is ever dear to God (vv. 35–39).

The nature, object, and necessity of faith (chap. xi. 1–6). Its utility in giving understanding or perception (ver. 2), righteousness (ver. 4), heaven (ver. 5). Its power and blessedness attested, before the law, by the life and blessedness of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, etc. (vv. 4–22); under the law, by Moses, by the Israelites at the Exodus, by the early victories in Canaan, and by Rahab (vv. 24–30, 41); after the law, by Judges and earlier Prophets (vv. 32–35); by others under the Kings, and in the days between Malachi and John the Baptist (vv. 35–38).

Reasons for patience (xi. 39, 40–xii. 11): The example of the Fathers, who finally received their reward, though it was long delayed (xi. 39; xii. 1), and of Christ Himself, who suffered more than all—the originator and finisher of faith (vv. 2–4). Further reasons are found in the fact that discipline is a test of all sonship (ver. 5), an evidence of Divine love (ver. 6), and a means of increasing holiness.

Exhortations to greater earnestness and to the cultivation of all virtue—(a) what we have to do (vv. 12–14); (b) and avoid (vv. 15–17); (c) and consider the excellence of the Mosaic law (vv. 18–21), and the greater excellence of the gospel (vv. 22–24). The obligation of greater earnestness (vv. 25–29), and of all virtue (chap. xiii.). Love of the brethren (ver. 1), love of strangers (ver. 2), compassion on all that suffer (ver. 3); purity in married life, contentment, and trust (vv. 4–6). The loving remembrance and imitation of departed leaders (vv. 8, 9), and a heart established by grace, and by our participation in the great sacrifice of the Cross—a sacrifice for sin offered without the camp, in which therefore none, as in the sin-offering under the law, can share (vv. 10, 11) but those who go forth without the camp (vv. 12, 13). This we do, offering continually the sacrifice of thanksgiving and of a consistent confession of Christ's name (ver. 15), with the added sacrifice of beneficence and subjection (vv. 16, 17).

The writer asks the prayers of Hebrew Christians (vv. 18, 19); prays to God for them—to God as the author of peace through the redemption of Christ (ver. 20), to God as the giver and perfecter of all good, working in us through Christ (ver. 21); commends to them his Epistle, speaks of the speedy visit of Timothy, and closes with the usual Pauline salutation (vv. 21–25).
INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

SUMMARY OF EARLY EVIDENCE ON THE AUTHORSHIP AND GENUINENESS OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, WITH REFERENCE TO AUTHORITIES ACCESSIBLE MOSTLY TO ENGLISH READERS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clement</td>
<td>Romz.</td>
<td>70-90</td>
<td>Quotes largely: no name</td>
<td>Jacobson’s Patr. Apost.; Stuart,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polycarp</td>
<td>Smyrna</td>
<td>80-150</td>
<td>Quotes more</td>
<td>Roth’s Op. Eccl. 1, 13, 24. See</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin Martyr</td>
<td></td>
<td>103rd-167</td>
<td>Quotes thrice</td>
<td>Forster, p. 447.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnabas</td>
<td></td>
<td>2nd Cent.</td>
<td>Quotes twice: once as Paul’s</td>
<td>147.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paschasius</td>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>2nd-3rd</td>
<td>Ascribes it to Paul</td>
<td>Anti-Nicene Fathers; Westcott, p.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignatius</td>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>135-140</td>
<td>Does not include it in Paul’s Epistles</td>
<td>176.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcellus</td>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Does not seem to include it</td>
<td>Roth, i. 326; Westcott, 399.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vet. Vespasian</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>Puts it among Canonical Books</td>
<td>Wordsworth, 397; Westcott.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eusebius</td>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>350</td>
<td></td>
<td>Stuart, i. 144.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>Is said not to quote it, but quotes thrice</td>
<td>Anti-Nicene Fathers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>248-258</td>
<td>Ascribes to Barnabas, and speaks of it as Apostolic in doctrine</td>
<td>Delitzsch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clement</td>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>Does not quote, and speaks of Epistles to Seven Churches</td>
<td>Anti-Nicene Fathers, p. 30; Westcott.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clement</td>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>Says Paul wrote it in Hebrew</td>
<td>Westcott, 311; Wordsworth, 356.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origen</td>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>Says Paul gave the thoughts, and quotes it as his</td>
<td>Wordsworth, 337; Stuart, i. 127.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diognetus</td>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>247</td>
<td></td>
<td>Westcott, 319.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregory Thaumaturgus</td>
<td>Cappadocia</td>
<td>212-270</td>
<td>Ascribes it to Paul</td>
<td>Cardinal Mai; Wordsworth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council of Antioch</td>
<td>Antioch</td>
<td>265</td>
<td></td>
<td>Roth, iii. 398.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archelaus</td>
<td>Mesopotamia</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>Quotes it twice</td>
<td>Roth, v. 137, 149.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter, Bp.</td>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>Ascribes it to Paul</td>
<td>Lardner, ii. 307.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander</td>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>313</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wordsworth, Introd. 369.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council of Nice</td>
<td>Nice</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>Quotes it</td>
<td>Westcott, 399.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodius</td>
<td>Lycia</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>Ascribes it to Paul</td>
<td>Wordsworth, p. [33].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregory Nazianzen</td>
<td>Nyssa</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>Discusses the whole question, and ascribes it to Paul</td>
<td>Wordsworth, 394; Delitz. 10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basilius</td>
<td>Caesarea</td>
<td>340</td>
<td></td>
<td>Westcott, 485.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chrysostom</td>
<td>Laodicea</td>
<td>347-418</td>
<td>Ascribes it to Paul</td>
<td>Westcott, p. 443.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council of Laodicea</td>
<td>Laodicea</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>Speaks of Epis. to Seven Churches</td>
<td>Westcott, i. 355.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victorinus</td>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>Ascribes it to Paul</td>
<td>Cave, Hist. Lit. 768 ; Wordsworth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council of Carthage</td>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>397</td>
<td></td>
<td>[33]; Westcott, 483.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyril</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>349</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wordsworth, 399.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerome</td>
<td>Palestine and Rome</td>
<td>360-90</td>
<td>Ascribes it to Paul: notes the Latin feeling</td>
<td>Westcott, 399; Westcott, 404.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damascus</td>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>Ascribes it to Paul</td>
<td>Wordsworth, p. 16.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epaphras</td>
<td>Constantia</td>
<td>367</td>
<td></td>
<td>Westcott; Wordsworth, Introd. 368.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilary</td>
<td>Poictiers</td>
<td>350-368</td>
<td></td>
<td>Westcott, 404.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucifer</td>
<td>Cagliari</td>
<td>370</td>
<td></td>
<td>Westcott, 397.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basil</td>
<td>Caesarea</td>
<td>371</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lardner, ii. 400, iii. 5; Cranmer’s Catena.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athanasius</td>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>373</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lardner, iii. 330; Davidson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambrose</td>
<td>Milan</td>
<td>374</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wordsworth, p. 33.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amphiphilus</td>
<td>Iconium</td>
<td>380</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wordsworth, p. 39.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodosius</td>
<td>Cæsarea</td>
<td>393</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wordsworth, Introd. 364.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodoret</td>
<td>Cilicia</td>
<td>394</td>
<td></td>
<td>Westcott, 392.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augustine</td>
<td>Hippo</td>
<td>395</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wordsworth, p. 343.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ephrem</td>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>With some doubt, ascribes it to Paul</td>
<td>Lardner, ii. 485.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innocent</td>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>Ascribes it to Paul</td>
<td>Westcott, 512.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSS. Alex. Vat.</td>
<td>6th Cent.</td>
<td>6th-10th</td>
<td>Hebrews is included among the Epistles of Paul</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symmachus</td>
<td>Constanza</td>
<td>6th Cent.</td>
<td>Ascribes it to Paul</td>
<td>Words, Canon, § 8, p. 96.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celsus (F.)</td>
<td>Turin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Words, p. 15; West, 510.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canones Apostolici</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruffinus</td>
<td>Sicily</td>
<td>330-410</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Indicates approximate dates.  
† Authorities supposed not to refer to the Epistle, but really referring to it.  
‡ Writers of the Latin or Western Church.
OUTLINE OF THE ARGUMENT ON THE AUTHORSHIP.

Was the Epistle written by Apollos, p. 1; or by Barnabas, p. 2; or by Clement or by Luke, p. 3. Was it written by Paul?

EXTERNAL TESTIMONY.

It was written in his lifetime and has his usual authorization, p. 4. (See also pp. 12 and 13.)

Peter’s Testimony, p. 5; Clement and other Apostolic Fathers, p. 5.

Eastern Testimony—
   Palestine—Cyril, Jerome, Eusebius, Gregory, Chrysostom, pp. 6, 7.
   Asia Minor—Gregory, Amphiloctius, Theodore, etc., p. 7.
   Alexandrian Writers—Pantenus, Clement, Athanasius, Origen, Dionysius, pp. 7, 8.
   Greek MSS. and Versions, p. 8.

Western Testimony—
   Cyprian, Victorinus, Hilary, p. 8; Hippolytus, p. 9; Caius, Muratorian Canon, etc., p. 10;
   Clement, Irenaeus, Decretals,Jerome, p. 11.

INTERNAL TESTIMONY (p. 12).

Peter. Why Paul should write to Hebrews, p. 13.
(1) Words found only in Hebrews—style, p. 14.
(2) Quotations, and mode of introducing them, pp. 15, 16.
(3) Arguments based on quotations, p. 17.

Result.

English readers may be glad to have a few books named which they will find specially helpful:—
Gouge’s (W.) Commentary on the Epistle, being the substance of thirty years’ Wednesday’s lectures (two vols. fol. 1655), is still held in high esteem; Owen’s (Dr. J.) Exposition of the Hebrews (in four vols. folio, 1668–74) is full of elaborate, doctrinal, and experimental comments; Maclean’s (A.) Paraphrase and Commentary on the Epistle is very judicious and excellent, and deserves to be better known; Brown’s (Dr. John) Exposition is rich in evangelical and practical comment, though less critically accurate than is usual in his expositions; for the argument, and for pithy, striking suggestion, Bengel’s Gnomon will never be consulted without advantage; Bleek and Delitzsch are very helpful for verbal criticism, and the last for doctrinal exposition; Tholuck and Eberard and Stuart are each helpful in all departments; Alford is on this Epistle largely indebted to Delitzsch, and is generally good; for Rabbinical learning, the English reader may turn with profit to Owen and Lightfoot and Gill; as the scholar may turn to Wetstein, and Schottgenius and Kuinoel.
TO THE HEBREWS.

(This is the only heading of the Epistle sanctioned by the most ancient authorities.)

[The marginal parallel passages in clarendon type are the passages from the originals of which the words of the text are taken. In citing these, figures in brackets give the Hebrew or Greek reference; when Gr. or Heb. is added, it indicates from which text the quotation is taken.]

CHAPTER I. 1–II. 4.

The excellency of the New Dispensation—proved by the superiority of Christ to Prophets and Angels, as Son of God, Creator, Redeemer, and King, I. 1–14. —Consequent Responsibility, ii. 1–4.

1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake 1 in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days, spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, ‘Thou art my Son, This day have I begotten thee?’ And again, ‘I will be to him a Father, And he shall be to me a Son?’ And of the angels he saith, ‘Who maketh his angels spirits, And his ministers a flame of fire.’

2 But unto the Son he saith,”

1 having in many portions and in many ways spoken, 2 read, at the end of these days, 3 in one who is Son, 4 he also very impress, 5 substance, 6 omit by himself and our, and tr. made purification of sins, 7 omit, when he again bringeth in, winds, 8 or, when he again bringeth in, 9 or, of, as in ver. 7
TO THE HEBREWS.

Ps. cxv. (28. v.) 6. 7.

Ps. cxv. (28. v.) 6. 7.

Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever:
A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom.

9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity;
Therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee
With the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

10 And,
Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation
of the earth;
And the heavens are the works of thine hands:
They shall perish; but thou remainest;
And they all shall wax old as doth a garment;
And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up,
And they shall be changed:
But thou art the same,
And thy years shall not fail.

11 But to which of the angels said he at any time,
Sit on my right hand,
Until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

12 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister
for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

CHAP. II. 1. Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed
to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should
let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast,
and every transgression and disobedience received a just
recompence of reward;
how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation;
which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord,
and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;
God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders,
and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

read, and the sceptre of (and tr.) uprightness didst lay
read and tr. roll them up; as a garment also shall they be changed
or, of, as in ver. 7 hath he said
i.e. to do service on behalf of
who are to obtain salvation
that were heard
drift away from them
through—by means of—angels became, or proved to be
witness with them manifold miracles (powers), and different distributions

Vers. 1, 2. The author contrasts the gradual and multiform revelations given of old in the person of the prophets, with the revelation given at the end of the Jewish dispensation in the person of Him who is Son.—God who . . . spake; rather, God having spoken; the Greek expressing the preliminary nature of former communications.—End times describes rather the many imperfect revelations—which were still parts of one whole—given through Enoch, Abraham, Moses, etc., each knowing in part only; as divers manners points to the many ways in which the revelations were given—mysterious promise, pregnant type, dark prophecy, or it may be, though less probably, dream, vision, audible utterance; while under the Gospel the revelation is the life and dying and explicit teaching of Christ, with the added enlightenment—still in Christ—of the Holy Spirit. . . . God spake in the prophets, as he spake in one who was Son. So the preposition means, indicating not so much instrumentality through them, as God in them, abiding and inspiring. Of one who was Son. Such is the force of the original where there, is no article, in contrast to the prophets of the previous clause. The completeness, the unity, the supreme authority of the revelation that closes the preliminary and partial
TO THE HEBREWS.

25

lessons of the old economy is the theme that fills the writer's mind. ... The Son of God—incarnate as we afterwards learn (ii. 14)—is in His life and death and teaching the full revelation of the Father, and for all that is essential to salvation. ... At the end of those days. Such is the corrected text. The common text speaks the Son as introducing the new economy; the corrected text speaks of Him as closing the old. Christ's kingship really began at Pentecost; but the last days of the old economy continued overlapping the new till Jerusalem was overthrown, and the possibility of keeping the Levitical law had passed away (Heb. viii. 13). The Epistle thus prepares all readers for the overthrow which is seen to be at hand, and which was to prove a sore temptation even to Christian Jews.—Beir, possessor, like the 'heritor' of Scotland and the heir of the old Roman law (Justinian, Inst. xi. 19). Already Christ was Lord, and whatever was God's was His also (Acts ii. 36; John xvii. 10).—By whom, through rather, i.e. by whose agency or instrumentality. The world. The Greek word in the passage subsumes all things as existing in time, and in successive economies, natural and moral. Elsewhere the world often represents the world in its material order and beauty (Heb. iv. 3, ix. 26), or, as inhabited, the world of men (Heb. i. 6, ii. 5). In the second of these senses, the word is sometimes used simply to mark a spirit or temper as opposed to the Gospel (Heb. xi. 7; Jas. iv. 4; 1 John v. 4.)

Ver. 3. The brightness—the effulgence—of the divine glory, with allusion probably to the visible glory of the Shekinah over the mercy-seat, though the meaning is deeper. 'Light of (i.e. emanating from Him who is the) light.'—The express image, the impress or stamp wherein and whereby the divine essence is made manifest: and all this He is in His own nature, so the Greek implies ('being,' comp. John i. 1), not that He became so by incarnation. Image of His person is not equivalent. The earlier rendering, substance (Tyrand, essence or nature), is more accurate.—And bearing, upholding and directing all things by the word, the frail of His power, when (rather after) He had made purification of sins, i.e. had stoned for them, sat down, etc.

What higher honour can be given to our Lord? He is the glory—the love and holiness of God made visible; the very essence, the nature of the Father in loving embodiment. He therefore that has the Son has the Father also.

Note that God not only acted in creating all things; He acts still in upholding them. A creation regulated by dead laws alone is not in Scripture teaching (see Acts xvii. 24, 25, He is giving to all life and all things, 27, 28). And it is in and through Christ this is done.

Ver. 4. Having become, after He had made at-nement for sin, as much superior to the angels, as he has obtained a name far more excellent than they. His greatness is partly essential and partly acquired (see Phil. ii. 6-11). The first He had as Son before the world was; the second He gained through His incarnation, and after He had suffered.

Vers. 5-14. Now follows the proof of this superiority—in name and, as name generally implies, in nature, in status.

Ver. 5. My Son. Again by position the emphasis is on this name, and on the relation it describes: My Son art thou, to-day have I begotten thee. These words have been referred to the incarnation, when the 'holy thing' born of the Virgin was called Son of God (Luke i. 35); or to His resurrection and exaltation, when He is marked out as Son of God in regal dignity, 'in power' as Messianic King (Rom. i. 4). This last view is favoured by Acts iii. 32, 33, where this identical promise is said to be fulfilled unto us when God raised up Jesus. Others refer the words to the essential nature of our Lord, as Son of the Father by 'eternal generation,' as it is called. God sent the Son, it is said, and so He had dignity before His incarnation and before His resurrection. The fact is, the word Son describes His relation to the Father, both personal and official; and I have begotten thee applies to every state to which the word 'Son' applies—His original nature, His incarnation, even his kingship. In the following verse He is called the first-begotten—a title not given to Him in connection with His incarnation, but describing his dignity and rights. He is called first-begotten, never first-created, for all things were made by Him, to Him, as all things were made by Him. This expression, the first-begotten, is peculiar in this figurative sense to Paul's writings (Rom. viii. 29; Col. i. 15, 16; Rev. i. 5; comp. Heb. xii. 23).

Ver. 6. And in accordance with this relation, whenever (to quote another passage, 'again') He bringeth or leadeth (literally 'shall have led') in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, 'Let all the angels of God worship him.' Here are several difficulties. The quotation from Ps. cxvii. 7 is not exact, as most of the quotations in this Epistle are. In Deut. xxii. 43 the very words are found in the Septuagint; but there are no words corresponding to them in the Hebrew text. The Psalm belongs to the Messianic Psalms, and the exact words of Deuteronomy describe the welcome given to the Messianic King. Two passages are here blended in one. Some translate bringeth or leadeth again, and refer the words to our Lord's second coming alone. But bringeth in is hardly appropriate to the second coming; and the use of an expression that describes an indefinite future is justified by the fact that it is a quotation of what was spoken long ago, from which time the futurity begins. It is therefore better to regard the language as fulfilled whenever Christ is introduced into the world of men. Then—at His birth, His resurrection, His kingdom—is He the object of angelic worship. The angels. The Hebrew of Ps. cxvii. 7 is, 'all ye mighty or divine ones,' a word applied to God, and applicable to magistrates, and to all who had a divine message and spoke in God's name (John x. 34). Comp. 'The divine in man,' 'The divine disciples sat.' Divine though they be, the Son is exalted above them all—in His nature, and in the reverence paid Him. (See on ii. 6.)

Ver. 7. As to angels, moreover, they were made by Him (not begotten). They are spirits, not sons; and His servants or ministers, a 'flame of fire.' Some render 'spirits' by 'sends,' and read, 'He maketh His angels as winds, passive, swift, and unerring.' They do His will, as do the tempest and the lightning. In the Hebrew of the Psalm (civ. 4) either meaning is possible; He maketh the winds or spirits His messengers, or His messengers' spirits' or winds. In the
Septuagint, and so here, on the other hand, the only allowable meaning is, 'His angels or messengers wind' or 'spirits.' The rendering of the Greek by winds is very rare in the New Testament, and is indeed found only here, and possibly in John iii. 8. In ver. 14, the angels are expressly called 'ministering spirits'—a name that recalls both the names given in ver. 7, spirits and ministers. They are His workmanship, not His sons; and they are all either 'spirits' or material elements, or as material elements; 'a flame of fire,' an allusion perhaps to a Jewish interpretation of seraphim—the burning ones.' On the whole, therefore, the A.V. seems preferable to the marginal rendering.

Ver. 8. But whatever the difficulties in the minute interpretation of those verses, the general sense is clear. Angels are all subordinate; while to Christ are given names of a very different import—God and Lord, and highest dignities—a sceptre and a throne, a kingdom.—A sceptre of righteousness, or rather of uprightness, as the word is translated in the Old Testament. If this change be made, it may then be said that righteous, righteousness, just, justify, justification, are throughout the New Testament forms of the same Greek word. His character befits His kingdom. His is a sceptre of uprightness. He loves righteousness and hates iniquity, showing herein the very nature of the Father.

Ver. 9. The dignity of the God-man He owes to His Father. God anointed Him as King and Priest, and gave Him honour as such as kings, prophets, priests—His 'fellows,' associates that is, not necessarily equals—never knew. He therefore is not only King and Priest, the King of glory and Lord of lords (see Eph. i. 21). This supremacy is a joy to all who trust and obey Him. Nay, the earth itself is called to rejoice because He reigneth. The anointing oil that consecrates Messiah Priest and King is oil of gladness indeed!

Of these quotations, ver. 8 is taken from Ps. xlv., which Jewish commentators maintain to be written of the Messiah; ver. 9 is taken from a passage that speaks of Solomon, and of Christ as antitype; and ver. 10 is taken from a Psalm (cii. 25–27) that seems to speak of Jehovah only; and yet vers. 13–16 of that Psalm are connected with the Messianic kingdom. Creating power and immortality are here ascribed to the Son, as in ver. 13 universal empire is given to Him. The quotation in ver. 13 is from Psalm cx., a strictly Messianic Psalm (see Matt. xxii. 43, 44).

Ver. 11. They all, i.e. the heavens and the earth. The language and the imagery are taken largely from Isa. xxxiv. 4 and 6. Ver. 12. As a mantle shalt thou roll them up, as a garment also shall they be changed—a quotation from Ps. cxi., with the words 'as a garment added, on the authority of the best MSS. The heavens and the earth are to be rolled up as done with, and they are to be changed for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Ver. 13. Sit thou, etc., from Ps. cx. 1. The right hand is the place of authority and honour. Thy footstool, lit. a footstool of thy feet—not a resting-place for the feet, but what is to be trodden under by them. The application of this Psalm to the Messiah is accepted by the Jews, as appears from the Targums and other Jewish writings, is affirmed by Christ (Matt. xxii. 43–46) and by His apostles (Acts ii. 34, 35; 1 Cor. xv. 25; Eph. i. 20–23), and by different passages of the Epistle. Whom else could David acknowledge as His Lord? and to whom else did God swear that he should be a priest for ever?

Ver. 14. Are they not all ministering spirits?—a blending in reverse order of the expressions found in ver. 7. The play upon the words 'ministering spirits sent forth to minister' is not in the Greek. The original is simply 'ministering spirits continually sent forth on (or for) service.' The word here rendered 'ministering' is used in N.T. to express the temple service; and the word rendered 'ministry' or service is a form of the word that expresses dispensation or subordinate service generally. The worship and the work of angels is carried on in the great temple of nature and grace, and their service originates in the needs and claims of those who are soon to possess complete salvation. Of their ministry, for the benefit of us who have many examples under both Testaments. It is none the less real now that it is unseen.

Chap. II. 1–4. These verses are closely connected with the first chapter, and scarcely less closely with the subsequent verses of the second. It is characteristic of these warnings and exhortations that they never interrupt the thought. They spring naturally from what precedes, and lead as naturally to what follows.

Ver. 1. We have heard, rather 'the things heard,' an expression less definite, and intended to include all that was spoken by our Lord and by His servants, whatever was heard by them and reported to us, or directly by those servants. The dignity of the messenger adds greatly to the responsibility of those who hear the message (Mark xii. 6).—Last haply, possibly, we drift away from them. The A.V. ('let them slip') is, in a general sense, accurate; but it fails to represent the figure, and conceals part of the lesson. It is not the truths of the Gospel that slip away, but we who slip or 'fretten' past them, as Wicliffe expressed it. The word well describes the subtle power of temptation. We have simply to do nothing, and we shall be carried along to our ruin. To fall away requires no effort. To stand firm, to hold steadfast, is the difficulty.

Ver. 2. The word spoken by (rather, through or in the midst of) angels. If the attendance of angels at the giving of the Law added force and dignity to the precepts of that economy, how much greater is the honour and the authority of the Gospel which was given by Him whom angels worship and serve (chap. i. 6–14)! The ministration of angels in giving the Law is mentioned elsewhere in Scripture (see parallel passages in the margin of the text), though not at great length. Josephus speaks of it more distinctly (Antiq. xv. 5, § 3), and Wetstein quotes Jewish authorities which speak of 'the angels of service' whom Moses saw. In Gal. iii. 19 this ministration is referred to as a mark of the inferiority of the law. In Acts vii. 53 the contrast seems to be between a law given by man and one having higher authority. Such allusions, however, must be carefully distinguished from passages that speak of the 'angel of His presence' in whom was God's name—'the messenger of the covenant'—passages that refer, though dimly, to the Son of God Himself (see Pyle Smith and Dorner).—Was steadfast,
rather, became or proved to be steadfast, i.e. the command was confirmed in authority and obligation by the punishment of transgressors.—Transgression and disobedience. Every violation of the command is here included: all actual transgression of the law in the first, and all neglect or contempt of divine precepts in the second. Ethically the two mental states involve each the other. Commissions and omissions are both transgressions and disobedience. The first are things done in violation of law; the second are things left undone in violation of law also—the neglect, for example, spoken of in the following verse.—Consequence of reward is a happy tautology. What is given back to a man in return for what he has done, whether good or bad, is the meaning of the Greek, as it is the meaning of both expressions in old English, though both are now used in a good sense only. (See Ps. cxiv. 3.)

Ver. 3. By the Lord, rather through, by the instrumentality of. When instrumentality is clearly expressed in the context, as when it is said, 'By whom He made the worlds' (chap. i. 2), no change is needed; but when, as here, 'by' is ambiguous, making it uncertain whether it describes a mere agent or the originating cause, it is important to mark the distinction. The Lord is here regarded as the divine messenger, whose message God Himself attested (ver. 4).—The Lord. The title thus given to Christ has special dignity, and is not common in this Epistle, being found only in vii. 14, xiii. 20, and perhaps in xii. 14. It is the word used in the Septuagint to translate Jehovah.—Was confirmed unto us has been quoted to prove that Paul did not write this Epistle, he having affirmed elsewhere that he received his doctrine directly from Christ Himself (Gal. i. 12; 1 Cor. iv. 16). There is, however, no inconsistency. The writer is here speaking of the Gospel as attested by many human witnesses whom he, and those he is addressing, had heard. Be great salvation. Nothing is said here of the greatness of the salvation beyond the qualities immediately named (comp. Greek ἄγιος), viz. that the Gospel began with the teaching of the Lord, and was confirmed by the testimony and experience of those that heard it; still further by the variety and the diffusion of miraculous and spiritual gifts—God's own witnesses. A gospel originated in this way, and sustained by such evidence, has the strongest claim on our attention. The primary evidence of Christianity is Christ and Christians—the character of Him who first taught it, and next the testimony of men who have believed it, and who can tell of its fitness to bring peace and to produce holiness; and all this evidence is permanent, as clear and as strong now as in the first age.—Neglect. The sin rebuked here is not the rejection of the Gospel or contempt of it. It is simply neglect or indifference. The hearers did not care to examine the truths and duties it revealed. Tell men what God is and what God has done to make them happy and good, and the character of men is as fully tested by their indifference as by their formal rejection of the truth. Not to care about a message of reconciliation and holiness decides the character and the destiny of many who have heard but will not regard. We have only to 'neglect' salvation and we lose it, as in the previous verse we have only to take no heed; and we are carried away to our ruin in both cases.

Ver. 4. God also bearing them witness, i.e. God bearing witness with them to the Gospel they preached, confirming their word by the signs that followed (Mark xvi. 20).—With signs, wonders, and miracles. This is the threefold division of the miraculous acts which prove the superhuman mission of those who work them. As 'miracles' (καθαρίσθη), they display Divine power; as 'wonders,' they excite surprise; as 'signs' (St. John's usual word), they supply evidence which remains after the sensuous excitement of miraculous power has passed away—evidence which is the usual proof and accompaniment of a divine revelation (2 Cor. xii. 12).—The gifts of the Holy Ghost are illustrated in their diversity (to one man one gift; to another, another) in 1 Cor. xii. 4-11. God Himself distributing them (as in First Corinthians it is the Holy Ghost who is said to distribute them) according to His own will.
And didst set him over the works of thy hands: 

8 8, 9 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, 

In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

13 And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold, I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him in to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

8 didst
9 i.e., in subjection, the same word as before in vers. 5 and 8 rather, But him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, we behold, even Jesus, because of or, congregation will I praise thee, as in Ps. xxii. 22 or, blood and flesh
9 i.e., in like manner, literally, nearly in the same manner or degree
10 bring to nought
11 hath
12 assuredly he taketh not hold of, i.e., to rescue
13 taketh hold of

Ver. 5. For. This verse introduces a new proof of the superiority of the Gospel; but it is also connected with what precedes. The most natural explanation is to connect the for with i. 14. Angels are not sons: they are ministering spirits appointed only to serve. Not unto angels is the government of men under the Gospel committed. The new dispensation, the kingdom of God, the order of things under the Messiah, is committed to man, as was the world of old (Ps. viii.) to the model man, however, the ideal man, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. The name, the world to come (see note on i. 2), was quite familiar to the Jews, who called their own economy this world, and was used after the Jewish economy had practically ceased (comp. Matt. xii. 34), as Christ Himself is called, even after He had come, the Coming One (Rom. v. 14). This world of the future was already introduced; but the description was still appropriate, and is used again in this Epistle (ix. 10, 11, x. 1), partly because it was the name that described the hope of the Jews, and partly because the temple was still standing. Some regard the name as applying to the new heaven and the new earth, some to the heavenly state itself. It really includes them both, only it is wider, and applies to the whole order of things and to the government of men (see Gr.) under the Messiah. (See chap. vi. 5.)
Ver. 6. But one in a certain place. Some one somewhere testifieth. This is not the language of uncertainty nor even of indefiniteness. It is a common formula found in Philo and, as Scholiast genius shows, in Jewish writers, when they quote from what is supposed to be well known to their readers. Some one, you know who, in a certain place, you know where. The expression is found only here and in chap. iv. 4.—What is man . . . or the son of man? Both expressions point in the original passage to man as fallen and feeble. It is human nature that is thus honoured—human nature, not probably in its original state, but as subject to death because of sin, the chief quality in which angels excel man. This human nature God crowns and makes supreme over the work of His hands—a supremacy one day to be made complete in the person of our Lord. A little lower may (in the Hebrew and Greek) mean a little in degree (as in Prov. xv. 16; Heb. xiii. 22), or for a little [time] (as in Ps. xcvii. 10). If spoken of man as originally created, it means a little; if spoken of man as humbled, brought down through sin and the penalty due to it, and spoken of Christ as incarnate, it may mean for a little. 'A little lower,' however, is the more probable meaning both in the Psalm and in this passage. Both senses are true of man as fallen and redeemed, and of Christ incarnate and suffering. Than the angels. This is the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew of the Psalm. The original may mean 'than God,' or than 'the Divine,' as we say. The expression is applied in Scripture to magistrates and rulers, who are 'hugged round with a Divinity,' and the word is rendered 'than kings' in the Chaldee paraphrase. The translation 'than angels' is sanctioned by most of the Jewish commentators (see Gill), and is to be preferred, unless we take it with the Divine,' the Hebrew plural form admitting this abstract sense (see chap. i. 6).—Thou hast set him, etc. These words are omitted by some ancient authorities and by the earlier critical editors ( rude Griesbach, etc.); but the preference of evidence is now in favour of retaining them. The supremacy they describe was given to Adam after his creation (Gen. i. 28), and again to Noah after the fall (ix. 2).

'Lord, what is man? extremest how wide
In his mysterious nature join,
The flesh to worms and dust allied,
The soul immortal and divine!'

'But Jesus, in amazing grace,
Assumed our nature as His own,
Obeyed and suffered in our place,
Then took it with Him to His throne.

'Nearest the throne, and first in song,
Man shall His hallelujahs raise;
While wondering angels round Him throng,
And swell the chorus of His praise.'

Vers. 8, 9. The supremacy is certainly promised, and is intended to be complete; for nothing is excepted, though as yet (ver. 9) the promise is imperfectly fulfilled. The humiliation is clear enough, and the crowning with glory is begun. By and by there will be universal subjection, and He will be universal king. Meanwhile we may well turn from the imperfect Gospel, in which it is so easy to see, and contemplate (see Gr.) the great spectacle—Jesus made man, tasting death for men, crowned, and awaiting His full reward. From that spectacle suffering Christians will gather fresh patience and faith. This use of the expression, 'subject to Him,' and its application to Christ, is found only in Paul's Epistles: I Cor. xv. 27; Eph. i. 22; Phil. iii. 21. The words, 'for the suffering of death,' are connected by the ablest scholars (Tyndale, De Wette, Winer, etc.) with the words that follow: 'because of the suffering of death He was crowned,' as in Phil. ii. 9; and this rendering is all but essential if we are to do justice to the Greek ( λατ. with the accusative expressing an actual existing reason, not an end to be gained). To connect them with the previous clause, 'a little lower,' etc., as if dying were the purpose of His humiliation, is to do violence to the original, and to anticipate and so preclude the thought of the next clause, that He might taste death for every man. 'To taste death' is a common Hebraism for so to die (Matt. xvi. 28; John viii. 52). Merely to taste is sometimes the meaning of the Latin gestare, but that meaning must not be pressed here. In classic Greek, the phrase means to give oneself up to; but the Hebrew meaning 'to die' is nearer the truth, with the added idea, perhaps, that He experienced and felt it, and so came to understand more fully what death is . . . And yet all this suffering—the ground of our Saviour's honour and exaltation—was by God's grace. Herein is love, love in its noblest form, that God sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. If God Himself be not deeply concerned in this work, if the Divine nature have no share in what Christ did and suffered, the whole teaching of Scripture is confounded; and for our salvation we owe more to a 'man' than to the blessed God. God is outdone by a creature in the exercise of His noblest perfections, and that in the very dispensation which was intended to reveal them.—For every man; rather, for every one. The extent, the design, and the effect of the death of Christ have been, as is well known, the subjects of great controversy. Some hold that He so died for all, that all are to be saved by Him; others, that He died only for all whom the Father gave Him; and others, that He died for all, inasmuch as His sufferings and death remove the obstacles to the pardon of sinners which are created by the character and government of God. The question is partly verbal, and may be raised in relation to all God's gifts—the Bible, the means of grace, blessings of every kind. The thing that may be safely affirmed here is that the explicit teaching of this Epistle makes it impossible to accept these words in the first sense. Those who are saved by His death are 'the sanctified,' 'the brethren,' 'the many sons;' not those who reject the Gospel and die in unbelief; and yet so large a company made heirs of blessings, moreover, so numerous, so varied, and so lasting, that if the dignity of His person gives value to His sacrifice, the efficacy of His sacrifice reflects back a glorious light on the dignity of His person.

Ver. 10, etc. It became him. This arrangement (whereby one made lower than the angels was to be supreme) was not only in harmony with God's intention, as foreshadowed in nature and revealed in Scripture; it was in itself befitting. It was worthy of God, and it comprised the standard qualifications for His office. In this way He, as sin-bearer, cleanses us from sin, and stands in the same relation to God as those who are to be cleansed. He becomes their brother, pays to the same Father the same tribute of grateful praise,
exercises the same trust as they, and presents them with Himself completely redeemed (vers. 11-13). Meanwhile His mercy, His faithfulness, His help are all perfected through the experience and the sufferings He has undergone (16-18).—It became him, i.e. God, who is Himself deeply concerned in His great work, for whom are all things, and this among them. For whom are all things, etc. The same language (which is found elsewhere in N. T. only in Paul’s writings) is applied with characteristic differences to God (Rom. xi. 36) and to Christ (Col. i. 6; 1 Cor. viii. 6).—In bringing is the right rendering, though ‘having brought’ is a possible meaning of the tenses form. The words refer not to the saints of the old economy chiefly, but to all who are being saved. The saints of old—David, Israel, etc.—typified Christ in their sufferings: to Him, therefore, they were conformed. But we as well as they. And as it is to the coming glory the writer refers, the words are eminently true of us.—Captain, translated elsewhere author (Heb. xii. 2), and prince (Acts v. 31), means properly originator or author, and so sometimes leader.—Perfect: that is, in His office as Saviour. The personal perfection in obedience which He learned through suffering is the ultimate (ch. xx. 12). Suffering includes all that is needed to make men fit for the service of God—freedom from guilt, and personal holiness.—Of one, i.e. not of the same race, but of one Father: not in the sense in which the race are said to be God’s offspring, but in the deeper sense of the Divine sonship which begins in our case with spiritual renewal, the sonship which begins with the second birth, not the first, when men are begotten again by the Father, by the Spirit, through the truth.

Ver. 12. The church. The Old Testament name is the congregation. But in modern usage the congregation is one thing, and the church is another; and it is the church that best reproduces the sense, the exact meaning of the original and the force of the argument.

Ver. 13. I will put my trust in him. Christ’s oneness with us is not only proved by the fact that we have one Father and are brothers, all partakers of a Divine nature, but by the further fact that we have the same trials and struggles, and faith—the principle of our spiritual life. The brotherhood, moreover, that begins on His part with His incarnation and sufferings (ver. 12; see Ps. xxi.) continues till His work is complete, and all the children, Himself and we, are presented perfect before God (ver. 13; see Isa. viii. 18).

Ver. 14. He himself likewise. The Greek word here is not easily rendered. It implies great likeness without absolute identity; very closely like, and absolutely like so far as flesh and blood are concerned. He partook in the main of our nature. His was an actual incarnation—Jesus Christ in the flesh (1 John iv. 2), but with the difference which His personal sinlessness implies. The word rebukes the Döretism (the mere appearance of a human nature) of the early heresies, the mythical dreams of Strauss and other modern inquirers, but without admitting that He was in every respect as man is, still less that He was only man.

Ver. 15. Through death. The Fathers and the later commentators (Bengel notably) delight in marking how Christ destroyed death by dying, and cast out the prince of the world—the king of death—on the cross, the weakness proving as often to be the power of God. He might destroy it too strong; abolish, bring to nought, render of none effect, neutralize the power of, permanently paralyze, take away the occupation of, are all nearer the meaning. It is a favourite word of St. Paul, who uses it twenty-five times in his acknowledged Epistles. It occurs, besides, only here and in Luke xiii. 7.—Subject to bondage. Aristotle calls death ‘the most fearful of all fearful things,’ and ancient believers often looked upon it with dread. Even now Christians are freed from this dread only by a firm faith in Christ’s victory over it, and by a clear insight into the significance of His dying. Christ died not for His own sins, but for ours. If by faith we are one with Him, death is no longer the penalty of sin: it is only the completion of our holiness and the way into the blessed life above.

Ver. 16. Verily is feeble, as is even assuredly. The word means, it is known, admitted, and admitted everywhere; it is nowhere questioned. He took not on Him; rather, ‘on angels (or in later English, of angels) He laid not hold,’ but on the seed of Abraham He laid hold, i.e. to help and save them (see the same word in Heb. viii. 8). It is not angels whom Christ delivers (ver. 12); nor is it angels He succours (ver. 18), but the seed of Abraham, the theocratic name of the people of God peculiar to Paul. This is now generally accepted as the meaning of the verse. In the early Church the phrase ‘took not on Him’ was applied pretty generally, as in the Authorized Version, to the assumption of a human nature, and so it was understood by Calvin, Luther, Owen, and others. The active voice of the same Greek verb (here it is in the middle) is used by Greek writers in the sense of assuming a nature. But the tense is present, the voice is middle, and the word ‘nature’ is not expressed, and can hardly be supplied, so that we seem shut up to the meaning which is admittedly found in Heb. viii. 9, and in other sixteen places where it is used in N. T., including 1 Tim. vi. 19, and seven passages in the Acts.

Ver. 17. It behoved him. The word expresses moral fitness and consequent obligation, as in Heb. v. 3, 12, based on the nature of His mediatorial work. In all things therefore, i.e. all things essential to His mediation. The exception, ‘without sin,’ is expressed later (chap. iv. 15), and is less necessary here because of the limitation implied in ver. 14.

A merciful and faithful high priest. The Greek may mean that ‘he may be merciful and a faithful high priest,’ but the quality of mercy in the priest is really part of the thought. How much we need a merciful high priest, as well as one who shall be faithful to his trust, is shown by the preceding description of our state. It is the one quality which is needed to win men to God. God knew, no doubt, what our guilt and sufferings were, and felt them; but we needed proof that He knew and felt in order that we might trust in His mercy. This proof is supplied by Christ as incarnate, and perhaps Christ as incarnate and suffering became capable of higher sympathy than the blessed God Himself.—To make reconciliation for the sins of the people. It is unfortunate that this Old Testament expression is used in the N. T. only here, while the expression commonly used in N. T.
express the same Greek word, 'propitiation,' is not found in the O. T. at all. It will help the reader if he note that 'atonement for,' 'reconciliation for,' 'propitiation for,' are all forms of one and the same Greek word and of one and the same Hebrew word. When followed by the word 'sin' or its equivalent, the Hebrew and Greek mean to make atonement for; when followed by a word describing a person, they mean to pacify or appease, to make propitiation, with special reference to the moral sense of justice or right in the person appeased. This double sense pervades all the teaching of both Testaments.

Ver. 18. In that he suffered, being tempted, is on the whole the best rendering of the Greek. It may admit of a limited sense, 'In that wherein He suffered, being tempted,' or, 'having been tempted in what He suffered.' The first sense includes these senses and others too. And the wider the meaning we give the words, the greater the justice that is done by them to the completeness of the fitness of Christ to win our confidence and to help us by His sympathies and grace.

It may aid the reader of this Epistle to gather lessons for himself if we note briefly some of the hints which are suggested by these first two chapters—doctrinal, practical, and homiletic.

DOCTRINAL HINTS.

In this Epistle, as in the Gospel of John, the doctrine is based on the Divine nature of Christ, and on His incarnation. As in the Gospel (i. 1–18) it is said that the Word was God and became flesh and dwelt among us, so double truth pervades the book, so in the Hebrews the Deity and the humanity of the Son form the foundation of the entire treatise, and give strength and consistency to its teaching. The double truth is not worked as a pattern on the surface, it forms part of the texture.

In this last dispensation God is said to speak to us in His Son. The Son is the medium of the revelation. As revealer He has as His associates the feeblest. But this office of Christ is quite subordinate. His true character is that He is Himself the revelation. To know God and His Son Jesus Christ is eternal life. God in Christ, Christ as God,—redeeming, renewing, sanctifying,—is the saving doctrine of the Gospel.

There is a double Trinity in Scripture—the Trinity of the Old Testament: the Trinity of the eternity that precedes the incarnation, wherein Christ shares the glory He had with the Father, wherein He made the worlds; the Trinity of the New Testament, wherein He, as incarnate Son of God, becomes Messianic King, and reigns with accumulated honours on original glory—the second founded on the first, revealing it in clearer colours, with greater tenderness, and in closer relation to ourselves; again, perhaps, to become subordinate to the first, when God Himself in His essential nature shall be all in all (chaps. I. and ii.).

PRACTICAL HINTS.

1. 1. God is the chief teacher of the Church, and what He taught of old has still its authority and its lessons even under the Gospel (vers. 5, 8, etc.).
2. The author of the Old Testament is also the author of the New. It is God who gives Christ the supremacy. To put Moses or some 'son of David' above Christ is to disobey God. By whom Christ, then, is a distinct person from the Father, and yet He is Creator of all things.
3. As the sun is manifested only by its effulgence, so the Father is revealed to us by His who is Light of Light, God of God. He who upholds all things is our Redeemer and sacrifice. The atonement of sin is effected not by our doings or sufferings, but by Christ, and was completed by Him before He ascended.
4. Names are qualities and character when God gives them. . . . To give angels the worship that is due to Christ is to frustrate the Divine purpose, and to give to the servant what belongs only to the Son or the Father.
5. In the first age of the Church, Scripture determined what was truth, and that is its province still.
6. 3. Not to believe the Gospel is a greater sin than to break the law. . . . When men are warned or exhorted, the first person is more impressive than the second, 'How shall we escape?'
4. The rejection of the Gospel is rejection of the doctrine which Christ and His apostles preached. Post-apostolic doctrine has no Divine authority. . . . The doctrine is Divine which miracles confirm; the miracles are false when the doctrine they support is not Divine.
11. 6. 7. The Gospel, which is sometimes said to libel human nature,—so darkly does it paint our character,—gives man highest dignities, and raises him to the greatest blessedness.
11. 9. Faith is insight, and sees much that to the unbelieving remains unseen.
11. 10. The poorest, feeblest Christian who is sanctified and believes is recognised by Christ as a 'brother.'
11. 13. Christ Himself is a believer, one with us in the covenant of grace. He lived a life of faith even as we.
11. 15. There is a natural fear of death in man not always felt, but easily wakened. Christ's death delivers man from the danger of death, and from the fear of it. None but the true Christian is really free.

HOMILETIC HINTS.

1. 1, 2. Revelation progressive and complete. (Trench, Titcomb). The possibility and necessity, the certainty, the characters, the methods, the perfections of Divine revelation (B. W. Williams). Divine revelation variously communicated (Dr. Ryland). The personal ministry of Christ a revelation of God (Chandler). The Gospel preached under the Old Testament (Mather).
1. 12. The Son, the Creator and Ruler of the worlds (Bishop Hobart).
1. 3. Providence (Dr. Collinges). Christ's sufferings the purging of sin (Is. Ambrose). The Feast of the Ascension.
TO THE HEBREWS. [CHAP. III. 1-IV. 16.

11. 1. The great danger of carelessness in religion (Stillingfleet, Chalmers, Guthrie).
2. The great salvation (Keach, Conant, J. Suller, S. Walker, E. Cooper, Melville, etc.).
4. Miraculous evidence as proof of the truth of the Gospel (Collyer, Malby, Conybeare, etc.).
5-9. The "world to come" subject to Christ (McNeile). The just prerogative of human nature (Dr. Snape).
10. 11. The reasons and end of the sufferings of Christ. Sufferings necessary to perfection (Jones of Nayland), Good Friday (S. Walker, Jay). Christ (rather God) preparing His people for glory (Blunt). Christ made perfect through suffering (Sheppard and Vaughan).

12. The mystery of godliness (Newman). The condensation of Christ (Balmer).
14. The incarnation and its design (Dr. Peddie, Simeon).
14, 15. The fear of death (Saurin, Three Sermons), and deliverance from it (Usher, Bishop Hall, Dr. Bates, P. Norris, Dr. M'Crie).
16. Fallen man redeemed (South, Berriman).
17. Discriminating mercy (Hyatt).
16-18. The merciful High Priest (M'Cheyne).
18. Christ's temptations (Girdlestone). Christ's power to succour the tempted (Simeon).

CHAPTER III. 1-IV. 16.
The excellency of the Christian Dispensation proved by Christ's superiority to Moses, 1-6.—The duty of Faith and Stoicfastness enforced by the example of Israel, 7-19.—Still further enforced, iv. 1-13.—The hopes supplied by contemplation of the Tenderness and Power of Christ, 14-16.

1 WHERFORE, holy brethren, partakers of "the heavenly calling," consider, 4 the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ, 5 Jesus; who 6 was faithful to him that appointed him, as also 7 Moses was faithful in all his house.
3 For this "man," 8 was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch 9 as he who hath built the house hath more honour than the house. For every house is built by some 10 man; 11 but "he that built all things is God." 12 And Moses verily 13 was faithful in all his 14 house, as a servant, 14 for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; 15 but Christ as 16 a son over his own 17 house; 18 whose house are we, 19 if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the 20 hope firm unto the end. Wherefore (as 24 the Holy Ghost saith, "To-day if ye will 25 hear his voice,

8. Harden not your hearts, 26 as in the provocation,
In 24 the day of temptation in the wilderness:
9. When 27 your fathers tempted me, proved me,
And saw my works forty years.
10. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation,

1. omit Christ
2. Rom. i. 7;
3. Heb. iv. 11;
4. Phil. iii. 14;
5. Heb. i. 11;
6. Tim. i. 9;
7. Pet. i. 20;
8. Rom. xvii. 7;
9. ch. ii. 7, 10;
10. V. 12;
11. V. 13, x. 18;
12. Sent. ii. 8;
13. ch. ii. 14;
14. iii. 9, ch. i. 24;
15. Ex. xvi. 31;
16. Num. xii. 7;
17. Deut. iii. 24;
18. Josh. l. 9;
19. ch. ii. 30;
21. 18, 19;
22. x. 7;
23. v. 20;
24. v. 11;
25. x. 12;
26. vii. 15;
27. Rom. v. 9;
28. Col. ii. 23;
29. ch. vi. 11;
30. x. 35;
31. Acts xvi. 16;
32. Ps. lvii. 7-11;
33. viii. 17; Num. x. 23.
And said, They do alway err in their heart;
And they have not known my ways:

So I swear in my wrath,
They shall not enter into my rest.)

take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; while it is said,
To-day if ye will hear his voice,
Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned,
whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not. So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said,
As I have sworn in my wrath,
If they shall enter into my rest:

although the works were finished from the foundation of the world: for he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again,
If they shall enter into my rest.

Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein,
and they to whom it was first preached entered not in.
because of unbelief: Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David,

TO-day, after so long a time; as it is said,

As any one. 
Gr. apostatizing
or, while To-day is called (in your hearing) by become
remaining, or being left over (see ver. 6)
to have come glad tidings, or a gospel heard; Gr. of hearing
rather, because they were not mingled (mingled) by faith with
that rest, even as he hath said they shall not, as in ch. iii. 11
hath spoken still remaineth for some to
who formerly heard the glad tidings, or the gospel (see ver. 2)
disobedience, or disbelief or defieneth
or, a long time after, 'To-day' (read, as hath been before said)
TO THE HEBREWS.

To-day if ye will 44 hear his voice,
Harden not your hearts.

8 For if Jesus 41 had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken 42 of another day. There remaineth 43 therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath 4 a ceas'd 41 from his own works, as 44 God did 4 from his. Let us labour 44 therefore to enter into that rest,

lest any man fall 4 after 4 the same example of unbelief. 4
For the word of God is quick, 4 and powerful, 4 and sharper than any 4 two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the 4 joints and marrow, and is 4 a discerner 4 of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 4

Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked 4 and opened unto 4 the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Seeing then that we have 4 a great high priest, 4 that is passed into 4 the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, 4 let us hold fast 4 our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our 4 infirmities; but 4 was 4 in all points tempted like as we are, 4 yet without sin. 4 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. 4

CHAP. III. Having set forth the dignity of the person of Christ and the greatness of His condescension in taking our nature, the author exhorts the Hebrews to an earnest consideration (Gr.) of Jesus, the Apostle and Priest of the new economy, whom they, moreover, had accepted as their Apostle and Priest. The grounds of this exhortation are that Christ was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as was Moses, and that He is as superior to Moses as the son is to a servant, as the founder of an economy is to the economy itself, to which economy we really belong only if we are steadfast and true (ver. 6).

Ver. 1. Holy brethren. No more complimentary title, but descriptive of the blessed brotherhood to which Christ and all who believe belong.—Partakers of, partners in a ‘calling’ that comes from heaven and leads to it, besides giving the tastes and spirit appropriate to our destiny (John iii. 17; Matt. iii. 2; Phil. ii. 20), servants, therefore, and workers under a new and divine economy.—Christ Jesus. The true reading is Jesus simply, with special reference to His human nature and His connection with ourselves (see vi. 20; vii. 22, xi. 4; Ex. xi. 10-15). He was sent from God, as was Moses, and He was Priest also, with Aaron’s office and dignity—a thought expanded later (iv. 14, x. 22). This Apostle and Priest the Hebrews had acknowledged as their own (of our profession, or confession rather), and it became them to be faithful as confessors to Him they had in this double office accepted. It is probable that the expression, ‘Apostle and Priest of our confession,’ means even more than ‘sent by God and accepted by us.’ When the high priest went into the holy place on the day of Atonement, he was called the apostle, the messenger of the nation whom he represented, and for whom as priest he pleaded. So Christ has entered into the holy place as our accepted Messenger and Priest. To reject Him now is a double insult.

Ver. 2. Who was faithful; rather, consider Him, he being faithful—in that He is faithful. His faithfulness is the quality we are to contemplate, a fresh reason why we should trust Him and be faithful too. . . . The sphere of the service of Moses was a restricted economy—the house of Israel. Christ’s is a wider economy, and includes all things. The maker must be greater than the work, and He that made all things must be Divine. Moses was part of the economy, the house in which He served. The economy, however, was a rough outline only—a shadowy
intimation of the higher economy of grace. Christ was faithful over His house as Son—that house His own (see on ver. 6), and the completed, universal kingdom to which the old type gave witness. And all this is ours—the house, the kingdom—if we remain faithful and steadfast (1-6).

Ver. 3. Builted. The word implies gathering or making the materials, putting them together, and furnishing the whole, even appointing the servants—all that is necessary for completing 'the house' as a home. Even Moses, therefore, is regarded as part of the house which God prepared.

Ver. 5. In all his house, i.e. God's house.—For a testimony, i.e. his work was preparatory, testifying as He did to things that were afterwards to be revealed (chap. i. 2).—As a servant. The word for servant in this verse, which is often applied in O. T. to Moses, includes all the work that naturally falls to an attendant on another, even when it is most confidential.

Ver. 6. His own house; rather, perhaps, His, i.e. God's house, the contrast being between a servant 'in the house' and a son 'over it.' The Greek, however, may mean that while the house is God's, it is also emphatically 'the Son's,' whereas over His (i.e. God's) house means that it is Christ's only by implication, i.e. because He is over the house and is Son.—Whose house (i.e. God's, or by emphasis or by implication Christ's) are we, i.e. (as the absence of the article shows) of whose house—part, not all of it—are we provided, if so be that (a strong particle) we hold fast the confidence as shown in speech and acts (not 'boldness,' which is too much a description of outward manner or profession only); and the ground, the matter of exultation (blended joy and boasting) which hope supplies. As the blessings are even still largely future, hope even more than faith is the requisite grace.

Ver. 7. Wherefore. Since it is only the giving up of your hope that can rob you of this blessedness, . . . beware of unbelief (a connection that unites the 'wherefore' with verse 8); lest you harden your hearts (a connection that unites the 'wherefore' with verse 8). The former explanation gives a good sense, and the length of the parenthesis is no objection (see Heb. vii. 20-22, xii. 18-24, where we have similar examples); but perhaps the second explanation is simpler, and commends itself to Delitzsch and others. It is also adopted in the Authorised Version.—As the Holy Ghost saith. The quotation is from the ninety-fifth Psalm, which in the Hebrew has no author's name, but in the Greek Version is ascribed to David, as it is in Heb. iv. 7. If ye will hear quite another; if ye hear (literally, if you shall have heard).—Today equals, with the whole phrase, whenever He speaks, whenever you hear His voice.

Ver. 8. As is the day of provocation; like as in the day of temptation in the wilderness. These clauses probably refer to two distinct occasions. The two words which are here translated 'provocation' and 'temptation' are in the Hebrew proper names, 'Meribah' (strife) and 'Mizbechah' (sacrifice). On the first occasion (Ex. xvi. 1-7) the place is said to have been called Massah and Meribah, which the LXX. renders 'temptation' and 'provocation.' The second similar temptation occurred towards the close of the forty years, and is recorded in Num. xx. 1-3. Their wanderings began and ended in tempting and proving God; forty years long did their unbelief last. Not for single acts were they finally condemned, but for settled habits and a fixed character.

Ver. 9. Wherefore, rather 'where,' a common meaning of the Greek word.—Tempted me, proved me. The true reading is, 'tempted me in' (or by) 'proving' [me]. Strong passion is some excuse for sin. When men tempt God to try how far they may go, and how much He will bear, there is a shamelessness in their state of heart that is without excuse.—And saw my works. Either the punishment God inflicted, which failed to lead them to repentance (as the word is used in Ps. cxiv. 10; Isa. vi. 12), or my mighty works, punishment in part, but chiefly mercy, and disregarding both they became more guilty.

Ver. 10. I was grieved is somewhat feeble; displeased, offended, deeply pained, is nearer the thought. The word means properly what is a burden, physical or mental, 'grieved,' being etymologically good (comp. 'it lay heavy on Him'). In some forms of the word it means what presses into the flesh and infects the latter:—That generation is the common Greek text, and it is the reading of the LXX.—This generation is the reading of the revised text. The Hebrew is simply 'with the generation.' The author has no doubt purposely inserted 'this' to show that he regards the passage as applying to the Jewish people generally, the living race of his time, as the word 'always' is added to the Hebrew in the following clause, being found, however, also in the LXX., and implied in the present tense of the verb in this place.—Have not known, or did not know. The Greek may describe a historical fact that preceded the erring in their hearts, or it may sum up their character, as in the Authorised Version: they have not known or understood the true nature and blessedness of the ways in which I would have had them to go (see Ex. xviii. 20).

Ver. 11. So; rather 'as,' though without much difference in meaning: the acts corresponded to the punishment is the meaning of 'as'; the punishment corresponded to the acts is the meaning of so. The former is the common meaning of the Greek.

Ver. 12. Lest there be. The peculiar expression of the original implies that the writer's fear lest there should be, is blended with the feeling that there will somehow be, an evil heart of unbelief. His interest in them, and what he knows of their tendencies, make his fear preponderate, and it is only kindness to them to tell them what he fears.—An evil heart of unbelief is not a heart made evil by unbelief, but a heart of which the essence is that it does not believe. The two qualities, evil and unbelief, are closely connected, and each produces the other.—In departing; literally, 'in apostatizing.'—From the living God; not the idols of the heathen, but the God of Israel, who is known emphatically by this name (Isa. xxxvii. 4), and who is now the God of the Christian Church, its Defender and Judge (see Heb. ix. 14, x. 31, xii. 29).

Ver. 13. Exhort one another. The verb is very frequent in the Acts and in Paul's Epistles, and occurs four times in this Epistle. Both here and in Heb. xii. 10 (where it is said in the Author-
risen Version that Christians are to exhort one another in psalms and hymns) mutual exhortation is implied; but the Greek is literally 'exhort yourselves,' and part of the idea is that the exhorter should have himself also as a hearer, even when he has no other. The word 'exhort,' moreover, includes all the kinds of help, consolation, encouragement, rebuke, which the Christian life needs.—While—as long as—the 'to-day' is called—sounded—in your hearing, so long as the warning lasts, and the need for it, let there be circumspection and wariness.—Look to it (ver. 12) that no one from among you (as well as your fathers, ver. 9) fall into unbelief.

Another interpretation of 'while to-day is called' is, 'while the Psalm continues to be read'; so some eminent commentators (de Wette, Bengel, etc.), but this does not agree with the use which is made of the words in 1 Tim. 4, not to give an appropriate sense to the text. The words may mean while the day of grace lasts, the time during which we hear the Gospel and are warned of the danger of apostasy. This meaning does not practically differ from the former, as is seen by the repetition of the word translated 'while today is sounded in your ears,' and is supported by a similar comment on the 'day of salvation' made by Paul (2 Cor. vi. 2).—The deceitfulness of sin. All sin has this quality (comp. Rom. vii. 9, 21), and especially the sin of unbelief, which is the sin of this context. Unlike the violation of purely moral precepts, it excites small disturbance in the conscience, and yet most effectively hardens the heart by making the most impressive truths powerless over the feelings.

Ver. 14. We are made partakers; rather, 'we are become,' i.e. we are now what we were not originally. The words describe a present character and an acquired character.—If, that is, we hold fast the beginning of our confidence—the confidence we have begun to exercise—firm unto the end; not our former confidence (1 Tim. v. 12), not the principle of our confidence, the essence of it, but the beginning of it...to the end. On this condition we are partakers of Christ, united with Him (John xv. 4, xviii. 23), 'even as He is united with us' (chap. ii. 14). This use of the word translated 'confidence' is found only in 2 Cor. ix. 4, xi. 17, and in this place. The Fathers generally regard it as meaning the beginning of the what is our subsistence, our life, or even the beginning of what is the subsistence of Christ in us. The word is found, however, in Hellenistic writers and is now well known—in the sense of confidence.

Ver. 15. While it is said. The connection of this verse with the preceding is difficult. Out of many interpretations the most consistent is that adopted by Ebrard, Alford, and others. We must hold fast if we would be partakers of Christ, and if we hear the warning (in that it is said): 'To-day if ye hear his voice,' etc.

Ver. 16-19. The argument of these verses has been variously interpreted, and the varieties are seen in the difference of the translation. The Authorised Version translates 'somen...bowels not at all,' the Revised 'who...I may, did not all.' Most of the ancient commentators, and many of the modern, adopt the translation 'some.' In verse 16, even when they translate 'with whom' (verses 17, 19), forms though they be of the same word, but with difference of accent. Bengel, Alford, and many more translate 'who' and 'with whom' as questions in both cases. They hold that it contributes to the force of the argument to affirm that all perished. But on the whole the Authorised seems the preferable rendering; for (1) the facts rather require a statement that not all perished. Besides Caleb and Joshua, all the children who were under twenty years of age when they left Egypt, and the women and the Levites, were exceptions. (2) The N.T. comment favours it also, for in 1 Cor. x. 5 it is expressly said that it was 'with the greater part of them' (or, 'with very many of them') 'God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness;' and again and again it is said in the same context that some of them were idolaters, and some of them tempted, and some of them murmured (vers. 7-10); while the appeal to these facts (the limited extent of the rain, not the universality of it) is used in this passage for the same purpose of warning as here; and (3) the argument is better enforced by the translation of the Authorised than by the proposed change.—'Beware, for all perish,' may seem impressive; but it is more impressive still to say, as is said in 1 Cor. x., 'Most perished,' and perished through unbelief; those who were spared were only the minority, and they were spared because they were not guilty of the disobedience of the greater part of the nation. Blended fear and hope is the warning most likely to impress and encourage; nor was there danger of the Hebrews reading the lesson so as to foster delusion when it is so carefully intimated that men must perish wherever there is unbelief.—Whose carcasses—literally limbs, suggesting, perhaps, the gradual decay of the nation's strength—one falling here, another there, till they were strewn all over the wilderness.

Ver. 18. Believed not; or, disbelieved, is the sense rather than disobeyed. The word 'unbelief,' in verse 19, may be used alike of those who have or have not heard the truth; the word, in verse 18, of those only who have heard the Gospel and will not be persuaded to accept. The word in verse 18 means also to disobey as well as to disbelieve, and here the two ideas are combined; they did not obey the command that made them to believe. Unbelief is as much disobedience as the breaking of any other Divine law. See John iii. 46, where both words are used and are translated 'believe;' 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8, where both are used, and are translated 'believe' and 'be disobedient' respectively; and Acts xiv. 2, xix. 9, where the word is the same as in verse 17, rendered 'disobedient,' and is yet translated in both places, in the Authorised Version, 'unbelief.' It is no doubt true, however, that the Israelites were disobedient and rebellious (see Deut. i. 26, etc.) but even when they are thus described, their acts of disobedience were generally owing to disbelieve of Divine announcements. So it is in this Epistle. The Hebrews were not tempted to disobey what they regarded as a Divine command, but to doubt and disbelieve the divinity of the commands they had been obeying. Their danger was not so much inconsistency in not obeying what they believed, as the rejection of the Gospel itself.—They shall not enter into my rest; see on iv. 1.

Ver. 19. So; literally 'And' ['we see'], i.e. from these facts.

CHAP. IV. 1-11. To understand the force of the reasoning of these verses, and the naturalness
of the different interpretations of the Psalm which the Apostle is explaining, note that 'My rest' is primarily the rest which God enjoys (Gen. ii. 2; Heb. iv. 4) on which God provides (Deut. xii. 9, 10). The first is the Sabbath rest which God enjoyed after His work of creation was completed, and which He provided for man when He instituted the day of rest, as He did long before the giving of the law; the second is the rest of Canaan, the rest which God gave Israel, a rest which proved very imperfect, partly because multitudes never entered it, partly because the rest itself was never really fulfilled even for those who did enter it. Both meanings of the word, therefore, point to such rest as the Gospel gives, of which the rest of the Sabbath and the rest of Canaan were types, and imperfect types. Two other facts need to be kept in mind: the word Sabbath and Sabbath-rest (see ver. 9) are Hebrew words for what is translated 'rest' and (as a verb in Genesis) 'rested'; and the word 'entered in,' moreover, is a common word in the Old Testament—almost a cant word, like 'going house to Canaan,' 'over the Jordan,' 'one more river to cross'—for 'inheriting the earth,' taking possession of the land of promise. Hence the naturalness of the interpretation which the Apostle refutes. The rest of which the Psalm speaks, and which the unbelieving miss, is not, as the word may mean, the Sabbath-rest which God instituted at the first, nor is it the rest of Canaan into which the Jews entered under the guidance of Joshua. The rest from which the disobedient Israelites were debarred was neither the one nor the other, for at that time the Israelites had both. It was a rest that stood over in David's time for future realization—a rest into which those enter, and those only, who believe (see ver. 3)—the rest of the Gospel, completed in the rest above. How natural this argument is may be gathered from the religious poetry of all Christian sects, and from the language employed even now to describe the Divine life. Every incident of the journey of the Israelites from Egypt into Canaan is spiritualized in our common religious teaching, and so may easily have been regarded as the reality, not as the type. How necessary the argument is also clear. The announcement that the Jews are not as Jews part of the true theocratic kingdom, that Canaan was not heaven, was to them one of the hardest sayings of the Gospel.

Ver. 1. Let us therefore fear. A stronger expression than the caution of iii. 12 ('take heed'), and the fitting preparation for the 'earnest labour' of chap. iv. 12. We are not to doubt the truth of the Divine promise, and the more firmly we believe it the more active shall we be in the fulfilment of every duty; but we are to fear the treachery of our own hearts. Continued unbelieving will exclude us from God's rest, from the peace and blessedness which the Gospel gives both here and hereafter; and even if we finally repent and reach heaven, unbelieving will, in proportion as we indulge it, lessen the enjoyment into which we enter by believing, and which we can enter in no other way. This godly fear, instead of debasing the mind, inspires courage and freedom; it preserves us from vain security, checks self-confidence, and makes us watch against everything that may endanger our safety. —Lost, somehow, haply. This last phrase, which it is not easy to express, calls attention to the greatness of the danger and emphasizes the caution.—A promise being left us. A promise remaining over unfulfilled.—Any one of you should seem... It should turn out that any one of you has come short of it; literally, lest any one of you should seem (to himself or to others), when the decisive day comes, to have failed, and to have no part in the promise—a warning of a fearful result, given with a delicacy quite usual with the writer; or it may be a statement like that in Matt. xxv. 40-46, where we are told that many will not know their true character till they hear it described at the bar of God. Their ruin will be as startling to themselves as to others.

Ver. 2. For unto us has the Gospel been preached as well as unto them, i.e. we both have our Gospel or glad tidings of a future rest, equally a Divine message, though given with different degrees of fulness.—But the word preached; rather, the word heard (literally, of hearing), was of no use to them, brought no profit, because they were not united (literally mingled') by (and in) faith with them that heard it, i.e. who listened and obeyed—Caleb, Joshua, and the rest. The word 'not united,' 'unmingled,' is found only here and in 1 Cor. xii. 24, and describes a state that follows from affinity and sympathy.

Ver. 3. For we who have believed are entering into rest. We only are entering who believe; it is not, therefore, the rest of the Sabbath which the Jews long since possessed (ver. 4-6), nor is it, as the author goes on to say, the rest of Canaan. To strengthen the statement that it is only believers who enter into God's rest, he quotes again the ninety-fifth Psalm: As he (i.e. God) said, As I have sworn in my wrath, they (who did not believe) shall not enter into my rest.—If they shall not enter' is the same phrase as is translated 'they shall not enter,' in chap. iii. 11; the phrase is part of the Hebrew oath ('God do so to me and more also, if, i.e. I swear I will or I will not'), and is here a strong negation; so in verse 5: 'they shall not enter into my rest.' It was unbelieving that excluded them, and so it is faith that brings us in, the appropriate means of producing peace and blessedness, and itself obedience to God's command.

Ver. 5. In this place again, i.e. either to quote again what was said before, or the Sabbath rest which God provides, is, on the other hand, shown not to be the rest spoken of in the Psalm, inasmuch as the men described have not entered it.

Ver. 6 is clearly an unfinished sentence, finding its completion in verses 9 or 11.—Let us therefore labour, etc., seeing it remaineth: rather, it still remaineth, for some to enter in to God's rest, and those who formerly heard the glad tidings of a rest entered not in because of unbelief. In all these verses where 'it remains' is used, the phrase has the same meaning—not that a rest now remains and is still future, but that the promise was not fulfilled in the Sabbath-rest or in the Canaan-rest; and therefore when this Epistle was written, it was still a warning and an invitation. It awaited the faith and the entrance which were to exhaust its meaning.

Ver. 7. Again. To continue the argument and to correct another misconstruction. He has already shown that the rest of God of which he here speaks is not the rest of God after creation; he now proceeds to show, by a further examina-
tion of the Psalm, that neither is it the rest of Canaan.—He limiteth (still further defines the day and consequently the rest of which he speaks) a certain day, saying in David (as we say ‘in Daniel’), not ‘by’ David, nor, as Bengel holds, ‘in,’ i.e., by the Spirit dwelling in and inspiring him.—A long time (some 500 years) after they had entered Canaan, as it is said in the forenamed passage (iii. 7, 15).—To-day if ye hear his voice, harden not your hearts. Some think the words ‘To-day’ look forward to the time of the Gospel (translating ‘to-day,’ i.e., as it said a long time before the day comes; so Dr. J. Brown and others; but if this be the meaning, it would surely be needless for the writer to prove by argument that the entering into rest had not yet come).—A long time points back to the entrance into Canaan, and ‘as it has been said before’ (the true reading) points simply to the previous quotations.

Ver. 8. Clearly, therefore, the Psalm speaks of a Divine rest into which men are bidden to enter, different from the rest of Canaan, and long subsequent to it.—For if Joshua (here and in Acts vii. 45, Jesus, the Greek form of Joshua, quite misleading) had given them rest—had led them into the rest of which we are speaking—He (i.e., God, who further defines ‘the day’ in Deut. and describes the rest as still unentered) would not have gone on speaking after that of another day (or of another day after that, i.e., still future).

Ver. 9. Therefore there remains (still unrealized in any rest that Israel then enjoyed) a sacred rest, a Sabbath-rest (the word is now changed), for the people of God. The name here given, ‘the people of God,’ is the usual designation of the covenant people. It occurs again in Heb. xi. 25, and is used in its deepest sense of all who are ‘children of God through faith’ (Gal. vi. 16). The use of the word Sabbath in this sense for the rest which God provides under the Gospel was quite familiar to the Jews. The coming kingdom of the Messiah was even called ‘the perpetual Sabbath.’ Into that rest all enter who believe. Some regard this verse as completing the sentence that began in verse 6. The better completion is found in verse 11.

Ver. 10. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his works, just as God rested from his; i.e., say some (Owen, Wardlaw, Ebrard), as Christ is entered into His rest, so also are we to be conformed to Him and to share His rest. But Christ is not named in the previous context, and is nowhere designated as ‘He who entered or is entered into His rest,’ nor would the argument have force with those who were questioning His mission. The other view, adopted by Bleek and Delitzsch, is that the words describe the people of God, those who by believing enter that state of peace and blessedness which is begun on earth and perfected in heaven. They have fellowship with God; they rest even as God rests, and have a happiness that is of the same nature, and springs from the same source, as His. The phrase, ‘ceases from his own works’ as God did from His, might then refer to the rest which men sought to no purpose under the Law or in Canaan. The true peace, the sacred rest of the Gospel, frees us from the necessity of seeking a righteousness of our own, and speaks peace to the conscience as the Law never did, making the whole life peaceful and joyful. This ‘is the rest, and this is the refreshing,’ and it is shared by all who believe.

This explanation of the argument of this part of the Epistle throws light on the meaning of the rest, the Sabbath-rest, of which the writer speaks. Some (Owen, Wardlaw, etc.) hold that the three rests here spoken of are the Sabbath-rest of Paradise, the Jewish rest of Canaan, and the Christian Sabbath rest that commemorates the completion of the new creation and the deliverance of the people of God from a worse bondage than that of Egypt. Important as these rests are, it surely falls far below the dignity of the theme to suppose that the writer refers to any positive institution merely, however useful or blessed. Others think that the ‘rest which remains’ must be heaven: we who believe enter it, all who enter it rest from their toils and work as God rested; and the conclusion seems sustained by the fact that the rest is ever spoken of as ‘still remaining.’ But this interpretation mistakes the meaning of ‘remaining,’ which is simply that it was not realized either in the Sabbath rest or in Canaan; while it is realized, is being realized, under the Gospel, as men believe. It includes, no doubt, the rest of heaven, which is the completion of our blessedness on earth; but the primary idea still is the rest which Christ gives to all who take His yoke upon them, and to whom, on their believing, old things pass away, sins, character, burdens, unrest, and all things have become new. The words of C. Wesley are not even an adaptation of the sentiment—they are an exposition of it:

‘Lord, I believe a rest remains—
To all Thy people known—
A rest where pure enjoyment reigns,
And Thou art loved alone.

‘Oh! that I now the rest might know,
Believe and enter in:
Now, Saviour, now the power bestow,
And let me cease from sin.

‘Remove the hardness from my heart,
This unbelief remove;
To me the rest of faith impart,
The Sabbath of Thy love.’

Ver. 11. Let us therefore begin the practical exhortation based on verse 6, of which it is the completion.—Labour, give diligence (as in 2 Pet. i. 10), seek earnestly, strive to enter into that rest, lest any man fall and form part of the same example of disobedience or unbelief; lest through unbelief like theirs we like them come short of the promise. The earnest striving, the eager seeking of which the writer speaks, is well described by St. Paul in Phil. iii. 7-14, and in 2 Pet. i. 5-12. In one sense faith is ceasing to work and beginning to trust; in another sense it is the most difficult of all works, requiring the energy of the whole nature, and the help of the blessed God besides. It is at once a gift and a duty, the easiest and the hardest ‘way of life.’—Lest they fall into and so become another example of unbelief—a pregnant construction. Whether fall has its lighter meaning, as Luther and Delitzsch hold, or is used absolutely—fall away and perish (as Calvin, Bengel, and Bleek hold)—we need not discuss here. The word is probably suggested by the doom of the Israelites who fell in the wilderness and perished (iii. 17); and it is used in the same deep sense in Rom. xi. 11. The fact that the Hebrews are cautioned lest they should fall through a disbelief that proved ruinous to those who yielded to it before, shows that the word has
probably its deeper meaning; it is the opposite state of entering into rest. Of course it is true also that in proportion as they fall, whether in degree or duration, they miss peace and swell the number of those who are warnings to all who witness them. But here the warning seems permanent, and the fall, therefore, complete.

Vers. 12 and 13 give a fresh reason for this warning.—For the word of God is quick (i.e. living) and powerful. But what is 'the word of God'? The common Patristic interpretation refers it to the Word incarnate, the personal 'Word' of the writings of St. John: so also Owen and many others. But that use of the term is peculiar in the New Testament to St. John, unless this be an instance. And the interpretation seems hardly appropriate to the description that is here given of it; nor is Christ ever so named in the Epistle itself, where 'the Son of God' is His common title. Had the author been familiar with 'the Word' in that personal sense, he would certainly have used it (as he did not) in Heb. xi. 3. The ordinary meaning, therefore, is to be preferred—the word of which he has been speaking—the word especially which excludes the unbeliever from the promised rest, and denounces against him the Divine indignation. The description is true of all Scripture, but emphatically true of the Word as the written, and of the living voice of the divine power that uttereth it. This word is a living word—not, as we sometimes say of a law, 'a dead letter,' having its place in our statute book, but never executed—having living power—having power to heal troubled consciences and bodies made sick with sin. But even those who are godly and expectant of the coming of the Lord, may find that the Word is 'a sharp two-edged sword.'

Ver. 13. The power of this word comes really from Him whose it is. More accurately, the Word of God is God Himself speaking. The writer, therefore, naturally turns from the instrument to the author.—Neither is there any created thing visible or invisible (Col. i. 16; even, perhaps, thought, the creature of the mind: Michaelis)—that is not manifest in His, i.e. God's, sight (a Hebraism common in St. Luke, in St. Paul, and in Alexandrian writers). But all things are naked and bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. These phrases, though their general meaning is clear, have been variously explained. 'Laid bare' may refer to the victims which were hung up by the neck, opened, and the backbone clef from the neck downwards, so that the priest might see any blemish which made the victim unfit for sacrifice (so the ancient Greek Fathers explained it); but there are no known instances of this meaning of the word: others say the reference is to the athlete caught by the neck and thrown prostrate on his back for all to see his defeat. The first of these interpretations is on the whole the more probable, the words being addressed to Jews who were more familiar with sacrifices than with the games. Anyhow, the general meaning is clear, that before God we are all manifest, stripped of every covering and concealment, our very thoughts, our 'secret faults,' revealed to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do, i.e. with whom our business is (a sense that may be seen in Judg. viii. 23). The Greek Fathers give the words a narrower meaning—to whom our account is to be given; but the English Version is at once idiomatic and accurate. All this description applies, of course, to our relation to Christ, and many commentators regard the words as applied to Him in this passage; but unless we accept the explanation that the Word of God is the personal Logos—Christ Himself (not a natural interpretation)—it is more grammatical and more accurate to regard the verse as applicable primarily to God who is Judge of all, though at the last He gives all judgment to the Son.

Ver. 14. The following verses (14-16) might begin a new paragraph, and are closely connected with the fifth chapter; but on the other hand, verse 14 looks back to the brief statement in chap. i. 3, ii. 17, and iii. 1, and its Hortian form naturally makes it rather a completion of what precedes. It is, moreover, the author's manner to blend with admonitions, based on...
previous teaching, assertions of what he is about to prove.

It is a peculiarity of the Gospel that it seems now without a sacrifice and without a priest. The unbelieving Jews would naturally say, 'Your new religion is without the first requisite of a Divine system; you have no sacrifice and no high priest—how can sin be forgiven? who can intercede for you?' The objection is answered in this passage: We have a High Priest, a great High Priest, transcending in personal and official dignity all that ever bore the name, for He is Jesus, the Son of God, each title implying His superiority. No doubt His sacrifice has ceased, and He Himself has passed through the heavens beyond clouds and stars, even into the heaven of heavens, to the very throne of God itself; just as the Jewish high priest on the day of Atonement offered sacrifices of expiation, entered into the holy place, and then through the second veil into the holiest of all, to sprinkle the blood of atonement and to burn incense, an odour of a sweet smell, a symbol of acceptance to Him who dwells between the cherubim. The objection that we have no sacrifice or priest is met by the fact that our High Priest has completed His work on earth, and has gone, not into an earthly tabernacle, the image of the tree, but into heaven to the throne of God itself—an evidence of the efficacy of His mediation and the means of perpetuating it. His entrance and His intercession there are really 'a perpetual oblation' with the intimation of His 'will' that the blood by which He has been instituted on them for whom He pleads. The exhortation is, therefore, that we hold fast our confession—what we have acknowledged as true and Christian faith, the word being used in a wider sense than in iii. 1.

Ver. 15. For. Whatever the difficulties of our Christian life, whatever the dangers that tempt us to turn aside, whatever the dignity of our Priest, whatever the awful power of the Word of God, we have not a High Priest unable to sympathize with us in our infirmities, but on the contrary one tempted in all things like as we are (or rather in accordance with the likeness there is between us), sin apart. The infirmities of which the writer speaks are not strict suffering or afflictions, but the weakness—physical, spiritual, moral—whereby sin is likely to find entrance, and misery is produced—hunger, poverty, reproach, the dread of sufferings, the love of rest, of friends, the difficulty of living by faith, the tendency to judge things by present results, to snatch victory in the easiest way; whatever, in short, is natural to man, and yet not itself sinful. The temptations of Christ in the wilderness, which are described as representing most of the forms in which temptation assails us; all He endured when the season came in which the tempter renewed his work, and especially in the hour and power of darkness, illustrate the meaning. All He bore and all He remembers, and so in a sense bears still (note the present perfect tense), fits Him to sympathize with like weaknesses in us. In all these temptations of His there was no sin in the origin of them in the struggle, in the results; but that fact only increases His fitness for His office and our confidence. He bore all, and yet was undefiled; and so His pity, while most tender, is in no danger of becoming weakness, which would itself create distrust even if it did not end in sin. 'Sin apart,' therefore, is added, as much in our interest as to the honour of our Lord. The perfect sympathy of a sinful man would have given very imperfect consolation.

Ver. 16. Let us therefore come nigh—a common word in this Epistle for drawing near to God by sacrifice, or under the Gospel through Christ (vii. 25, x. 1, xi. 6). St. Paul's word for a similar idea is generally different (see Rom. v. 2; Eph. ii. 18, iii. 12, we have boldness and access by faith) with the added idea when addressing Gentiles that they are brought nigh. With boldness, rather with confidence (see chap. iii. 6), not as the Israelites trembled when they approached, not to the mercy-seat, but at most towards it—the priest alone entering the holiest of all, but with the trust that tells all its wants—to the throne of grace (not Christ as if He were the mercy-seat, as some have held, nor the throne of Christ, but), the throne of God Himself; not of His justice, however, nor of His providence, but of His grace made such in fact by the propitiation which Christ has offered, and in part by our assurance that the priest himself feels for us. That we may obtain mercy—pity—partly, as His sympathy implying the means of forgiveness for the sins which still cleave to us as children (see 2 Tim. i. 18, Jude 21, where the idea is that the mercy we receive from day to day is confirmed and perfected in the day of God); we need continual forgiveness (1 John i. 10, ii. 1). And grace. Whatever we need to perfect our holiness and happiness—those gifts of free favour which prove God to be our friend, and will help us to persevere in the faith and obedience of the truth till we are partakers of the perfected grace which is glory—the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. i. 13). For reasonable help is the literal rendering of the last clause, i.e. help convenient, suitable to the occasion; 'in time of need' is very good if that mean, as it may, 'as we need it,' and so is appropriate to each emergency as it arises.

These exhortations were eminently suited to the condition of the Hebrew Christians. With such a High Priest, who has expiated our sins, has passed into the presence of God, thus proving the acceptance and the continuance of His work, whose Divine Sonship gives virtue to His sacrifice, whose perfect sympathy with us in all our weaknesses is made complete through His endurance of the same trials, let us persevere in the confession we have made—seek from God with the boldness of children the mercy and the grace we need for emergencies and opportunities alike till our victory is complete. Nor less suited is the exhortation to ourselves. In every age the same temptations assail us, though they assume different forms; and in every age the maintenance of the truth as it is in Jesus, and habitual (mark the present tense, 'continue coming') intercourse with God as the God of Peace and blessing under the influence of this truth, these are the true sources of our steadfastness.
Chapter V. I–VII. 28.


1 For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him,

Thou art my Son, To-day have I begotten thee.

6 As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever After the order of Melchizedec.

7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedec. Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even being taken (i.e. being taken as he is) appointed 2 deal gently with (or, feel gently towards) and the erring (wandering) read, when to become for his godly fear was a Gr. the cause addressed by God as (see v. 6) explained the rudiments of the first principles (Gr. of the beginning), see vi. 1 solid food Gr. partaketh ("takes") inexperienced mature—full grown (Gr. finished, or perfect); see vi. 1, perfection
those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

CHAP. VI. 1. Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we do, if God permit. For if 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. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: but that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. But, beloved, we persuade you better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak: For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when he had made promises to Abraham, because he could swear by none greater, he sware by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible
for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation,\textsuperscript{43} who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:\textsuperscript{19} which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast,\textsuperscript{20} and which entereth\textsuperscript{44} into that within the veil;

whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus,\textsuperscript{45} made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

CHAP. VII. 1. For this\textsuperscript{46} Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of\textsuperscript{47} the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and\textsuperscript{48} blessed him; to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, (first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is,

King of peace; without father, without mother, without descent,\textsuperscript{49} having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God;)\textsuperscript{50} abideth a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.\textsuperscript{51}

And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they\textsuperscript{52} come out of the loins of Abraham: but he whose descent\textsuperscript{53} is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham,\textsuperscript{54} and blessed\textsuperscript{55} him that had the promises. And without all contradiction\textsuperscript{56} the less is blessed of the better.

And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, paideth tithes in Abraham.\textsuperscript{57}

For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.\textsuperscript{58} If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under\textsuperscript{59} it the people received\textsuperscript{60} the law,) what further need was there that another\textsuperscript{61} priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called\textsuperscript{62} after the order of Aaron?

For the priesthood being changed, there is made\textsuperscript{63} of one man a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are spoken\textsuperscript{64} pertaineth to\textsuperscript{65} another\textsuperscript{66} tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang\textsuperscript{67} out of Juda; of\textsuperscript{68} which tribe Moses spake.

\textsuperscript{43} or, encouragement \textsuperscript{44} entering
\textsuperscript{45} Where as forerunner for us Jesus is entered, having become
\textsuperscript{46} literally, gave as his portion (or, divided)
\textsuperscript{47} out of the chief spoils
\textsuperscript{48} rather, when they (on their receiving)
\textsuperscript{49} these (i.e. their brethren)
\textsuperscript{50} hath taken
\textsuperscript{51} hath
\textsuperscript{52} rather, without any contradiction or gainsaying (or, beyond all contradiction)
\textsuperscript{53} so to say, through Abraham, even Levi, who receiveth tithes, hath been
\textsuperscript{54} that he should be said to be not
\textsuperscript{55} comes to be
\textsuperscript{56} said (as in v. 11)
\textsuperscript{57} Gr. hath partaken of
\textsuperscript{58} Gr. hath sprung
nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before, because of the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did by the which we draw nigh unto God. And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: (for those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent,

Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.)

By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,

and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

read, priests read, or. become covenant
hath been (Gr. hath come to be) a different indissoluble
read, It is witnessed of him omit verily because of
because of the weakness and unprofitableness thereof; (for the law made nothing perfect) and there is bringing in thereupon of a better hope through. For these have been made (or, become) priests he
hath Jesus become covenant
have become priests in great number hindered from continuing
hath his priesthood unchangeable, or; a priesthood that doth not pass away completely separated once for all
appoineth after perfected

Chap. V. The high-priesthood of Christ is now formally introduced for fuller discussion. It has been mentioned in every chapter of the Epistle (i. 3, ii. 17, iii. 1, iv. 5), and clearly occupies a chief place in the writer's mind, as it does in other books of Scripture. The notion that this office of our Lord has only economic or temporary interest; that it belongs rather to the ancient law and to Jewish conceptions than to the Gospel, quite misleads. It is, indeed, a doctrine demanded by the express teaching of the New Testament and by human nature as illustrated in the religious sacrifices of all nations, and in the felt needs of the human conscience.

Two qualifications are said to be necessary in priests, and Christ is proved to have them both: the first is, that they should be able to feel for those whom they represent, and then that they should have the authority of a Divine appointment (verses 1–4). Christ is thus shown to have both a Divine appointment and the requisite sympathy (verses 5–10).

Ver. 1. For resumes the subject of discussion (see iv. 15), and gives a reason why Christ should possess the qualities here de-
Chap. V. 1—VII. 28.]  TO THE HEBREWS.

scarcely (ver. 5).—Every priest. The reason is suggested by the case of the Aaronic priesthood, and refers in detail to that; but the words are applicable to all priesthoods (i.e. to all who act for others in things pertaining to God).—Taken as he is from among men affirms part of the quality of a priest, and is so regarded by most commentators; others render the expression, as apparently does the English Version, 'when taken,' i.e. every merely human priest); and suppose that there is a contrast between human priests and the Son of God. But the former is the juster view, for the writer goes on to claim for Christ also the same human qualities in a higher degree (ver. 7, etc.).—Is ordained properly, 'is appointed;' 'ordained even as Aaron was ordained,' misleads. Ordination in any technical sense is not here, but Divine appointment simply.—For men, i.e. on behalf of, not in the stead of. This last is indeed a possible meaning of the preposition in certain combinations (He was made a curse for us, etc., but is not in the word itself, nor is it appropriate here. —In things pertaining to God; literally, 'things Godward,' our interests and business in relation to Him. —Both gifts and sacrifices are naturally the offerings or gifts of the law other than sin-offerings and the sacrifices; 'for sins' belonging to the last only (see the same combination in ver. 5 and ix. 9), and not, as Alford supposes, to both. It is true, however, that the sacrifices were also gifts, the victim being the property of the offerer, and sometimes only gifts, and not properly sacrifices (for sin); while the gift was sometimes of the nature of a sacrifice. Both the ideas are blended in the work of our Lord, 'who gave Himself for us.' On the other hand, we are said, without any reference to sin-offering, to present our bodies living sacrifices (Rom. xii. 1). The fact is that the Hebraic meaning of the word to sacrifice (Θυσία) was to burn wine, etc., in the fire to the gods; its secondary meaning, to slay in sacrifice. From that one root came a double set of derivatives—incense, to burn incense, altar of incense (Thine wood, θῦσα, etc.); and to sacrifice, to offer sacrifice, altar of sacrifice, etc.; and hence sacrifice is often and naturally used in the New Testament in the figurative sense, especially in St. Paul (Eph. v. 2; Phil. iv. 18).—To offer is the technical word common in this Epistle, but Alford says it is never found in St. Paul. The noun, however, is found (Rom. xiv. 16; Eph. v. 2), though appropriately with another verb—present, 'give'; either because the sense is figurative (see above), and the ordinary verb would be too sacrificial, or because in the last passage he wants to call attention to the fact that Christ is offered as well as victim.

Ver. 2. Who; rather, being one able to have compassion; literally, to be reasonably compassionate towards—a word found in the New Testament only here. The Stoic prided himself on being apathetic in relation to sin and misery, as he held the gods were. A sympathetic or emotional nature rejoices with those that rejoice, and weeps with those that weep. The true position of a priest in relation to those who are not only sinners, but also guilty, is that of the two. His is a blended feeling of sorrow and blame. Were there no sorrow, there would be no fitness for the office manifold; were there no blame, there would be no holiness, and so no fitness for the office Godward. As standing between man and God, he feels (we may say with reverence) for both; and herein consists His noblest quality.—With the ignorant and the erring. The persons for whom the priest acts are not innocent, or the function would cease; they are sinners, and are described as ignorant and out of the way (errin, or, it may, be led out of the way). The first word is milder than the second, and describes an ignorance that may be without sin, though it is often an ignorance that is more or less sinful (see Lev. iv. 13, v. 16). There is generally sin in it, though not the sin of a wilful perverseness ('I did it ignorantly in unbelief,' 1 Tim. i. 13). The second word, though stronger than the first, is milder than is consistent with a wilful conscious sin; it is going astray, or (in the passive voice) being led astray (see 1 Cor. vi. 9; Gal. vi. 7; 2 Tim. iii. 13). Possibly these words describe the feeling of the priest, who is supposed to be a man and himself a sinner (see next clause) towards those who are sinners, and who he may say are after all 'ignorant and deluded.' More probably, however, the words describe the real character of those for whom he is to act. All men are blameably ignorant, and are out of the way; every sin is want of knowledge, as well as want of wisdom; we all have gone astray, and for all the priest acts; those being excepted who are presumptuous and defiant sinners for whom no sacrifice could be accepted. The very office of the priest implies some desire to be forgiven, or at all events the cessation of perverse persistence in sin. Sympathy for all such is the duty and qualification of the true priest; made the more easy that he is himself beset with infirmity, and the more obligatory that he himself needs the same treatment. The infirmity here spoken of is clearly moral weakness, which makes men capable of sin, and leads to it.

Ver. 3. And by reason hereof the true reading, though requiring no change in the English Version, i.e. the infirmity with which he is himself compassed. He ought (under a double obligation, ethical and legal, with special reference in this instance to the first).—As for the people even, so also for himself. The reasoning applies to the Aaronic Priesthood, and also to all human priests. The provisions of the Jewish law in this respect are very clear (Lev. iv. 3—13), and especially for the service of the great day of Atonement, when the priest confessed for himself and his house, then for the priesthood in general, and then for all Israel (Lev. xvi.). Whether all this applies to Christ has been much discussed. Some have regarded it as spoken of human priests as distinguished from Christ; but it is more natural to regard it as true of all high priests in general, and then to allow the writer himself to show how far the Priesthood of Christ is like others, and how far it is unique; this he does as his argument proceeds (vers. 7, 8, and chap. vii. 28).

Ver. 4. A priest, moreover, who is God's agent as well as man's, has his appointment not from himself nor from man, but from God. And none taketh this honour (the office, as the word frequently means) to himself (upon himself, as some now say), i.e. legally, acceptably to the chief party in this arrangement; but when called of God, even as Aaron was. The Divine ordinance which made Aaron and his sons high priests continued
long in the theocracy, and was vindicated against the usurpation of other Levites and of kings (Num. xvi. 17; 2 Chron. xxvii. 16–21). But long before the date of this Epistle the ordinance had been broken, and the Roman power contemptuously set it aside. Some have thought that the writer rebukes these irregularities in this verse, but probably he is speaking of what was in fact the law and the proprieties of the case without any side-reference to later abuses. Who are to present offerings to God, and whom God will accept, are questions that belong clearly to God in Himself, and are not to be distinguished, however, between the prophetic office and the priesthood. All Christians that have the Gospel may prophesy; every man who has found the cross is competent and is authorised, nay, is even required to tell others the road. Warnings against preaching the Gospel, derived from the history of Korah and Abiram, are specially inappropriate under a dispensation when all are commanded to tell what God has done for them, when not only the Spirit and the Bride, but every one that heareth is to say, Come. The real lesson lies in another direction. We have under the Gospel one Priest only in the deeper sense of that word, a Mediator and a sacrifice, who has made complete atonement for sin. The usurpation of His office is on the part of those who assume to themselves the name of priests, and pretend to offer sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead. Here is the sin of Korah; the more guilty as Christ is greater than Aaron, and in His perfect sacrifice is superior to the shadowy sacrifices of the ancient Law.

Ver. 5. These requisites of the high priests are all found in Christ, and are exhibited in such a degree as proves Him to be superior to all others.—Thus Christ also (as well as others) glorified not himself, took not the honour upon Himself (see John vii. 44) to be made High Priest, but He (the Father) who spake to him: Thou art my Son; I have this day begotten thee. He it was that made Him Priest, and made Him Priest in the very passage that speaks of Him as ‘Son,’ the ‘Only-begotten.’ The deeper meaning which regards the Sonship that Christ had before His incarnation as itself having reference to redemption, and to Christ’s place therein, is favourd by the Fathers. Others who regard the quotation as giving honour to the Son without making that honour an assertion of His Priesthood, interpret simply Christ did not Himself assume the office of Priest; God who acknowledges Him as His Son in a sense that raises Him above all creatures, God gives Him the office.

Ver. 6. Then follows a correction (according to the second of the above interpretations), or an assertion in plainer terms (according to the first) of this appointment.—Even as also he saith in another (literally, ‘a different’) place; a psalm written with a different purpose; a quotation from the 110th Psalm, which is generally accepted by the Jews themselves as Messianic, showing that if Jesus is the Christ, He is a Divine Priest. He holds the character and performs the functions of a Priest—a perpetual Priest—the only Priest—with honours and qualifications higher and greater than those of Aaron.

Ver. 7. Having shown how Christ has one qualification for the Priesthood, the authority of a Divine appointment, based in part upon His relation to the Father, the writer now reverts to the other qualifications, His fitness to bear with our infirmities, and to sympathise with us in suffering. The four verses really make one sentence. Stripped of its modifying clauses, it is briefly: ‘Who, though He was, in His own nature, Son, yet learned obedience by the things which He suffered, and being perfect (having completed the sacrifice He had to offer, and finished the training that was to fit Him for His office), He became the author (the cause) of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, being publicly, solemnly addressed as High Priest after the order of Melchisedec.’

Ver. 7. In the days of his flesh (‘of His humanity,’ Arabic), i.e. during His earthly life, especially in the closing part of it, as contrasted with the glorified state on which He entered when His high-priesthood began. When He had offered up, etc.; rather, ‘in that He offered up . . . . was heard, and though He was a Son . . . . learned,’ or, ‘having offered up and being heard . . . He learned obedience,’ etc.

All the tenses refer to one and the same process of discipline; they describe His life not in distinct and successive portions, but as a whole, though no doubt the description is specially true of His final agony.—Having offered up is the regular sacrificial word used throughout this Epistle, and it probably implies that while all the sufferings these words describe were fitting our Lord for His priestly office, they were also part of what He had to suffer as the hearer of our sins.—Prayers and supplications. The word for ‘prayers’ expresses a deep feeling of need; the word ‘supplications’ is a term taken from the olive branch wrapped with wool which was held out of old as an earnest entreaty for protection and help, a word and is a stronger word than the former. ‘Prayers and entreaties’ may represent, therefore, the general sense. Each may involve the other, but they differ in this way: St. Luke (who of the Evangelists dwells most on this human side of Christ’s life) tells us often that Christ prayed, and then again that ‘being in an agony He prayed more earnestly’ (xxii. 44).—With strong crying and tears; with a most vehement outcry, an outcry of intense feeling. Such was His first great cry on the cross: ‘My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?’ (Matt. xxvii. 46); and such was the cry that accompanied His last utterance (Luke xxiii. 46). His tears are also once named at least (xix. 41), and seem implied in such passages as Matt. xxvi. 38, xxvii. 46. The very agony of the final struggle has its prelude at an earlier stage (John xii. 27), and was not without its parallel even in the wilderness. These prayers and entreaties were addressed unto Him that was able to save from death, and he was heard in that he feared.

This clause has been variously interpreted. One guide to its meaning is, that whatever it was He prayed for, the Father heard and gave (literally, or by a better equivalent) what He asked. A second guide to its meaning is that the last clause, ‘in that He feared,’ is rightly translated in the English Version: ‘Was heard, and feared from that which He feared—either from His own fear, or from the thing He feared,’ though largely supported, is admissible. The word ‘fear’ is used only of the fear of caution, of reverense, of devoted submission, never of the fear of terror. The interpretation of the Authorised Version, adopted by all the Greek expositors, is accepted,
CHAP. V. i–VII. 28.] TO THE HEBREWS.

47

after a full examination of passages in ancient writers by Bleek and Alford, and is required in Heb. xii. 28, the only other place where it is found in the New Testament. The adjective, moreover, which is found only in Luke, means always 'devout' (Luke ii. 25, and Acts). Does it mean, then, that Christ prayed unto Him who was able to save from death that He Himself might not die? Impossible—He came to 'give Himself a ransom for many.' He knew that He was to be betrayed into the hands of the Gentiles, and was to be scourged and crucified. With ever-increasing clearness He had announced the fact to His disciples; and if now He prayed for such deliverance, His prayer was not heard. Does it mean that He prayed God to deliver Him from death after having died—a prayer that was fulfilled when the 'God of Peace,' God reconciled to the world through the death of His Son, 'brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ?' So Ehrard, Brown, and others interpret it. But neither is this the exact meaning. What He prayed to be delivered from was not the mere dying, nor was it the grave into which, when dead, He was to enter. His prayer had rather reference to the agony of the final struggle. As Mediator He saw in death all it involved; the curse of the broken law, the penalty due to sin, the wrath of God, not primarily against Himself as the Holy One, but against the guilty, in whose room He stood, and against Him as He had taken their place. The weight of the Father's wrath, and the need in that dread hour of continued love to man, and of continued trust in God; the fear lest by one moment of passionate impatience, in forgetfulness of the force of His temptation, through a natural recoil against the injustice and cruelty of His murderers, through possible distrust of Him who now seemed to have left Him to His own unaided power—these were among the elements of His agony. And He could bear and resist them only through the cautious handling of the solemnities of His position, and by the reverent submission of His entire nature unto God. And God heard Him, not by delivering Him from the necessity of dying, not even by raising Him from the dead, but by strengthening Him to bear all (Luke xxii. 43), and by making the pains of death the birth-throes of an endless life for Him, and for all who were to believe. Had there been any impatience or distrust His prayer must have remained unanswered, and His whole work have been frustrated. On the cross was there the deepest prostration of human weakness, and the utmost willingness to bear the burden whereby we are disburdened; as there was also the perfecting of the work and of the discipline which fitted Him to be a Priest, both in relation to God and in relation to ourselves.

Ver. 8. Though he were a Son; more accurately, 'though he was a Son' (there is no conditional thought expressed, but a strong assertion); literally, though being [in His own nature] Son, yet learned he his obedience (not obedience simply, but the obedience He practised, or the obedience which was to fit Him for His office) by (really the source of His knowledge) the things which he suffered. The absence of the article again calls attention to His relation to the Father (see i. 2).—Learned by suffering. There is in the Greek a play upon the words (comp. anabain, pathyron, troubles our best teachers—discipline essential to discipleship).

Ver. 9. Being made perfect, not only brought to the end, the completion of His learning and suffering, but having acquired all the necessary merit, power, and sympathy needed in His office after His obedience unto death. He became the author (literally, the cause, the personal principle) of eternal salvation. A salvation not partial or temporal, like the stonements of the law, but a complete and ever-enduring deliverance from evil in all its forms and in every degree. It is the salvation of the soul which is immortal. It is the opposite of eternal condemnation. It takes in grace and glory; and Christ is its author or cause through the lasting virtue of His blood and righteousness, His obedience and suffering. His intercession and gifts. To all who obey him, who believe the truth He reveals, who live under the influence of it, and who acknowledge Him as their Master and Lord. His obedience unto death is the ground of our hope, and His obedience unto death is the model to which our life is to be conformed.

Ver. 10. Being called of God; rather, being addressed (not the same word as in verse 4) by God as High Priest: the title of honour whereby with the Son made perfect through suffering was saluted by the Father openly and solemnly when He made Him sit at His own right hand. Christ was Priest on earth (see ver. 6) when He made oblation of Himself unto God; but having now entered the heavenly sanctuary, He was publicly received by God as High Priest, the priestly and high-priestly offices being united in Him. After the order of Melchisedec, there being a resemblance in many particulars between the two, and especially in the antiquity, the dignity, the perpetuity of their respective offices, with the usual fuller depth of meaning in the antitype, the reality, than in the shadowy symbol.

The exact nature of the obedience which Christ learned through suffering has been much discussed. Many commentators hold the view that it was His obedience as Priest whereby He became qualified for His office and the consequent sympathy of which He became capable. He learned to feel what obedience involved, and so became a merciful High Priest in things pertaining to God. The idea that His obedience to the Divine law generally was increased by suffering seems to many inconsistent with His Divine nature and His personal holiness. But the language of the 8th verse seems to mean more than this explanation allows. He learned His obedience, not sympathy merely, nor merely priestly fitness for His work. Though Son, with all the love and trust of a Divine Son, He yet acquired and manifested a measure of obedience which else had been unattainable. Our Lord was man, proper man as well as God, and we must not so confound the two natures as to modify the attributes of either. As man He had an intellect like our own. He grew in wisdom, nay, even in favour with God and man. He had the faculty whereby He perceived the relation in which as man He stood to others, and felt the duties that relation involved. He had a will to decide His choice, and affections to impel Him to act. He was subject like ourselves to the great law of habit, whereby active principles become stronger through exercise, and are fixed
from exhaustion or made mighty through meditation and prayer. As man, the second Adam was as capable of growth in holiness as the first. He was made, moreover, under the law subject to its requirements. God was to be judged by it; and though this subject was His own act, it was as complete as if He had claimed His descent entirely from the first transgressor. In this condition He was personally liable for all His acts. To Him the warning came as to us:

'Indignation and wrath upon every soul of man that doeth evil.' Under this law, and subject to this condition, Christ appeared. If He fulfilled the law with absolute perfection He is accepted, and for us there is hope. If He fail, if through His own weakness, the subtlety of the tempter, the subtility of God is left to deplore the ruin which His own frustrated benevolence has made only the more touching and dreadful. One impatient desire, one as the sight, one sinful feeling, would have done it all. His suffering was obedience, His obedience intensest suffering from the beginning of His public ministry even to its close; and if He was subject to the laws of human growth, faculties strengthened by reason of use, emotion made more mighty and more tender, obedience more easy by repetition, we may say that as Christ was truly man His obedience was learned and perfected by suffering. This view of the human life of our Lord, and the awful responsibility which attached to every act and feeling of His life, amid forces of evil unparalleled in human history, gives us a higher conception of His suffering than anything besides. Such suffering strengthened, developed, perfected His own nature, even as ours is to be perfected, while it fits Him in the highest degree to understand our struggles and to sympathize with them.

CHAPTER V. II—VI. 20. The writer, knowing how unprepared his readers were to admit that the Aaronic priesthood was inferior to that of Melchizedec and to that of Christ (who was the antitype of both), insisted on remonstrating with them on their spiritual ignorance (11-14), and urges them to attain higher knowledge (vi. 1-3), by the danger of apostasy (4-8), by his own hope of them founded on their former real (9-12), and by the encouragement which God's promise and oath give to persevering faith (12-20).

Verse 11. Of whom; that is, of Melchizedec, in his superiority to Aaron, and as the type of Christ. The other interpretations, 'of Christ,' and 'of which thing,' are hardly defensible grammatically; the explanation just given is grammatically preferable, and is the same in sense.—We, not the writer and Timothy, but (as elsewhere in the Epistle, ii. 5, vi. 9, 11, and as is common in Paul's Epistles) the writer himself.—Have many things (literally, have much) to say, and hard to be uttered; rather, hard to explain to you.—Seeing (since) ye are become (having lost the quick sense of your new life, and relapsed, in part at least, into your old state) dull in your hearing (not easily made to understand).—For while ye ought, on account of the time, to be teachers, etc. Thirty years had passed since Pentecost, and some of you may have heard Christ the Lord; His apostles you have certainly heard. Churches were first formed among you, and most of you became believers years ago. Nor only a long time, but a trying time also; 'distress of nations,' 'men's hearts failing them for fear,' the 'shaking' foretold by the prophet. The nature of the time (not the length only) ought to have produced serious thought, earnest inquiry, and better understanding of what was coming upon the earth. They had not only made no progress,—they had retrograded.—Ye have need that one teach you what is the nature of (or, that some one teach you) the very first principles of the oracles of God. The first rendering is adopted by most commentators, ancient and modern, though the second is adopted by Bleek, Alford, and others. In neither case does it mean 'what are the first principles,' but rather, what quality and meaning they have. The oracles of God in the plural means generally what God revealed,—the Divine utterance (Acts vii. 38; Rom. iii. 2),—while in the singular it meant that part where the revelation was given. The meaning here is not quite the same as in vi. 1: 'the doctrine of Christ,' though this meaning is implied. The Jews had sacrifices and ritual, a material temple, prophecies clearly foretelling the life and death of our Lord, and rudimentary Christianity; but, though they had embraced the Gospel, they were failing to see what their own economy really meant, and they were in danger of going back from the Spirit to the flesh, from the reality to the type, overrating the significance of the simplest parts of their system,—'the elements,' as the Apostle Paul calls them also (Gal. iv. 3, 9). The description here given may mean the plain doctrines of the Gospel, such as are specified in the first verse of the next chapter; but the peculiar language of this verse ('elements,' 'oracles') points rather to the significance of the elementary rites and truths of Judaism itself, the very things he goes on in later chapters to explain. Christianity is the Law unveiled, and you would understand the general principles of the new economy if you rightly understood the old; a like rebuke may be seen in Luke xxiv. 25-27. And are become (as in ver. 11) such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat (solid food). You have gone back into a second childhood, and need to understand the pictures and shadows of the ancient Law, things intended for the infant state of the Church,—or, possibly, need to study again those earlier parts of the Gospel which you once accept at the beginning of the Divine life. The Fathers generally understood by 'milk' and by 'first principles' the Incarnation; but that is itself a profound mystery, and the writer has already affirmed and discussed it. The comparison of doctrines to milk and food is common in Philo, and is found in both Testaments. St. Paul uses both in 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2.

Vers. 13 and 14 give the reason why the further teaching is hard to explain.—For every one who useth milk (takes it as his ordinary food, and can digest nothing else) is unskilled (literally, inexperienced) in the word of righteousness; not in the Gospel as the true and righteous word (Grotius, Brown, and others); not in rightly ordered speech (Delitzsch); not quite the word of righteousness, as Melchizedec is king of righteousness, as if there were a word upon the words (Hackett); but rather, that message, that Gospel of which righteousness, imputed and imparted, in its double
form of justification and holiness, is the central truth. The man who fails to see the spiritual significance of the law, or, having once seen it, goes back to his old condition of imperfect vision, neither knows the burden of human guilt and the consequent need of atoning for it. A feeling of true holiness, nor the necessity of true holiness.—For he is a babe (an infant), and takes the same place among spiritual seers as an infant takes in the perception of worldly interests.

Ver. 14. But solid food belongs to the full grown, to the spiritually mature (so the word often means in Greek writers). It is the same word in vi. 1 (deine us go on unto perfection'). Then follows the description of them.—Even those who by reason of (by virtue of, not by means of) use (their long use, their habit) have their senses (properly their organs of sense, i.e. the inner organs of the soul) exercised (by spiritual gymnastics; only it is healthy work also, and not play; comp. 1 Tim. iv. 7, and Heb. xii. 11) to discern (literally, 'with the view to discriminate between') good and evil. To discern what is good and noble and what is bad and baseless. The child is early impressed upon; he may be the sixth sense induced to take even poison if it is sweetened to his taste; but a man has learnt by the discrimination which practice gives to make a distinction between things which differ, to 'refuse the evil and choose the good,' the very discrimination in which children fail (Deut. i. 39; Isa. vii. 16).

To have time for learning, time which is rich in lessons, and make no progress, is itself retrogression. Growth is the condition of all healthy life, physical, mental, spiritual. Not to grow in grace is to become dull and feeble; it is to remain in the system what ought to be replaced by new or added knowledge or feeling. It makes men specially susceptible to disease, and is the sure precursor of decay. The apostolic guard against apostasy is here and elsewhere to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ (2 Pet. iii. 18).

CHAP. VI. 1. It must be carefully marked that this chapter does not begin a new subject; still less is it implied that the first principles of the Gospel have been considered in previous chapters, and now the further process of growth is more profound. It is all part of the argument begun in ver. 11, and is a digression on the danger and weakness of the Hebrew Christians, and indeed of us all, the writer included, unless we aim at higher knowledge and clearer understanding.

Ver. 1. Therefore; rather, wherefore, i.e. for which (not for that) reason—viz., because the Christian cannot remain a child, but must either grow or decay, and because you yourselves seem decaying, losing even your perception of the meaning of your economy. Let us leave (behind, as something which should be done with) the principles of the doctrine of Christ (literally, the word or instruction of the beginning of Christ, the elementary truths with which men began when they first believe or preach the Gospel, the things mentioned in the next verse). 'The first principles of the oracles of God' describe the primary and essential truths taught in Judaism. 'The principles of the doctrine of Christ' represent the corresponding truths of the Gospel. And press on unto perfection (maturity, the state of full-grown men). A question is raised here on which the commentators widely divide. Have these words to do with the writer's task, in which he unites his readers with himself in his work, or have they to do with the hearers' condition and their need of a spiritual manhood, in which case he unites himself with them in their deficiencies and duty. Is he urging them to listen to his arguments, or is he urging them to greater advances in holiness? Most authorities favour the former view. Against this interpretation is the fatal objection that the writer has affirmed that they are not fit for such instruction. The meaning seems therefore to be, that he puts himself by their side, and urges himself and them to seek such mature knowledge as will increase their spiritual discernment and promote their steadfastness. Not mere teaching which the writer alone has to give, but knowledge and life, which his readers are to share with him.

Wherefore, seeing that we (you and I) are children, not grown men, let us, etc. He then proceeds to name six particulars which are specimens of the 'first principles' of the Gospel. Two of these refer to the spiritual requirements of Christianity, two to the introductory rites, and two to its final sanctions; or better, the six particulars are actually two essential qualities of Christian life, followed by four subjects of doctrine—rites and sanctions. These former (to repent and believe) the Hebrew Christians ought not to have to do again, and the other four they ought not to have to learn again. Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith in God. 'Laying again' describes naturally the preacher's work, but as naturally the work of the hearer, who builds his own character and busies himself with every part of the process. The foundation consists of repentance, the true inward change of heart, without which no man can see or enter the kingdom (John iii. 3, 5).

—Repentance from dead works (perhaps works devoid of all spiritual life, consciousness, and power, but more likely, from the use of the same phrase in chap. ix. 14, guilty works, works that deserve death; see 1 Kings ii. 26), and faith in God as having fulfilled the promise in the gift and death of His Son. —Of the doctrine of baptisms, and the laying on of hands. The form of the word for 'baptism' means distinguished from 'baptism,' and is generally applied in the New Testament to the washings of the ancient law. It probably includes also the baptism of John and of Christ. The nature of each, and the distinction between them, became important practical questions with the Jews in the first age. The laying on of hands had several uses in the early Church. With that rite the sick were healed; pastors and elders were admitted to their offices; the Holy Ghost was given, and converts were fully admitted into the fellowship of the Church, generally with the impartation of spiritual gifts also. It is to this last chiefly that the expression refers. —And of resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. All these particulars are under the grammatical government of the doctrine,' showing that it is not to the facts themselves, but to the doctrine and the belief of the facts, the writer is referring as the foundation of the Christian life. These were Jewish doctrines as well as Christian, only they were brought into clearer light by the Gospel. The resurrection is that of both good and evil (John v. 25); and the judgment (here the sentence, rather than the pro-
cess, though both forms of the word are used for the judgment, see x. 27) is called eternal because its results are eternal, and so final (Matt. v. 46). That these first principles of the Gospel were proclaimed by the first teachers as principles which a man must know and believe in order to be a Christian, will be seen by an examination of the passages given in the margin of the text. The Hebrew believers are exhorted to leave them just as St. Paul tells us he himself left them, forgetting the things that were behind; not because they are unimportant, for they are in truth essential, but because to stop there is to risk our steadiness. How important these elementary principles are is clear from the fact that there is no true godliness without them; how unsatisfactory if Christians have no profound knowledge is clear from the fact that the divisions and the lesser errors that have paralyzed the powers and marred the beauty of the churches of Christ have nearly all originated with men who understand first principles, and had no clear perception of anything beyond. We must have godly people in our churches, or they are not churches of Christ at all; but if there are ignorant godly people, with small insight into the spirit and nature of the Gospel and of the Church, these churches will be robbed of half their power and of half their holiness.

Ver. 3. And this will we do. Let us try to raise each other to the higher ground of matured intelligence.—If so be that God permit (favour and help). Whether any of us have so far forfeited His grace as to be incapable of further progress, God only knows; the writer hopes the best (ver. 9); but there is a backsliding, an apostasy, from which it is impossible to return. The position is therefore very solemn, will anyhow need special help, and the work may be even impossible.

Vers. 4-7. These verses have deep significance and are difficult of interpretation. In the early Church a sect arose who gathered from them that those who sinned after baptism either generally or especially by joining in idolatrous worship under persecution, were to be finally and permanently excluded from the churches, and could not be forgiven; and hence baptism itself was often postponed till after the year of grace had passed. The Church of Rome, on the other hand, refused for a considerable time to give this Epistle a place in the Canon, because it seemed to teach a doctrine at variance with what is taught in the accepted apostolic writings. In later times, those who deny the perseverance of the saints find in these verses and in others a little later (x. 26) the chief support of their system, as the defenders of that doctrine may perhaps have sometimes been more anxious to confute their argument than to give a fair interpretation of these texts. Nor can it be questioned that the passages have created great anxiety in real Christians who, sinking into spiritual languor, or betrayed into gross sin, as was David or Peter, have been thrown into despondency, unable "to lay hold of the hope set before them in the Gospel." Of the two passages it may be observed generally that the word "if" (if they fell and sinned, or if they fell and sinned wilfully) is not found in the Greek of either of them. It has been urged against the translators of the Authorised Version that they inserted "if" for the purpose of lessening the difficulty of the passage; but this should not be hastily assumed. In the Revised Version the "if" is retained in the second passage, though it is struck out in the first; and the "if" is so natural a translation of the Greek that it is inserted in the 5th verse; "if it be; where the Greek is simply "but bearing." We need not blame the translators if either earlier or later; it is enough to note that a common solution of the difficulty of the two passages, that they are only supposed cases, is not tenable. On the other hand, very few of the commentators note that the persons whom it is impossible to help are described by words that indicate continuous character and not a single act. Those who fall away are spoken of as "continuing to crucify" to themselves the Son of God, while those who sin wilfully are not guilty of a single sin, but of "going on sinning. The case, therefore, is the case of those who go back to a life of sin,—who take their place with the crucifiers of our Lord. Not single sins, but settled character or habitual practice, is what is condemned. Three principles more need to be remembered: every Christian grace has its counterpart, and all the common privileges of the Gospel are shared by multitudes who make no saving use of them. This is the first. Many of the rulers of the Jews believed, and yet they "loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." There is a real faith that cannot save. There is a repentance, a worldly sorrow, which cannot be distinguished for a time from the godly sorrow of the true convert, as there is a "joy" with which some receive the word and yet have no root in themselves. There is a hope which God will not honour; there is a holiness that is Pharisaism or deception; there is an enlightenment as universal as the knowledge of the Gospel (John i. 9); there are miraculous powers shared apparently by Judas, and certainly by men whom Christ of old knew as their Lord (Matt. vii. 22). And, secondly, though there are difficulties on both sides, the general teaching of the New Testament is, that if there be true union with the Lord Jesus Christ it is never to be broken off. If the light of Divine grace be once kindled in the soul, it is never to be extinguished. Sins once forgiven are forgiven for ever. The law written on the heart by God Himself is distinguished from that written on stone, and is not to be effaced: the principle of the Divine life once implanted is kept and guarded even to the end (see Heb. x. 19; John x. 15, 17, 28, 29; 1 Pet. i. 4, 5). But, thirdly, the precepts and warnings of the New Testament are addressed to men who are still in a state of probation. Every command that deals with essential Christian grace, every promise made to character, as in the Sermon on the Mount, all the watchfulness which Christians are exhorted to practise, and which inspired men practised ("I keep my body under, lest having preached the Gospel to others I should be a castaway"), are based upon the supposition, not that really saved men will perish, but that any professing Christian man may. We are startled to find the truth so sharply set forth in passages like the one before us; but the truth really underlies the teaching of every Epistle, and practically of every modern sermon. Most of all, the warnings and the invitations of the blessed God in the Old Testament, and of our Lord in the New, both of whom may be supposed to know the actual character and the final destiny of those they addressed, speak ever as if the ruin of all
were possible, nor can there be probation under any other arrangement. To argue that therefore neither the gift nor the salvation is known or certain, would be shallow sophistry. We cannot solve the mystery, but we ought to recognize it, and to note that a moral government under which God reveals to every one beforehand his final destiny, speaks or acts as if it were fixed, and thus removes the condition which moral government implies (the force, viz., of motives as if all were uncertain), is a contradiction in terms. There is, of course, an added difficulty in this chapter, that those which are enlightened are not supposed to fall away, but are stated to do so. The difficulty will be examined in due time.

Ver. 4. For. A reason for each of the previous clauses: "This will we do," for the case is urgent; without further knowledge you may fall away. 'If God permit,' for the case may be even now hopeless, and certainly is so without His help.—It is impossible (see below) for those who have been enlightened; once for all, a process that needs not, or admits not of repetition. 'Enlightened,' a word which, when applied to persons, means 'taught,' 'taught.' When applied to Christians, it means that they have been made acquainted with the principles of the Gospel, and have received 'the knowledge of the truth,' as it is expressed in Heb. 2:26; they have known the way of righteousness (2 Pet. ii. 20, 21). In the later history of doctrine, the word 'enlightenment' is used as a synonym, it is said, for baptism, and so many have interpreted here; but in fact it is not used in the Fathers for baptism simply, but for the historical period of which the writer speaks. In which case the word in the baptism was the symbol (Alford). This interpretation was set aside in favour of the common meaning of the word by Erasmus, and nearly all modern commentators have adopted this view. 'And have had taste of the heavenly gift,' i.e. of the gift that is made known by this enlightenment. Some refer the gift to Christ or the Spirit, or forgiveness, or salvation in Christ (2 Cor. xi. 15); but the connecting particle in the Greek shows that the gift refers rather to what is implied in the previous instruction,—a heavenly gift it is in its origin and results.—And became partakers of the Holy Ghost. Partakers, the noun and the verb are common in St. Paul, and in this Epistle. When men had been instructed and had tasted of the blessings which instruction revealed to them, the next stage of the Christian life was to become partakers of the gifts and influences of the Holy Spirit, not excluding the influences which had men may resist, for He has much to do even with hearts in which He never takes up His abode.—And have tasted the good word of God. Tasted, so as to feed upon the rich inheritance of promise and hope, which men have seized in all ages, even when slow to justify their right to it by consistency and holiness. This use of the word 'good,' as descriptive of what is comforting and satisfying, is common in Scripture (see Josh. xxiii. 15; Zech. i. 11).—As well as the powers of the world to come: the gifts and experience of the new economy, its powers both miraculous and spiritual, and the fact that these are to enjoy the blessings and advantages which follow from the fulfilment of the Divine word. Whatever is striking in evidence, glorious in teaching, solemn and impressive in sanctions—all are included in the powers which these men had felt.—And have fallen away (not, if they should fall); fallen not into sin simply, but so as to renounce the Gospel, so as to go back with a will into a life of sin (chap. x. 26), so as to depart from the living God (chap. iii. 12), returning to the false religions they had left, or to determined infidelity and ungodliness. Such are the characters the writer describes; they possessed the knowledge of Gospel truth, and had a certain amount of enjoyment from that knowledge (note the genitive case after 'taste'); they were partakers of the common influences and miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost; they enjoyed the promises of the Gospel (note the accusative case after 'taste') more fully than some other truths in which they had been instructed, and had felt most of the influences of the new economy miraculous, moral, and spiritual; and yet after all they had abandoned the Gospel and continued to denounce both it and its founder. Every part of this description applies probably to Judas, whose case seems to have been in the writer's mind; and yet he was never a real believer, but 'a son of Perdition' even from the first. Such was the primitive apostate. His counterpart in modern times is easily described: men have made great attainments in the knowledge of Christianity, have had considerable enjoyment of it; they have been graced with the Holy Spirit, have enjoyed largely the promises and hopes of the Gospel; and yet through neglect of its ordinances, through frailty and weakness, through and after trial have rejected both. These miserable men are described as having fallen away. That was the fatal step which they took once for all (so the tense implies). The state in which they now are is described in the other participles, 'crucifying to themselves, as they still do, the Son of God afresh, and putting Him, as they still do, to open shame.' It is not the act that ruins them, it is the habit; and it is partly through that settled habit that it is impossible to renew them again to repentance. Some indeed regard 'impossible' as used in a popular sense. It is difficult to renew them, so the Latin of D. translates here, and so several commentators have held; but that meaning of the word is unknown in the New Testament. Others regard the imposibility as referring to man rather than God, and hold the meaning to be: We cannot renew men whose hearts are so hard, and whose condition is so desperate as theirs. God can, but we cannot. No new argument, no new motive can we use; the terror, the love, the warnings, the enticements of the Gospel—all have been applied and understood and resisted. Nothing but a miracle can change and save them. Neither of these explanations, however, is satisfactory. The word 'impossible' is very strong, and it seems immoveable. Just as in chap. x. 25, the writer, after describing the sacrifice of Christ, tells us that if men reject and despise it and go back to a life of sin, no other sacrifice remains for them; there awaits them nothing but the eternal sentence of judgment: so here, if men deny Christ and crucify Him to themselves—their treatment of Him in their own hearts; if they renounce Him as a blasphemer and Impostor—their treatment
of Him before the world; and that after having seen the truth and felt the attractiveness of His teaching and life, it is impossible to renew them.

The language, as thus explained, is not a mere truism, as Delitzsch holds ("it is impossible to renew to repentance those who fall away, except they repent," etc.); it is rather a strong assertion of an important truth. The contemptuous rejection of Christ's sacrifice means no forgiveness, and the contemptuous rejection of Christ's teaching and grace means no renewal and no personal holiness. There may be a sense in which each is an identical proposition, but each meets the very purpose of the writer and the needs of the readers. They were tempted to think there was still forgiveness and holiness for them, even if they renounced Christ and treated Him as their fathers had done. The writer warns them that to reject Christ—to reject Him after all they have known and felt, under circumstances, therefore, that made their rejection practically final—was to give up all hope, all possibility of salvation. What would become of them if somehow they had ceased to crucify Him, ceased to scorn and to denounce Him; if they gave up the life of sin to which, in chap. x., he speaks of them as having willingly returned, we need not discuss, for the case is not supposed.

What they were in danger of saying was: There is renewal and forgiveness in the old economy, in heathenism, nay, even in ungodliness. We believe it in spite of Divine teaching and our long experience to the contrary. We may give up this new religion, may trample upon the blood of the covenant, insult the Spirit of God, and live as we please, and yet be saved. What else can meet such doctrine but the strongest rebuke, and the most absolute denial? For men—out of Christ—because they have knowingly and wilfully rejected Him, renewal and forgiveness are alike impossible. Neither man nor God can save them.

Vers. 7 and 8. Awful as this teaching is, men accept it in the sphere of nature and recognise the equity of the arrangement. For land (not the earth) that hath drunk in (not that drinketh in; the showers precede the fruitfulness) the rain that cometh oft upon it (that keeps coming, not in drenching but frequent showers, and comes for the purpose of making it fruitful, probably the force of the genitive with τό), so the land is described; it is not impenetrable rock from which the rain runs off, but land that sucks in the rain. Rain itself is in Scripture the emblem both of Divine truth (Isa. lv. 10) and of Divine influence (Isa. xlv. 3).

The whole description, therefore, applies to those who have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come. . . . And, the result is in one case that the mother earth made fruitful from above, brings forth herbs (edible plants, grass, corn, food) fit for those on whose account, moreover (not "by whom," as Vulgate, Luther, Calvin, and others, a sense the Greek will not admit), it is tilled (carefully cultivated, a strong word); such fertility making a due return for the rain of heaven and the toil of man, partakes of blessing from God, in that He rewards it according to His own law (Matt. xiii. 12) andpromises (John xv. 21) with more abundant returns.

Ver. 8. But when it (or the first clause may be repeated: 'but when the same kind of land under like conditions') bears (produces, not so noble a word as 'brings forth,' which expresses something like natural birth) thorns and thistles (so generally, Matt. vii. 16, etc.); these products of the curse—it is rejected (being tried, it is proved worthless and reprobate, a word occurring seven times in N. T., and only in Paul's Epistles), and is nigh unto a curse; whose end (not the end of the curse, De Wette, Bleek, etc., but the end of the land; see chap. iii. 13. the end shall be) is for (or unto) burning. With great tenderness the writer softens the language of the original curse (Gen. iii. 17 and 18), and pronounces land of this kind to be nigh unto cursing, in great danger of it, and the end to be in the direction of burning—an end it may reach and will reach unless there be a great change. What this burning is has been much discussed. Are they the weeds, that the soil may be made fruitful, as were the weeds of old (Virg. Georg. i. 84—93)? No; the weeds and soil also. What is burnt is the soil, and that means destruction; so it is in Deut. xxix. 22, 23, and elsewhere; comp. John xv. 16. . . . Each clause of this analogy answers to the description already given in the previous verses. The tillers of the soil are Christian workers; they for whom the ground is tilled are the Father (chap. iii. 9), and the Son as heir (chap. iii. 6; Matt. xxi. 38). The rain represents the oft-repeated manifestations of truth and grace, and the drinking in of the rain symbolizes the apprehension and the reception of them; if there be fruitfulness there will be ever-increasing blessing; and if there be no fruitfulness, the case may not be hopeless; but it is nearing that state, and is preparing for judgment, and the judgment is destruction. How applicable all this description is to our own age, as to every age, need not be shown.

Vers. 9, 10. After these solemn warnings comes the outburst of hope and love. —But, beloved (only here in this Epistle), we are persuaded (not the middle voice as often, 'we have the inward confidence,' but the passive, we are led to the conviction,—we are persuaded by evidence which justifies the conclusion, the evidence being given in the next verse. The whole expression, as Alford and Delitzsch note, resembles Rom. xv. 14).

—Better things (either 'in your moral state' or 'in your final destiny;' both are really combined), and things that accompany salvation (rather, things that lay hold of,—that are in immediate connection with,—so that he who has the one has the other); though (notwithstanding that) we then speak (talk, not now only, but again and again). The better things, and things connected with salvation, are the holy dispositions they possessed (not the external privileges and spiritual gifts only), together with the final issues of that holy disposition in continued steadfastness and eternal life. They had 'received the knowledge of the truth in the love of it' (the exact definition that can be given of true and saving faith), and being rooted and grounded in love, he hoped they would persevere and be preserved (the two sides of perseverance) in believing even till the completion of their salvation.

Vers. 10. For (and he has reason for this conviction) God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love ('labor of' ['love'] is without adequate support; it was probably taken from the parallel passage, 1 Thess. i. 3) which ye have showed towards his name, in that ye ministered to the souls of the saints and to the ministry of their souls. Their 'work' was their whole Christian life of
active obedience (so of ministers, 1 Cor. iii. 13; so of men generally, Rom. ii. 15; and of Christians, 1 Thess. i. 3). Their love shown to God's name is not the love with regard to or for the sake of His name, but the love towards it (see Rom. v. 8, etc.). The object of their love was the name of God—God's name to us, 'the God and Father of our Lord,' and the God and Father of all who believe; and this love they manifested by ministering, and continuing to minister to those by whom that name was known and confessed and loved. Their work and love are clearly described in chap. x. 32-34. The ministry was one of sympathy, and the help shown largely to those of their own nation. 'Ministering to the saints' is generally used in Scripture of help given to the Jewish Christians in Palestine, not because this expression of Christian love was to be restricted to them, but because they had then most need. This active Christian life, this love towards God shown in generous help to His servants, gives the writer hope that they are really God's children, and that, therefore, God will not forget them. 'He is just, and will not forget,' is the strong language he uses. Some (as Brown and others) regard 'righteous' as equivalent to 'faithful,' shrinking apparently from implying that the remembering of the grace we exercise is a matter of righteousness with Him, and quoting 2 Thess. i. 6 ('God is not unfaithful') as the true explanation. That is no reason, however, for changing the meaning of the word; and the two words, faithful and righteous, are combined in a way parallel to our passages (1 John i. 9). The whole case is well explained by Delitzsch. Not only is it true, when we believe and are holy, that God is bound by righteousness to fulfil what He has promised; not only is it true, when we repent and please the Son of His love, that God is bound by what is due to Him, as well as by His mercy to forgive; but it is true also that God's righteousness prompts Him to help and graciously reward them that are righteous. Whenever our acts correspond to His holiness and love, His righteousness leads Him to honour and bless the holiness and love which he has Himself created. The state in us that answers exactly to the holy love of God is our holy love, the fruit of faith in the revelation of God's holy love in Christ. Faith, as the acceptance by our hearts of the free unmerited grace of God, is itself the beginning of a holy loving state; and though the holiness of the faith is neither the meritorious ground nor the measure of our forgiveness, for of itself it cancels no sin, and can give no legal title to eternal life, it is none the less the object of God's approval, and it ever works by love, which is its noblest fruit. Faith and love and holiness all come into judgment and approval now, as they will come into final judgment and approval at last, as they will come into final judgment and approval at last, as they will come into final judgment and approval at last.

Ver. 11. But (though persuaded of better things and recognising your work and love) we desire (not 'earnestly desire,' the preposition of the original indicates generally the object of the desire, not the intensity of it) that every one of you do show the same diligence (the diligence you have already shown in cultivating brotherly love) with respect to the full assurance of your hope unto the end. The stress is on 'the full assurance of your hope,' and 'unto the end.' 'Full assurance of hope' is no doubt the meaning, just as elsewhere we read of the full assurance of faith (Heb. x. 22), and the full assurance of understanding (Col. ii. 2). And we desire that you show this quality and persevere in it even to the end. The warnings of the Gospel are solemn, and yet Christians should live in the sunshine of an assured hope as the true safeguard against apostasy—"a hope, however, which it is difficult to maintain."

Ver. 12. In this hope ye need to persevere, that ye become not slothful, but imitators (a favourite Pauline word, see 1 Thess. i. 6, etc.) of those who through faith and patience (generally 'long suffering') inherit the promises. 'Become not slothful,' a more delicate and hopeful way of expressing the exhortation than 'be.' The same word ('slothful') is used in v. 11, and the writer affirms that they had become so. There the reference is to hearing, and is the opposite of vigorous thought and knowledge; here the reference is to Christian practice, and is the opposite of a diligent, earnest life. The sluggishness had already invaded the outer sense—the mental faculty; the writer's hope is that it may not reach the inner spiritual nature. But rather Imitators.

The Greek word has a nobler meaning than this English equivalent. Scholars, it was said of old, should not only learn from their master, they should imitate (or, as we say, should copy) them. 'Copy' itself is also misleading. Both words indicate too much a servile superficial reproduction of the original, and hence the 'followers' of the Authorised Version is not unlikely to retain its place with 'imitators' in the margin. Patience or long-suffering is the mental state that bears long with the trials of the Christian life, and with the delays of the fulfilment of the Divine promise, with cheerful courage and without despondency or dejection. We believe what is promised, we patiently wait and endure, and in the end we shall come into the full enjoyment of the blessings themselves. Of them that inherit the promises.

What is it, then, they inherit, and who are they? A needful difficulty has been created by the statement of chap. xi. 39, that the Patriarchs did not obtain the promises, i.e. the blessings promised, and hence it is concluded either that what they inherited was simply a promise, not the blessing promised (Bleek), or that the words here used cannot refer to Abraham or to the spiritual blessings of the Gospel (Alford). But the argument is clear enough. Our fathers and others of later times walked by faith; they were stedfast amid the trials to which they were exposed; but they inherited the promised blessings, some in the fulness of God's grace on earth, and others in heaven. The specific instance quoted, that of Abraham, had a double fulfilment—the promise of a large seed, though long delayed, began to be fulfilled in his lifetime, and under the old economy (Dent. i. 10); its complete fulfilment belongs, of course, to the Gospel, and Abraham sees and enjoys it now, as he saw and enjoyed it even when the Epistle was written.
TO THE HEBREWS.

V. 13-30. The writer has sought to encourage the Hebrews by appealing to the Divine 'righteousness.' He who graciously made them fruitful would righteously treat them according to their fruitfulness, and would complete what He had begun (ver. 10). He now proceeds, however, to encourage them by the fact that they had on their side the promise and the oath of God even as Abraham had.

Ver. 13. For when God made (or, had made) promise to Abraham, because (since) he could swear by none greater, he swore by himself.

'Made promise' may be translated (as is done by De Wette and others) 'had made promise,' with reference to previous promises, which were in substance repeated for the first time with an oath at the offering of Isaac. The only occasion on which God did swear was at Mount Moriah (Gen. xxii. 16-18). The quotation which is made in the next verse follows neither the Hebrew nor the Septuagint exactly, but it represents the sense. Similar promises without an oath were previously given (Gen. xiii. 16, xv. 5).

'Having made promise, He afterwards swore,' may therefore be the meaning, save that implied in v. 5; but whether the promise and the oath refer to one occasion only or to two, the sense is unchanged. God made promise, and then, because there was none greater to whom He could appeal, He pledged His own life or being to the sense of the promise. Both promise and oath were immutable; the oath did not add to the intrinsic certainty of the promise. His word being ever as good as His bond; but it gave a deeper impression of its certainty, and was fitted to remove every doubt.

Ver. 14. Saying, Surely. The Hebrew of 'surely' is equivalent to 'I swear.' The unfamiliness of the Greek translators of the Hebrew idiom for swearing has created various renderings of the Hebrew particles, and the meaning of the Greek particle has been misunderstood by the English translators in this Epistle (see chap. iv.). But there is now no question as to the sense.

—Blessing I will bless, etc. The repetition indicates, according to the order of the original words, either the certainty of the thing promised ("Thou shalt surely die"); or the continuousness and consequent completeness of it. In neither case is it unmeaning.—I will multiply thee. The full expression in Genesis is: 'I will multiply thy seed.' Some think the change is significant, as if it was intended to connect the promise more closely with Abraham and his faith rather than with his seed (so De Wette and Bleek), and there may be force in this somewhat refined reasoning; but the multiplying is the essential thing, and, as Abraham could be multiplied only through his descendants, the promise in this shorter form leaves the meaning unchanged.

Ver. 15. And so, in this way, having patiently waited, believing and expecting the blessing amid all the trials and delays he was subjected to, he obtained what had been promised, —not so much: the birth of Isaac (Alford), who was born before the oath, nor yet the restoration of Isaac from the dead (De Wette), a result that needed no waiting. The promise was really fulfilled in Abraham's becoming through Isaac the father of the people of promise, and then of 'many nations' under the Gospel through Him who was 'the seed' (Gal. iii. 16), and so of all who are through faith children of Abraham. This is the promise which, in the widest sense, Abraham has obtained. During his earthly life the fulfilment was very partial. At the Exodus the seed are expressly said to have been as 'the stars for multitude' (Deut. i. 10); but the blessing of the nations was still to come. Nineteen hundred years later appeared the great Deliverer, whose day Abraham also saw, and now His kingdom is supreme, and Abraham has long since obtained it all. This wide meaning of the promise is not properly a spiritualizing of the Old Testament; it is the true meaning on which St. Paul again and again insists (Gal. iii. 7; Rom. iv. 11). No trial of faith under any dispensation has been severer than Abraham's, and no reward more blessed or more complete. The lesson to 'Israel,' whether literal or spiritual, is decisive and clear.

Ver. 16. For men swear ('verify,' or 'indeed,' goes out on external authority) by the greater; by one who is above themselves, and can punish the wrong-doer; and for confirmation, when any statement of theirs is contradicted the oath is final; the question, as a legal question, is settled. The oath here spoken of is distinct from the contract or compact in which the truth of a statement was made legally valid by the oath of assurance which appealed to God; an agreement or covenant was made legally binding by the oath of promise. He who took an oath under the circumstances and occasions by the death of the covenanted victim, which death was really an imprecation of death on him who broke the agreement. Further sanctions, in either case, were impossible. The oath went beyond everything. It was as far-reaching as could go. It still forms the highest and final sanction of the law; and when men's statements are contradicted or their promises questioned, the oath is the ultimate confirmation of both. Some translate contradiction 'dispute,' or 'contention;' 'of every dispute or strife of theirs the oath is an end,' The interpretation given above is the more probable, however, partly because 'contradiction' is the accurate rendering of the word elsewhere (chap. vii. 7), and partly because there is no dispute or strife supposed in this case, but only, on man's side, disbelief and questioning of the Divine announcement. The entire thought of this reasoning is given in very similar words in Philo (see Delitzsch).

Ver. 17. Wherein; better, 'wherefore,' under which circumstances, in which case, on which principle, i.e. man having this estimate of the value of an oath,—God, willing to show more abundantly to the heirs of the promise (those to whom under both economies the promises belong, see ver. 12) the immutability of his will. The word used for 'will' is used by Luke and by Paul to express God's gracious will or counsel (Acts ii. 23, etc.; Eph. i. 11).—Intervened, 'mediated,' with an oath, i.e. between Himself as the promiser and man as the recipient of the promise. He Himself came as pledge and surety, not for us (Ps. cxix. 122) but for Himself. The same loving purpose that provided the blessings He promised prompted Him to do everything that could be done to win our trust and establish our faith.

Ver. 18. That by means of these two immutable things, two distinct acts, things really done. Most understand by these two things the promise and the oath to Abraham; but the immutability He is said to show by the oath (ver. 17); though no doubt He was also immutable in His promise,
That quality, however, was not so clearly shown to our apprehension. It is therefore better to regard the oath to Abraham as one, and the oath concerning Melchizedek (the typical priest) as another (Ps. cx. 4, and vii. 19). In neither of which is it possible that God ever lies (the force of the tense denying the possibility in a single case). The emphasis is on lying and the impossibility, while the absence of the Greek article before 'God' calls attention to His nature. In the case of Him who is God, lying can really have no place (Tit. i. 2), only He needs to meet human infirmity.—That we may have strong encouragement, having already fled for refuge to their hope. We have the promise set before us in the double oath of God, Christ, the Desire of all nations, and the great High Priest, and it is a mighty encouragement to keep hold of that on which we have laid hold (the word means both), to know that God has solemnly assured and reassured us of His loving purpose on our behalf. 'Encouragement,' translated 'consolation,' has a wide meaning; it includes the help and comfort which men call in for emergencies. The meanings vary between 'strength' and 'consolation,' the old English word 'comfort' representing both—the first etymologically (through foris), and the second from usage.

Ver. 19. Whose hope we have, not which encouragement we have. The hope spoken of in the previous verse is largely objective, i.e. it includes the object of our hope—the glorious things which the promise warrants us in expecting. In this verse, it is largely subjective—the affection or grace (compare 'Christ, our hope, sustains us,' where hope is objective; and 'hope in Christ sustains us,' where hope is subjective; both are combined in the beautiful description, 'Christ in us the hope of glory'). Each implies the other; the heavenly reward as set before us by God is 'our hope' in its objective sense; our hope of the heavenly reward is the grace of hope in the subjective sense. As an anchor of the soul (a common classical emblem, though not found, as 'anchor' itself is never found, in the Old Testament) both sure (with firm holding ground) and steadfast (in itself strong), and entering into that which is within the veil. A mixed figure, but of great beauty. The anchor of the sailor is cast downwards into the depth of the ocean; but the anchor of the Christian, which is hope, finds its ground and holds above. Into the holiest above Jesus has entered for us, and there also the anchor of our hope has entered; so have we rest now, and shall outside all the storms of our earthly life. Some regard these last clauses, 'sure and steadfast' (or, as qualifying 'hope,' not the anchor; the image, in short, they think, is once named, and then no longer used; while others regard the hope as identical with Christ, who is said to enter heaven as our anchor, and then as priest for us. The general sense is not changed in any of these interpretations. The force and beauty of the figure is best preserved, however, by the interpretation first given.

Ver. 20. Whither as forerunner Jesus has entered for us, having become after the order of Melchizedek a High Priest for ever.—As forerunner (not 'the,' and not 'a,' forerunner, as if He were one of several. This absence of the article simply calls attention to the nature and purpose of His entrance). Forerunner occupies the prominent place also in the sentence. The Levitical high priest entered the Holy of Holies on behalf of the people, as Christ also entered into the Holiest of all. Here He appears in a new character. He is now gone to prepare a place for us; we are to follow and to share His glory and His throne. The 'priest for ever' of the Psalm is now changed into 'high priest,' a title made appropriate by the fact that it is not into the holy place simply, but into the immediate presence of God, He is gone. After the order of Melchizedek occupies the emphatic place in the verse, for it is the subject to which He is about to return. Here, therefore, the digression ends.

Chap. vii. 1-28. Resuming his argument, the writer proceeds to show that Jesus, belonging as He did to the order of Melchizedek, is superior to Aaron. In proving his point he first (1) treats of the priest king Melchizedek with reference to the history of Genesis (xiv.), dwells upon his greatness (1-3), and on his superiority to Abraham, the ancestor and representative of Levi (4-10); he then (2) treats of the prediction (Ps. cx.), wherein it is foretold that a perpetual priest is to arise who is to supersede the Aaronic priests because of their inefficacy; shows (3) that the greater solemnity of the institution of the priesthood of Christ proves its superiority to the priesthood of Levi (20-22); (4) its permanence (23-25); and (5) its adaptation to our needs (26-28).

Here begin the things hard to be explained; not that the difficulty lies in the phrases used concerning Melchizedek, for these, however startling to us, were familiar modes of expression among the Jews, but that the Jews were slow to receive and apply the general teaching of the passage. The Jewish priesthood had the highest sanctions; it was the divinest part of the law. The government was originally a theocracy; the priest was the representative of the invisible King, His minister, and the mediator between the nation and Himself. The kingship came later. It originated partly in popular feeling, and was at first even displeasing to God. That the Messiah should be King, the Son of David, and the occupant of His throne, was generally allowed; but that He was to be priest also, that He was to set aside the ancient law, was something more difficult to believe. The cessation of the priesthood is indeed as great a mystery to the Jews as the destruction of the Temple, and is in their view even more irremissible. And yet One is to arise after the order of Melchizedek, and not after that of Aaron, and is to hold uninterrupted office in His Church.

Ver. 1. For this Melchizedek ... abides a priest continually. And who is he? King of Salem, i.e. Jerusalem, as is taught in the old tradition given in the Targums (see Gill); and in Josephus (Antiq. i. 10, 2), the Salem of the 76th Psalm (ver. 3). The latter tradition, that Melchizedek is a general name, is not changed in any of these interpretations. For not only was he...
king of Salem, he was also Priest of the Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth, a title intended to assert not only that He is God alone, but that Melchisedec was priest of the God not of a particular people, but of all nations; his priesthood belonged therefore to the primitive dispensation of religion, the early catholicism of the first ages, and not to the temporary and typical economy of Judaism. —Who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and gave him, when at the summit of his earthly greatness, after he had overthrown four kings and delivered five, his priestly benediction (see Deut. xxvii. 5), a benediction which Abraham welcomed by paying the tithe which was of old offered to priests, that they might present it as a symbol of the consecration of all the gains of the offerer unto God. Abraham therefore acknowledged what the blessing implied, the reality and the greatness of his priesthood.

Nor less instructive is his name and the name of his city, and the very silence of the Scripture record on other questions. Melchisedec, his personal name, when interpreted, is significant of his character. He is king of Righteousness, he rules in righteousness, he maintains and diffuses righteousness. —And after that (in the next place) he is King of Peace, and ‘righteousness and peace are, as we know, the glory of the reign of the Messiah (Ps. lxxii.). This reasoning rests upon a double principle. Names are in the Old Testament largely descriptive of character, and as God arranges all the devices of his covenants, and sets up this king as a type of the Messiah, we may safely reason from him to the antitype, and gather lessons and proofs of God’s purpose and grace.

Ver. 3. He is without father or mother, appearing out of the darkness without ancestors or successors; without pedigree either immediate or remote; owing his priesthood, therefore, and dignities to no connection with priests on his father’s side or even on his mother’s: his is a priesthood purely personal, and not to be traced to natural descent or hereditary claim. In contrast with this tenure of office was the tenure of the Levites; they held their priesthood only on condition that they should prove their descent from Levi; and so, after the captivity, all those who could not prove this descent were not allowed to act as priests till God Himself gave counsel by Urim and Thummim (Ex xii. 62, 63; Neh. vii. 62-64).

—Without beginning of days or end of life, unlike the Jewish priests therefore, who began their ministry at thirty and closed it at fifty, the high priest holding his office until he died. —But made like (in the respect named) unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually. These words still refer to the history and not properly to the Psalm (cx. 4), where it is said that Melchisedec was made like to Christ, and so, instead of ‘a priest for ever,’ the phrase of the Psalm, we have ‘a priest continually,’ one whose office remains unbroken either at the beginning or at the close. Though this is the simplest and the natural interpretation of the words, some find a deeper meaning in them. The terms used are wide and sweeping, and while the Targums and Philo, and modern commentators, find no difficulty in the explanations given above of the phrase without father or mother, or genealogy, a deeper meaning is not without its attractions, especially when the words are applied to the great antitype Christ. ‘Without father,’ it has been thought, may refer to the fact that Christ had no earthly father and no Divine mother (answering to His higher nature), while the later expressions, ‘without beginning of days or end of life,’ are descriptive, they think, of Him whose goings forth are from everlasting, and who, though He died, conquered death, and has taken the nature of man into union with His essential eternity. What in the type means no record, meant in the antitype no existence. It may fairly be admitted that the phrases are finely chosen so as to be true of the type in some degree, and more profoundly true of our Lord; but beyond this superscription, by the same altar in hand, the sacrifice by the same altar still, by the same altar in hand. Origen regarded Melchisedec as the incarnation of an angel; Bleek thinks that the writer shared a supposed Jewish opinion that he was called into existence miraculously and miraculously withdrawn, then abiding a priest for ever. Others, ancient and modern, think he was the Son of God Himself—an opinion untenable, inconsistent alike with the Psalm and with the entire teaching of this Epistle. The Jewish writers supposed him to have been Shem (see Gill), or Enoch, or Job. It is enough to say that he probably represents a royal worshipper of the true God, the head of his race, before as yet the primitive worship had become corrupt, and before there was a need for selecting a particular family as the depository and the guard of the Divine will. . . . It is a solemn and instructive to note how most of the false religions on earth and most of the corruptions of the time owe their power to men’s desire to have a human priest who may forgive them and plead for them, and even offer sacrifice for them. The doctrine is even more popular than the opposite extreme, forgiveness without sacrifice and without priest. All sacrifices are indeed the sacrifice of the cross, and all priesthoods by the priesthhood of our Lord. The recognition of one priest is as essential to true religion as the recognition of one king.

Ver. 4. Now consider (consider further, a slightly transitional particle) how great (applied to age, size, or, as here, to moral grandeur) this man was, to whom even Abraham the patriarch (the father of the tribe, of the whole race of Israel) gave the tenth out of the best of the spoils. The word rendered ‘spoils’ means properly that which lies at the top of a heap, ‘the finest of the wheat,’ and so of any spoils taken in war. It is questioned whether the tenth of the best of the spoils means the tenth of the best of the spoils, leaving what was of less value untithed, or a tenth of all the spoil, which tenth as given to God was to be the best part of the whole. The last is the true meaning (comp. Num. xv. 21), for it is already said that Abraham gave a tenth part of all (ver. 2). As was fitting, he gave to God the tenth, and that tenth the best.

Ver. 5. And they vastly (or, ‘indeed,‘ as in ver. 8; or better, the emphatic ‘and they,’ the Greek particle calling attention to the contrast between those mentioned in this verse and in the following) that are of the sons of Levi, when they (not ‘who’) receiv’d . . . have a committ’d, etc. The meaning here is best learned from the facts. The Levites, the teachers of the Jewish people, received their portion of the land of promise in the form of a tithe, all the increase of the ground (Num. xviii. 21-24); of this tithe, the priests properly so called received a tithe
(Num. xviii. 26-28); the priests' share, therefore, was taken from their brethren's share, and all from the people. This was the arrangement "according to the law."

Ver. 6. But he (Melchisedec) whose descent (pedigree) is not recorded from him has never-theless taken tithes of Abraham (when he contained in his own person both Levi and Israel). And not only did he receive tithes from the tithetaker Levi, but also blessed him who has (who is the possessor of the promise).

Ver. 7. And beyond all contradiction (or without any contradiction), what gives a blessing is greater, (is raised above) what receives it. The neuter of the original seems used to express the universality of the statement, and to make the truth of it depend not on the person but on the act or relation itself; and the conclusion is that Melchisedec is greater than Abraham, the possessor of the promises, for he adds even to the blessings of him who for all men and by all men is so richly blessed. The exalted founder and head of the covenant people is inferior, even in the hour of his triumph, to the still more exalted and mysterious personage who is once priest and king.

Ver. 8. And here indeed (as in ver. 5, 'indeed' is useful only to make more clear the contrast of the following clause; an emphatic 'and here' would be better) refers not to the time of Melchisedec, though that is last spoken of, but to the time of the Levitical priesthood, which extends down to the writer's own age. —Man that die (literally, 'dying men'), that is, who receive tithes; but there (i.e. in the case of Melchisedec of which he is immediately speaking, but which as belonging to the past is more remote) he received them, of whom he is witness that he liveth, i.e. we read of him not as dying but as living, "and so his end of life" is affirmed of him at all. This is spoken not of Melchisedec as man, but of the Melchisedec of the sacred narrative, who is made in this way like unto the eternal priest. As man he doubt died, but as priest he did not belong to that order. Under the law the priesthood was temporary. Before the law the priest was priest as long as he lived, and so was perpetual (as at Rome the dictator for 'Dictator perpetuum'); and as Christ lives for ever, so for ever He is able to make intercession for us.

Ver. 9. And so to say (a phrase which, like 'as it were,' is used to moderate a strong expression or to qualify a statement that is not literally true; the other sense of the original, 'in a word,' 'to speak briefly,' is not appropriate here).

An obvious objection to the previous reasoning is that Abraham was not a priest. It was therefore not unnatural that he should pay tithes and receive the blessing. But the objection is answered by the fact that as Abraham had obtained the promise, he was the representative of all his descendants. Levi was in him, not physically and seminally merely, but representatively; and so Abraham on his own behalf and theirs recognised a priesthood beyond the limits of the dispensation which belonged to his own time.

Ver. 11. If therefore perfection was; better, 'If again,' or 'Now if,' a transitional particle indicating an argument bearing on the same subject (see ix. 1). 'Was,' not 'were'; the reasoning is not, 'If there were perfection, there would be no need;' but, 'If there was perfection, there was no need.' The Psalm tells us that in the person of the Messiah there was to arise a priest who did not belong to the order of Aaron, but to a different order; and this declaration implies that the priesthood of Aaron was not capable of securing the great end of a priesthood. What that end is has been largely discussed. Expiation, consecration, transformation of personal character, true permanent blessedness, each has had its advocates, and we may safely combine them all. If sinners are to be forgiven, forgiven-ness must be consistent with the Divine character and law; the conscience must be pacified and man made holy. That the Levitical priesthood did not effect these ends is proved at length later on; here the writer restricts himself to the one point, that after the first priesthood was instituted it was announced that its work was to pass into the hands of another order, an intimation of its insufficiency. The case is made clear by the parenthetic statement—for on the ground of the Levitical priesthood (not 'under it') the people have received the law (i.e. not that the priesthood was first and the law afterwards, for the contrary is the fact, nor that the people were subject to a law that had reference to the priesthood. The law rested on the assumed existence of a 'priesthood, all its precepts and requirements presupposing some such body;' so that now, if the priesthood is removed, the economy itself is removed also. Under the Gospel, God appoints, as He foretold, a priest who does not answer to the description given of priests under the law—a clear proof that He who first made the law has annulled it. —What need was there that there should arise (the usual word to describe one raised to dignities in his office, Acts iii. 22, vii. 37) a different priest after the order of Melchisedec, and that he should be said to be not (or not be called) after the order of Aaron?

Ver. 12. For the priesthood being changed. This is true of an institution that forms the foundation of the law in the sense just described (ver. 11). If Christ is made priest, the law is changed in its ceremonial and political arrangements, and even in the ethical relation of the people to God. They have another priest, and through the completeness of his work they have a freeness of access and a fulness of forgiveness which alters the very nature of their economy.

Ver. 13. The writer now proves the completeness of the change of the priesthood. —For he of whom (nor 'to whom,' Dr. J. Brown and others, the preposition being used to denote that to which a word or thing refers) these things (the words in Psalm cx. are said (see the end of ver. 14) hath partaken of (better than 'pertaineth'), hath become a member of, a different tribe (the words describe an already existing fact, and intimate that he had joined the tribe), of which tribe no man hath ever (the full force of the corrected text) given attendance (the word means to bestow labour or attention upon anything, see 1 Tim. iv. 13) at the altar.

Ver. 14. For (the proof of the statement of ver. 13) it is evident (plain to all, an adjective found only in Paul, 1 Tim. v. 24; for proof that it is evident, see the passages in the margin above) that our Lord hath sprung—as a branch out of the root of Jesse, a common rendering of the Hebrew word, Jer. xxiii. 5, Zech. iv. 2; or
as the sun or the star rises (Num. xxiii. 17; compare Isa. ix. 1 and Matt. iv. 2). Both meanings of the word 'hath sprung' are scriptural. Christ is said to 'spring up' in both senses. Here the former is the more probable, as the language of Isaiah, chap. xi., seems to have been in the mind of the writer.—Out of Judah, with respect to which Moses spake nothing concerning priests, nothing to imply that priests should arise out of that tribe.—Our Lord. This is the only place in Scripture where this name 'Our Lord,' now so familiar, is applied to Christ without the addition of His proper name Jesus, or His official name Christ. 'The Lord' is frequent.

Verses 15-17. The writer now touches another point of the argument.—And it is yet far more evident. What is more evident? That the law is changed? as De Wette and Bleek hold. Hardly; for this is not the main thought, but the imperfection of the priesthood (ver. 11). That imperfection has been proved by the change of priests, and that imperfection is made still more evident by the fact that a new priesthood (ver. 16) to arise after the similitude of Melchisedec (ver. 16), who hath been made (who hath become) priest not after what is a law of a carnal commandment—i.e. a rule of external ordinances (see Lev. xxii. 16) (Ex. xxiv. 17), temporary and perishing—but after what is the power (the priestly and kingly power, Rom. x.) of an endless, an indissoluble life. We are bidden to conceive of His priesthood in this light, and not in the light of the qualities and temporary office of the priests under the Levitical law (ver. 17).—For it is testified of him, Thou art a priest for ever, the emphatic phrase.

Verses 18-19. These verses summarize the argument of the previous verses.—For what takes place is on the one hand an annulling of the former commandment (concerning the priesthood) on account of what in it was weak and unprofitable (for the law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand (there is) a bringing in over the law of a better hope—such a bringing in as supplies the deficiencies of the law and practically supersedes it. By means of which hope we draw nigh to God. 'What in it was weak' is the expression the writer employs, not the wider expression, the weakness thereof. He simply calls attention to what in it has that quality. The law made nothing perfect; it finished nothing; it created hope, but failed to satisfy it; it awakened a consciousness of the need of an atonement, but provided no sacrifice; it set up the ideal of a holy life, but failed to give the strength needed to realize the ideal; it created longings for closer fellowship with God, but opened no way whereby we could draw nigh. 'We draw nigh,' and not priests only. The access to God is free to all who believe. The Holy of Holies has still to the eye of flesh its veil; but Christ has entered for us, and so to the eye of faith it has no veil at all. The title and the fitness to enter there is the perfection which the law could never give. This note has been struck already (iv. 19); by and by it swells into a whole strain of impassioned argument (ix. 24, x. 19-25).

Verses 20-22. A third argument is now introduced. The oath which God swore in making His New Priest gives to Him higher sanctions.—And insomuch as (it is) not without an oath; rather a simpler filling up of the omission that the Authorised Version, though 'He was made (or came to be) priest' better represents what is really a new argument.

Verse 21. (For they, as we know, without an oath (literally, without the swearing of an oath as a solemn act) are made (have become and now are) priests; but he with an oath by him that saith, etc.).—22. Of so much better a covenant (or as in A. V., provided 'a better covenant,' which comes at the end of the verse, is made emphatic) hath Jesus become surety, i.e. He has pledged Himself for the maintenance of it, and for the fulfilment of its promises. The covenant is the result of His death, and His presence above as Priest (vi. 20) and the glory and honour with which He is crowned (ii. 9) are a perpetual security for its continuance and completion.

Verses 23-25. A fourth argument for the superiority of Christ's priesthood is that the priests under the law were continually removed by death, while Christ is unlying. This argument has been touched upon before (v. 8 and 16), but under different connections. Here it is the personal contrast of the many who changed with the one who abides. And they indeed have become and still are priests in great number, because they are being hindered by death from continuing (i.e. 'in their priesthood, not 'in their life,' which makes a poor tautological sense).

Verse 24. But he because of his abiding for ever (i.e. in His life, John xii. 24) hath his priesthood unchangeable ('inviolable'). The active sense of the word rendered 'unchangeable' ('what does not pass over to another') is very unusual, and therefore less likely; but either meaning makes a good, and nearly the same, sense. By some commentators the 'abiding' which is here affirmed of Christ is applied not to His life, but to His priesthood. If this meaning seem preferable, it needs then to be kept in mind that the 'for ever' of the Psalm relates to the priesthood of Christ, and answers to the 'for ever' of the arrangement with Melchisedec—each of them having reference to the covenant to which they belong, and so not eternal in the case of Melchisedec, nor even in the case of Christ; for though the life of Christ is eternal, as are the effects of His priesthood, yet His exercise of that office will cease when all the glorious ends of it are completely answered in the eternal salvation of the redeemed, even as He will then deliver up the kingdom to the Father (1 Cor. xv. 24). But the more natural reference of 'for ever' is to His life.

Verse 25. Whence, i.e. from the fact that He lives it follows—the particle being generally used to introduce something of deeper significance.—He is able also to save (in its completest sense, not from this evil or the other, but from all evil) to the uttermost (not to save for ever, but, as the word properly means (see Bleek), to completeness in every respect, and not chiefly with respect to duration) all that approach through him to God, ever living as he does, as a fuller explanation of the 'whence' at the beginning of the verse.—to undertake for them. The word rendered 'undertake' means primarily 'to see' or 'meet in with a person on behalf of another,' and so includes all that Christ does (reviving, for instance) his perpetual oblation in heaven, or by his mediation generally and kingship as Head over all. This
meditation is of the very essence of the work of Christ so far as His priestly office is concerned, and is the ground of the triumphant outburst of St. Paul when he concludes that none can condemn, seeing that Christ who died is now risen, and is making continual intercession on our behalf. Its foundation of right is His atoning sacrifice; its central motive is the love He bears us; its method of procedure, the advocacy of our interests, and the intimation of His will that the blessings we need be bestowed; and its fruit the maintenance of our relation to God, and our perseverance in holiness.

Vers. 26-28. The final argument for this superiority is the moral fitness of the whole arrangement (see ii. 10).—For such a high priest was for us besetting—a high priest who was holy (giving to God the reverence and holy love that were due to Him), harmless (innocent, guileless, unsuspected in relation to all human duty between man and man), undefiled (free, therefore, from personal pollution, and from legal defilement, as such as often interrupted the priestly office), separated from sinners—praying them, helping them, able to sympathize with them, dying for them, but not belonging to their class,—from apart from sin itself (Heb. iv. 15, where a form of the same word is used), and made higher than the heavens—a phrase found only here, though the sense is expressed elsewhere (chap. iv. 14: 'having passed through the heavens'; Eph. iv. 10: 'far above the heavens'). It describes His higher authority, while implying that part of His work has been done on earth, and that for the rest it is essential that He should be at the right hand of God. And such a high priest and no other became us, who needs not daily to offer sacrifice for his own sins, as the high priest did on the Day of Atonement; and then for the sins of the people; but this (the offering for the sins of the people) he did once for all when he offered Himself. This is the first mention in this Epistle of Christ 'offering Himself'; the truth is introduced again and again: once struck, the note sounds ever louder and louder. As the writer compares Christ with the Levitical high priests, and as these did not offer sacrifices daily, there has been much discussion on the 'daily' of this verse. The various solutions (that the high priest did offer 'insecu daily'; that the high priest might have taken part occasionally in the daily burnt-offerings; that 'daily' means on the day appointed—the Day of Atonement which is elsewhere said to be every year 'from days to days,' Ex. xii. 10, Heb. and LXX.; and that the high priest is regarded as doing what the ordinary priest did) are all unsatisfactory. Christ is now, and every day, in the Holy Place. If, therefore, He were a sinner, as the high priests of old were, He would need to offer for Himself each day, as the high priests offer, on the one day of every year when they appeared before God. But Christ, being completely free from all personal sin, had no need to offer except for others; and as He offered Himself once for all, His atonement has perpetual efficacy.

Ver. 28. For the law appointed men (emphatic) high priests having infirmity; but the word of the oath (see ver. 21) which was after the law—five hundred years later as given in prophecy, and one thousand five hundred later still when fulfilled in Christ—appointed one who is Son (see note on i. 4), made perfect for evermore. 'For evermore' is in the emphatic place, and belongs to 'made perfect.' 'Having infirmity' belongs to 'high priest;' they were mortal, sinful men, and therefore were an inefficient priesthood; their expiations, their intercessions, their benedictions, all had the character of weakness, and as such they were not fit to meet our needs. 'Perfected' or 'made perfect' (not 'sanctified') 'for evermore;' it is the same word as is used in chap. li. 10, 'made perfect through suffering;' and in v. 9, 'having been made perfect;' and this condition is continuous and unchanging, forming a contrast to the condition of the priests of the Law.

Chapter VIII. 1-X. 18.

The Excellency of the Christian Dispensation proved by the Superiority of the New Covenant—in the Efficacy of its Priest and Sacrifice, viii. 1-13, and in its Worship and Ordinances, ix. 1-x. 18.

NOW of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: we have such an high priest, who is set on 1 Heb. i. 10; Col. ii. 2: ch. i. 3, x. 13, xii. 2: Ch. ix. 8, xii. 24.
2 ch. iv. 17; Num. xxiv. 6, 8; Ch. v. 1.
3 Eph. v. 2; ch. ix. 14.
4 Gr. upon are saying (Lit. are being said) the chief omit and appointed rather, high priest . . . also read. Now also would not even be a priest
are priests that offer gifts according to the law: who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: 

for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount. But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith,

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord,

When I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers

In the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt;

Because they continued not in my covenant,

And I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel

After those days, saith the Lord;

I will put my laws into their mind,

And write them in their hearts:

And I will be to them a God,

And they shall be to me a people:

And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord:

For all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness,

And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candle.

omit priests the gifts what is a copy and shadow of the is Gr. finish hath been enacted (as a law, see viii. 11) would Gr. complete towards (with the idea of bringing home upon) for with, establisht for also upon read, townsman insert, of them even Gr. propitious unrighteousnesses probably omit and their iniquities is becoming old and failing for age Gr. is nigh to vanishing away rather, Now the first covenant indeed its sanctuary (or, holy place) of this world rather, prepared rather, is (see ver. 4)
Chap. VIII. 1–X. 18.]

TO THE HEBREWS.

stick, and "the table, and the shewbread;" which is called the
sanctuary.

3 And after the second veil, the tabernacle which
is called the Holiest of all, which had the golden censer, and
the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold,
wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's
rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; and over it
the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy-seat; of which
we cannot now speak particularly. Now when these things
were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first
tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God; but into the
second went the high priest alone once every year, not with
out blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors
of the people: "the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way
into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as
the first tabernacle was yet standing: which was a figure for
the time then present, in which we offered both gifts and
sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect,
as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats
and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances,
imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ
being come, an high priest of good things to come, by a
greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that
is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats
and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an
heifer sprinkling the unclea, sanctifieth to the purifying of
the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who
through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God,
purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the

32 lit. the presenting of the loaves, or, the loaves as presented
33 the Holy place (see ver. 3)
34 Gr. the Holy of holies
35 having a
36 a golden pot having the manna
37 Gr. the propitiatory
38 prepared (ver. 2)
39 go in
40 omit went, or, goes in
41 offereth
42 Gr. ignorances
43 rather, the holy place (see vers. 12, 25)
44 hath not been
45 is or, now
46 read, according to which figure are
47 that cannot, as to the conscience, perfect him that does the service
48 read, being only (in the meats and drinks and divers washings, Gr. / baptisms) carnal ordinances
49 having come
50 through
51 or, through the
52 creation
53 through
54 once for all
55 lit. them that have become unclean, or, have been defiled
56 purity
57 Some MSS. read, our
58 a new covenant
59 Gr. a death having taken place—with the idea of the result that follows—
(and so, the origin or means)
60 or, covenant
17 death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, 'This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered, since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

CHAP. X. 1. For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, But a body hast thou prepared me:

48 him (or, he in v. 17) that made it (see note on verse), or, the covenanted victim. 63 over the dead
64 Whence not even the first covenant hath been inaugurated
65 commandment 66 commanded 67 insert the 68 omit both
69 purified 70 figures of the things 71 entered not
72 a holy place, or, holy places 78 copies like in pattern to
74 Gr. laid up for 75 Gr. apart from 76 insert the 77 read, they
78 the same else 80 having been once purified would
81 didst 88 complete, or, fit—for me
6 In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.
7 Then said I, Lo, I come (In the volume of the book it is written of me,)
   To do thy will, O God.
8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt-offerings
   and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hast pleasure
9 therein; which are offered by the law; then said he, Lo, I
   come to do thy will, O God: he taketh away the first, that he
may establish the second. 11 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 12 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, "which can never take away"
m 13 sins: "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins
for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth
expecting till his enemies be made his footstool." 14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.
Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, "This is the covenant that I will make with them After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.
18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

---

CHAP. VIII. 1 Now—A transitional particle—in regard to (or in) the things here spoken of (literally being spoken of), the chief point is this: 'The sum is this' is a possible meaning of the word; but it does not agree with the force of the preposition, with the incomplete tense of the verb, or with what follows where it is implied that the previous enumeration is unfinished: We have such a high priest who (having finished His work) took his seat on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. The main point is that Christ, being exalted to the throne of God, and seated there, has an equally exalted sphere for His priestly office, with greater power than the priests of the Law.

Ver. 2. A minister (the regular word for public work, and specially for priestly functions, Jer. xxxiii. 21) of the sanctuary (the inner part—'the holy of holies,' as it is called in ix. 3; though elsewhere, as here, the holy place or the sanctuary simply, ix. 25, xiii. 11) and of the true tabernacle (the outer part of the same erection, called in ix. 2 the first tabernacle) which the Lord pitched, not man. Christ's place and
work are described in terms taken from the divisions of the earthly copy of the spiritual or heavenly reality. The copy Moses pitched (Ex. xxxiii. 7); the reality is the work of God Himself. The holy place is the immediate presence of God, distinguished from the tabernacle, where God is pleased to meet with men. Jesus Christ mediates for us in both—the holy of holies of the Divine nature, while He welcomes and overshadows with His glorified humanity the whole company of the worshippers. Both are in the heavens, and in this double sphere Christ is acting as Priest and High Priest. And yet the spheres are really one. The veil has been removed by His incarnation and death, we all have free access to God. The Father Himself loveth us and gives us the right of entrance (Rom. v. 2), because we have believed in the Son... ‘A minister of holy things (not of the holy places or place) is Luther’s rendering; but it is not sanctioned by the usage of this Epistle, where the expression is applied only to the holy place, ix. 25, x. 19, xiii. 14. The same form (the neuter pl.) ‘the holies,’ is clearly used of ‘the holy of holies’ in ix. 8, 12. In ix. 3 the holy of holies (probably a superlative, the most holy place) is also used for the inner sanctuary.

Ver. 6. For—a new proof is now given that Christ is in the heavenly sanctuary. There is no priest without sacrificial functions (ver. 3); and if Christ were here on earth He would not be a priest at all (ver. 4), there being already those who offered the gifts and did temple service for what is a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. Christ’s office, therefore, must be discharged elsewhere, as it really is. And the dignity of His office is measured by the superiority of the covenant to which He belongs. The following verbal explanations are important.

Ver. 3. ‘Ordained’ is simply appointed. ‘This man’ is rather this high priest. Ver. 4. ‘For’ is by reading ‘now,’ and marks the continuance of the statement, not a reason. Ver. 5. ‘Who’ means ‘those namely who,’ and calls attention to the description. Ver. 5. ‘Serve’ describes always in N. T. the service of God. It occurs in Luke eight times, and in St. Paul’s acknowledged Epistles four times, and this Epistle six times. ‘What is a copy;’ the word means either a model, the archetype which is to be followed (iv. 11), or it is (as here and in ix. 22) an after-copy made from an original; and ‘shadow’ of the heavenly things: the shadow cast by a solid body or a mere outline that gives an idea of the form only without revealing the true substance. This language is clearly deprecatory, not because the writer questions the Divine origin of the things he speaks of, but because the true priest having come, the glory of the legal priesthood and of the tabernacle sinks to its proper level as the mere shadow or outline of the great reality.

That this is its true character is now proved from Exodus, Even as Moses is anointed of God (not shwarz, the present tense shows that the admonition still stands in Scripture and may be used to explain the nature of the tabernacle), when about to make (literally, to finish, i.e. to take in hand and complete) the tabernacle, for (not part of the quotation, but a proof of the assertion just made), see, saith he... the pattern showed to thee in the mount. These words may mean either the reality, the veritable heavenly things which are the original of the earthly resemblances, or a plan of the tabernacle itself which had the spiritual meaning here given to them. As Moses, however, could hardly have seen Christ’s priesthood and offering as such facts, it must have been the symbolical, the parabolical (ix. 9) representation of them in the form of the earthly tabernacle. Anyhow, the priesthood and offering of Christ belong to the heavenly state.

Ver. 6. But now—as the case is; not the temporal now, but the logical now so common in this Epistle, ix. 26, xii. 16, xi. 8, xii. 26, and in Paul’s writings—hath he obtained a more excellent ministry (see ver. 2); by him the heavenlies were opened, he was the mediator of a better covenant also. Jesus is surety (vii. 22) and mediator, both; and herein He has qualities which Aaron never had. He is Moses and Aaron (Mediator and Priest), and the ratifying, the sealing blood of the victim all in one. Which (i.e. better in this that it was a law-based constitution, like the first, but resting upon better promises, as the following quotations prove. ‘A law-based and a law-enacted constitution’ (as the Greek implies) was changed. Paul gives to the Gospel. It is ‘the law of faith,’ ‘the law of spiritual life in Jesus Christ,’ ‘the law of righteousness,’ Rom. iii. 27, vii. 2, ix. 31.

Ver. 7. For—promises implied in what follows are themselves a proof of the inferiority of the old covenant—no place would have been sought, i.e. in the development of the Divine purpose, in the plan of redemption.

Ver. 8. Yet it is sought. And this is the proof finding fault with them. This phrase completes the description of the previous verse. There, the covenant is said to be not blameless; and here, it is the people who are blamed. The covenant, as a revelation of God’s holiness, was faultless; but as the people fell away under it, it failed as a covenant of works to establish abiding fellowship between them and God, and so proved weak and profitless (vi. 22, see on vii. 19).—He saith: Behold, the days come—Jeremiah’s common introduction to his prophecies (Jer. ix. 25, xvi. 24, etc.). The prediction that follows is taken from the last great series of his prophecies (chaps. xxx. xxxxi.), which are distinctly Messianic. It points to the new covenant which God will one day make with His people, based upon the absolute remission of sins and on a no less absolute change of heart.—When I will make; rather, will make. The word here used is not the same as in ver. 9, which is rightly ‘made,’ nor yet as in ver. 10, where the word means establish a covenant. It may be added, however, that the three different Greek verbs used here are taken from the LXX., and that all represent one and the same Hebrew verb. Nor is the ‘with’ of vers. 9, 10 the same expression in the Greek. In both verses the ‘house of Israel’ and ‘their fathers’ are rather recipients than co-ordinate agents. The covenant is ‘for’ them rather than with them, though in a sense it was both and is so described.

Ver. 9. The old covenant differs from the new in this—that it was broken on the one side, and ended in indifference and despair on the other. Perfect as the Law was, the Jews never kept it. Idolatry prevailed in nearly all the earlier ages of the theocracy, as later hypocrisy and formalism prevailed; and so God withdrew the providential favour He had promised to show them, though only that in the end he might introduce an
economy of richer grace; whether with a correspondent change upon the part of the ancient people of God remains, the Epistle tells us, yet to be seen.

Ver. 10. The new differs also from the old in this, that—(a) God will write His law upon their hearts; (b) they shall be permanently His people, and He will be their God (ver. 11); (c) the true knowledge of God, moreover, will become the common heritage of all the members of the polity. He is about to establish (ver. 12); and fourthly, (d) a more excellent promise, itself the beginning and the very reason (for) of the rest; God will forgive all their sins, and (to) their unrighteousness and their sins and their lawlessness will He remember no more. Sins of every kind He will forgive—at once and for ever. How completely this teaching agrees with Paul’s need not be shown. In Christ all is forgiven when once men believe, and yet the doctrine is not the minister of sin, for the faith that justifies is ever the beginning of renewal, the germ of a holy life.

Ver. 11. In saying a new covenant, he hath made the first old. Long ago, in Jeremiah’s day, God showed by His promise of a new covenant that the former one had done its work; was antiquated and virtually obsolete. And (we know, this is a generalised word) that which is coming antiquated, which is already obsolete, and is daily growing feebler with age, is nigh to vanishing away. It is nearing the point where its power and its right to exist will both cease!

CHAP. IX. The argument interrupted by the preceding quotation is now resumed. The divineness and the beauty of the arrangements of the old covenant are admitted, and their significance, vers. 1-5; but they belonged to this world (ver. 4) and gave no peace to the conscience, and no free access to God; a provisional and ineffective institute awaiting the time when all should be reformed and completed, vers. 6-10. That time is now come.

The entrance into the holy is now opened; provision is made for the full forgiveness of all transgressions, even those under the ancient law (see ver. 15); and the conscience is purified by the efficacy of the blood of Christ, who is again to manifest Himself to those who believe in Him, and will bring in complete salvation, vers. 11-28.

Ver. 1. This verse concedes the excellency of the old economy. It had ordinances of divine worship. The writer speaks in the past tense, because he looks back to the original institution and the first tabernacle, partly also because from the vantage ground of the new covenant the old seems obsolete—and its holy place of this world.

As the writer is commending the first covenant, ‘of this world’ can hardly be only depreciatory.

The word used, when not used ethically, describes the world in its order and beauty; and this is part of the thought: of this world indeed, and yet costly and beautiful. Compare a similar word in 1 Tim. iii. 2, ‘orderly’. The words at the beginning of the verse—‘The first covenant then instead’—are consecutive and resumptive, taking up the thought in chap. viii. 7 and 12.

Ver. 2. The writer first notes the beauty of the holy place, and then (ver. 6) the holy ordinances of the service. For a tabernacle was prepared with two apartments, the first wherein were the candlestick (the golden candelabrum, with its upright shaft and six branches, three on each side, crowned with seven lamps: Solomon’s temple had ten of those lamps; Herod’s, again, but one), and the table (of acacia and overlaid with gold) and the shewbread (the leves as set forth and presented before God), which part of the tabernacle is called the holy place.

Ver. 3. And after (generally of time, here of place, behind) the second veil, the same tabernacle, which is called the holy of holies (the holiest of all); having (belonging to it, not necessarily in it) a golden censer or an altar of incense. The word means either; and interpretations differ. Incense was taken by the high priest into the holy of holies from the very first, Lev. xvi. 12, 13, but a golden censer is not named in the Law, and only in the ritual of the second temple. On the other hand, if we take the other meaning, ‘the altar of incense,’ that stood not in the holy of holies, but without the veil; though it was regarded as belonging to the inner sanctuary (1 Kings vi. 22), and was sprinkled with the blood on the Day of Atonement.—And the ark of the covenant (so called because it contained the two tables of the Law) overlaid on all sides (without and within, Ex. xxv. 11, and with a golden rim or border, Ex. xxxvii. 2) with gold, wherein was a golden pot having the manna and Aaron’s rod that budded. All these were in the holy of holies in the time of Moses. The first temple also possessed the ark (though not the manna or Aaron’s rod, 1 Kings viii. 9). In the second temple the ark was wanting. The two tables of the covenant, the stones on which the ten commandments were written by the finger of God: mentioned last, because the writer is enumerating the things that were most costly and beautiful.

Ver. 5. And up over it (the ark) cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat. These ‘cherubim’ were connected with the Shekinah, the visible glory of God. They were two in number, one at each end of the mercy-seat, and were beaten out of the same mass with it. A wing of each stretched over the mercy-seat till both met in the middle; their faces were opposite each other, and they looked downwards on the mercy-seat between them (Ex. xxv. 18-20). This mercy-seat was the lid or cover of the ark. On this the Divine glory rested as on a throne. It was by sprinkling the blood on and before this covering that the atonement for the nation was completed (Lev. xvi. 14, 15): and it was there that God manifested His presence and revealed His will (Ex. xxv. 22), and showed his favour (Ps. lxxx. 1). The glory above, the tables of the covenant, called also of testimony below, and the place of propitiation between, with all the vessels of the service, had each its lessons, but the writer cannot now discuss them.—Of which one cannot now speak severally—in detail. Everything was made under Divine direction (Ex. xxv. 8, 9), even the most insignificant. Some are explained elsewhere. But the writer hastens on to the ordinances of worship, and above all to the superiority of the great atoning work of the new economy.

Ver. 6. Meanwhile he notes the weakness of the old covenant and its fitness for this world only (vers. 9, 10). And now all these things—the apartments and their contents—having been thus prepared or arranged, into the first tabernacle the priests go in continually, accomplishing...
TO THE HEBREWS. [CHAP. VIII. I—X. 18.

(performing) the services. The ordinary priests are entering continually, i.e. without limits prescribed by law, twice at least every day (Ex. xxx. 7), to do the appointed service, sprinkling the blood of the sin-offering before the veil, dressing the lamps, burning incense on the golden altar, and once a week changing the shewbread.

Ver. 7. But into the second tabernacle, the holy of holies, the high priest alone once in the year. Into this second part none of the priests were allowed to enter or even to look; but the high priest alone, and he only on one day—the tenth day of the seventh month (Lev. xvi. 29). On that day he entered the veil, i.e. lesten before times—first with the censer of burning coals and the incense, that the cloud might cover the mercy-seat and intercept the Divine glory (Lev. xvi. 12, 13); then with the blood of the bullock, which he sprinkled seven times before the mercy-seat (ver. 14); and then with the blood of the goat, which also he sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat (ver. 15); so that not without blood which he offered for himself and for the sins of the people. It was his business to make atonement for sin, and this could not be done without blood. Nor was it enough that the blood should be shed at the door of the tabernacle; the high priest had to carry with him a portion of it within the veil, and there offer it by sprinkling it on and before the mercy-seat. And this atonement was made for himself and his house, i.e. the priests generally, and then for the sins of the people (Lev. xvi. 6, 14). Within the holy place the blood was sprinkled once upwards; seven times backwards before and on the mercy-seat. The horns of the altar were anointed with the blood of the two sacrifices, and the same mingled blood was sprinkled seven times before the altar, and then the remainder of the blood was poured out at the foot of the altar of burnt-offering. This offering of the blood is said to have cleansed the people once a year from all their sins (chap. vi. 16–34). Here the statement of the Law is restricted to sins of ignorance—errors, i.e. committing offences committed in no defiance of the Law, or with only a partial knowledge of their turpitude. They are thus marked off from those capital offences and presumptions for which no provisions of mercy were made; in which, therefore, the sinner died without mercy (Num. xv. 27–31; see also Heb. x. 28).

Ver. 8. The Holy Ghost signifying, i.e. by the arrangement which excluded all from the sanctuary except the high priest, who entered only on one day in the year—that the way into the holiest—holy heaven, i.e. the Heavens, not the holy of holies—hath not yet been made manifest, while as (an archaism, like when as [and the modern form whereby], stating time during which, with a slight intimation that the thing stated is the reason of the result) the first tabernacle, i.e. the holy place separated from the holy of holies, is still standing—these present tenses all call attention to the continuance of the Jewish worship and to the need of its ceasing. That is, while there is a distinction of tabernacle and tabernacle with a veil between them, and a hidden glory, there is no freedom of access. Let the veil be removed, and then the two tabernacles will become one; and so the first will be done away. To refer the 'first tabernacle' to the old covenant neither suits the usage of the context nor the description given elsewhere of the 'heavenly things' which are prior to the first tabernacle.

Ver. 9. The which tabernacle is a figure (literally a parable, an arrangement with a lesson) for, i.e. in reference to (or lasting till) the time now present, or then present, for neither is expressed. Either makes good sense. The former, 'now present,' better suits the writer's purpose; the latter, 'then present,' has found more favour with the commentators. The arrangement might have taught those who first witnessed it (then present) that the gifts and sacrifices which are still being offered (present tense) could not meet the needs of the human conscience or give free access to God. The arrangement teaches us ('now present') the same lessons imposed, as it is till the fulness of the time when all is to be rightly arranged and with the commentator's. The Greek admits either) were offered gifts and sacrifices which could not make peace to the conscience or satisfy God's justice.

Ver. 10. And the reason is plain, being only with meats, and drinks, and divers washings (or baptisms, a reference to the legal and traditional conditions of eating and drinking, comp. 1 Cor. viii. and Col. ii. 16–23, and to the various baptisms commanded by the law both for people and priests).—Carnal ordinances. They may have been performed in a right spirit. They may have been accompanied with these. But they were mainly material, not spiritual. They purified the flesh and not the spirit. They failed to meet the demands of the awakened conscience and to bring back that blessed fellowship with God which sin destroys. Burdensome in themselves (so the word 'imposed' means, comp. Acts xv. 10–28), they were also inadequate for spiritual purposes. They were imposed on men to prepare them for better things. And for a better to which parable (or tabernacle, i.e. a holy place with the holy of holies veiled and inaccessible—either meaning gives the same lessons, and the Greek admits either) were offered gifts and sacrifices which could not make peace to the conscience or satisfy God's justice.

Ver. 11. Such is the earthly sanctuary and its ordinances. The contrast, the time of reformation— not 'a time,' as if there were several, not quite 'the time,' the Greek simply marks the quality of the time itself—'until what is to prove God's set time, when all is to be made straight'—is described in the following verses.

Ver. 12. Here begins the true antithesis to the preceding verses, though ver. 6 marks a contrast of another kind. That old economy was earthly, glorious indeed, but (ver. 6) ineffectual. The new economy has to do with another tabernacle not of this creation, with other blood, with a far more complete redemption, and with the purification of the conscience and of the life (vers. 11–14). So it introduces a new covenant and a heavenly sanctuary (vers. 15–20), with complete forgiveness (ver. 26); and the only thing that remains is Christ's reappearance to complete salvation (vers. 27, 28).—But Christ having come (having appeared, a word used to describe the appearance of any one in history, specially a miracle) at the beginning of life, Matt. iii. 1; Luke xii. 51), a high priest of the good things to come (not things that belong to the future state chiefly, but in conformity with the Jewish mode of speaking of them while they were yet future, the things that belong to the new covenant, extending indeed into the heavens
and the distant future, but beginning here and now), by a greater and a more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation (see under ver. 12).

Ver. 12. Nor yet by the blood of goats (put first because most characteristic of the Day of Atonement, Lev. xvi. 5, etc.—the two goats which made one sacrifice) and calves (called in ver. 13 bulls; both were males, one of the first year and the other of the second), but by his own blood (the same expression as in Acts xx. 28, 80, chap. xiii. 12 he entered in once for all, etc., i.e. by services of a greater and more perfect tabernacle—neither of human workmanship nor of created materials. Some regard ‘by’ or ‘through’ in ver. 11 as local; but the use of the same preposition in ver. 12 in the instrumental sense is against this view. Those who regard it as local interpret differently: ‘Through Christ’s body’ (the true temple) is the common Patristic interpretation. Through the Church; or the world, the outer temple of the Creator; through the lower regions of the heavens; through the worshipping place of blessed spirits (Dellitzsch), have all their advocates. Some who understand through as ‘by means of,’ render by means of Christ’s human nature—the outer dwelling-place of God. But the interpretation given above is simpler and more natural. We know that Christ is not entered into the holy place made by the oath, etc., (ver. 34), but into heaven; and so it is not by the services of an earthly tabernacle, but by the services of a tabernacle far grander and more perfect He presents himself and seeks forgiveness.—And having obtained (an emphatic form of expression implying energetic effort) eternal redemption for us. All here is in contrast, and the results not least. The Jewish high priest gained a pardon for the sins of the year, such a pardon as cancelled all ceremonial sin, fleshly defilements, and retained or regained for his worshippers their place in the theocracy; but Christ, by the one sacrifice of Himself, has obtained for us an everlasting deliverance from sin, leading to a complete deliverance from the power of it, and that at the price of Himself or of His blood. He gave Himself for us, and He gave His blood, dying in our stead that we might live. Both express similar and equivalent views (Tit. ii. 14; Eph. i. 7). The word here translated redemption (deliverance by payment of the price, by giving satisfaction; Num. xxxv. 31, 32) is the shorter form (λύσις) the longer form (αἰφνιδία) is used in ver. 15, and again in a lower sense in chap. xi. 15. Both forms are found in St. Paul’s Epistles. Redemption is obtained for us when Christ enters into the holy place, as redemption is made ours when His blood is applied to our consciences; both truths are consistent with the other teaching that atonement—expiation—was made when He died for our sins.

Ver. 13. For if ... and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctifieth unto (i.e. so as to secure; the full expression implies result, not purpose) the purity of the flesh. This case of the ‘ashes of the heifer’ is one of the most suggestive symbols of the Law, and is well worth examination (see Num. xix.). The heifer without spot, slain by the priest without the camp, its blood sprinkled in the direction of the tabernacle, the animal itself burnt with solemn rites, its ashes laid up in a clean place

to be used with water in cleansing those who had been defiled by contact with a dead body, itself a symbol and a result of sin—all are instructive, and all was done to secure an outward purity only.

Ver. 14. How much more shall the blood of Christ ... cleanse your conscience from that impurity which shows the inward man to be as a dead corpse, producing only such works as have no pulse, no power or feeling of true and higher life. The context gives ‘dead works’ in its passage a slightly different meaning from that in chap. vi. 1. And the purpose of this process is to secure not the common service of the Jewish worshipper—the service of an outward life; but the inward spiritual service of the living God—of God not as veiled and in symbols, but of God in His reality and holiness. Such is the work of Him who, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot (1 Pet. i. 19) unto God. ‘Through the eternal Spirit’ has been variously explained. Through the Holy Spirit—say some—which was given to Him ‘without measure,’ or by which He was quickened and raised from the dead, and so entered into the holy place. Others, however, regard the expression as describing all in Christ that was not human—His higher nature, His Divine personality. This view is favoured by the double fact that it is the writer’s purpose to describe the intrinsic essence of His offering, and that elsewhere ‘the Spirit’ is used in this sense when applied to our Lord. As to His flesh—His human nature—He was son of David; as to the Spirit, what in Him was not human nature, He was the Son of God (Rom. i. 3; 1 Pet. iii. 18; 1 Tim. iii. 16). The victims of the Law gave up an animal life all unconsciously. Christ gave Himself, His own will and heart consenting—not the man of g., but all that was Divine in Him: His higher nature which, before time, acquiesced in the purpose of the Father, and that same nature now a conscious agent in effecting it.

Ver. 15. And for this cause (for the reason that His blood is thus efficacious, ver. 12), because He has performed this great work, ver. 11–14) he is mediator of a new (emphatic) covenant, in order that, death having taken place (viz. His own) for redemption from (or expiation of) the transgressions under the first covenant, they that have been called (‘partners of a heavenly calling,’ chap. iii. 1) may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. The first covenant left its transgressions unforgiven. It waited for the offering that had efficacy. The death of Christ, therefore, has a double work. It is offered once for all, and extends its efficacy forward to the end of time and backward to the entrance of the Law. It is the procuring cause of forgiveness for all dispensations (see Rom. iii. 24–26). The emphasis of the last words is on ‘may receive the promise,’ i.e. be put in possession of what was promised—the eternal inheritance, the blessing of the Gentiles, ‘the good things to come,’ including the eternal life, which is the completion of them all. ... As the writer is speaking of the Old Covenant, those ‘who are called’ refers properly to the Jews, but the principle applies to the Gentiles also, and to all economies.

Ver. 16. And it is a covenant—with all the requisite validity. For where a covenant is, there must also be (brought in—or, there is
necessarily implied) the death of the covenanting victim.

Ver. 17. For a covenant is of force over the dead (or on the condition that some persons (or things) have died), since it has no effect at all while the covenanting victim lives.

Ver. 18. Whose neither hath the first covenant been inaugurated (or ratified) without blood. Those verses are specially difficult. The logic of the passage seems to require the rendering now given. It does not follow that because a testator must die before his will can take effect, therefore the first covenant was inaugurated with blood. Moreover, it is everywhere else in Scripture ‘covenant,’ as it is in the immediate context, and it seems better to keep to that meaning throughout: all the more as the notion of a will, though familiar to Western civilisation, was not familiar in countries where each child’s portion was settled by law. There are difficulties, however, on the other side. ‘Covenanting [victim]’ is not a known meaning of the word here used. It means generally a covenanting person or a testator. ‘Over the dead’ is commonly used also of dead men. Both difficulties are lessened, however, by the peculiar facts of the case. All solemn covenants under the Law were made valid by the death of a victim which represented the covenanting persons, and pledged them on peril of their lives to faithfulness; and so the covenanting victim is spoken of under the same name as the covenanting person—the one representing the other. If the rendering ‘testament’ is preferred, and ‘testator,’ it is best to regard vers. 16 and 17 as an illustrative argument, a parallel case, suggested partly by the mention of an inheritance and partly by the double meaning of the Greek word (covenant or testament), which is applied to any arrangement or distribution by will, or in any other way.

Ver. 19. For (a proof of the assertion in ver. 18) when every commandment had been spoken by Moses according to the law (as the law directed, without any variation from it) unto all the people, he took the blood of the calves and the goats (these last are not expressed in Ex. xxiv. 6-8, but are implied in v. 5) with water and sprinkled it with the blood of the calves (Ex. xxiv. 4-8, but each is given elsewhere. Either God commanded Moses to do these things, as they were done later, or the writer is giving in brief a summary of the whole law as at first instituted), and sprinkled both the book itself (which probably lay on the altar) and all the people.

Ver. 20. The design of this sprinkling is now explained—saying, This is the blood of the covenant which God (the Hebrew is Jehovah, and the Greek the Lord;) probably God is used to preserve the O. T. character of the quotation; the N. T. covenant, the Supper especially, is connected with the Lord commanded youward.

Ver. 21. Moreover, the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry (the service) he sprinkled in like manner with blood (probably later: it was certainly done every year, Lev. xvi. 16-20. Josephus, however, gives the same fact as occurring at the inauguration of the covenant, and in very similar words, Antiqu. iii. 8, 6).

Ver. 22. And according to the law almost all things (some were purified with water, Ex. xix. 10, etc.; others with water and the ashes of the heifer, Num. xxxi. 22-24; but the things which were specially appropriated to the worship of God are cleansed with (in) blood; and apart from shedding of blood—the word here brings up the language of the Lord’s Supper, ‘Sed for you’ (Luke xxii. 20)—there is no remission (forgiveness). The ‘almost’ of the first clause applies also to the second (see Lev. v. 11-13). The need of blood and the significance of it may be seen in Lev. xii. 11.

Ver. 23. The patterns; rather, the representations, the heavenly things themselves being the original patterns shown to Moses in the mount (viii. 5), whence the earthly copies were taken but the heavenly things themselves (heaven and the things therein, see ver. 24) by better sacrifices than these. How the heavenly things need purifying has been much discussed. The simplest explanation is that the heavenly things received purification through the blood of Christ, in the same sense as the tabernacle received purification through the blood that was offered in it. The tabernacle had no impurity of its own. It needed purifying because of the uncleanness of the people, and because of the uncleanness which the entrance of the people without atonement would have introduced. Forgiveness without atonement would have nullified the holiness of God. By the blood of Christ God is just while justifying the ungodly. The place that was unapproachable by reason of our sin, is made free to the guiltiest: but for this purpose there were needed sacrifices better than those that Aaron offered.

Ver. 24. ‘The heavenly things; for not into a holy place made with hands did Christ enter, like in pattern (answering to the original, the typical form) to the true house of God manifest himself before (the face of) God for us; His passover our offering, and by virtue of the eternal Spirit—His own Divine nature,’ with all the power of an endless life.

Ver. 25. And as Christ has not entered into the holy place made with hands, neither has he entered into heaven that he should offer himself often (the reference is not to His dying, but to His presenting Himself and His blood. The dying is named later, verse 28, but it is just the high priest entereth into the holy place year by year with blood of others (i.e. not His own, as the Syr. renders it); else must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world. As His blood was His own, and as His death was essential to the offering of Himself, and necessary in order that He might have something to offer (viii. 3), He must in that case have often suffered. The contrary, however, is the fact. But now, the case is that once for all at the end (the completion) of the ages which have elapsed since sin entered, antediluvian, patriarchal, Mosaic, hath he been manifested, i.e. in our flesh (1 Tim. iii. 16; 1 Pet. i. 20), for the putting away of sin in its guilt and power by the sacrifice of himself.

Ver. 27, 28. And there can be no second dying, and no second offering of Himself unto God. Such an arrangement would be against all analogy and all experience. Since man as such can die but once, so must it be with the Christ also: for in all things He is made like unto His brethren. And as if it is the judgment which awaits all men beyond the grave, so there is no second self-offering of Christ between the First Advent
and the Second. As human life with all its works comes to an end in death, and only judgment remains; so the atonement of Christ is complete, and nothing remains but for Him to return—and judge. But no; the writer does not care to end so. He shall appear to them that wait for Him, unto complete salvation.

All here is still in contrast. When the high priest returned from the Holy of Holies after having made atonement there, he made a second atonement in his priestly robes for himself and his people (Lev. xvi. 24), 'for the sins of his most holy things.' When Christ appears forth from His holy place, He will appear without sin, and therefore without a sin-offering, and completing the blessedness of those He has redeemed!

CHAP. X. 1-18. We now reach the conclusion of the argument, which is also in part a repetition. Christ's offering of Himself, as contrasted with the yearly offerings of the Law, is the completion of the will and purpose of God (vers. 1-10). Christ's priestly service, as contrasted with the daily services of the priests, is repeated and all imperfect, is for ever perfected by His one priestly act, and in His kingly authority (11-14); and His finished work is the inauguration of a New Covenant, in which the law being written on the heart, and sin put away, and faith, then, no further offering is needed or allowed (15-18).

Ver. 1. For—a particle that connects the argument with the last verses of chap. ix. The sacrifice of Christ will not be repeated, we are told in iii. 25. Not that He, the statement would have been the law having, as we know it has, a shadow only—a mere outline of the good things which belong to the world to come (chap. vi. 5), of which Christ is High Priest (ix. 11), not the very image—the very form—of the things, i.e., the heavenly realities themselves (comp. Rom. viii. 29), they can never—at any time or anyhow—with the same sacrificial year by year which they offer continually—words that describe the ever-recurring cycle of the same sacrifices for sin—make perfect those who are ever drawing nigh to God.

Ver. 2. Else would they—these same sacrifices not have ceased to be offered, because the worshippers—both priests and people—would have had no longer any conscience—any consciousness of the guilt—or sin being once for all completely purified? The whole clause is best treated as a question, as is clear from the next verse.

Ver. 3. But, on the contrary, there is in those sacrifices a remembrance made—a recalling to mind, on the part of the worshippers and on God's part—of sins year by year.

Ver. 4. Nor could it be otherwise, for the sacrifices themselves are inherently defective. This teaching may seem to contradict the statement that 'the blood upon the altar' makes an atonement for the soul (Lev. xii. 11), and is appointed ('given') for that purpose. The fact is, that the blood of the bullock or of the goat (the sin-offering on the Day of Atonement) could not weigh against the guilt of a nation, or even of a single worshipper. It could only satisfy to the purifying of the flesh (ix. 13), restoring the sinner to living membership with the literal Israel. It cancelled ceremonial guilt, not spiritual sin, and gave legal outward purity, not spiritual regeneration.

The annual sacrifice was only a shadow and prophecy of another sacrifice, in which the Divine will was to be perfectly accomplished.

Ver. 5. Wherefore, let me describe, says the writer, in O. T. language, the voluntary offering of Christ and His setting aside of the effects of the law—when coming into the world—the incarnate Messiah, to do the will of His Father— He saith, Sacrifice (victim) and offering (gift) thou didstest not. This language and the language of ver. 6 has created difficulty. All these offerings were commanded, and were offered according to the Law (ver. 8). Why then did not God desire them? or find pleasure in them? When offered indeed in hypocrisy, to the neglect of moral obedience, or when trusted in for righteousness and acceptance, they were, as we know, rejected. But these reasons are not assigned here. The explanation, therefore, is to be sought elsewhere. It is of atonement for sin the writer is speaking. In sacrifice or mere suffering God cannot delight, and if it is spiritually powerless, insufficient to atone for sin, it is useless, and may even be worse than useless. In whole burnt-offerings (see Lev. i. 16, 27), in sacrifice for sin of whatever kind (sin-offerings, Lev. iv. 20, etc.; trespass-offerings, Lev. v. 15; peace-offerings, Lev. iii., vii. 11-23), God had no pleasure, because none, no one, nor all combined, were an adequate propitiation. But when Christ came in the body which the Father had prepared, and to offer the sacrifice of Himself, the Father declared that in Him at every stage He was well pleased (Matt. iii. 17, xvii. 5); and so because of His 'obedience unto death,' He becomes the Lord over all. The clause, 'a body hast Thou prepared for me,' has created difficulty. The present Hebrew text is, 'My ears hast Thou opened or pierced.' The rendering 'pierced' is supposed to refer to the man who became a life-long servant under the circumstances described in Ex. xxi. 6, etc.; but this view is not favoured by the plural form 'my ears,' nor is the Hebrew word here used, the usual word for 'piercing.' 'My ears hast Thou opened' is therefore the better rendering, describing as it does hearty and devoted obedience, as in Isa. l. 5. It is not easy to explain the change in the Septuagint. Perhaps the Greek text better represents to a Greek reader the general sense. Perhaps there has been confusion in copying Greek MSS., or possibly some later alteration of the Hebrew. Each theory has its advocates.

Ver. 7. Then said I, Lo, I am come (in the volume or roll of the book it is written of me)—the book of the ancient Law from Moses downwards (see Acts iii. 18; 1 Pet. ii. 11)—to do thy will, O God. To do the will of God is to obey His commands, and especially in this context the command to lay down His life (John x. 17, xiv. 31). It is on this one thing the writer is insisting. That He might render this obedience a body was prepared for Him, and a nature capable of those sufferings both in heart and in life which were necessary to expiate sin, and fulfil the one righteousness whereby many were to be made righteous. This was, indeed, the chief design of His coming (Matt. xx. 28; 1 Tim. i. 15).

Ver. 8. The writer now comments on the quotation: Saying above as he (i.e., Christ, see ver. 5) does say, etc. Which is more than the relative—it describes quality, and makes this remark apply to all offered under the Law—then and now (present tense).
TO THE HEBREWS.

Ver. 9. Then saith he (literally, hath He said), He (that is, Christ) taketh away the first, that he may establish (set up) the second. Legal sacrifices are abolished that there may be substituted for them, the will—the good pleasure of God, which Christ came to do by the one sacrifice of Himself.

Ver. 10. In which will, and in the accomplishment of it, we have been made and are sanctified—freed from the guilt of sin (and so we are said to be sanctified in Christ Jesus, 1 Cor. i. 2) and made morally fit for God's service—by the offering of the body of Christ, which Thou hast prepared for me, once for all.

Vers. 11–14. With this appropriate result—that He is exalted as Priest and King to the right hand of his Father.—And every priest (high priest has less MS. authority and is less appropriate) standeth (not permitted to sit in God's presence as if he were at home and his work were done), ministering and offering oftentimes, morning and evening, day after day, the same sacrifices, with no result. All that were offered had the same deficiency—that they could not nor could never be paid off, take away the guilt of sins. Some sense of relief, some hope they might give; but the sin itself still clung to the worshippers.

Ver. 12. But he (this Priest) having offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, took his seat on the right hand of God, an evidence of the completeness of His work, which left no room for another sacrifice or for the repetition of His own. His priesthood indeed continues, and the presentation of His sacrifice—"the perpetual oblation"—but His atoning work is over. "For ever," in perpetuity, unceasingly, may be connected with "took His seat," but the usage of this Epistle is to connect it with the words that precede, vii. 3. x. 1.

Ver. 13. Not a second time can He suffer: Only waiting as he now is till, in fulfilment of the Divine promise (Ps. cx. 1), his enemies he made the footstool of his feet. The Jewish priest stood fearful and uneasy in the holy place—hastening to depart when the service was done as from a place to which he had only temporary access. Christ sits as at home, having completed His work and now awaiting His full reward.

Ver. 14. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever, in unbroken continuance, them that are being sanctified. Here the word used is the present participle—not as in ver. 10, the perfect—and calls attention to the progressive purification that belongs to the redeemed. The word "sanctified" implies both the imputed and the imparted righteousness of Christ. When the perfect is used, and we are said to be sanctified in Christ, imparted purification from the guilt of sin is the predominant thought; when the present is used, it points rather to the subjective process whereby Christ's work is realized in the peace and holiness of believers.

Vers. 15–17. And with this teaching agrees the old prophetic word which makes inward holiness and absolute forgiveness the most characteristic marks of the new covenant whereof the Holy Ghost also bears us witness—then follow passages that have been quoted before (viii. 12). The verbal differences in the two quotations are suggestive, though they do not change the general sense. For "with the house of Israel" (viii. 10) we have now "with them," so that the promise is denationalized and wider. In the earlier passage the mind is first influenced, and then the heart; in the latter, the heart is first changed and then the mind. Both are changed—is the truth common to the two passages. The order alone differs. Even this is suggestive. Renewal and forgiveness are really contemporaneous. The faith that newness is also the faith that justifies. The dead letter is written on the heart, and becomes a living spirit; and contemporaneous with this great change, and the effect of the same faith, sin is not only forgiven, it is forgotten and remembered no more. Other sacrifices are remembrances of sins; this sacrifice is the complete obliteration of them all.

Ver. 18. And plainly where there is forgiveness of these, there is no need of further atonement; and the sacrifices of the Law which were instituted to meet and deepen man's sense of a need they could not satisfy, and which secured at best outward forgiveness only, are for ever done away.

Here ends the threefold central argument of the Epistle, that Christ is a Priest after the order of Melchisedec, not of Aaron, vii. 1–25; that He is the Mediator of a better covenant, vii. 26–ix. 12; and that His sacrifice is of everlasting efficacy and is fittingly followed by His kingdom, ix. 13–x. 18: the first eighteen verses of chapter x. being devoted to a repetition of the main positions and to the confirmation of them from the Old Testament.

CHAPTER X. 19–39.


HAVING therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil...
TO THE HEBREWS.

23 conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for
24 he is faithful that promised,) and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:
"not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is;
but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see
26 the day approaching." For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the ad
28 versaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy
29 under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punish- ment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing,
30 and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me," I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands
32 of the living God. But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great
33 fight of afflictions; partly, whilst ye were made a gazing-stock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spilling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of
36 reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.
37 For yet a little while,
And he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.
38 Now the just shall live by faith:
But if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.
39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

4 body 5 custom 6 drawing nigh 7 rather, go on sinning
8 insert a 9 or, reception 10 lit. indigination, or, fierceness of fire
11 rather, hath set at nought 12 dieth 13 rather, on the evidence of
14 deemed 15 lit. common, or, unclean 16 omit hath
17 or, is mine (as in Rom. xii. 19)
18 enlightened (as in vi. 4)
19 rather, conflict 20 rather, in that, or, being made, and, becoming
21 read, on them that were in bonds, and ye
22 read, that ye have yourselves
23 may 24 very little
25 read, my just (or, righteous) one
26 lit. of drawing back
27 i.e. possession
28 lit. of faith
29 the which
30 he
31 shall
32 hath
33 or, gaining
CHAP. X. 19-39. For nearly four chapters the argument has remained unbroken by those exhortations which abound in the earlier parts of the Epistle. From chapter vii. 1 to x. 18 the reasoning is close and continuous; but the one great purpose of the Epistle is never absent from the writer's mind. Here he resumes the appeals with which the fourth chapter closes, and repeats with characteristic differences, as suggested by the train of the thought, the solemn warnings of chapter vii. 8.

Vers. 19-21. Having therefore (on the grounds already named), brethren (again he puts himself in communion with those he addresses as in chapter iii. 21), confidence by the blood of Jesus (see on chap. iii. 6) in respect to (going) the way into the holiest, a new and living way which he first opened (or inaugurated) for us through the veil, that is to say his flesh, and having a great priest (who is at once Priest and King) over the house of God, let us use the way that is opened in joyful assurance (22), let us hold fast our profession (23) and complete the graces of our character, faith and hope (22, 23), by the love which is the crown of all (24). Through the exaltation of the sacrifice of Christ and His position in heaven, where He has entered for us, we have holy filial confidence in approaching God,—a feeling that contrasts with the fear and bondage of Old Testament worshippers. Christ has exalted us (as forerunner, vi. 20), we follow along the way He has formed and opened, knowing ourselves to be sanctified by the one obliteration which was shed on earth and presented in heaven; and, if we have access to the holy place, which is heaven itself (ix. 24): there is the throne of grace (iv. 16), and there Jesus, the Minister of the holy places (viii. 2), appears for us. This way is further described as a new and living way (25). Literally, 'newly slain;' but in common Hellenistic usage the meaning is 'newly made;' and yet there is probably a reference to the fact that it is made with flesh and blood, the opposite of what is lifeless and powerless. The way opened by Christ is the way of faith, of love, of confidence, of access to God and the Father (ix. 15). 'Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh for sin,' and it is the same sin and the sinful flesh. His incarnation and dying represent, that come between us and God; and when He died for sin, the veil was rent; and when He ascended and entered heaven for us, it was completely taken away. Thus it is that we are reconciled in the body of His flesh through death (Col. i. 22).

Vers. 21. A great priest—now a high priest chiefly, for which the word high priest is always used in this Epistle, but a priest who is enthroned at God's right hand—over the house of God—not a servant like Moses in the house (iii. 5, 6), but over it, i.e. over the universal Church, including both the church of God (John xiv. 21) and the Church on earth. We are under Christ in our earthly pilgrimage, as we shall be in the home above; and indeed we have both privileges, for we reach the inmost recesses of the very sanctuary of God even now by faith and prayer (ver. 22).

Ver. 22. Let us draw near—every hindrance created by God's holiness and our own sin is removed—the way is opened—let us come to God in loving trust and holy service; and so worshippers are called 'comers' (unto God), vii. 25, x. 24, xi. 6—with a true heart—free from hypocrisy and double-mindedness and in harmony with the realities of the Gospel (John i. 9), being what we seem and seeming what we ought to be, the perfect heart' of Isa. xxxviii. 3—In full assurance of faith, i.e. without any difficulty as to our right of approach or our acceptance through the entrance and presence of God. Hope and love come afterwards (vers. 23, 24), these three, the usual Pauline triad (1 Cor. xiii. 13; 1 Thess. i. 3, 5, 8; Col. i. 4). The three assurances of Scripture, of understanding (Col. i. 2), of faith, and of hope, are great blessings which all Christians should try and perfect. All the errors and doubts, the discomforts and fears, of Christian men are traceable to the defective nature of these graces. Israel's right of access is not comparable to ours. They were provided with blood at Sinai (Ex. xxv. 19); the priests washed hands and feet before every sacrificial service (Ex. xxx. 29), and the high priest washed his body twice on the Day of Atonement (Lev. xvi.); but these were external sprinklings of blood and water, and the ordinary means of grace, as ours are operations of grace. We are sprinkled as to our hearts, so as to be cleansed from an evil conscience—an inward justifying through sprinkling of the blood of Christ (1 Pet. i. 2) which was shed for this very purpose, as before called the blood of sprinkling (chap. ix. 14): and our bodies washed with pure water, with reference still to the divers washings of the Law (see chap. ix. 10), whereby both people and priests were purified for approaching to God, but with deeper significance. The blood under the Law typified the cleansing of priest and people from the guilt of sin, and the washing typified the cleansing of them from the defilement of the body. By our justification through the blood of Christ is inseparable from that inward renewal which we call a new and regenerate nature. The faith that justifies is always the beginning of a holy character: both are essential to acceptable service and to acceptable fellowship with God (for the need of this double work, see Tit. ii. 14, iii. 5). Some commentators understand by the washing of the body the rite of baptism (Delitzsch, Alford, etc.), and it is not improbable that this may have been in the writer's mind; but it is not consistent with sound interpretation to make one rite the antitype of another. Antitypes are spiritual realities, and if baptism is implied at all it must be baptism in closest connection with the grace it symbolizes; in short, it must be the spiritual significance of the ordinance rather than the mere ordinance itself.

Ver. 23. Thus forgiven and renewed and sprinkled with blood, washed as with water with the purest and most holy of graces, no man entereth. Those who refer the previous clause to baptism find here an argument for that view: 'hold fast' the hope which you express when you confessed Christ in baptism, became conformed to Him in His death, and vowed to walk henceforth in newness of life (Rom. vi. 3-15);
To the Hebrews.

75


Col. ii. 12; Gal. iii. 27—a good sense; and yet confession is generally used in this Epistle without specific reference to baptism (chap. iv. 14, iii. 1), and the change of reading from 'faith' to 'hope' points rather to the view that it is not chiefly the baptismal sense they are to remember, but the general hope in Christ which their daily life and speech have avowed to the world. Their hope is not to 'waver,' but is to be steadfast (chap. iii. 14), neither allured by worldly pleasures nor frightened by persecutions, doubting neither the grace nor the certainty of the reward. — For faithful is he that promised—a common Pauline formula (1 Thess. v. 24; 1 Cor. i. 9, x. 13, etc.). A lying god, a perjured god (chap. vi. 18), is not the God of the covenant or of the Bible.

Ver. 24. And let us (who have the same right of approach, the same interest in one another's holiness, the same common relation to one Lord—and still depending on ver. 19) well consider (the weakness, the capabilities, the dangers, the preciousness of the graces of one another) to provoke unto love, etc. (in the old sense of calling forth—literally, 'to the sharpening or quickening of love,' etc.), and kind beneficent works which are its appropriate fruit. Such provocation is the only provocation the Gospel recognizes, and it must be carried on from proper principles and with Gospel motives so as to confirm our faith and hope. A loving Christian community striving for the faith of the Gospel is sure to be steadfast (Phil. i. 27, 28)—a loving temper is a wonderful aid to faith. The connection between states of heart and belief is far closer than most suppose (ver. 25); there is a connection between faith and the maintenance of fellowship with Christians.

Ver. 25. Not forsaking (the original is stronger—not deserting, not leaving in the lurch) the assembling of yourselves together—a phrase found only here and in 2 Thess. ii. 1, 'Our gathering together unto Christ.' The reference is not chiefly to the meetings of the Church as a Church, but to all the meetings of Christian brethren whereby brotherly love and kindly service are promoted—as the manner of some is—an expression which shows that it is not of apostasy as yet the writer is speaking, but only of the indifference which comes perilously near it and is often its forerunner—but exhorting one another—comforting, strengthening, entertaining, is the meaning of the term, both by word and by example. This is part of the pastor's work (Rom. xii. 5; 2 Tim. iv. 2; Tit. i. 9), but not exclusively. All who have knowledge are to admonish one another (Rom. xv. 14). The same precept has been given before (chap. iii. 12, 13), and now it is enforced by the fact that 'the day' was seen to be approaching, the briefest description of Christ's coming to judgment, found only here and in 1 Cor. iii. 13: the day of days, the last of time, the first of eternity. And yet, as this day was seen to be approaching, the immediate reference is possibly to the destruction of Jerusalem, of which there were signs already in the earth and the sky—the day so long foretold (Luke xxii. 22, and with its signs, vii. 12); the day which was to end the Jewish Church and State, and to punish that people for the rejection of the Messiah and their persecution of His followers; though perseverance unto the end (Matt. xxiv. 13) was the only way of escaping the calamities that were coming upon their nation, and the still more dreadful calamities which await those who, having been once enlightened, apostatize from the Christian faith. 'The day of the Lord' is at once the day of complete salvation and the day of final judgment; and the expression may be used in a lower sense—it is the day of great delivering mercy, and it is the day of decisive judgment, and the day of our death.

Ver. 26. For if we sin wilfully—rather, are wilfully continuing in sin. It is a word which needs to be noted. First of all there is no 'if' in the passage; it is stated as an actual case, not a supposed one. Then the emphasis is on 'wilfully' and on continuance in sin. In a sense all sin implies the consent of the will for a time; and yet there is a distinction. Paul was a blasphemer and a persecutor; but he did it ignorantly in unbelief. Peter was a true disciple, and nevertheless he denied Christ with curses and oaths; but not wilfully, rather apparently through passing fear (Matt. xxvi. 74, 75). The expression seems taken from Num. xv. 30, 31, where sinning wilfully is described as doing something presumptuously, with a high hand, and by one who despises the Word of the Lord. The wilful sinner is one who will sin. Nor is it a single act that is denounced, but a permanent state (not an apostasy, but the present), continuance in a sinful course, and such continuance is implied apostasy. Moreover, it is the state of one who has trodden under foot the Son of God, counted His blood an unholy, a common, even a profane thing, offered insult to the Spirit of grace. They rejected that one sacrifice which completed and ended the sacrifices of the ancient Law, against their better knowledge, and resolved to return to their former sinful life; and for them there is no longer remaining any sacrifice for sin.

Ver. 27. The only thing left is a fearful award, an awful reservation, of judgment and fiery indignation (fervour of fire—flaming fire, 2 Thess. i. 8; the heat of the consuming fire of God Himself, chap. xii. 29), which shall devour those that oppose. The word 'reservation,' 'award,' is found only here in the New Testament, though the verb is not infrequent. It always means in common Greek reservation (in a literal or a figurative sense), and this is probably its meaning here. It describes not what is expected, but what will certainly be, and in truth what is already in reserve—'a reception of judgment.'

Ver. 28. This awful destiny which awaits wilful apostates, judgment without mercy, is now illustrated and enforced from the law. — He that hath despised (literally, any one having despised) Moses' law dieth without mercy upon the testimony of (before) two or three witnesses—not in every case; it is simply a general principle. Moses' Law attached to certain violations of it the doom of death. Some eleven kinds of sin were thus punished:—wilful murder, obstinate disobedience to parents, blasphemy, idolatry, etc.
(Deut. xvi. 2–7). The phrases of this verse are taken from this last instance, and, as the sentiment of death is said in that case to be carried out with unusual severity, 'without mercy' no doubt refers to it. Idolatry was treason against Jehovah, and the idolater was an apostate from God. Apostasy from Christ answers to the wilful, deliberate idolatry of the Law, and is the sin condemned here with a condemnation proportioned to the fuller light and the greater privileges of the Gospel.

Ver. 32. How much more severe punishment (a word used only here, and meaning punishment in vindication of the honour of a broken law; compare Acts xxii. 5). The phrases that follow describe the apostate Christian—\( \text{to trample under foot (an expression of ruthless contempt) the Son of God—} \) Him who has been proved to be above the mediator of the old covenant, and above angels and prophets. He treats the sacrifice of blood under the covenant as a common thing, nay, as a profane thing—as the blood of one who claimed to be what the apostate now denies Him to be, and who is, therefore, guilty of blasphemy—the blood, moreover, wherewith (or rather in which, i.e. sprinkled with which) he was sanctified (Lev. xvi. 19). What is this but the profanation of what he himself admitted to be most sacred. Who was sanctified? Christ, who did 'sanctify Himself'? Hardly; for He is never said to sanctify Himself with His own blood; and, moreover, the word 'sanctify' is always used elsewhere in this Epistle in the sense of cleansing from the guilt of sin by the blood of sacrifice (chap. ii. 11, ii. 13, iii. 12). The person, therefore, who was said to be sanctified is the apostate himself. But in what sense? Not in the sense of the Divine purpose or will (Stier—see chap. x. 10), not in the sense that he tramples upon blood wherewith we believe are sanctified (Calvin); but in the sense that he himself, the apostate, had claimed and had professed to be sanctified by it. So all the members of the first churches are addressed as saints elect, sanctified (1 Cor. i. 2; 1 Pet. i. 2), for this was their professed character. Similarly Peter speaks of the fruitless professor as having been cleansed from his old sins (2 Pet. i. 9), and of false teachers, who denied the Lord that bought them (2 Pet. ii. 1). What men seem to be, what men claim to be, what men are commonly recognised as being, is fairly quoted as an aggravation of their guilt. — They have done despite to (have insulted) the Spirit of grace—the Holy Spirit, the Giver of grace. To contam mercy and holiness; return insult to Him who gives them grace, is the sin of sins, for which, as the man has gone back to his old state, and continues in it, there can be no forgiveness; as in a previous passage we have learned that no such thing is renewal (cp. vi. 6).

Ver. 30. For. This punishment is certain, and is fulfilled and executed by God Himself. The first quotation in this verse follows neither the Hebrew nor the Greek text, but is the exact rendering adopted by Paul in Rom. xii. 19. The second is taken from Deut. xxxiii. 36, and from the Psalms. The Hebrew of the word 'judge' has two meanings—to exercise judgment in punishing others, and to exercise judgment on behalf of others. The second sense may be seen in Ps. lxxxii. 3, 4 (compare margin), Ps. xiii. 1, 1 Sam. xxiv. 12, 15, and is appropriate to the passage in Deut. xxxiii. 35, 36, as well as here.

He will execute judgment on behalf of His people, and against those who become traitors and blasphemers. God is Judge, is the first truth; and His judgment will be executed, is the second.

Ver. 31. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. His hands represent His power for work, whether in love or in wrath. To fall into His hands in faith is to have peace; but to fall into His hands in punishment is dreadful.

Vers. 32–39. The argument now takes a turn, as in chap. vi. 9. The writer hopes better things. He bids them to remember again and again their earlier struggles and their hope of a blessed reward (vers. 32–34). He exhorts them not to lose confidence (vers. 35), which needs patient waiting for God (vers. 36); the time required for it, indeed, is short (vers. 37), though it requires faith and steadfastness (vers. 38). To those who owe their all to faith, and who mean God helping them, still to believe, and so to secure their souls from the ruin that will otherwise overtake them, he affirms they belong (vers. 39).

Ver. 32. Call to remembrance (rather, call up and keep in remembrance) those former days in which, when first enlightened (as in chap. vi. 4), ye endured, without losing heart or hope (so the word implies), a great fight (a manifest struggle) of suffering, i.e. consisting in being left to suffer as your foe (vers. 34, where it is said that they suffered with those that were bound)."
to the Hebrews

seem to be combined in this passage—that ye may do the will of God and receive the promise. The doing and the receiving are not separated in time; the one crowns the other. ‘The promise’ means the promised reward, which in a sense is already yours; but the full possession is still future, and the present enjoyment broken and imperfect. Hence the need of patience and faith, as is shown by Old Testament teaching.

Ver. 37. For yet a very little while—a phrase that is taken from the Greek of Isa. xxvi. 20, where it is translated, in E. V., ‘for a little moment’ (literally, for a little time, how little).—He that cometh—‘He that is to come’—the name of Christ under both economies—He was called ‘the coming One,’ and He is so still. The prophecy is taken from Habakkuk, where it refers to the vision of the fall of the Chaldean monarchy, a type for the time of a great persecuting power, and of the setting up in immediate sequence (as is common in prophecy) of the Divine kingdom.—Will come—though it tarry, wait for it. The Greek of the Septuagint makes the object of the vision a person, and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews makes the person the Messiah. The day of Jehovah in the one covenant becomes the day of the Lord in the other.

Ver. 38. But (or now) my righteous one (he who belongs to God’s people) by faith shall live. As it is by faith he first gets life (as is told us in Rom. i. 16, 17, and Gal. iii. 11), so it is by faith that life is preserved in the midst of judgments and of delays that are incident to them.—But if he (A. V. ‘any man’)—Owen and Gill, Winer and De Wette, prefer ‘he,’ which is simpler and in harmony with the context; the same person is described in the two clauses—draw back—the rendering of the Septuagint adopts apparently a different reading of the Hebrew text, as it does to a small extent in the following clause. The reference of those two clauses to the same person need create no difficulty. The apostasy of a professed Christian is always possible, or warnings would be needless: not necessarily the apostasy of a true Christian. The perseverance of the elect is one thing; the perseverance of a particular person is to us another.

Ver. 39. But we are not of them that draw back unto perdition (destruction, Rom. ix. 22; Phil. i. 28, iii. 19, etc.), but of them that believe. ‘We’—the writer again includes himself with them as true believers, though subject to the same law as here is applied to his own case (‘I keep my body under, lest, having preached the Gospel to others, I should be myself rejected’). ‘That draw back’—that believe’—each expression describes a quality or character which originates in apostasy or faith respectively. We are not of the character that drawing back produces; we are of the character that faith produces.—Unto the saving of the soul. This last phrase is very striking—the gaining of possession of the soul. As the backslider loses his soul,—gets, instead of eternal life, never-ending death, which yet is not annihilation,—so the man of faith wins back his soul from impending perdition, gains a possession that is truly his. The man who is not God’s is not even his own; his entire personality is the slave and the property of another.

Chapter XI. 1-38.


Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by faith Enoch was translated so as not to see death, for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.
6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. By faith * Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, 7 prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. By faith * Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, 8 obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, 9 who looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Through faith also * Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore * sprang there even of one, and * of them, and as many as are the stars in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea-shore innumerable. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that speak such things declare plainly * that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. 14 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed * to be called their God: for "He hath prepared for them a city. By faith * Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, "That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure. By faith * Isaac

---

18 rather, seek after 19 godly fear 20 according to 21 obeyed and went (lit. to go) 22 was to 23 i.e. a possession 24 omit, see note 16 25 i.e. a temporary dweller in 26 land that belonged to another 27 lit. having his home in tents 28 lit. the city which hath the foundations 29 By 30 deemed (as in x. 29) 31 Wherefore also 32 omit even 33 according to (as in note 15), i.e. as men die who had not received the promises, but believed in them 34 omit even and were persuaded of them 35 read, having seen them from afar and greeted them 36 make it plain 37 are seeking after a home (a fatherland) of their own 38 to return 39 insert of them 40 while tried 41 lit. hath offered up 42 or, was offering 43 or, he to whom 44 or, In simply 45 lit. In Isaac shall a seed be called to thee 46 he did in a figure receive him
Chap. XI. 1-38.]

TO THE HEBREWS.

21 blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.

22 By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones. By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

23 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than glory with the persecutors.

24 By faith he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. By faith, he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.

25 By faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

26 By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land; which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.

27 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and Barak, and of Samson, and of Samuel, and of the prophets:

33 and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:

37 they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted;
were slain with the sword: 'they wandered about in sheep-skins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;" (of "Zechar. iii. 4. whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."

"went (not the same word as in ver. 38) evil entreated (as in xiii. 3)"

Chap. xi. 1. Having affirmed that our distinguishing quality as Christians is not apostasy, but faith, and that the issue in our case is not perdition, but the gaining of that life of the soul which apostasy threatens, he now proceeds to show that faith is the quality of the spiritual life. This faith means the belief of things still future; such belief makes them realities to us: and the evidence of things unseen, such evidence as answers objections and produces conviction (compare Aristotle's definition of faith, etc.). It means, among other things, patient waiting, heroic suffering, and is illustrated by reference to the lives and history of men of all ages and of every economy. The words of this verse have sometimes been taken as a definition of faith, or as a description of it; but properly they are no definition, for the terms of each proposition are not interchangeable; nor are they a description; they rather seize upon one quality of faith which is most appropriate for the writer's purpose, and help us to understand what faith is by calling attention to properties not peculiar to it, but still deeply significant. Faith, then, has to do with what is future and is an object of hope, viz. blessing and reward. More widely, it has to do with what is unseen, whether in the future, the present, or the past. Similarly the things which it believes are either historical facts, as 'things' means in chap. vi. 18, or spiritual realities, as 'things' means in chap. x. 1. If they are future and are objects of desire, they are hoped for; and if they are not objects of hope, but still believed, they are things unseen. All are unseen, whether hoped for or not. So the last clause of the verse describes the wider class. Faith gives weight and force to what would be otherwise unsubstantial; and faith is itself, in an important sense, a proof of the truth of what it believes. The feeling of the solid body which the hand sustains is itself a proof that the body is solid. The consciousness of the light is decisive evidence that the sun has risen—not to others, but to the man himself.

Ver. 2. For in it. In just such and no other faith all the heroes of the older economy were testified of, and obtained a [good] report—became, through their steadfastness and amid inferior means of grace, examples to the younger generation, ourselves (see ver. 40). The forms of expression used to describe a life of faith are all instructive. Here it is 'in it,' as the region or state in which the good report and testimony was gained; later it is 'by it' (vers. 3, 4, 5, etc.); 'through it,' as the instrument—calling attention not to 'it,' but to some living force which is behind it (ver. 33); 'in accordance with it,' i.e. in such a way as faith requires or prompts (ver. 7, 13). All those phrases are common in Paul's writings—'out of faith'—i.e. having its origin in faith, another of Paul's expressions, is also found (chap. x. 38).

Ver. 3. Here begin the examples of the power and nature and effects of faith. By faith we know that the worlds (the universe) have been framed by the word of God: all that exists in time and space, including time and space themselves (see note on chap. i. 2). 'Have been framed'—the reference is to the preparation and completing of the world according to the design of the Founder. The word is translated 'established' in Ps. lxxxix. 37—'prepared' in Ps. lxiv. 16. 'By the word of God;' i.e. His command. The explanation is found in Gen. i. where nine times we read, 'God said.' And it was so. It is by faith we understand that God made the universe. The word 'understand' describes the rational or spiritual act of thought whereby things come to be known: that things had an origin, that they did not originate themselves, that they had an originator whose ability, intelligence, and goodness correspond to the qualities which we see in them, are conclusions to which our rational and spiritual nature lead us (as we are told in Rom. i. 20). The conclusions are of the nature of faith; for the process was unseen, and the conclusions are rather to be believed than demonstrated. When the announcement is made, however, and we believe it, the mystery is comparatively solved; an adequate cause is assigned, and we form a conception of the origin of things which commends itself to our noetic faculty, or perceptive understanding, as certainly as it commends itself to our religious instinct. Faith, therefore, the belief in the unseen, is as certainly a principle of natural religion, in its rudimentary form at least, as it is of revealed religion. It suggests the solution of many problems. Without it the world itself, in its origin and destiny, is a deep mystery, a maze without a plan. So that what is seen (the true reading, the visible universe as a whole, not many separate things) was not made (hath not come to be) out of the things which appear. Creation abounds in change and in development—the plant comes from the seed, and each man from the race that precedes him; but the understanding of faith leads us to the conclusion that at the beginning it was not so. The series is not eternal or self-created; God Himself is the Creator, and to Him and to His word the visible creation is to be ascribed. The clause 'so that,' etc., may mean the tendency of the arrangement; the arrangement itself leads to the conclusion; or it may describe the purpose of the Creator, 'in order that' what is seen might be understood to have come from what does not appear—viz., from the Divine mind and plan; but the interpretation given above is the more simple and natural.
Ver. 4. A more excellent sacrifice—partaking more of the quality of a true sacrifice with reference to what constitutes its excellence. Cain offered of his fruits what came first to hand; Abel offered of the firstlings of his flock, the choicest and best. Cain expressed at most his thankfulness, and not hearty or profound; Abel’s faith showed itself in acknowledging his sin and in laying hold of the Divine mercy in the midst of what he felt to be deserved wrath; and thus his offering was a true sacrifice. By which faith (it was witnessed of him) (the same word elsewhere) that he was righteous. Witnessed by our Lord (Matt. xxiii. 35), and later by John (1 John iii. 12), but chiefly by God Himself, as the following clause shows—God himself testifying of his gifts (the very expression in Gen. iv. 4)—probably as God testified in other cases (Ex. xiv. 24; 1 Kings xviii. 24, 25), by consuming and accepting the sacrifice. And by it (still his faith) he being dead (having died), yet speaketh (the active voice is the true rendering). But how? Partly perhaps to us by way of encouragement and example; but as a similar phrase is used in chap. xii. 24 of the blood of Abel as speaking unto God, it seems at least to be part of the meaning here that through the faith and the offerings of Abel, Abel, the first martyr, lives on after death: through his faith he still speaks to God; even as Enoch still lives, who never died at all.

Vers. 5, 6. By faith Enoch was translated. The language of this verse is taken from the Septuagint (Gen. v. 22-24): ‘He was not’ is there rendered ‘he was not found.’ The phrase God took him is translated God translated him (the same word as above), and he was translated into the glory. The Hebrew phrase, ‘he walked with God,’ which probably had no clear meaning to a Greek, the Septuagint renders he pleased God, or strove to please Him; he lived right well-pleasing to Him. Nothing is said in the Old Testament of his faith; but before his translation is recorded, it is recorded that he pleased God; and now the writer proceeds to show that faith was the foundation of his God-accepted life.

Ver. 6. But faith is essential to our well-pleasing, and therefore Enoch had faith. Without faith there is a double difficulty; there is no complacency on the side of God, who regards the impious and unbelieving man as a sinner, and on the side of man there is no trust. The logical proof of the need of this faith is that whoever draws nigh to God to serve Him, or hold communion with Him (see chap. v. 19-25, ix. 14), must believe (1) that He is a reality towards whom he stands in closest relation of love and duty, and (2) that to those who seek Him He becomes (not will become) the bestower of a full reward. God’s being is a thing not seen, His reward a thing hoped for; faith an assured conviction of the first, and a solid expectation of the second.

Vers. 7, 8. The antediluvians are named—Abel, the penitent and martyr; Enoch, the prophet (Jude 14, 15) and saint; and now is introduced Noah, the righteous and perfect man—the first man to whom this title is applied (Gen. vi. 9, compare Ex. xiv. 14-20). Being warned of God (having received a Divine admonition) . . . moved with godly fear. The word thus rendered is a form of the expression found in chap. v. 7. Its meaning depends in part upon the context, and varies from (mere prudence) the fear that excites careful forethought (Acts xxiii. 10) to the filial reverence of our Lord Himself. Here reverence for God, or what is practically the same thing, for the message that was given to him, best suits the passage. The rendering, taking forethought (Delitzsch, Alford), separates the quality from the faith, and describes worldly caution rather than Christian grace. When things unseen and fearful are revealed, faith believes them, and fears accordingly. Faith works by fear in such cases, as it works by love. By which faith he condemned the world—not by the ark (Chrysostom, Calvin, etc.); though this is true; only it is feeble, and it is of faith the whole chapter treats—by which faith, as shown in this way, is, however, the full thought. He condemned the world, showing how the world ought to have regarded the warnings God gave, and how guilty they were in disregarding them. The patience, faith, and holiness of godly men shall condemn their opposites, and excite the hatred of bad men on that ground. And became heir (possessor) of the righteousness which is according to faith—the righteousness which owes its quality, as it owes its origin, to faith. All these expressions are intensely Pauline; and it is instructive also to note that the great doctrine of righteousness by faith, which is not the main subject of the Epistle, must have been familiar to all its readers.

Vers. 8-22. From the elders of the antediluvian world the writer now appeals to the elders of Israel, the great men who, under God, founded the Jewish state. Themselves also was raised up to be of patient trust, and ultimately of blessed reward.

Ver. 8. By faith Abraham, when being called—the reading, he who is called, has less authority than the common text, though it makes a good sense—by the word of God. Nothing is said in the Old Testament of his faith; but before his translation is recorded, it is recorded that he pleased God; and now the writer proceeds to show that faith was the foundation of his God-accepted life.

Ver. 9. By faith he received the promise, and still waited for the fulfilment of it. By faith he sojourned (a temporary resident only) in the land of promise (which God had given him) as (if it were) another’s (and not his own), having his home in tents—tents without foundation—pitched to-day, struck to-morrow. His whole life, therefore, was a life of promise unfulfilled, and so of patient waiting for God’s time and at God’s disposal.

Ver. 10. For (the reason of his being a sojourner only) he looked, or waited, for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. The contrast here is first between tents, which are easily removed, and a permanent home, and then between an earthly tent and the city of the living God, of which we read in chap. xii. 22 and chap. xiii. 14. Abraham’s faith
looked forward to a home for himself and his descendants in Canaan, in the earthly Jerusalem, with its foundations in the holy mountains (Ps. lxxxvii.); and then, beyond Canaan and his mortal life, to the heavenly reality, of which Jerusalem was the type—a double Jerusalem, the one below and the other above; of which Jews had some knowledge, and devout Jews had strong hope, long before the Gospel had thrown fuller light upon these themes.

Ver. 11. And what is true of Abraham, the father of the faithful, is true also of Sarah, who was equally the ancestor of the chosen race. Sarah herself, not 'who had so long doubted' (Bleek, etc.), for the writer is not dealing with the difficulty of faith, but with the necessity for it. The expression is nothing but an extension of the lesson of the previous verse to a new and connected instance—Sarah likewise. The expression is very common in Luke.—And when she was past age (literally, 'and that contrary to the time of life')—an additional difficulty; and yet, in spite of her barrenness, her age, her former incredulity (for she had laughed at the promise in the first instance), she believed, and therein found a large reward.—Deeming (as in chap. x. 29 and xi. 26, and to be distinguished from the 'accounting' of ver. 19) him faithful.

Ver. 12. Wherefore also (a common Pauline expression, Rom. iv. 22 and xviii. 22, etc.) from one (the emphatic part) sprang Israel, etc.—from a single, yet a lifeless, source—than is a race like the dust of the earth (Gen. xii. 2), the stars of the heaven, the sand on the lip (the margin) of the sea, innumerable; and through faith Abraham became the father and Sarah the mother of them.

Vers. 13-16. The one attribute of the faith of all these men is that it continued till death. In faith (rather, consistently with it, still looking forward to a glorious future as yet unrealized).—These all (from Abraham downwards, as is clear from ver. 15) died as not having received the promises (often repeated, and containing blessings of many kinds—hence the plural; the promises which they did not receive are the 'things promised,' as in chap. ix. 15 and Acts i, 4), but as having seen them from afar, and greeted (or saluted) them, and having confessed, as Abraham did, and Jacob (see references). They saw their home all through their lives; and even when they were dying they saw their homes from afar, and greeted them 'though distant still.'

Ver. 14. For (they proved that they lived and died in faith) they who say of themselves that they are sojourners (Gen. xxiii. 4)—of their life that it is a pilgrimage (Gen. xxvii. 9), a wandering in a foreign land, make it plain that it is a fatherland, a true home, they are seeking, and not the home they have left in the country of Terah, or elsewhere.

Ver. 15. And if indeed they were thinking of (or mentioning, as in ver. 22) that home whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to return.

Ver. 16. But now (the case is that, see chap. viii. 6) they desire a better, that is, a heavenly (home); whereas God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God. Of old He honoured them as His friends; Himself added to names which describe His essential nature, His being, and His almighty name; and (the surname 'the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob;' acknowledged it when given to Him by the patriarchs (Gen. xxxii. 9); and now He acknowledges the same name, and acknowledges the continuance of the same relation (the force of the present tense), showing their continued life and His own continued favour; and the proof of all (partly perhaps the reason but rather the proof) is that He prepared for them a permanent home above—not a tent but a city of His—and welcomed them there. Whether all this was foreseen by the patriarchs has been much questioned. There may be a fulness of meaning here which the patriarchs did not reach; but in substance they believed that the promise given them was the promise of a future home, a promise connected in part with an earthly heritage; but their desire was for the presence and blessing of Him who was their trust, and with whom they hoped to be when their earthly pilgrimage was ended. Less than that fails to explain the language of the Old Testament, as it fails to recognise the clear teaching of the New.

Ver. 17. Thus they lived and died. The writer now returns to particular instances, in order to illustrate not the final results, but the power and heroic deeds of the faith which was thus honoured. By faith Abraham being tried (his trials were long continued), hath offered up (the purpose of his heart was complete, and has abiding results) Isaac; and (intensive—nay only Abraham, Isaac, but—yet) he that had leisure (literally, accepted, welcomed as with open arms) the promises was offering up his only-begotten Son. The tense now recalls attention to the literal fact; the work was begun—a marvellous act of faith; it was against the perversity—nay, even against what seemed the Divine purpose; for it was through this son the nations were to be blessed.

Ver. 18. Even he to whom ('whom' refers in the Greek to Abraham, not to Isaac, and therefore it is 'to whom,' not with respect to (of whom) it was said, In Isaac (through and in descent from him) shall there be named to thee a seed—only his descendants shall be (and shall be known as) Abraham's seed. To be called, is generally used in Scripture with one of two senses,—'to have the name,' or really to be. Sometimes, as here, the two senses are combined.

Ver. 19. And the reason was that he reckoned the faithfulness of God to be safe in the keeping of His almightiness; he believed that God would keep His word, even if it was necessary for Him to effect a resurrection from the dead. The statement is quite general; and, though applied to Isaac by implication, it is a universal truth. Whence—and from the dead he did receive him back (used of captives delivered—of hostages sent home), not in a literal resurrection indeed, but in what was an equivalent; the father's heart was as resigned, and the bitterness of the separation was as complete. Whether this all has been much disputed. Perhaps 'in a figure' has a further reference to 'the ram' which was offered in his stead—the victim of God's providing, while the son was set free; or possibly the whole transaction may be a figure of the death and resurrection of our Lord.

Ver. 20. Nor is faith restricted to trial; it realizes blessing also. By faith Isaac blessed
Jacoeb (the heir of the greater promise) and Esau too (the two articles of the original call attention to distinct acts) even concerning things to come—the act of faith and of prophetic faith. The blessing and the prayer of faith, proceeding as they do from the mind, comes from the Divine will, bind even God, and control the future destinies of him on whose behalf they are offered.

Ver. 21. By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph. The dying acts of the two patriarchs are connected together as worshippers (Gen. xlvii. 31).—He worshipped on the top of his staff. The history explains this allusion. Jacob had arranged with his son for his own burial in the distant land of Canaan (itself an act of faith), recognizing in Canaan the future home of his posterity. When Joseph had given the promise, Jacob showed the energy of his faith by the energy of his thankfulness. Though dying, he rose in his bed, leaned on his staff (the staff, perhaps, of which he spoke long before, Gen. xiii. 10) and bowed in worship (this is the meaning of the Hebrew, Gen. xlviii. 2) to the God who had now fulfilled all his desires. The same word (written 'staff') means, with other vowel pointing, 'bed'; and, as the other Hebrew text had no vowel points, the Septuagint has one rendering and the English version of the Old Testament another. The writer adopts the version of the Septuagint. If the English version be retained, it means that he worshipped, leaning on (with his face towards) the bed. (See Isa. xxxviii. 2.)

Ver. 22. This dying act of Jacob's recalls the faith of Joseph. By faith Joseph, when drawing to his end, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and made his brethren swear that his bones should rest in the land of promise; an expression at once of his faith and of his love for those who were the heirs of that promise. Centuries later Moses carried his bones out of Egypt (Ex. xiii. 19), and the burial of them in Shechem is recorded in the closing verses of the Book of Joshua. All this had deeper meaning. He would be buried where they were buried, because his God was their God.

Ver. 23. Thus far the writer has been dealing with examples of faith in Genesis alone. The examples are few compared with all recorded in that book, but they are very striking and noble. The history and character of Moses naturally occupy a chief place in the following verses. From the first he was a child of faith. His parents hid him three months, noting his commonness (Acts vii. 20), and hoping apparently that God might use him as He had used Joseph, to be the deliverer of their people. They therefore disregarded the king's ordinance, and did their duty, looking for Divine succour.

Ver. 24-28. Mark the successive expressions of his faith. When he was grown up he refused the name and dignity of a member of the royal family, preferring to suffer with the people of God rather than enjoy, with godless, idolatrous Egyptians, such fleeting pleasures as sin provides. Denouncing the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasure of Egypt. The reproach to which typical Israel suffered is called the reproach of Christ; as Paul calls the sufferings of Christians the sufferings of Christ (Col. i. 24; 2 Cor. i. 5), i.e. of Christ dwelling and suffering in His Church as in His body. In the true Church of every age the eternal Christ ever lives and reigns, though when Moses suffered He was still to come, appearing chiefly in the types and tropes, while really dwelling among them. And the reason is that he looked away from the suffering to the Divine reward, his life and acts being moulded and guided by his hopes. By faith he passed through Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king. The reference here has been supposed to be to his flight into Midian after the slaughter of an Egyptian; but then it is said that he did fear (Ex. ii. 14). The natural explanation is that the words describe his abandonment of all his Egyptian hopes (not that he fled from Egypt, but gave it up), not fearing the wrath which the desertion of his post, and the bitter feeling of Pharaoh against the people whom he was joining would certainly excite.—For he endured, or (he was stedfast) as seeing what is invisible, or, the king who is invisible (1 Tim. i. 17). The wrath of an earthly sovereign was nothing to him, when assured of the grace and protection of the king of kings.—By faith he kept the Passover, i.e. he celebrated it, as the verb always means, and instituted it, as the sense rather implies. Both thoughts seem to be here. —By faith he passed through the Red Sea. God by a strong east wind made a passage through the water, and in faith the Israelites entered as by dry land, assured of their safety. The Egyptians tried (either the sea or the seemingly dry land) as an uncertain experiment, and were swallowed up.

Ver. 30. The writer now leaves the Book of the Law for the Book of Joshua, the record of the conquest of the land and of the complete fulfilment of the ancient promise. By faith (of Joshua and the whole people, the correlative of that Divine power which really did the deed) the walls, etc. As the great deliverance from Egypt was effected by faith and the boldness it produced, so the first victory in Canaan was achieved by persevering faith, the wall having been compassed about for seven whole days (see Josh. vi.).

Ver. 31. Nor does previous personal character hinder its power, or previous separation from the covenant people. By faith, as shown in her confession, 'Jehovah is God in heaven above and in the earth beneath,' 'and He hath given you the land' (Josh. xi. 9)—Rehoboam the king, and a Canaanite, perished not with those who, having heard of God's miraculous dealings on behalf of
Israel (Josh. ii. 10), persisted in their defiance, and refused submission. Her faith showed its reality (see Jaa. ii. 23) in her receiving and protecting the spies, and found its reward in her preservation, and finally in her becoming an ancestor of the Lord. 'When she had received,' in the Authorised Version represents the expression of her faith (properly 'receiving as she did'), as if it were prior to the faith; it was really its result, or more properly the working of the faith itself.

A careful attention to the tenses, and to the absence of the article whereby this clause is closely connected with the preceding, would be sufficient of itself to reconcile the teaching of Paul and James.

Ver. 32. What shall I say more for time will fail, etc. The groups named in this verse are really two; and though there are various readings as to the connecting particles, they necessitate no change. The chronological order of the names would be Barak, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson; Samuel, David. Samuel is probably put last to connect his name with the prophets, to which class he belongs (see Acts iii. 25); and Gideon and Samson are probably put before Barak and Jephthah respectively, because they are of greater celebrity as men of faith. The characteristic exploits of each will be found in the passages named in the margin.

Ver. 33. Who through faith. The 'who' refers both to those named and to others like them; the introduction of the previous enumeration ('time will fail,' etc.) being practically a rhetorical equivalent for 'etc.' in English; and the 'through faith' applying to all that is said to the end of ver. 34. Through faith (not 'in' or 'according to'), the expression for the last time in this chapter, and specially appropriate as describing the instrument by which those great works were accomplished. How it sustained also in suffering is recorded in the later verses, 35-38.

Sublime Kingdoms—true of all the judges named, as is of Samuel and David.—Wrought righteousness is specially true of David, the righteous king (2 Sam. vii. 15, etc.), and of Samuel, the righteous judge (1 Sam. xii. 4).—Obtained promises, i.e. obtained the fulfilment of them, not indeed of the great promise of all (see ver. 40), but of the lesser promises which God fulfilled to the prophets themselves. Joel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, all saw the partial fulfilment of things they foretold.—Stopped the mouths of lions—true in part of Samuel and David, and specially of Daniel, of whom it is said that an angel shut the mouths of the lions, because he believed in his God (Dan. viii. 23).

Ver. 34. Quenched the power of fire (not the fire, which still burnt, but the power of it); true of Shadrach and his companions.—Escaped the edge of the sword, as in the case of Elijah (1 Kings xix. 1, etc.), Elisha (2 Kings vi. 14, etc.), Jeremiah (Jer. xxxvi. 26, etc.).—Out of weakness were made strong, as in the case of Samson (Judg. xvi. 28, etc.), and David, whose most plaintive Psalms end often in thanksgiving.—Waxed (became) mighty in war out of many heroic men under the judges and during the monarchy.—Turned to flight the armies of the allies—a word used in the Septuagint of Gideon and the Midianites, and of Jonathan and the Philistines. It is probable, however, that these last clauses, without excluding those older deeds of faith, refer mainly to the later history of Israel after the close of the Old Testament canon. They find a striking fulfilment in the Maccabean age. It is certain that some of the sufferings spoken of in the next group of verses are found only in that age; and the expressions of ver. 34 seem taken from the First Book of the Maccabees (compare 1 Macc. iii. 1, 38, ii. 7, etc.). No doubt the faith of these latter heroes was sometimes of a lower type, rather patriotic than theocratic, the result of a noble enthusiasm as much as of trust in the living God; but in other cases it was true and Divine; while the struggles between the holy and all nations, which the book describes, seem referred to in the Book of Daniel as of the deepest interest.

Vers. 35-38. What faith has done we have seen; what it helps men to suffer is now told us. Women received (back) their dead raised to life again (literally, by a resurrection, which is regarded as the cause or origin of their so receiving them), true of the widow of Sarepta and of the Shunamite. —And others were tortured (broken upon the wheel). The word here used (a wheel or drum-head on which the victim was stretched and beaten to death) shows that the reference is to Eleazar (2 Macc. vii. 31-33), and the heroic mother and her seven sons mentioned in chap. vii. Fuller details of the same martyrdom are given in the so-called Fourth Book of Maccabees, sometimes, though erroneously, ascribed to Josephus. —Not withstanding (rejecting would be more exact) the deliverance which was offered them at the price of their principles (so the original means), in order that they might obtain a better resurrection than the mere return to the present life. 'The king of the whole of the nations raise us up,' they said, 'unto everlasting life' (2 Macc. vii. 9, etc.).

Ver. 36. Others had trial (experience) of cruel mockings and scourgings. The allusion again is to the Maccabees (2 Macc. vii. 7-10).—Xoa, moreover (a harder thing, because of the continuance and depressing influence of it), of bonds of imprisonment—perhaps with reference to Jonathan (1 Macc. xii. 16), or to Hamaiah, Micaiah, and especially to Jeremiah (see references).

Ver. 37. They were stoned, as was Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, the last martyr mentioned in the Old Testament (2 Chron. xxiv. 20-22), as Abel was the first. Jeremiah is also said to have been stoned to death at Tahpanhes (Daphne) in Egypt. —They were sawn asunder, as was Isaiah by Manasseh. —They were tempted. This word reads feeble, standing as it does in the midst of three descriptions of violent death. A similar word means, 'they were burnt'; another, 'they were mutilated'; and there is evidence, though not preponderating, for the omission of it altogether. If it is genuine, 'they were experimented upon' is a possible rendering, and makes a fairly consistent sense. As it is now rendered, it means that in addition to a cruel death they were, all through, offered relief if they wouldかつる their faith.—They were slain with the sword (literally, they died by the murder of the sword)—true of Uriah in Judah (Jer. xxvi. 23), and quite common in Israel (1 Kings xix. 10, etc.). —Yet went about. The writer now returns to the various kinds of death they suffered to their life-
TO THE HEBREWS.

CHAP. XI. 39—XII. 29.

Reasons for Patience, xi. 39—xii. 11.—

Practical Exhortations enforced by the

greater Excellence of the Gospel, 12—29.

AND these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

CHAP. XII. 1. Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children,

My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, Nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, And scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us; and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: neverthe-
less afterward it yieldeth "the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are "exercised thereby. Wherefore "lift up 12 the hands which hang down, and the feeble "knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be 14 turned out of the way; "but let it rather be healed. "Follow 15 peace with all men, and holiness, "without which no man shall see the Lord: "looking diligently "lest any man fail of the grace of God; "lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble 16 you, and thereby many "be defiled; "lest there be any fornicator, or profane person as Esau, "who for one morsel of meat "sold his "birthright. For ye know how that afterward, 17 when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: 18 (for he found no place of repentance,) though he sought it 19 carefully with tears. For ye are not come unto "the mount 20 that might "be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto 21 blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice 22 intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any 23 more: "for they could not endure that which was commanded, 24 And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be 25 stoned, or thrust through with a dart: "and so terrible was 26 the sight, "that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake: 27 but ye are come "unto mount Sion, "and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, "and to an innumerable 28 company of angels, to the general assembly and church of 29 the firstborn, "which are written "in heaven, and to God 30 the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men "made perfect, and to Jesus "the mediator of the new covenant, and to "the 31 blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things "than that 32 of Abel." See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For "if 33 they escaped not who "refused him that spake "on earth, 34 much more "shall we escape, if we turn away from him that 35 speaketh "from heaven: "whose voice then shook the earth: 36 but now he hath promised, saying, "Yet once more I "shake 37 not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once 38 more, signifieth "the removing of those things that are shaken, which 39 have been 40 the holiness (or, sanctification) 41 the many 42 meal 43 his own 44 a mount (and in italics as omitted in best M.S.S.) 45 could 46 rather, no word more should be spoken to them 47 omit or thrust through with a dart 48 lit. that which was made to appear 49 lit. tens of thousands, or, innumerable hosts 50 lit. 'written off,' or, enrolled 51 rather, as mediator of a new covenant, and to blood 52 read, better, and omit things 53 lit. than Abel (cf. xi. 4)— "the blood of" is found in some MSS. 54 when they (lit. refusing as they did) 55 lit. warned them (i.e. in God's name), see xi. 7 56 is, or, warneth 57 read, will I 58 not the same word
as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be 28 shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace; whereby we may serve
29 God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for "our God is a consuming fire."

42 rather, are not 44 or, thankfulness 49 read, fear simply

Ver. 29. The Bible is largely a history of faith, its deeds and sufferings and rewards; pre-eminently of the patience and perseverance which belong to it, and which seem essential in a world where virtue is militant. These all having had witness borne to them through their faith, i.e. though they had all this noble attestation, had still to wait for the fulfillment of the promise—the promise of final and complete salvation (chap. ix. 15).—God having provided, or rather, having looked forward to, some better thing—that salvation which the Lord has accomplished and made known, which had reserved for our economy, and which Old Testament saints receive only when we receive it too. Our economy completes the former. To give up the Gospel and go back to the Law is to return from what is perfect to what is preparatory; and to sever ourselves from the blessedness for which the patriarchs died.

CHAP. XII. 1-11. Exhortation with encouragement and reproof, in view of all these witnesses, and of the later example of Jesus, to maintain the conflict, and to remember the love from which all discipline comes, and the fruit it is intended to produce. The chapter is introduced by a strong Pauline particle, seeing then, therefore, found only here and in i Thess. iv. 8, and by a favourite Pauline image taken from the ancient games. The figure is doubly instructive; it throws some light upon the authorship, and it illustrates the general principle that Christianity is a universal religion, not for literati, but for literate. Hellenic materials, as well as Jewish. The chief thought continues the appeal of chap. xi., basing it on stronger arguments suggested in part by the eleventh chapter.—Let us run with patience (i.e. with endurance maintained through to the end) the race that is set before us. These are the first conditions of success. Those who were once witnesses for God, witnesses even unto blood, martyrs in the modern sense, now form the circle, the ring, of spectators who witness our consistency. This double meaning is certainly here; the first in the word 'witnesses,' and the second in the cloud that bends over the militant Church. The witnesses for God, whose deeds are named in the previous chapter, are also witnesses of our faithfulness and patience.

Ver. 2. Even more important than the contemplation of these martyr witnesses for maintaining the athlete spirit is the continuous looking unto Jesus, the originator and finisher of our faith (or of faith). 'Our faith' favours the interpretation that Jesus begins and completes the faith which forms the principle of the Christian life. But though this is true of Christ, as it is true of God (John xv. 10), it seems hardly the truth taught here. The faith spoken of is the faith of chap. xi., and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is quoted as the noblest example; He realized a glorious future in the midst of a troubled present, even as we must do. He is the originator of faith because He has trod the way of faith before us, and the finisher of it because having completed our salvation, which is 'the end of our faith' (1 Pet. i. 9), He leads all who trust Him to the same goal. This application of faith to Christ is not common in Scripture, but it is found in this Epistle (chap. ii. 13), and it is involved in His human nature and conflicts.—Who, for the joy set before him, endured the cross, despising shame. This part of the sentence describes the life of faith, as the second describes its reward and completion—and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. These two things we are to fix our gaze upon; they are closely connected in the Greek, as they are in the argument. Faith, as the realization of the unseen, was as much the principle of our Lord's life as it is the principle of the life of His followers.

Ver. 3. For (He suffered as well as you, therefore you may well consider (properly, compare His case with your own, and gather the lessons) him who hath endured, (it is His permanent character that is described) such contradiction (not in words only, but hostility of every kind, even treason (John xix. 12)) of sinners against themselves (i.e. of those who, in thus acting, sinned against their own souls, the sinning being againstHimself;) has also good authority; 'themselves' suggests a fresh reason why the Hebrew Christians should not join 'a gain-saying people' by rejecting the Gospel.—Let us run with patience (i.e. with endurance maintained through to the end) the race that is set before us. Still the athlete's figure. As the limbs grow faint (loose) in the race, so the soul in the Christian conflict. Principle is strengthened by thoughtfulness; for want of consideration Israel perished, as well as from want of knowledge.

Ver. 4. Special care is still needed, for there may be severer trials in store. For not yet have we resisted unto blood in your conflict with sin. Here the image is changed, as in i Cor. ix. 24-27, from running to boxing; and the meaning is that whatever some of the Hebrew Christians had suffered (chap. xiii. 7), heavier trials might be in reserve for them. Thus the writer is addressing those who, though not without experience of severe persecution in their first love, would have secured themselves against further violence by sinful conformity. How poor our modern self-denial is, compared with what the first Christians suffered, much more when compared with the sufferings of our Lord! Happier times call for the greater voluntary consecration.

Ver. 5. And ye have quite forgotten (not a question, as Calvin, and Delitzsch, and others
have suggested; the fact is rather assumed in
vers. 7–11; and a question, after the strong
assertion of ver. 4, is unnatural; the exhortation
(blessed to be or comforted or consolidation,
which is the more common rendering; see an
instance in Acts xv. 31), which reasons with you,
etc. (both words, ' consolation' and 'reasons,' are
favourite ones in describing Paul's method of
teaching, consisting as it did of argument and
appeal, Acts xvii. 2–17, xviii. 4, etc.). The quota-
tion is from Prov. iii. 11, 12; and as wisdom
speaks there as a person, so here the exhortation she
gives is spoken of as a person addressing tender,
motherly appeals to all who suffer... Nor
faint when corrected by him. The rendering of
the Greek is here adopted; the Hebrew means,
as to resent or to murmur against. Despondency
and resentment imply the same unbelief of the
loving purpose of the discipline, and they express
themselves in the same outward form of complaint.

Ver. 6. Whom he receiveth, i.e. whom He
takes to His heart as His son. The quotation is
from the Septuagint of Prov. iii. 12. The Hebrew
may be rendered as in the English version ('even
as a father'), or, by an alteration of the vowel
points, as here, 'and scourges.' All suffering
inflicted by God upon His children, or permitted
therein, is a proof of love, and forms itself in or its
results part of the evidence of their sonship.

Ver. 7. It is for chastening (for filial chasten-
ing) ye endure, as with sons God deals with
you; (Heb. 'He bears His hands towards you). The reading,
'It is for chastening—for improvement as sons ye
endure,' has decisive support. It differs from the
canonical text only by the addition of a single
letter (αις for ας), and the use of the expression
'for' is quite common in this Epistle (chap. i. 14,
iv. 16, vi. 16).—For what son is he (not 'who
is a son,' or 'what sort of a son is he,' though each
is a possible meaning) whom a father (or his
father—the statement is quite general, and does
not refer primarily to God) chastiseth not? Cor-
correction and chastening while character is forming
is the condition of all sonship and of all true
fatherhood, and our sonship in relation to God is
no exception to the general rule.

Ver. 8. If ye be without (be severed from,
have no part in) chastisement (filial discipline),
of which all (God's sons, or better, because of the
tense, the sons mentioned in chap. xi.) have be-
come partakers (or have had their share), then
are ye bastards (of spurious parentage) and not
sons.

Ver. 9, 10. The fatherhoods differ, and so the
rule and purpose of their discipline differ also.
Furthermore, we once had fathers of flesh
(our natural parents, and probably rather more—
those who were mediately the originators of our
flesh), as chasteners (correctors), and we gave
them reverence; shall we not much rather be in
subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?
The contrast here is between earthly fathers, men
who being flesh themselves are in a sense the
creators of our flesh, and God, Himself a Spirit,
and the immediate Creator of spirits. Other
interpretations have been discussed in both ancient
and modern times—'The Father of our spirits, i.e.
of human souls'; 'the Father or Originator of all
spiritual exaltation.' Others think that reference is
not to the originiation of our nature at all, but only
to parental feeling—'We have had those who, in
relation to our fleshly nature, have shown a father's
care; shall we not much rather submit ourselves
to Him who, in relation to our spiritual nature and
life, has a father's rights, and shows a father's
kindness? The ethical meaning implied in this
last interpretation is implied more or less in all
the others. This last suggestion will bear further
illustration. The earthly discipline of nearly all
nations, their Paideutics, was physical, and found
its best results in physical beauty, with Apollo
as its ideal, or in manly strength, with Hercules
as its ideal; when it went further, and cultivated
wisdom, as in Greece, or patriotism, as at Rome, or
the commoner virtues, as in the model Republics
of ancient or even of modern writers; it was still
shoddy and secular. The Paideutique that sancti-
fies our higher nature is peculiar to Divine revela-
tion, and is perfected only under the personal
supersubordination of the Father of spirits. The
recognition of His rights, and the acceptance of
His discipline, and the laying hold of His strength,
are essential to it.

Ver. 10. And this deeper reverence is reason-
able. For they (our earthly parents) for a few
days (for the time of youth, and with special
reference to it, whether successful or not, it came
to an end) chastened us according as it seemed
good to them (their rule being that nostalgia of
what was right, or sometimes their own temper or
caprice); but he for our profit (not a question of
scorning but of actual fact), for the purpose that
and to be continued until (literally, unto) we
share in his holiness, and then the war and our
need for it will cease. The contrast here is
perfect between seeming and reality—between
their pleasure and God's noble purpose—between
the few days of our youth, whether it succeed or
not, and the continuance which is unbroken till
the result is achieved. 'His holiness' is, no
doubt, a holiness completely like His own. The
original word represents it rather as a gift or a
result of His discipline than of our own culture
or effort (ἀγριόμοιον not ἀγριομοίον is found only here,
compare 2 Cor. vii. 1). The word rendered
'share' or, in the English version, 'be partakers
of,' is not the same word as in ver. 8. It means
to share in to what is not within our reach; it
implies willing acceptance rather than personal
acquisition, though shared with others, even with
the blessed God Himself. He sits as a Refiner of
silver, and He applies the heat and removes the
refuse till He sees in it His own image.

Ver. 11. Now no chastening (either God's or
any other) seemeth for the present to be joyous,
but grievous (literally, a matter of joy, but of
grief); nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the
peaceable fruit of righteousness (i.e. righteous-
ness is the fruit; and as the conflict is over, it is
enjoyed in peace) unto them that have been ex-
ercised thereby. The figure of a struggle is still
continued, as the original implies:

'Tis conflict here below,
'Tis triumph there and peace.'

Such is the general interpretation of the passage.
The objection to it is that the last part of the verse
is not true of all chastisement, but only of what
God sends. To this objection it is replied that it
is true of all chastisement, of all filial discipline
properly so called. The ethical meaning implied in
the chastisement of ver. 11 as spoken of God's
only, and then the conclusion is true as it stands.
The connecting particles are affirmative in both
clauses; and the only question is how to render the first of them. 'Now' refers to chastisement generally, as distinguished from God's chastisement, which is spoken of in the previous verse. "All chastisement from God, however," represents Deitrich's sense; while 'now' better represents the sense adopted above. In either case one of the clauses needs narrowing; either the first clause means God's chastisement, or the second means that all chastisement has this beneficial result if we speak of it from its design and purpose.

The chapter is a striking lesson on 'analogy'—the word which underlies the command ('consider') with which it begins. Christ Himself (ver. 3), human institutions (the Grecian games), the common relationship of life (parents and children), are all introduced to strengthen the argument, and most impressive lessons are drawn from them all.

Vers. 12-17. Further exhortations. Ver. 12. Wherefore (connecting the practical appeals, as is usual in this Epistle, with the reasoning and imagery of the previous verses) lift up (make strong) all the hands that hang down, and the weak (the loose or the palsied) knees. The figure of a race is still preserved, and perhaps of a light; also the last requiring the strong hands, and the first firm knees; or perhaps the drooping hands and the faint knees, the complete collapse which threatened the Hebrew Christians in the race set before them. And make straight (or level) paths for your feet (the same word as above), that which is lame, that part of the Church which is stumbling between Christianity and Judaism, may walk in plain, beaten tracks, and so be kept from turning aside. Some interpret 'that which is lame may not be put out of joint'—a possible meaning of the verb. It is used, however, in the New Testament only in the pastoral Epistles, 1 Tim. i. 6, v. 15, vi. 20, 2 Tim. iv. 4, and has always the sense given to it above. Who can estimate the power of a few courageous, consistent men in any struggle, and not least in Christian churches? Nay, rather than let it suffer further infirmity, as it is needlessly doing, let it be healed.

Meanwhile here, as in the Church at Rome, the weak, the lame, are to be treated with great forbearance, and peace is to be carefully cultivated, not division.

Ver. 14. Follow peace with all (believers, the true parallel being Rom. xvi. 19), and holiness (the appropriation by us of the Divine holiness of ver. 10; there it is the Divine attribute, here it is the process whereby the quality is made our own); without which (apart from which) no man shall see the Lord—shall not enter His presence, and share His blessedness. The reference is to God the Father. Only the holy rise to the sight of Him. The word 'Lord' is applied to Christ in chap. ii. 3, and to God in chap. viii. 2. When, however, Scripture speaks of seeing as a future reward, it is seeing God that is meant (Matt. v. 8; 1 John iii. 2); and yet as the throne of God is also the throne of the Lamb, to see one is ready to see the other.

Ver. 15. Looking diligently. The word is used generally of pastoral oversight, but is here used to enforce mutual watchfulness and discipline; a truth set forth also in chap. x. 24, ill. 12, iv. 1.—Lest any man fall of (come short of) by wilfully relinquishing the grace of God. The characteristic of the Gospel is 'grace,' apart from the works of the Law; and a man falls from it who puts himself at a distance from the blessing, and so gives it up. Lest any root, or plant, of bitterness, trouble the sacred enclosure of the Church, and thereby the many (the larger part of the ground even) be defiled (corrupted).

Ver. 16. Lest there be any fornicator (taken literally, as is the uniform meaning in the New Testament except in Revelation), or profane person (rather, worldly person; one who has no sense of the value or glory of Divine things) as Esau, who for a single meal sold his own birthright (the double portion which was his share as the eldest son [Deut. xxvi. 17], together with the precious inheritance of the great promise that in his seed the nations of the earth were to be blessed). These three clauses are often regarded as describing one character; but it seems better to regard them as describing three. For want of faith men give up the Gospel; for want of faith roots of bitterness spring up in the Church and defile it; and faithless persons become so selfish and so low-minded, that the least worldly advantages tempt them successfully to abandon their principles; and yet the course of even the least favoured of them may end in despair—

Ver. 17. For ye know (a fact familiar to every Hebrew) that when afterward, with the blessings of receiving the blessing (part of his birthright, and involving the rest), he was rejected (rejected after trial, as the word means), by his father and by God (Gen. xxvii. 33); for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it (i.e. the blessing) carefully and with tears. The previous clause, 'for he found no place of repentance,' is best regarded as a parenthesis (compare chap. xii. 20 and vil. 11). The tears were shed not for the loss he sustained, not for the low, sinful preference of which he had been guilty. Whose repentance did he not find? His own (as all the Greek fathers hold, with Luther, Calvin, Bengel, and Deitrich), or his father's (as they of Italy, Theodoret, and others)? The word has always an ethical meaning, and describes a change in the deeper recesses of our nature, which is followed by a corresponding change in the outer life. Such a sense is hardly applicable to Jacob. It seems better, therefore, to regard the words as applicable to Esau. He is regarded as a type of the hopeless apostate, who throws away his birthright through sensual indulgence or love of the world, and who, too late, finds the door of repentance closed to him, because repentance itself, in its true and deep sense, is impossible. Other commentators give the lighter interpretation to 'place of repentance,' and understand by it locum penitentiar, a chance and opportunity by repentance of repairing the mischief—a result in this case impossible; and then they understand by 'it' such repentance as might repair the loss he had suffered (Alford). Others give to 'repentance' its deeper meaning, and refer the 'it' to that repentance. Thus regarded, the whole passage teaches that a time may come, possibly in the history of any of us, when through sensual indulgence and worldly tastes repentance becomes impossible, though men seek it carefully and with tears. There is a striking sermon of Melvill's on the text as thus interpreted. In favour of referring 'it' to the blessing rather than to repentance, is the historical fact;
and in favour of the deeper sense of repentance (not merely a change of his father’s mind, or a cancelling of the result) is the uniformly ethical meaning of the word. In any case the lesson remains: sensual, worldly preferences may be so indulged as to become our masters; and we may wish to die the death of the righteous, and reap their rewards, and yet be rejected. That path cannot be safe where such a possibility is incurred. Whether the repentance comes too late, or the repentance, though in some sense desired, is really unattainable, or whether both suppositions are true, it is in any case an awful destiny, and men should take warning in time.

Vers. 18-29. All these warnings become the more impressive from the fact that our economy is one of much greater privilege than the previous, and that it is the last revelation which God will give. — For ye have not drawn near to a mountain that is touched (a material, tangible mountain) and that burned with fire and blackness (of clouds) and darkness (as in the night) and tempest. At the giving of the Law the top of the mountain burned with fire; lower down were black, impenetrable clouds, and out of the darkness which they caused came the lightnings of the storm. Amid this terror was heard the sound of a trumpet, and an articulate voice giving the commandments which were delivered to Israel; which voice was so awful that those who heard implored to be excused, begged off from hearing (declined to hear) more. The same word is found in the parable, ‘They began to make excuse.’ — For (a parenthetical explanation of their awe) they could not bear what was commanded, viz. And if even a beast (much more a man) touch the mountain .

Ver. 21. And so terrible was the sight (what was made to appear) that Moses shared their feeling of dread. Such was the access to God which ancient Israel possessed—an access that belonged to a visible mountain full of terror; an access rather of repulsion and enforced approach, which they prayed might cease.

Vers. 22-24. Seven things, Bengel notes, show the inferiority of the condition of Israel under the Law, and seven things show the superiority of the true Israel under the Gospel. Our gathering-place is Mount Zion (not Sinai), the abode of Him who is Father and King,—and the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. We are come to an innumerable company of angels (literally, ten thousands of angels; not the comparatively few who witnessed the giving of the Law, and aided the administration of the old economy), to the festal gathering of the Church of the first-born—of the Christian Church of this age, consisting as it did of those who were heirs of the promises, and whose names are enrolled, not as were the names of the first-born of Israel, in earthly registers (Num. iii. 42), but in heaven itself; a privilege shared, moreover, not by the first-born only, but by the entire company of the redeemed (see Luke x. 20);—and to God, the Judge of all. The mention of the militant Church and of their adversaries brings up this thought: He is their Defender, and to Him they may commit their cause. —And to the spirit of justness made perfect, from righteous Abel downwards; and to the Mediator of the recent and new covenant (not the same word as in chap. ix. 15)—Jesus (the name of our Lord which
TO THE HEBREWS.

The description is taken from Deut. iv. 22, and the meaning may be, Our God also (as well as the God of the Jews) is a consuming fire; but the former rendering—an additional reason simply—without specific reference to a distinction between our God and theirs, is the juster view. A devout sense of what we owe to God is a strong motive to holy service; so also is our reverence for God's holiness and justice. Thankfulness and fear are both among the motive forces of the Gospel, and both are stimulated by the character and acts (mercies and judgments alike) of the blessed God.

CHAPTER XIII. 1-25.

Admonitions to the Cultivation of Love, Hospitality, Compassion, and other Graces, 1-6.—The Loving Remembrance of Departed Leaders, etc.—Christian Sacrifice, 7-17.—Asks their Prayers, offers his own, commends to them his Epistle, speaks of the speedy Visit of Timothy, and closes with the usual Pauline Salutation, 18-25.

1,2 Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body. Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers shall God judge. Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say,

The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear
What man shall do unto me.

7 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow.

8 Considering the end of their conversation. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest

1 lit. of love to strangers
2 are evil entreated
3 life, lit. turn (mode of life, or, turn of mind)
4 read, for
5 omit may
6 or, I will not fear. What shall man?
7 better, your leaders
8 copy (lit. imitate)
9 lit. manner of life, i.e. the [noble] end their life had
10 walk
11 read, away
TO THE HEBREWS. [CHAP. XIII. 1–25.

12 for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood,
13 suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. 'For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. 'By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name. 'But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. 'Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves:
18 for that is unprofitable for you. 'Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. 'But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner. Now 'the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,' that great shepherd of the sheep, 'through the blood of the everlasting covenant,' make you perfect in every good work to do his will, 'working in you' that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; 'to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for 'I have written a letter unto you in few words. Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you. Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints.

25 They of Italy salute you. Grace be with you all. Amen.

CHAP. XIII. The exhortations with which the Epistle closes are various; but all are connected with the argument and with the condition of those addressed. The writer has sought to confirm their faith and grace, and now a loving holy life, which ever grows feebler with waning faith, is his chief concern. To their faith he has exhorted them to add godliness (xii. 28, 29), and now they are to add to godliness brotherly kindness and universal love. It is characteristic of the Epistle, too, that the graces commended in the earlier verses of this chapter are those for which the readers are commended in previous chapters (x. 33, 34, vi. 10).

Ver. 1. The first admonition is 'brotherly love'—a term used in the N. T. (not as in classic Greek to describe the love of brothers and sisters, but) to describe the love which Christians bear to one another in Christ, as children of one Father (cp. ii. 11), part of the wider love which 2 Peter describes (2 Pet. i. 7). It was not extinct (x. 32), the precept therefore is—as in the case of their faith—that it should continue, or abide. It is appropriately put first
among earthly duties, as it is the first fruit of faith and the beginning of all else. How the title here given to this grace struck the heathen is made very clear by a passage in Lucian: "Their most distinguished lawyer (?) Paul) has taught that the devil become brethren one of another as soon as they are changed; that is, when they deny the Greek gods, and adore the crucified sophist." He also enlarges on their sympathy with those in bonds, and on their hospitality. The sentiment struck the observer even while he scorned it as new and impracticable (see the passage in Delitzsch, ii. 371).

Ver. 2. Nor was this love confined to the family. The God worships loved strangers (Deut. x. 18, 19). In His gracious philanthropy (Tit. iii. 4) He had welcomed them when strangers; and now He sometimes sends His messengers—His angels—in the disguise of wayfarers, that He may know whether those who bear His name are like Him in their kindness, and that He may reward them as of old (Gen. xviii.).

Ver. 3. Debtors to all the brotherhood, and to others besides, there were some who had strong claims on their charity. There were prisoners who wore their bonds for Christ's sake and the Gospel's; and in loving tenderness these they were to remember as bound with them (v. 34). There were others in afflictions natural to men; these also the work of Christ took in hand, as being themselves in the body, and subject to like trials. Loving and prayerful remembrance might bring deliverance, and would certainly comfort their hearts and deepen their thankfulness.

Vers. 4, 5. The writer now speaks of two relations of life which are often placed side by side in Paul's Epistles—marriage and the purity which belongs to it, and covetousness, or 'the love of money' (Eph. v. 5; Col. iii. 5). The abrupt form of the sentences and the curt energy of the admonitions are intensely Pauline. Let marriage be held in honour in all, and the bed be undefiled. Whether these words are affirmative ("let marriage be honourable," as A. V.) and Delitzsch hold, or hortative ("let it be held"), has been much discussed. But the question is now settled. The words stand in the midst of exhortations. The next verse is equally without a verb, and is yet translated as exhortation. And moreover, the reading in the next clause is 'for' and not 'but,' enforcing not a statement, but a command. 'In all persons,' of whatever rank, degree, or profession; or 'in all respect,'—a rebuke of the 'false science' which was already spreading in the Church (1 Tim. iv. 13). It may be better to be single, if God's adjustment of gifts and tastes makes single life no serious burden (1 Cor. viii.), and if Christ is thereby better served. But all who marry in the Lord assume an honourable place. Only, where Christians have entered into that state, the bed must be undefiled by adulterous intercourse, or by lascivious sinfulness. The who 'distribute to the needful according in either way, God will judge. Let your life—a word which describes the turn of a man's thoughts and actions—be free from covetousness ("the love of money"); and be content with (finding your sufficiency in) such things as you have. They needed the warning: For as men decline in grace, they grow in selfishness. The mischievous influence of this deceitful vice is strikingly described in 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10, where 'the love of money' (the same word) is said to be a root of all kinds of evil, drowning men in perdition, or piercing them through with many sorrows. One guard against this evil is that we be content with what we have; but the security against it is the Divine promise. —For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. Five negations, 'I will never, no never, no never forsake,' give strength to the assurance. The words are taken from three passages (see marginal references) spoken to various Hebrew saints, and forming part of the general promise of the Gospel given to each believer. Our God is the God of salutations (Ps. lxviii. 20), not one, but many, and delivers us from want as well as from sin. He spared not His Son, and freely gives with Him all things.

Ver. 6. So that we boldly say, The Lord is my helper, I will not fear: what shall man do unto me? So the Hebrew reads, and so more naturally the Greek of this passage.

Ver. 7. This verse is connected in part with the preceding. Remember them who are your leaders—a title found only in this chapter in the Epistles, but used in the Gospels and Acts for the leaders of the Church (Acts xv. 22; Luke xxii. 26). Leadership is the prominent thought with so much of ruling as is essential to lead. As applied to ministers, it gives no authority to make new laws in Christ's kingdom, or even to enforce Christ's commands by any authority except His own. —The which (who have this quality that—a word which defines the ground and the limit of their authority) have spoken to you the word of God (the Gospel); whose faith (not their creed, but their blessed trust in trouble and fidelity to principle) copy (or imitate), thoroughly considering what a blessed end their life had. These words refer not necessarily to martyrdom, of which, as yet, there were but few examples. The meaning is rather, that a course of Christian conduct, which even to the end is the outcome of a holy noble faith, is well worthy of the contemplation and imitation of all who observe it.

Ver. 8. This verse is closely connected with the preceding, though not in the way the Authorised Version (with a colon, or sometimes a comma, at the end of v. 7) indicates, as it is with what follows. It is a general truth. Jesus Christ is, the same yesterday (when our fathers lived and struggled), to-day (now that we live and struggle), and throughout the ages. He was the chief theme of the Gospel they preached—so 'the word of God' generally means in the New Testament. His power and love and grace are all unchanging and exhaustless.

Ver. 9. Very different from the varied and strange (foreign) doctrines (teachings) with which this Gospel is sometimes confounded, and very different from the legal precepts as to meats which are profitless as means of quickened life, or of true salvation, by which we must not suffer ourselves to be carried away (the true reading is not 'carried about')—For it is a good thing (a fine thing—a thing that has the beauty of virtue as well as the substance of it) that the heart be established (be made strong and firm) with grace (here opposed as a Divine operation in the soul to the outward and lifeless precepts of Jewish teachers, Col. ii. 22, 23)—the flesh profiting nothing (John vi. 63), wherein those that walked (a common Pauline expression, Eph. ii. 14-17);
TO THE HEBREWS.

92

Col. iii. 7] were not profited. The precepts of a ritual law have no living power, no saving efficacy. The mind that is occupied with them is generally blind to the great duties of piety and virtue, and is neither peaceful nor strong. The simplicity of the Gospel is most helpful to holiness as the purity of Gospel truth.

Vers. 10–12. And yet we have our altar and our meat. We are worshipers, may, even priestly worshipers. Our altar is the cross; our sin-offering the body of our Lord. 'His flesh is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed.' But all is hidden from the view and forbidden to the touch of those who serve the earthly sanctuary. Under the Law, some offerings were shared by the priest and people, and the arrangement implied that fellowship was restored and ceremonial expiation was completed. But the sin-offering of atonement was not eaten (Lev. vi. 30), and the bodies of national and priestly expiations were burnt without the camp. When atonement was a figure only, and not a reality, the worshipper had no communion with what professed to form it; the body, and were partakers of it, and claim the reconciliation which the partaking implies. The old altar must be renounced, and the old sacrifice abandoned. Men must go to the place where Christ was offered (cp. ix. 28), the place where Christ offered Himself (ix. 25), and those who seek acceptance through legal sacrifices have no part in Him, as they had no part in that sacrifice, which was the complete type of His work, yet was itself powerless to make full atonement, and therefore insufficient to secure the reconciliation and the strength of which the eating of the altar was the sign.

Vers. 13. Of Christ the sin-offering we may partake, provided we go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. The cross is the meeting-place of all who would be saved. To number ourselves with those who cast Him out, and so unconsciously made Him the antitype of the holiest of the ancient sacrifices, is to be undone. We must abandon the Law, we must find in Christ Himself the sin-offering in which we are to share, if we desire to partake of the forgiveness and holiness of the Gospel.

Vers. 14. Israel still claimed to be the people of God, and Jerusalem was outwardly His dwelling-place. But God had already quitted it. Jerusalem, with its temple and rites—all were condemned. Here, therefore, we have no continuing city, no material temple, no imperfect sacrifice; but the cross and Christ and heaven the antitype of them all.

Vers. 15. Meanwhile our sacrifice or peace-offering is praise; 'the perpetual offering,' as even Jews described it, 'which is never to cease'—the fruit, 'the calves,' of lips that are ever giving thanks to His name. Praise, continuous praise, is the fitting recognition of an abiding Saviour and an unending salvation.

Vers. 16. Nor is that all: there must be also the further sacrifice of a beneficent and generous life; for with such sacrifices—'well-doing' and fellowship in love, in service, and in gifts—God is well pleased. A life of cheerful thankfulness, of ceaseless well-doing, of ready participation with others in the gifts God has entrusted to us—are these the offerings of the Gospel; the one great sin-offering of our Lord possessing ceaseless power.

Vers. 17, etc. Having referred to deceased leaders and to their steadfastness, the writer is naturally led to speak of the danger of apostatising to Judaism; he therefore exhorts them to come completely out of it and boldly follow Christ. He now returns to their leaders. Obey God; keep giving, the obedience which springs from trust in them, and from the persuasion that their rule is right! your leaders, and submit yourselves (to their reproof and admonition, even to their authority); and this rule he enforces by a delicate reference to the leaders' responsibility; for it is their duty and their right to watch over and in the interest of your souls, free alike from indolence and from false security, as having to give account, that they may do this work (of watching) with joy, and not mourning (literally 'groaning') over it or you; for, if it is a grief to them, the loss will be yours; that is unprofitable for you.

Vers. 18. The writer now speaks of himself and of his colleagues, all watchers over them, and asks the prayers of his readers, as Paul does in all his Epistles. Pray for us, for we are persuaded (the perfect tense, 'we trust,' gives practically a passive) that we have a good conscience. He was conscious of no evil. He had exhorted them, rebuked them, and instructed them. He had also suffered. And he felt he was blameless in all. The feeling, however, may be a delusion; and yet it rests on the teaching of God's Word, and is confirmed by God's blessing and by our higher consciousness—that we are really desiring (striving, having a will to behave, to live) honourably in all things. The Greek words for 'a good conscience and 'honorably,' are forms of the same word, and express the beauty, the nobleness of goodness. To live a good and noble life in all things is an earnest purpose, and the conscience which affirms this is our purpose, is itself worthy of the life we desire to live; not blind or perverted, but noble and true. His life and his teaching had probably both been subjects of distrust among the Hebrews. Paul's gospel, which this Epistle certainly represents, was still in disrepute. He therefore asks their prayers as helpful both to himself and to themselves.

Vers. 19. And I beseech you the more exceedingly (earnestly) to do this, i.e. to pray for us (comp. Phil. 2, 22), that I may be restored to you the sooner. This language agrees remarkably with the deep affection Paul cherished for the Hebrew Church at Jerusalem, a Church he visited many times.

Vers. 20, 21. To this desire for their prayers is added his own benediction, as in Paul's Epistles generally (1 Thess. v. 25, etc.). Now the God of peace—a common title of God in Paul's Epistles, used in different connections, and probably with different meanings. Here it is specially appropriate; partly because of the troubles that harassed and threatened them, and partly because it implies how completely God had been pacified and reconciled through the death of His Son, who came preaching peace. God is further described, who brought again from the dead (not too much for 2 Cor. and 1st Cor.), as one who had made full atonement for sin, and having paid the debt, could no longer be held in the bondage of the grave. Only here in this Epistle is the resurrection named, probably as proving the completeness of Christ's work.

Everywhere else Christ passes from the atonement to the Holy of Holies as priest and offering, to make
intercession for us. The phrase, 'from the dead,' coupled with what follows, 'that great Shepherd of the sheep,' points to Isa. lixii. 11, where Moses, the shepherd of the sheep, is said to have been brought up out of the sea. Moses from the sea, Christ from the dead, each for his own work.—

The great Shepherd of the sheep, who had given His life for them, who was great as Priest (x. 21), and great as Shepherd too. His self-sacrificing tenderness, His ceaseless care, His power, His resources, His authority, all are included in this title—a favourite representation of our Lord in ancient Art.—In the blood of the everlasting covenant, i.e. God brought Him from the dead by virtue of it, in the power of the blood, which ratified not the temporary covenant of Sinai, but the eternal covenant of grace. God's peace is not a truce for a time; it is a permanent peace, an agreement for eternity. The interpretation that Christ was made shepherd by virtue of the blood of the covenant is hardly scriptural. He was shepherd before He died. The acceptance of His atonement, the efficacy of His blood, was the condition of His resurrection. If He had not risen, it must have been because atonement was not made; and if atonement was not made, we should still have been in sins.—Even our Lord Jesus Christ. Here the name that is above every name (our 'Lord') is given to Jesus. He who is the Shepherd, who died for His sheep, who keeps them, feeds them, guides them, protects them, is also their lord; the Lord of their hearts as He is also of their creed. By His resurrection God acknowledges the validity of the atonement; by accepting it, Christ accepts the result of Divine love; grace which justifies and sanctifies and guides us; grace which begins and completes our salvation; an especially appropriate ending of this Epistle, and the characteristic ending of each of Paul's Epistles, and of his own, in the New Testament.

The only subscription that has any critical value is 'To the Hebrews.' Variations are found in some MSS.; 'was written from Italy by Timothy,' one MS. adding 'in Hebrew;' 'from Rome' (A). But no argument can be based on these readings.

Three lessons are suggested by the structure and argument of this Epistle. 1. The theme which distinguishes doctrine from precept, and makes precept the more important, is rebuked by the very order of the Epistle itself, as in all Paul's Epistles. The doctrinal teaching suggests the form of the precepts, and supplies the strongest reasons for obedience. Spiritual truths on sin, Christ, redemption, eternal life, are largely the foundation and the motive-forces of practical duty.

2. The need of a priesthood, and the fact that Christ is the great High Priest, superseding every other, all-sufficient and eternal, are essential parts of the Gospel. Without the recognition of the first, there is no adequate sense of sin and of God. Without the recognition of the second, there is no pacifying of the conscience, and no free personal access to God as the loving Father of all who believe.

3. False conceptions of the Gospel and of God's way of peace, based on institutions and teaching that are originally Divine, are among the greatest hindrances to salvation, and among the most fruitful sources of apostasy. Because Judaism was Divine, and the Jews believed it, they were in danger of rejecting Christ—in greater danger than if they had been heathens. Truth blended with error, God's word misunderstood and believed, may be as great hindrances to holiness and charity as heresy or unbelief.
INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

This Epistle is the first in that division of the books of the New Testament known by the name of the Catholic Epistles. To this division belong seven Epistles: the Epistle of James, the two Epistles of Peter, the three Epistles of John, and the Epistle of Jude.

The term Catholic was applied by Origen in the third century to First Peter and First John; but it was not until the fourth century that it was used to distinguish this group of Epistles. In this application we first meet with it in the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius, who speaks of 'the seven Catholic Epistles' (H. E. ii. 23). Various meanings have been attached to the term. Some regard it as synonymous with canonical, and as used to denote those Epistles which were universally recognised. Others understand the term as opposed to heretical, and as employed to denote those writings which agree with the doctrines of the universal church. And others think that, after the Gospels and the Acts were collected into one group, and the Pauline Epistles into another, the remaining Epistles were called catholic to denote the common or general collection of all the apostles. But all those meanings are defective; they do not distinguish this group of Epistles; they are as applicable to the other writings of the New Testament. The most appropriate and approved meaning of the term is general, in the sense of circular; used to denote those Epistles which are addressed, not to any particular church or individual, as the Pauline Epistles, but to a number of churches. It is true that the Second and Third Epistles of John form an exception, as they are addressed to individuals; but they are attached to the larger Epistle of the same author, and may be considered as an appendix to it. Although the term Catholic is given to these seven Epistles primarily to distinguish them from the Epistles of Paul, yet, taken in the above sense, it appropriately distinguishes them. Thus the Epistle of James is a catholic or circular Epistle: it is not addressed to any particular church or individual, but generally to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad. Corresponding to this general address, the references in it are general, not personal; there are no salutations appended to it, as is the case with many of the Epistles of Paul.

Sect. I.—The Author of the Epistle.

The author designates himself 'James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.' Now there are three distinguished disciples bearing the name James. 1. James the son of Zebedee and brother of John, one of the three favoured apostles of our Lord. 2. James the son of Alpheus, called also James the Less (Mark xv. 40), another of the apostles. 3. James the Lord's brother, the so-called bishop of Jeru-
salem; unless, indeed, these two last are the same person. The question which meets us is: To which of these three does the authorship of this Epistle belong?

Some have attributed the Epistle to James the son of Zebedee. This is stated in a manuscript of the old Italic version, the Codex Corbeiensis, and in the early printed editions of the old Syriac or Peshito, although it is doubtful whether it was originally in that version itself. But this opinion is now generally abandoned as opposed to all probability.¹ James the son of Zebedee was beheaded by Herod Agrippa I, A.D. 44 (Acts xii. 2); but this is too early a date for the composition of this Epistle. The gospel was then scarcely propagated beyond the boundaries of Judea: there could hardly, at that early period, be any Jewish churches of the dispersion to which to write; nor could the Christian Church be in that state of development which this Epistle presupposes. This, of course, proceeds on the supposition, which we shall afterwards prove to be correct, that this Epistle was written to Jewish Christians, and not to Jews generally.

Christian tradition has pointed to James 'the Lord's brother' as the author of this Epistle (Eus. H. E. ii. 23); and with this the state of the case fully accords. This James was permanently resident in the church of Jerusalem; he appears to have been its recognised head; if not an apostle, he was at least a person of acknowledged importance among the apostles; he presided at the Council of Jerusalem, and is mentioned by Paul as one of the pillars of the church (Gal. ii. 9). Hence, as the head of the Jewish church at Jerusalem, he would have a great interest in the believing Jews outside of that city—'the twelve tribes who were scattered abroad,' could write to them with authority, and would be listened to by them with deference and respect.

The opinion of Roman Catholics and early Protestant commentators is that this James the Lord's brother is identical with the Apostle James the son of Alpheaus.² This opinion was not entertained by the early Church, and appears to have been first introduced by Jerome. According to this view, the word brother is used in an extended sense for cousin. The brothers of Christ are mentioned by name in the Gospels; they are James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas (Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3). Now two of these names, James and Joses, are elsewhere mentioned as the names of the sons of Mary, the wife of Clopas, who is assumed to be the same as the sister of the Virgin. 'Now there stood at the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene' (John xix. 25); and elsewhere we are informed that this Mary was the mother of James the Less and Joses (Matt. xxvii. 56; Mark xv. 40); and consequently these two were the cousins of our Lord. It is further maintained that Clopas is the same name as Alpheaus—these being different forms of expressing the Hebrew name in Greek characters; and hence the Apostle James the son of Alpheaus is the same as James the son of Clopas and Mary, the cousin of our Lord. We also know that this James had a brother named Judas; for among the apostles mention is made of 'Judas, the brother of James' (Acts i. 13). And further, another apostle named Simon is mentioned in the apostolic lists, always in company with James and Judas, so that there is no improbability in supposing him to be another brother. Hence, then, the sons of Alpheaus, or Clopas, and Mary, the sister of the Virgin, namely James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas, are regarded as identical with those bearing the same names, who are mentioned

¹ This opinion has of late been ingeniously defended by the Rev. F. T. Basset in his Commentary on the Epistle of James.
² See the discussion on the brothers of our Lord in a note appended to Matt. xiii. 58 in this Commentary. The remarks here were written independently of that note.
INTRODUCTION TO THE EPistle OF JAMES. 97

as the brothers of our Lord. The names are the same, and to identify them we have only to suppose that the word brother is used in an extended sense so as to include cousins.

It would occupy too much space to discuss this view. The reasoning is plausible, but will not bear examination; and the objections against it are so numerous and great, that it may almost be considered as demonstrated that James the brother of our Lord, and James the son of Alpheus, are not identical. 1. In no passage of the New Testament is it indicated that the brothers of our Lord were only His cousins; they are always called brothers, never relations; and it is arbitrary to assume that the word brothers here denotes cousins, a sense which it never has in the New Testament. The same objection is equally strong with reference to those who are called the sisters of our Lord (Matt. xiii. 56). 2. When the brothers of our Lord are mentioned, they are always distinguished from the twelve apostles. We are expressly informed that, during the lifetime of Christ, His brothers did not believe on Him (John vii. 5). 3. And after His ascension, when they became believers, and associated with the disciples, they are still distinguished from the twelve (Acts i. 14; 1 Cor. ix. 5). This could not have been the case, if two, if not three, of them had been apostles. 4. It is extremely doubtful if Mary the wife of Clopas was the sister of the Virgin. The words in John's Gospel are: 'Now there stood at the cross of Jesus His mother and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas and Mary Magdalene' (John xix. 25). It is more probable that four women are here mentioned in pairs, instead of three; and as we learn from the other Gospels that Salome, the mother of John, also stood at the cross (Matt. xxvi. 56; Mark xv. 40), the probability is that she, and not Mary the wife of Clopas, was the sister of our Lord's mother: John having abstained to mention her name, in accordance with his usual reserve in personal matters. This avoids the awkwardness of two sisters being called by the same name. On this supposition, James the son of Alpheus was no relation to our Lord. 5. It is by no means a certainty that Clopas and Alpheus are the same names. 6. It is equally uncertain that Judas the apostle was the brother of James, and not rather, as the words might have been translated more in accordance with the Greek idiom, the son of (an unknown) James. 6. The uncertainty is still greater with regard to the relationship of Simon Zelotes to James and Judas. For these reasons, then, we consider that the identity of James the son of Alpheus, and James 'the Lord's brother,' must be relinquished.

But if James the Lord's brother is not identical with James the son of Alpheus, who is he? On this point there are two opinions: the one, that he and the other brothers of our Lord were the sons of Mary and Joseph; and the other, that they were the children of Joseph by a previous marriage.

Many eminent divines suppose that James was a real brother of our Lord, being the son of Mary and Joseph. According to this opinion, the words brothers and sisters, when spoken of in connection with our Lord, are to be taken in their literal sense; they being likewise the children of Mary. Such an opinion was first started toward the close of the fourth century by Helvidius. It was opposed to the then universal tradition of the Christian Church concerning the perpetual virginity of

1 The argument is independent of the meaning attached to the unbetroth of our Lord's brothers, whether it was absolute or partial.

2 This identity is asserted by Bishop Wordsworth in his Greek Testament, and has more recently been defended by Dean Scott in his excellent Commentary on the Epistle of James, forming part of the Speaker's Commentary.

3 It is a matter of dispute whether Tertullian held that James was the son of Mary and Joseph; his words are ambiguous. Lightfoot thinks it highly probable that he held the Helvidian view,
INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISODE OF JAMES.

Mary; and on this account is still repugnant to the feelings of many Protestants, as well as of all Romanists. On the other hand, it is argued that the idea, that Mary should have had no other children of her own, is a mere sentiment arising from a false notion of the superior sanctity of celibacy, and that it has no foundation in the word of God (Luke ii. 7; Matt. i. 25). There are, however, two positive objections against this opinion. 1. It would appear that James is expressly called an apostle by Paul, when he writes: 'Other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother' (Gal. i. 19). To this it has been replied, either that the word apostle is here used in an extended sense: as in the New Testament it is not confined to the twelve, but is applied to other distinguished disciples, as, for example, Paul and Barnabas (Acts xiv. 16); or that the restriction does not apply to the word apostles, but to the whole clause in the sense: Except Peter, I saw no other apostle, but I saw James the Lord's brother (comp. Luke iv. 25-27). 2. If Mary had children of her own, Jesus would not, when dying, have recommended her to the care of John (John xix. 26, 27); an objection to which we have found no satisfactory solution. We are ignorant of the circumstances of the case; but this objection cannot outweigh the greater and more numerous objections to the theory of identity.

There is still a third opinion—namely, that James and the other brothers and sisters of our Lord were the children of Joseph by a previous marriage, and were, on account of this relationship, regarded as his brothers and sisters. By reason of our Lord's miraculous conception, they were actually no relations; but they would be considered by the world as His brothers. This view was the general opinion of the early Greek Fathers, as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius, Epiphanius, Gregory of Nyssa, and so is the one best attested by ecclesiastical tradition. It lessens, though it does not entirely remove, the objection arising from Jesus recommending His mother to the care of John, that is, to her nephew, instead of to her step-children; and it does no violence to the general sentiment of the Church concerning the perpetual virginity of Mary. Still, however, though ably maintained by Bishop Lightfoot, and apparently adopted by Dean Plumptre, it has not been much favoured by modern divines. It has too much the appearance of a hypothesis invented to avoid a difficulty; nor is there the slightest intimation in Scripture that Joseph had been married previous to his espousals with the Virgin.

This James, the Lord's brother, is scarcely alluded to in the Gospels, but is frequently mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. He was a prominent person in the early church. During our Lord's lifetime it is probable that with his brothers he remained unbelieving (John vii. 5), but was converted by a special appearance of Christ to him after His resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 7). From the first, owing probably to his high moral character and relationship to Christ, he occupied a distinguished position in the early church. To him Peter sent a message, on his release from imprisonment: 'Go show these things unto James and the brethren' (Acts xii. 7). He presided at the Council of Jerusalem, and pronounced the decree of the assembled church (Acts xv. 19). To him, as the head of the church of Jerusalem, Paul repaired on his last visit to that city (Acts xxii. 18). In the Epistle to the Galatians, Paul gives him the honourable designation of 'James the Lord's brother' (Gal. i. 19); and along with Peter and John, he mentions him as one of the three pillars of the church (Gal. ii. 9). In the same Epistle we are also informed, that it was the presence of 'certain who came from James' which was the cause of Peter's withdrawing himself

1 An ingenious solution is given by Dr. Bushnell in his sermon on Mary the mother of Jesus: 'Why Jesus committed her thus to John and not to the four brothers it is not difficult to guess; for John has a home as they certainly have not, and are not likely soon to have.'
from converse with the Gentiles (Gal. ii. 21). And in the short Epistle of Jude, the
author calls himself ‘Jude the brother of James’ (Jude 1).

If not actually bishop of Jerusalem, it would appear from these scriptural notices
that James at least exercised a very important influence in the mother church. He
was the recognised head of the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem. When Christianity
was chiefly confined to Jewish converts, his influence must have been almost para-
mount. And after its extension to the Gentiles, the Jewish Christians would esteem
him to be peculiarly their apostle, as Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles; his influ-
ence would not be confined to Jerusalem, but would extend to all believers among
the twelve tribes, wherever scattered.

Nor is ecclesiastical history silent concerning this pillar of Christianity; he
occupies a large space in the traditions of the church. Certainly the accounts that
have reached us are mixed with fable, but still in them we can trace the character of
the man. They all describe him as a man of the greatest moral strictness, to whom
the epithet ‘the Just’ was universally applied, and affirm that he continued to the
last an observer of the Mosaic law. He suffered martyrdom by the Jews, a few years
before the commencement of the Jewish war. The accounts of his death vary. It is
thus recorded by Josephus, in a very remarkable passage, the genuineness of which
has without good reasons been disputed: ‘Ananias assembled the sanhedrim, and
brought before them the brother of Jesus, who is called Christ, whose name was
James, and some of his companions; and when he had formed an accusation against
them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned’ (Ant. xx. 9. 1). Accord-
ing to the account of Hegesippus, preserved in the history of Eusebius, James was
cast down from the pinnacle of the temple, and stoned while he was yet alive, and
at length put to death by a blow from a fuller’s club (H. E. ii. 23).

From all these scriptural and traditionary notices, it would appear that James was
a man of the strictest integrity, and that he continued to the last an observer of the
law of Moses—‘a just man according to the law.’ By becoming a Christian he did
not renounce Judaism; he resided in Jerusalem, and continued to worship in the
temple. He was even more than Peter the apostle of the circumcision (Gal. ii. 8);
the sphere of his labours was restricted to the Jewish converts to Christianity. Hence,
then, his practical relation to the Jewish law was different from that of Paul. Paul
felt himself to be dead to the law, freed from its requirements; he probably observed
it, but not strictly; when it served to promote the diffusion of the gospel, he could
become without the law to those who were without the law; though, on other occa-
sions, he became a Jew to the Jews that he might gain the Jews. James, on the
other hand, did not disavow Christianity from Judaism; he regarded Christianity as
the perfection of Judaism; he was far from wishing to impose the Jewish yoke on
the Gentile Christians, but he saw no necessity to separate himself from the ancient
people, or to renounce their religion. ‘Had not,’ observes Dr. Schaff, ‘the influence
of James been modified and completed by that of a Peter, and especially a Paul,
Christianity, perhaps, would never have cast off entirely the envelope of Judaism and
risen to independence. Yet the influence of James was necessary. He, if any, could
gain the ancient chosen nation as a body. God placed such a representative of the
purest form of Old Testament piety in the midst of the Jews to make their transition
to the faith of the Messiah as easy as possible, even at the eleventh hour. But when
they refused this last messenger of peace, the divine forbearance was exhausted, and
the fearful, long-threatened judgment broke upon them. And with this the mission of
James was fulfilled. He was not to outlive the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.’

1 History of the Apostolic Church, vol. ii. p. 38.
SECT. II.—THE READERS OF THE EPISTLE.

As the personality of the author has been the subject of much dispute, so likewise have been the persons to whom this Epistle was primarily addressed. They are designated ‘the twelve tribes who are scattered abroad;’ but very different meanings have been attached to these words.

Some suppose that the Epistle was addressed to Christians in general. They take the expression ‘twelve tribes’ in a figurative sense to denote ‘the Israel of God’ (Gal. vi. 16), in contrast to ‘Israel after the flesh’ (1 Cor. x. 18). But such an interpretation is wholly inadmissible. There is not the slightest intimation in the Epistle that a figurative sense is to be given to these words; and we must beware of assigning a metaphorical sense to the words of Scripture when no such sense is indicated by the context or required by the passage. Moreover, James speaks of Abraham as ‘our father’ (Jas. ii. 21), thus indicating that as a Jew he wrote to the Jews.

Others suppose that the Epistle was addressed to Jews generally—to non-Christian as well as to Christian Jews. This is an opinion which possesses considerable plausibility, and has found many able supporters. The Epistle, it is affirmed, is addressed ‘to the twelve tribes,’ without any recognition of the Christian faith of the readers; they are described merely according to their nationality. Besides, it contains various statements which can hardly apply to Christians, and can only be true of unconverted Jews (ii. 6, 7, v. 6). But the general contents of the Epistle are opposed to this opinion. The readers, whoever they were, were at least professing Christians; their Christianity is taken for granted. James rests his authority upon being ‘a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ’ (i. 1). His readers, without distinction, are such as God hath begotten by the word of truth, that is, the gospel of Christ (i. 18). He speaks of their possessing the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory (ii. 1). He mentions those who blasphemed that worthy name, namely, the name of Christ, by which they were called (ii. 7). And he exhorts them to patience because of the advent of Christ: ‘Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord’ (v. 7).

Hence, then, we conclude that this Epistle was primarily addressed to Jewish Christians. To this, indeed, it has been objected that there are portions in it which are inapplicable to Christians: the severe invectives of the writer (iii. 9, iv. 1, 4), and especially his denunciation of judgment upon the rich (v. 1–6), can only refer to unbelievers. But we do not know the state of moral corruption which prevailed among the Jewish Christians; and certainly, if we were to judge of them by the conduct of many professing Christians of the present day, we would not regard those invectives as too strong. And with regard to the attack upon the rich in the fifth chapter, it is so worded that it may be regarded as an apostrophe addressed to rich unbelievers—the proud oppressors of the Jewish Christians; though it is not impossible that there existed in the Christian Church rich professors to whom these words of stern reproof were not inapplicable.

The phrase ‘twelve tribes’ was a usual appellation of Jews in general. Thus Paul, in his speech before Agrippa, says: ‘Unto which promise our twelve tribes hope to attain’ (Acts xxvi. 7). The twelve tribes were now mixed together, and formed the

1 The opinion advocated by Basset, and necessary for his theory of the authorship of James the son of Zebedee.
nation of the Jews. Many of the Israelites were left in their own land by their Assyrian conquerors, and many of them returned at the restoration from Babylon. The locality of these twelve tribes is contained in the addition, 'who are scattered abroad.' They were the Jews of the dispersion—Jews resident beyond the boundaries of Palestine. In almost every country at that time Jews of the dispersion were found; but there were especially two great dispersions—the Babylonian and the Greek. The Epistle being written in Greek, it would seem that the Greek dispersion (John vii. 35) was primarily intended. Accordingly the persons to whom it was addressed would be such as had passed over to Christianity from among those who are called Hellenists or Grecians in the Acts of the Apostles, i.e. Christian Jews who resided out of Palestine and who spoke the Greek language. The churches addressed were in all probability those in the countries in the closest proximity to Judea, namely, Phenicia, Syria, Cilicia, and Proconsular Asia. The members of these churches were, it is supposed, chiefly composed of Jewish Christians; not like those churches founded by Paul, which were chiefly composed of Gentile Christians.

The condition of those Christian Jews of the dispersion, as described in the Epistle, was such as to excite great anxiety and concern. They were exposed to manifold trials; their members were in general poor; and they were dragged by their rich oppressors before the judgment-seat (ii. 6). But it would appear that they did not bear their trials with Christian patience. Instead of trust in God, they gave way to doubt, and thus became double-minded, with their affections divided between God and the world. On account of their trials, they were strongly tempted to apostasy, to renounce their Christianity, and to relapse into their former Judaism. They carried the spirit of Jewish covetousness with them into the Christian Church, and were eagerly desirous of earthly riches; looked upon poverty as a crime; showed even in their religious assemblies an obsequious attention to the rich; and by their actions declared that they preferred the friendship of the world to the friendship of God. This worldly spirit was the occasion of bitter strife among themselves; and especially there was a wide breach among them between the rich and the poor. Their religion had degenerated into a mere formal observance of certain religious ceremonies; they trusted to their privileges, both as Jews and Christians, without giving due attention to holiness of life; and they rested on their Christian faith, although divorced from good works. Of course we are not to suppose that all were thus estranged from the Christian life; but even they who preserved their Christianity purest were living in the midst of temptation, and required to be admonished and encouraged to perseverance.

Sect. III.—Place and Time of Writing.

With regard to the place of composition, there is hardly any difference of opinion. This was undoubtedly Jerusalem, where James usually resided, and which was the proper centre for an Epistle addressed to Jewish Christians to issue from. In this Epistle the mother church addresses her offspring. 'The local colouring of the Epistle,' as Dean Plumptre remarks, 'indicates with sufficient clearness where the writer lived. He speaks, as the prophets of Israel had done, of the early and latter rain (v. 7); the hot blast of the kassbûn or simoom of the desert (i. 11); the brackish springs of the hills of Judah and Benjamin (iii. 11); the figs, the olives, and the vines with which those hills were clothed (iii. 12); all these form part of the surroundings of the writer. Storms and tempests, such as might have been seen on the Sea of Galilee, or in visits to Cæsarea or Joppa, and the power of man to guide the
great ships safely through them, have at some time or other been familiar to him'' (iii. 4).1

The time of composition, on the other hand, is a matter of greater difficulty, and has given rise to a variety of opinions. Assuming the correctness of our view regarding the author of the Epistle, it was evidently written on or before the year 63, when James was martyred. But it may be disputed whether it was written before or after Paul’s publication of the doctrine of justification without the works of the law. Those who suppose that the object of this Epistle was to correct the perversions of Paul’s views must assign a later date, not long before the death of James; whereas those who think that James makes no reference to Paul’s views, but refers only to errors which he knew to be then prevalent among the Jewish Christians, may assign a much earlier date, though not necessitated to do so.

Some suppose that the Epistle contains a designed refutation of certain perversions of Paul’s doctrine of justification, that doctrine having been apprehended as implying that faith was all that was necessary for salvation, and that works or acts of holy obedience were unnecessary. They think that the very terms employed by James—justification, faith, and works—point to a Pauline origin, and are a proof that Paul’s doctrine was already published and perverted among those Jewish Christians to whom James wrote. James, it is said, expresses himself with evident reference to the conclusion which Paul arrived at (Jas. ii. 24; Rom. iii. 28). The example of Abraham’s justification is adduced by both Paul and James, as an illustration of their respective views (Jas. ii. 21; Rom. iv. 1–3). And various expressions in this Epistle are considered to be allusions to similar expressions in Paul’s Epistles. The relation of James’ doctrine of justification to that of Paul’s will be considered when we come to the exposition of the Epistle. Meanwhile we would only remark that it is not necessary to suppose that James was acquainted with Paul’s doctrine, or that he had read his Epistles. The supposed allusions to the Pauline Epistles are vague and not numerous. There is no necessity to suppose that the ideas of justification, faith, and works, were only Pauline ideas; they might have been prevalent in the Christian church, as expressions of its belief; and, indeed, they were not unknown among the Jews. The reference to Abraham’s justification would be natural to any Jewish writer in discussing the relation of faith to justification, for it is one of the few instances in the Old Testament where faith is mentioned in such a relation. What James combats may have been, not any perversion of Pauline views, but the old opinion of the Pharisees introduced into the Christian church, that mere external privileges, an orthodox creed, and the performance of certain outward religious services, would ensure salvation, independently of a holy life.

We are therefore inclined to agree with those who would assign the date of this Epistle to a period prior to the promulgation of the Pauline doctrine of justification: indeed to suppose it possible that it may have been written even before the Council of Jerusalem. There is in it no allusion to Gentile Christians, as if Christianity was then chiefly restricted to the Jews; nor is there any mention of those divisions which arose, in consequence of the numerous conversions of the Gentiles, between Jewish and Gentile Christians concerning the validity of the Mosaic law. This can easily be accounted for on the supposition that such divisions had not then arisen, and that Jewish Christianity was then predominant. At an early period, when the gospel had only commenced to be preached to the Gentiles, when Paul and Barnabas had only set out on their first missionary journey, most of the Christian Churches must have been composed of Jewish Christians, who would be identical with those Jews of the

1 The local colouring of the Epistle is also adverted to by Hug in his Introduction, vol. ii. sec. c.viii.
INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISODE OF JAMES.

dispersion beyond Judea, to whom James wrote. We read that, in consequence of the persecution that arose about Stephen, those that were scattered abroad travelled as far as Phenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but to the Jews only (Acts xi. 19). Afterwards, in consequence of the conversion of the Gentiles, the Jewish element would be swallowed up, and beyond Palestine there is no mention of Jewish Christian churches, although it is not improbable that some of them may have existed in Syria and Babylonia. Although we can attain to no certainty on this point, yet an early date is more probable than a late one, and on this supposition we would assign the composition of this Epistle to somewhere between the years 45 and 50. In that case, this Epistle is one of the earliest, if not the very earliest, of the books of the New Testament.

SECT. IV.—DESIGN OF THE EPISTLE.

The design of the Epistle has already been indicated in considering the condition of the readers. It was to correct certain errors in practice into which the Jewish Christians had fallen, to warn them against apostasy, and to establish them in the faith amid the temptations to which they were exposed. It is observable that the faults which James censures are such as we know then prevailed among the Jews. The Jewish Christians, when they embraced Christianity, had not divested themselves of their Jewish character; their old nature was not thus so easily laid aside. Thus James reproves them for their covetousness—their eager desire to buy and sell and get gain (iv. 13); for their formalism—relying on their belief in the unity of God, the great article of the Jewish religion, without a corresponding practice (iii. 19); for their oppression—the rich refusing to pay the labourers their hire (v. 4); for their meanness, their sycophancy toward the rich (ii. 3); for their falsehood, their disregard of oaths (v. 12); and for their fatalism, laying the blame of their faults upon God (i. 13).

The design of this Epistle is ethical, not doctrinal. James does not, like Paul, insist upon or develop the peculiar doctrines of Christianity; he supposes them known, and he builds upon them practical Christianity. He dwells upon the government of the tongue, the sin of worldliness, the observance of the moral law; in short, the utter worthlessness of faith without works: he inculcates the principle of that pure and undefiled worship which consists in doing good to others, and in keeping ourselves pure in the world (i. 27). Hence there is in the Epistle a comparative want of Christian doctrine. James does not insist on the atonement, the resurrection and ascension of Christ, and the work of the Spirit. Our Lord's sufferings are hardly alluded to: even the name of our Saviour occurs only twice (i. 1, ii. 1). On the other hand, there is nothing in the Epistle at variance with the exalted and divine nature of Christ, but rather the reverse. James calls himself 'the servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ' (i. 1), thus maintaining a unity between God and Christ; he speaks of Him as the Lord of glory (ii. 1), exalted above all human power and dignity; he adverts to the coming of the Lord (v. 7, 8), and evidently designates Him as the Judge of the world (v. 8, 9). At the same time, even when James touches

1 Dr. Erdmann supposes that the Epistle was written even before the formation of the Gentile church at Antioch, when consequently almost all the Christians would be Jews and Jewish converts. These churches of the dispersion would necessarily be closely connected with the church of Jerusalem, over which James presided, so that he may be considered as having a pastoral oversight over them.
on doctrine, it is not for the sake of the doctrine, but always with reference to practice. Thus he speaks of justification, in order to show the inseparable connection between faith and holiness. The Epistle, in its purely ethical tendency, bears a very close resemblance to the Sermon on the Mount: many of the precepts and illustrations are the same as those found in that greatest of discourses. Not that the writer of this Epistle saw the Gospel of Matthew; but the words of Jesus, orally repeated before any Gospel was written, were impressed upon his memory, and influenced his diction.

The style of this Epistle is very marked and original; it bears no resemblance to any other writing in the New Testament; the nearest approach to it in sententious sentiments and detached maxims is the Book of Proverbs. There is a great freshness and vividness about it; the writer is rich in illustrations, which are always appropriate and impressive. There is a directness in his address; the persons whom he addresses are brought forward, and spoken to, as if they were present. In his animadversions he uses strong expressions; his stern sense of duty gives rise to a great severity in his rebukes; he is full of zeal and moral indignation at all iniquity; he does not spare the faults of those to whom he writes; and his denunciations often resemble the indignant reproaches of the Old Testament prophets. To him no faith, no profession, no assertion is of any value unless accompanied with holiness of life.

It is not easy to give a connected statement of the train of thought in this Epistle. There is no logical connection, as in the Epistles of Paul; the sentences are often detached, and do not follow one another in a regular order. James commences his Epistle by alluding to the trials to which his readers were exposed; these, if patiently endured, were to be to them a source of joy, and were an occasion of blessedness; but they must beware of attributing their yielding to temptation to God, for He is the source of all good and not of evil; more especially it was of His goodness that they were born again by the gospel. It becomes them to be diligent hearers of the gospel, in order that they might reduce to practice its precepts. Religion does not consist in the performance of ceremonies, but in active benevolence and personal purity (Jas. i.). They must not envy the rich, nor despise the poor, but practise their religion without respect of persons. The royal law of love teaches them to love their neighbour as themselves. Faith without love, showing itself in acts of benevolence, is dead. Such a faith, if it hath not works, cannot justify. To no purpose do they believe in God, unless their faith is accompanied with holiness of life (Jas. ii.). Especially must they cultivate that branch of holiness which consists in the government of the tongue; this will require their utmost care; they must avoid all strife and bitter envy, and cultivate that heavenly wisdom which is pure and peaceable; the result of holiness is not contention, but peace (Jas. iii.). On the other hand, all their fightings and strifes arise from those sinful lusts which exist within them; these they must overcome; they must resist the devil; they must cleanse their hands and purify their hearts; they must humble themselves before

---

1 The following is a list of parallelisms as given by Huther:

| Jas. i. 2 compared with Matt. v. 10-12. |
| --- | --- |
| " i. 4 " | " v. 48. |
| " i. 5, v. 15 " | " vii. 7-12. |
| " i. 9 " | " v. 3. |
| " i. 20 " | " v. 22. |
| " ii. 13 " | " vi. 14, 15, v. 7. |
| " ii. 14-16 " | " vii. 21-23. |

| Jas. ii. 17, 18 compared with Matt. v. 9. |
| --- | --- |
| " iv. 10 " | " v. 3, 4. |
| " iv. 11 " | " vii. 1, 2. |
| " v. 2 " | " vi. 19. |
| " v. 10 " | " v. 12. |
| " v. 12 " | " v. 33-37. |
INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISODE OF JAMES.

God, and not judge one another. Religion is also trust in God; in everything it behoves them to exercise dependence on God, and to acknowledge Him even in their worldly undertakings (Jas. iv.). The rich are especially warned, in a stern apostrophe, of their oppressions and wantonness; whilst those suffering from their oppressions are exhorted to patient waiting for the coming of the Lord; they are to take the prophets for examples of patient endurance of sufferings. In all things, and in every condition, they must abound in prayer, and seek to reclaim their erring brethren, for in so doing they would hide a multitude of sins (Jas. v.).

SECT. V.—THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE EPISTLE.

The Epistle of James did not receive the same speedy and general acceptance as the Epistles of Paul. The testimonies in its favour among the ancient fathers are comparatively few. Eusebius classes it among the disputed epistles (H. E. iii. 25); and it did not receive universal acceptance until the close of the fourth century. It is well known that at the Reformation its authority was disputed, and that Luther, from subjective reasons, viewed it in an unfavourable light.

The reasons of this dubiety with regard to the authenticity of this Epistle are easily accounted for. There was a certain doubtfulness as to its author. James the Lord's brother, to whom it was generally ascribed, although a person of great importance in the early church, was not an apostle, and hence he was regarded as inferior to most of the other writers of the New Testament. The Epistle was primarily addressed to the Jewish Christians, and thus would for some time be confined to a narrow circle of readers; and, besides, there was in the early ages a prejudice among the Gentile Christians against their Jewish brethren. Most of the peculiar doctrines of Christianity were omitted in the Epistle, and hence it was regarded as of inferior importance to those epistles which contained a development of Christian doctrine; it was considered to belong rather to the law than to the gospel. And especially the statements in it appeared to be opposed to the teaching of Paul. These circumstances hindered the general recognition of this Epistle; but, as has been remarked, 'so much the more valuable are those recognitions of its genuineness and canonicity which we do meet with.'

Still, however, this Epistle is not without external testimonies in its favour. There are probable allusions to it in the writings of the fathers Clemens Romanus, Hermas, Irenæus, and Tertullian, in the second century. Origen, in the third century, is the first who ascribes it to James; he speaks of it as the Epistle attributed to James. But the chief external testimony in its favour is that it is inserted in the Peshito or early Syriac translation, made in the middle of the second century, although that translation omits some other books of Scripture (2 Pet., 2 and 3 John, and Jude). The Syriac church was in the best position to judge of its authenticity. It was especially to the Jewish churches in Syria that this Epistle was addressed; and, therefore, its being recognised by the Syriac church is a strong proof in its favour.

The internal evidence is even stronger than the external. If it were a forgery, the author would not be described merely as 'James, the servant of God.' Other titles would be attached to his name, as 'James the Lord's brother,' in order to pave

---

1 It has been plausibly asserted that the earliest testimony in favour of the Epistle of James is the references to it in 1 Peter. Comp. 1 Pet. i. 6, 7 with Jas. i. 2, 3; 1 Pet. i. 24 with Jas. i. 10; 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2 with Jas. i. 21; 1 Pet. iv. 8 with Jas. v. 20; 1 Pet. v. 5, 6 with Jas. iv. 6, 10; 1 Pet. v. 8, 9 with Jas. iv. 7.
the way for the reception of the writing by the authority of the name of its author. The difference between it and the non-apostolic writings is immense, and its undisputed superiority is an argument in its favour. But, further, it is precisely such a letter as one would expect, considering the legal strictness of James, and the national feelings and temptations of the Jewish Christians. It is at once severe and indignant at sin, and earnest in the inculcation of practical religion, as we would expect in any utterance of James, the Just; and it reproves covetousness, worldliness, and Pharisaical formality, the prevalent faults in a community of Jewish Christians; for these were, even in the apostolic age, the prominent sins of the Jewish race.
THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF

JAMES.

CHAPTER I. 1-18.

On Temptations.

JAMES, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering: for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.

Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted; but the rich, in that he is made low; because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own, and tempted.

1 omit this 2 proof 3 endurance 4 simply 5 doubting 6 doubteth 7 who is lowly 8 in his humiliation 9 For the sun arose 10 with its heat 11 fell 12 He (the best authorities omit the Lord)
15 lust, and enticed. Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. 

16, 17 'Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will he begat us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.

by his own lust  
begeteth  
coming down

CONTENTS. James, after saluting his readers, commences his Epistle by advertings to the trials to which they were exposed: these, if patiently endured, would confirm and strengthen them in the faith; and, as they were placed in trying circumstances, he admonishes them to ask, without doubting, wisdom from God. If, on the one hand, they successfully overcame those temptations to which their trials exposed them, they would receive the crown of life which the Lord had promised to them that love Him; but if, on the other hand, they were overcome, they must beware of attributing their sins, which arose from their own wicked desires, to God who is the Author, not of evil, but of good; and especially it was of His pure goodness that they were born again by the word of truth.

Ver. 2. My brethren: the constant form of address in this Epistle; his readers were his brethren, both in account of their nationality and of their Christian faith; both in the flesh and in the Lord. Count it all joy, that is, complete or pure joy—a joy which excludes trouble and sorrow. Some suppose a reference here to the greeting of James, wherein he wishes his readers joy.—when ye fall into, when ye become unexpectedly surrounded or encompassed by. The idea of surprise is here to be taken into account. Trials are not to be sought for or rushed into; believers fall into them. Divers temptations. The adjective divers does not indicate the different sources from which the temptations proceed, but rather the different forms which they assume. Temptations are generally regarded in two points of view: enticements to sin, and trials or tests of character; here it is evident they are chiefly regarded in the latter point of view, though the former is not excluded (see note to ver. 13). They are outward trials as contrasted with inward temptations to evil. St. James may primarily allude to those trials to which, in the form of persecution, the Jewish Christians were exposed from their unbelieving countrymen; but the epithet divers would appear to include temptations or trials of all kinds. It is not the mere falling into trials that is the cause of joy; but the beneficial effects which result from them is evident from the verse which follows.

Ver. 3. Knowing this—being well assured of the fact, the reason or ground of the joy.—That the trying. These temptations are regarded as the tests or proofs of faith, and in this consists their value. By them faith is being tested as gold in the furnace, and is thus recognised and purified.—Of your faith; of your firm confidence and trust in the Gospel. Faith here is not used objectively for the doctrines of Christianity; but
subjectively for our personal persuasion of the truth of the Gospel.—worketh, producteth, patience. By patience here is not meant so much freedom from murmuring and repining, as endurance—steadfastness or perseverance in the faith of the Gospel under these temptations. The Jewish Christians by their trials were tempted to apostatize from Christianity. A period of trial is a period of testing; the true metal is purified, not consumed. Those who are true believers stand the test; the trying of their faith produces endurance. Those who are not true believers fall away; 'in time of temptation, says our Lord, 'they fall away' (Luke viii. 13). With respect to joy in temptation, because it produceth patience, compare the language of St. Paul: 'We glory in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience (endurance), and patience experience (approval),' (Rom. v. 3, 4). But let patience, or endurance, have her perfect—not only in the sense of enduring to the end, but of completeness—work. Patience is not merely a passive but an active virtue; there is a work of patience, yea a perfect work. And this work consists in the purification of the soul—in refining and ennobling our moral character. Patience under trials has pre-eminently a sanctifying tendency. The most perfect Christians are not the most active, but the most enduring; not so much in the battle of the world in the work of grace carried on, as in the quietness of the sickness. God proves His people in the furnace of affliction. He purges the fruitful branches that they may bear more fruit (John xv. 2).—that is, the trying of their faith produces in a man, as Dean Alford observes, 'is the man. If God's teaching by patience have had a perfect work in you, you are perfect.' Of course by this cannot be meant absolute perfection; the word denotes maturity in grace, not absolute but relative holiness.—and entire. Perfect and entire are almost synonymous terms; perfect denotes that which has attained to its maturity, entire that which is complete in all its parts. Compare Acts iii. 16.—wanting nothing—or 'in nothing lacking,' a negative expression for the sake of strengthening these two positive attributes—perfect and entire.

Ver. 5. If. The connection of this verse with the preceding is not very obvious. It may be as follows: You may by your trials be thrown into a state of perplexity; you may want wisdom; if so, ask of God.—any of you lack wisdom, perhaps suggested by the previous expression 'wanting or lacking nothing,' the verb in both verses being the same in the Greek. By wisdom here may be primarily meant wisdom or prudence in the present trying circumstances of the Jewish Christians; wisdom to bear their afflictions well. But the word is not to be confined to this; it denotes spiritual wisdom in general, not mere human wisdom or learning, but that 'wisdom which cometh from above,' and which is an essential foundation of Christian conduct. James, in writing to Jewish converts, might well suppose them acquainted from their sacred books with the true nature of wisdom, which was regarded by them as almost synonymous with religion. Wisdom was especially necessary to Christians in their temptations, to convert them from being incitaments to sin to be occasions of Christian perfection.—let him ask of God that giveth, or more literally, 'of God, the Giver.'—to all men liberally. The word rendered 'liberally' denotes simply, with simplicity, and intimates either that God gives from the pure love of giving, or without exacting any conditions. God does not give as man does, grudgingly and limiting His gifts, but simply that is, freely and graciously.—and without reproaches: Not as man who upbraids the petitioner on account of his unworthiness, or of his past misconduct, or of his abuse of former gifts. God in His giving upbraids not; He does not reproach us with our past faults. 'After thou hast given,' says the wise son of Sirach, 'do not upbraid' (Sirach xli. 22).—and it shall be given him, namely, wisdom, the object of his request (comp. 1 Kings iii. 9, 12).

Ver. 6. But, as an essential prerequisite to our obtaining an answer to our prayers,—let him ask in faith; that is, not believing that God will give us the precise thing that we ask, for we may ask for what is permicious to us, but believing that God hears prayer. The object of prayer is here presupposed, namely, wisdom; and this we may ask without limitation, as it is a blessing which is always proper for God to give, and fit for us to receive.—nothing wavering, or more simply and correctly, 'doubting nothing.' It is the same expression as occurs in Acts x. 20 in the address of the Spirit to Peter: 'Arise, get thee down and go with them, doubting nothing.' Here the expression means 'not doubting that God hears prayer.' The nature of this doubting is well stated by Huther in his excellent commentary: 'To doubt is not equivalent to disbelieve,' but includes in it the conviction of the heart; it is unbelief; whilst faith says 'yes,' and unbelief 'no,' to doubt is the conjunction of 'yes' and 'no,' but so that 'no' has the preponderance; it is an internal wavering which leans not to faith, but to unbelief.'—For hath he that wavereth, or doubteth, is like a wave of the sea: there is in the original no play upon words, as in our English Version.—driven of the wind and tossed. These terms in their original import do not, as some think, refer to outward and inward temptations (Erdmann). The figure which St. James employs is striking. The mind of the doubter is unsteady and wavering; like a wave, sometimes advancing and sometimes receding; there is want of rest and calmness. It is in stillness that God communicates His grace; unrest is adverse to His operations.

Ver. 7. For let not that man, namely, the doubter, think. This warning supposes that the doubter fancies that he will receive an answer to his prayers; but it is a vain delusion: his expectations will be disappointed.—that he shall receive anything of the Lord. By the Lord is here meant not Christ, but God. As the Septuagint does, here uses the term as equivalent to Jehovah. This is the usual meaning of the term in this Epistle; it is applied to Christ only in v. 7, 14, 15. In the Epistles of the other apostles the term 'Lord' generally denotes Christ.

Ver. 8. In this verse it is to be observed that the word 'is' is in italics, and therefore is not in the original. The verse ought to be translated: 'He,' that is, the doubter, 'is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.'—a double-minded man—literally, a two-souled man. Double-mindedness is here used not in the sense of duplicity, but
of doubioussness and indelicion—a man whose affections are divided between God and the world, or between faith and unbelief, who has, as it were, two minds—the one directed to God, and the other to the world. The man is not a hypocrite; he is a wanderer in his religion.—in unusability in all his ways. This necessarily arises from his double-mindedness. Where there is a want of unity in the internal life, it is also wanting in the external life (Huther). The man is actuated sometimes by one impulse, and sometimes by another; and thus will be perpetually running into inconsistencies of conduct. He wants decision of character. On such a man there is no dependence; he has no fixedness of purpose, and is therefore an untrustworthy man. His holy earnestness that adds dignity to the character.

Ver. 9. The meaning of this and of the following verse has been much disputed.—Let. The connection with the preceding is not obvious. It appears to be this: We must avoid all doubting of God in prayer, all double-mindedness; we must exercise confidence in Him, and realize His gracious dealings in all the dispensations of His Providence; and, whether rich or poor, we must place implicit trust in Him. The brother: here evidently the Christian brother, because Christianity unites all those who embrace it into one holy brotherhood.—of low degree—literally, 'who is lowly.' The word in itself does not necessarily involve the idea of poverty; but here, where the contrast is with the rich, it must denote 'poor' or 'afflicted'—the poor brother. The majority of the early Christians were from among the poor; and it is probable that the unbelieving Jews by fines and exactions, and by selling their believing brethren of their goods. Poverty was a frequent form of persecution for conscience' sake. — rejoice in that he is exalted—literally, 'glory in his exaltation.' Different meanings have been assigned to this phrase. The usual interpretation is to refer it to spiritual exaltation: Let the poor brother rejoice in the dignity and glory which a Christian he possesses, in those spiritual riches which are conferred upon him, and in the crown of life which is in reserve for him. He is constituted a child of God and an heir of heaven. Doubtless many who were slaves in the world were the Lord's freedmen. This dignity was a precious privilege to those who were thus possessed of greater means of usefulness, and are the better enabled to promote the cause of Christ. Voluntary poverty is no virtue; money may be redeemed from the world and deposited in the treasury of the Lord.

Ver. 10. But the rich. Some suppose that by the rich here is meant the unbeliever; not the rich brother, but the rich man; and accordingly they misunderstand the words either as ironical, 'Let the rich man rejoice in—let him glory in—that is in reality his shame, his humiliation;' or as a statement of fact, 'The rich man rejoices in his humiliation,' in his riches, which shall perish. But such a meaning appears to be forced and unnatural. The most natural meaning is to take the word 'brother' as a general term, which is specified by the lowly and the rich. The rich man, then, is here the Christian brother. Although most of the early Christians were poor, yet there were several among them who were rich; and to them there were addressed special exhortations; as when St. Paul says: 'Charge them that are rich not to trust in uncertain riches' (1 Tim. vi. 17). The word 'rejoice' or 'glory' has to be supplied: 'Let the rich brother rejoice in that he is made low; literally, in his humiliation.' There is here also the same diversity of meaning as in the former verse. It is usually understood of humility of spirit: 'Let the wealthy brother rejoice in that lowliness of spirit which the Gospel has conferred upon him: that by being made conscious of the vanity of earthly riches, he has been induced to seek after the true riches; to cultivate that spiritual exaltation which is the prelude of true exaltation. Although rich in this world, yet as a Christian he is poor in spirit, and clothed with humility. Others refer it to a rich man being stripped of his possessions by persecution for the sake of the Gospel: 'Let him glory in being thus deprived of his worldly wealth.' Perhaps the words may also be taken in their most literal meaning: 'Let the rich brother rejoice when he becomes poor,' when he is reduced from affluence to poverty, because he is then freed from the snares and temptations of riches. This is indeed a high attainment in piety, but it is one which has been made by many of the children of God. Riches are too frequently an obstacle to salvation; and when they have been thus converted and extinguished, believers may have abundant reason to thank God that that obstacle has been removed.

Ver. 11. For the sun is no sooner risen. In the original the words are in the lively style of a narrative: 'For the sun arose,'—with a burning heat. The word here rendered 'burning heat,' is often used in the Septuagint to denote the hot east wind; and hence the simoom or the sirocco is meant, which, blowing from the hot sands of Arabia, burns up all vegetation. But it is better to refer it to the heat of the sun, which in Palestine is very scorching; hence, 'for the sun arose with its heat.' It converted the rich and luxurious field into an arid waste.—so also shall the rich man; not the rich brother, that is the Christian, but the rich man generally: St. James is here speaking of the transient nature of the earthly riches. He who trusts in earthly riches shall find that the flower of the field—fade away in his ways; in his goings, when actively engaged in his worldly pursuits or pleasures. Death snatches us away from the objects of worldly ambition.
tions impart a manliness, a strength, a vigour to virtue. Victory over temptation is a higher attainment than untired innocence. Untired innocence is the negative innocence of children: righteousness approved by trial is the positive holiness of apostles, martyrs, and confessors. ‘Behold,’ says St. James elsewhere, ‘we count them happy that endure.’ (v. 11.)—for, the reason assigned for this blessedness—when he is tried or rather, when he is approved by the trial, so that he is able to stand the test and to be purified by it.—he shall receive the crown of life. If these words were found in one of St. Paul's Epistles, the reference would be to the Grecian games—to the crown of laurel which was bestowed on the victor in these games. But here there can be no such reference; as these games were discontenanced by the Lord, therefore shall they receive a beautiful crown from the Lord's hand.’ (Wisdom v. 16, 17.) As has been beautifully said: ‘Earthly trials are the flowers of which the heavenly garden is made’ (Bishop Wordsworth. The penitent is the fruit of temptation; life is the crown which the Lord, not Christ, but God, hath promised to them that love him. To endure temptation is a proof of love to God. It is attachment to His cause which induces us to endure.

Ver. 13. Let no man say when he is tempted. The connexion is: if, instead of enduring the temptation, we yield to it and are overcome by it, we must crucify the child of our corrupt passions; it has its origin in our evil desires; it is the outcome of inward depravity. First, there is evil desire in the heart, and then by the will yielding to evil desire there is sin in the life.—and sin when it is finished, fully developed or matured. There is no distinction here between the internal and the external act; as if it were sin in the form of the external act which worketh death. St. James speaks of sin in general, whether in the heart or in the life. Sin may be developed in the heart as well as in the conduct. —bringeth forth, or begetteth, as the two verbs are different in the original, death. Lust is the mother of sin and death its progeny. (Cp. Milton's sublime allegory in Paradise Lost, Book ii. 745-814.) Death here does not denote only physical or temporal death, but, as the contrast is to the crown of life which God has promised to them that love Him, it must include eternal death. Cp. the statement of St. Paul: 'The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life' (Rom. xi. 23.)

Ver. 16. Do not err—a common Pauline expression, elsewhere always translated, 'Be not deceived.' Here it refers rather to what precedes than to what follows. Be not deceived in this matter, in supposing that temptation to evil comes from God.—my beloved brethren, strengthening the exhortation.

Ver. 17. Every good gift. A positive proof of the assertion that God tempteth no man. Not only does evil not proceed from Him, but He is the source only of good. All good is from God.

Our higher and spiritual good evidently arises from Him: all good works are the effects of Divine impulses. Our lower and earthly good also comes from Him: our health, our property, our domestic comforts, are the gifts of His bounty. Our very trials, our disappointments, our afflictions, our sicknesses—those tests of character are the proofs of His goodness, and are designed to produce within us the peaceable fruits of righteousness. The statement is true taken in its universal application. — and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down (more literally, 'Every perfect gift descendeth from above,' or 'is from above, coming down') from the Father of lights. By lights here are primarily meant the heavenly bodies, and by the Father is denoted their Author or Creator; but it may well be applied to all spiritual existences—the souls of men and angelic spirits. As Bishop Wordsworth beautifully expresses it: 'God is the Father of all lights: the light of the natural world, the sun, the moon and stars, shining in the heavens; the light of reason and conscience; the light of His law; the light of prophecy, shining in a dark place; the light of the Gospel, shining throughout the world; the light of apostles, martyrs, and confessors, preaching the Gospel to all nations; the light of the Holy Ghost, shining in our hearts; the light of the heavenly city; God is the Father of them all. He is the everlasting Father of the everlasting Son, who is the Light of the world.' —with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. St. James does not here employ, as some suppose, technical astronomical terms, which would not be understood by his readers, but alludes to what is apparent to all—the waning and setting of the natural lights in the firmament. The statement is obviously equivalent to that of St. John: 'God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all' (1 John i. 5).

Ver. 18. Of his own will—' After the counsel of His own will,' as St. Paul expresses it (Eph. i. 11). Regeneration is here alluded to as the highest instance of the Divine goodness. It is not a necessary act of God, but proceeds from His own free will.—begat he us. It is evident from what follows that spiritual and not natural birth is here referred to: believers are begotten of God (John i. 13).—with the word of truth: the instrument of our regeneration, namely the Gospel, so called because truth is inherent in it. Some erroneously interpret the word here as signifying the Logos, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ; but this is exclusively an expression of St. John.—that we should be a kind of first-fruits: a Jewish form of expression taken from the custom of presenting the first-fruits to God. Christians are here called 'first-fruits' because they are consecrated to God, dedicated to the praise of His glory. Those Jewish Christians also, to whom St. James wrote, might be regarded as the first-fruits of Christianity, being the first converts to Christ, and the earnest of the spiritual harvest—the vast increase of converts from the Gentile world.—of his creatures: of the new creation, that great multitude of the redeemed whom no man can number: and perhaps not even to be limited to them, but to embrace all the creatures of God, pointing forward to that time when 'the creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God' (Rom. viii. 21).

Chapter I. 19–27.

Hearing and Doing the Word.

19 WHEREFORE, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls: but be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

1 omit therein
2 mildness
3 implanted
4 mirror
5 omit the
6 doing
If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

26. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

27. — So the Revised Version.

CONTENTS. In this passage St. James exhorts his readers to be not only hearers but doers of the word. They are to be swift to hear, and to receive the word implanted within them with freedom from malice and in mildness: but they are to hear it only with a view to practise its precepts; lest, being mere hearers of the word, they impose upon themselves. They must remember that true religious service does not consist in the performance of certain ceremonies, but in active benevolence shown especially towards the afflicted, and in purity of life.

Ver. 19. Wherefore. There is a diversity in the reading of this verse. The most important manuscripts, instead of ‘Wherefore,’ read ‘Ye know,’ or ‘Know ye,’ according as the verb is understood as indicative or imperative, referring either to what precedes, ‘Ye know this,’ namely, that God out of His free love has begotten you with the word of truth; or to what follows, ‘Know this, my beloved brethren, let every one of you be swift to hear;’ equivalent to ‘Hearken, my beloved brethren’ (ii. 5). — my beloved brethren: an affectionate address, strengthening the exhortation. — Let every man be swift to hear, namely, the word of truth, which, having been so lately mentioned, the Corinthians had no need to repeat. The words, however, admit of a general application to the acquisition of all profitable knowledge. The same sentiment is found in the writings of the son of Sirach: ‘Be swift to hear; and let thy life be sincere, and with patience give answer’ (Sir. v. 11). There is no reason, however, to suppose that St. James in these words refers to this passage. — ‘Slow to speak’: perhaps here primarily referring to teaching: be not rash in entering upon the office of a teacher (chap. iii. 1); see that you are thoroughly prepared beforehand. But the words are a proverbial expression, admitting of general application. Men are often grieved for saying too much, seldom for saying too little. Still, however, the maxim is not to be universally adopted. Occasions may frequently occur when we shall regret that we have omitted to speak, giving a seasonable word of advice, reproof, or comfort. There is a time to speak as well as a time to keep silence (Eccles. iii. 7). — slow to wrath. Wrath here is not directed toward God — enmity against Him, on account of the trials which befall us; but wrath directed toward men, and especially that wrath which frequently arises from religious controversy or debate. ‘The quick speaker is the quick kindler.’ But the words are true generally; on all occasions we ought to be slow to wrath. Still, however, all wrath is not here hidden. Moral indignation is a virtue, for the exercise of which there are frequent occasions; and to regard sin without anger is a proof of indiffERENCE to holiness. — Some suppose that in this sentence is contained the subject-matter of the Epistle. The former part was only introductory; now the subject of the Epistle is stated; and the remainder is divided into three parts, corresponding to ‘Swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath,’ with an appendix at the close. The arrangement is ingenious, but is hardly borne out by the contents.

Ver. 20. For, the reason assigned for the above exhortation, and especially for the last portion of it — ‘slow to wrath’ — the wrath of God, that is, carnal zeal, whose fruit is not peace, but contention. Those angry feelings which arise from religious controversy are here primarily alluded to. The word of God was then abused, as it is now, into an occasion of strife, wrath which not produceth not, — the righteousness of God. By the righteousness of God is not meant the righteousness imputed by God, as if the meaning were that the wrath of man does not work out the faith which God counts to men for righteousness; nor that righteousness which God possesses — the Divine attribute of righteousness; but that righteousness which is approved by God, and which He Himself forms within us by His Holy Spirit. The meaning of the verse is that contentions arising from dispute or controversy, is not conducive to holiness, either in ourselves or in others — does not tend to the furtherance of the righteousness of God in the soul. Furiously real does not promote the interests of God’s kingdom.

Ver. 21. Wherefore, seeing that the wrath of man does not promote the righteousness of God, lay apart, divest yourself of, all bitterness, pollution. By some this word is taken by itself, but it is more in accordance with the context to connect it with ‘naughtiness,’ indicating a particular kind of pollution. — and superfluity — abundance or excess. — of naughtiness: a word which has now lost somewhat of its original meaning. The Greek word signifies wickedness, depravity, malignity, malice, — that disposition which manifests itself in the wrath of man mentioned above; accordingly, ‘all pollution and abundance of malice’ — all that malice which is so polluting and abundant in our hearts. Some suppose that the words are metaphorical, having reference to agriculture, in correspondence with the ingrained word, which directly follows: Purify all the defilement and rank growth of malice which like weeds encumber the ground, and prevent the growth of the ingrafted word. — and receive with meekness: here, as opposed to malice and wrath, not so much a teachable spirit, as meekness — a gentle and loving disposition toward our fellow-men. — the ingrafted word, or rather the implanted word — that word which by Divine grace is implanted in your hearts. By
this is meant, neither reason nor the inner light of the Mystics, but the word of truth or the Gospel of Christ as received into the heart. Some suppose that by the ingrafted word the incarnate Logos, namely the Lord Jesus Christ, is meant; but this is a fanciful supposition, and unsuitable to the context.—which is able to save your souls. Compare with this the words of St. Paul: 'I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them who are sanctified' (Acts xx. 32). Comp. also Rom. i. 16. James does not mean that those who are born by the word do not aim at, but that the salvation is not fully possessed in this life.

Ver. 22. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only. The implanted word, or the word of truth, must be so heard and received as to produce a corresponding course of action. Practice, and not opinion, is the desired effect of the reception of the word. The Jews have a proverb among themselves: 'He who hears the law, and does not practise it, is like a man who ploughs and sows, but never reaps.' It is, however, to be observed that St. James does not in the slightest degree depreciate the hearing of the word; he only asserts the superior importance of the doing of the word. 'Be not only hearers of the word, but be also doers.' And indeed the hearing is in order to the doing; if this be wanting, the hearing is of no value. Compare with this the words of St. Paul: 'Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of it shall be justified' (Rom. ii. 13).—deceiveth your own selves. The term denotes deceiving by false and sophistical reasoning. He who is a hearer of the word and not a doer, and who thinketh that this is sufficient, imposeth upon his own self. And of all deceptions, self-deception is the worst. If a man were deceived by others, it would be comparatively easy to undeceive him, by placing things in their true light. But if a man be deceived by himself, it is next to impossible to undeceive him, because prejudices have blinded his eyes; the bandage must first be removed before he can see the light.

Ver. 23. For. The above exhortation is enforced by a comparison. A hearer of the word, who is not a doer, resembles a man seeing his face in a mirror, without its making any permanent impression upon him.—If any man be a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face: literally, 'the countenance of his birth,'—that face with which he was born; and therefore here well translated 'his natural face.' The word for 'beholding' literally denotes 'contemplating': it does not involve the idea of a passing glance, which is suggested by what follows.—in a glass, or mirror. The ancients had no looking-glasses properly so called; their mirrors were usually made of polished metals. In them objects could be but dimly discerned: 'Now we see through a glass darkly' (1 Cor. xiii. 12).

Ver. 24. For he beholding himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth. The words are in the lively style of narrative: literally translated they are: 'For he contemplated himself, and has gone his way, and immediately forgot what manner of man he was.' A general statement, not necessarily to be understood universally. A man has seldom any true or accurate notion of his own features; from beholding himself in a glass or mirror, he retains no distinct recollection of what he has seen.—what manner of man he was. No distinct impression is made on him; he cannot recall his own features. This must especially have been the case, when we take into consideration the imperfect nature of the mirrors of the ancients.

Ver. 25. Now follows the application of the metaphor.—But. The door of the word is now described. —who so looketh into: literally, 'stoopeth down to look into,' representing the earnest inspection: 'who so fixedly contemplateth' (comp. 1 Pet. i. 12; John xx. 5).—the law of liberty: corresponding to the glass in the metaphor, the same as the word of truth or the implanted word, namely, the Gospel of Christ. By this, then, is not meant the natural law, nor the moral law as such, but the Gospel in so far as it becomes a law of life and morals. There is hardly any implied contrast between the law of Moses and the Gospel. The moral law itself was a perfect law; it was the transcript of the Divine character; and, of all the writings of the Old Testament, St. James would be the last to depreciate it. But the perfection which belongs to the Gospel is that it is 'the law of liberty.' This could not be said of the Mosaic law in many respects, it was a law of bondage (Gal. v. 1). The moral law was a rule of conduct—a law of commands and prohibitions—a law which by reason of its violation brought all men under sentence of condemnation. But the Gospel is a law of liberty: it not only delivers man from condemnation, but, by implanting within him a new disposition, it causes him of his own free will and choice to obey the moral law; it not only imparts to him the principles of righteousness, but will to obey: the law of God is written on his heart: obedience to it is not so much a yoke as a pleasure: 'he delights in the law of the Lord after the inward man' (Rom. vii. 22). The perfect law of liberty, then, not lawlessness and the contrary, it is holiness—a disposition to obedience—'the moral law transfigured by love.' As long, observes Calvin, 'as the law is preached by the external voice of man, and not sanctified by the finger and Spirit of God on the heart, it is but a dead letter, and as it were a lifeless thing. It is then no wonder that the law is deemed imperfect, and that it is a law of bondage: for, as St. Paul teaches, separated from Christ, it generates to bondage, and can do nothing but fill us with diffidence and fear.'—and continueth therein. The word 'therein' is in italics, and not in the original. The meaning therefore is not 'and continueth in the law,' but 'and continueth to look.'—he being not a forgetful hearer: literally, a hearer of forgetfulness, to whom forgetfulness as a property belongs.—but a doer of the work: literally, 'a doer of work,' with the omission of the article; 'work' is added to 'doer,' in order to give greater prominence to the doing: or taken as a Hebraism, 'an active doer.'—this man is blessed in his deed, or rather, 'in his doing.' The righteous shall be rewarded for their doing; to those on the right hand, the King will say, 'Well done.' The point of comparison then is evident. The word of God, especially in its moral requirements, is in the glass, in which a man may behold his moral condition, whereas the imperfections of his character may be clearly
CHAP. II. 1-13.] THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES. 115

discerned. Both to the mere hearer of the word and to the doer of the word, the Gospel is compared to a glass, wherein a man may behold his natural face: but whereas the one sees his imperfections, and immediately forgets them; the other not only sees, but endeavours to remove them. 'Blessed,' says our Saviour, 'are they that hear the word of God and keep it' (Luke xi. 28).

Ver. 26. If any man among you seem, that is, not seems to others, but thinketh himself, appears to himself to be religious. The words denote the false opinion which a man has of himself; the false estimate which he has formed of his religion.

—to be religious. 'Religious' and 'religion' are hardly the correct renderings. Both are, however, adopted in the Revised Version without note. We have no terms in our language to express the original; worshipper and worship is perhaps the nearest approach. See Col. ii. 18. See Trench's New Testament Synonyms", pp. 192 ff. It is not internal religion to which St. James alludes, but the manifestation of religion, the servitium Dei or religious worship. He speaks of the external form rather than of the internal essence, of the body rather than of the soul of religion. To be religious, in the sense of our verse, is to be a diligent observer of the externals of religion: 'If any man among you think that he is observant of religious service, that he is a true worshipper of God.'—and bridleth not his own tongue, does not abstain from wrath and contention: does not exercise a command over his words. But decoloveth his own heart, imposeth upon himself, by relying upon the mere form of religion, this man's religion, religious service or worship, is vain—of no value in the sight of God.

Ver. 27. Pure religion and undefiled. Pure and undefiled may almost be regarded as synonymous terms, the one expressing the idea positively, and the other negatively. Not, as some arbitrarily think, 'pure' referring to the inward, and 'undefiled' to the external life. There may be a reference here to the frequent washings and purifications which characterized the Jewish worship—before God and the Father; in His view, who looketh not so much at the outward appearance as at the heart. The Father is added to express the relation of God to us, as one of paternal love. Is this—consists in this. James does not here give an enumeration of all the parts of religious service, but mentions only two chief points—active benevolence toward the afflicted, and careful avoidance of the impurities of the world; these, he observes, and not certain ceremonial observances, are the outward forms in which real worship manifests itself—to visit the fatherless and the widows. There is a probable reference here to 'before God and the Father;' before Him who is the Father of the fatherless and the God of the widows. In their affliction. No kind of religious service or worship paid to God can be of any value, if it violate the royal law of charity. The fatherless and the widows are mentioned as examples of the afflicted. But along with this active benevolence toward the afflicted there must be combined personal purity. —and to keep himself unspotted. Personal purity which, like the delicate pupil of the eye, shrinks from the very approach of everything which defileth, which garrisoneth the heart with holy affections to keep out those which are polluting, which maintains a conduct above suspicion, and which abstains from the appearance of evil, is acceptable in the sight of our God and Father, and shall be rewarded with the manifestation of His glory: for, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.')—from the world. By the 'world' is here meant not merely earthly things so far as they tempt to sin, or worldly lusts, but the world as the enemy of God, the rival of God in the human heart; all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John ii. 14). Christians, by being born again by the word of truth, are separated from the world—they are a peculiar people. But still, so long as they live in the world, they are exposed to its temptations and liable to be defiled by its pollutions. They must carefully avoid that friendship of the world which is enmity with God (Jas. iv. 4).

CHAPTER II. 1-13.

Respect of Persons.

1 My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ,
2 and of glory, 6 with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, 1 and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; 2 and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, 'Sit thou here 6 in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are 4

1 with gold rings 2 gay clothing 3 clothing 4 omit unto him 5 Was not this to doubt within yourselves, and to
5 become *judges of evil thoughts?*  Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they *blaspheme that worthy* name by the which ye are called? If ye fulfil the royal law *according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: but if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law *as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, *Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. For he shall have judgment *without mercy* that hath showed no mercy; and *mercy rejoiceth against judgment.*

*evil-minded judges*  
*goodly*  
*which was named on you*  
*Yet if*  
*convicted by*  
*For the judgment will be without mercy to him*  
*glorieth over*

**Contents.** In this passage, St. James proceeds to caution his readers against showing respect of persons, especially in their religious assemblies; for by doing so they would violate their Christian principles, and become evil-minded judges. God has chosen His people from among the poor; whereas the persecutors of believers and the blasphemers of Christ are from among the rich. The law of God requires them to love their neighbour as themselves; but by exhibiting this respect of persons they violate this law. They must so speak and act as they who are to be judged by the law of the Gospel, remembering that if they show no mercy to the poor, no mercy will be shown to them by God.

**Ver. 1. My brethren.** The connection appears to be: As the true service of God consists in active benevolence, exercised especially toward the poor and afflicted, St. James takes occasion to reprove his readers for a practice which was in direct contradiction to this, namely, showing partiality to the rich, and despising the poor.—**have not, or hold not, the faith**—the profession of Christianity, or the belief in Jesus as the true Messiah. Do not hold it in such a manner, as that respect of persons should constitute a part of it.—of our Lord Jesus Christ: of Him who, although rich, yet for our sakes became poor, in whom there is neither rich nor poor, and with whom there is no respect of persons.—the Lord of glory. The words 'the Lord' are in italics, and not in the original; all that is in the Greek are the words 'of glory.' Accordingly, different meanings have been attached to this phrase. Some construe it with 'respect of persons,' and translate it 'according to your estimate or opinion;' thus Calvin: 'Have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons, on account of esteem; that is, placing a false and unchristian value on riches.' Others attach it to Christ: 'the faith of our Lord Jesus, the Christ, or the Messiah, of glory.' Others consider it as governed by faith, but give different meanings: the glorious faith of our Lord Jesus Christ; or faith in the glory or exaltation of Christ; or the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ in the glory, namely, in that glory which is reserved for the saints. Others suppose that glory is a personal appellation of Christ: 'our Lord Jesus Christ, the Glory,' equivalent to the Shechinah of the Jewish Church. This is certainly the simplest reading; but there is no proof from the New Testament that such an epithet was applied to our Lord. Our version, by supplying the words 'the Lord' from the former clause, is the least objectionable: 'the Lord of glory.' The clause is inserted to show the vanity of earthly riches, as contrasted with the glory of Christ.—with respect of persons: a caution against showing undue preference to any on account of external circumstances. The word in the Greek is in the plural, as St. James had several instances of such respect of persons in view. We must, however, beware of perverting this maxim. We must show due respect where respect is due; as St. Paul says, 'Render to all their due, honour to whom honour is due' (Rom. xiii. 7). There is a respect due to a man in office on account of his official character. Servants must honour their masters, and subjects their rulers; but we are not called to honour a man merely on account of his wealth. And in spiritual matters all are equal. In the house of God, the rich and the poor meet on the same footing of equality. The same exhortations are
addressed to both; and the vices of the rich must be rebuked with the same sharpness as the vices of the poor.

Ver. 2. For if there come St. James does not here mention a mere hypothetical case, but what must frequently have occurred,—unto your assemblies. The word employed in the Greek is 'synagogue.' Some understand it of the Jewish synagogue, from which believers had not yet separated themselves; but against this opinion is the pronoun 'your,' nor would Christians in a synagogue not their own be permitted to give any preference of place to those who entered. Others think that the reference is to the judicial assemblies which the Christians, in imitation of the Jews, held in their places of meeting, and that the caution is against showing partiality in the administration of justice; but this is an arbitrary opinion for which there is no reason. The reference is undoubtedly to the Christian assemblies for worship. To denote these places of assembly, the word 'synagogue' was employed, because it was more familiar to St. James and the Jewish Christians than the corresponding Greek term. We read in the Acts that there were numerous synagogues in Jerusalem (Acts vi. 9), and among them there would be the synagogue of the Christians; and the same would be the case in all the large cities where the Jews of the dispersion congregated—a man with a gold ring: literally, gold-ringed, wearing many rings. Formerly persons of distinction wore only one signet ring; but at the time when this Epistle was written, as we learn from Roman writers, it was common for the wealthy to wear many rings. Such rings could only be worn by free citizens, and were consequently a symbol of rank or riches.—in goodly apparel. The gorgeous dresses of the Orientals may be here alluded to. In that age the rich profitted themselves on the extravagance of their dress.—and there come in also a poor man in vile or shabby raiment. The description is in St. James' graphic style. Into their place for religious assembly, enter thus gaudily arrayed with jewelled fingers and a great display of riches; the other a poor man in shabby apparel, soiled with his daily manual occupations.

Ver. 3. And ye have respect: literally, ye look upon, ye have regard to him that weareth the gay clothing. The two who came in are very differently treated; the rich man is conducted with all honour to a comfortable seat, whilst the poor man is left to shift for himself. In these verses there is in our English version a needless variation in the renderings of the same Greek word; the words apparel, raiment, and clothing are all in the original expressed by the same term.—and say unto him, Be it done here in a good place; a place of consequence and comfort: literally, 'Be well seated.' As in the Jewish synagogues, so in the Christian, there would be a diversity of seats. Thus we read of the scribes and Pharisees who 'loved the chief seats in the synagogues' (Matt. xxiii. 6).—and say to the poor, Stand thereon, or sit here under my footstool. The other man in vile raiment is told to stand where he is, or is allowed to sit where he can, provided he does not select a good seat. Observe the contrast between 'here' and 'there'; 'here,' the goodly seat—the place of honour; 'there,' the seat under the footstool—the place of dishonour. We are not informed whether those who came in were believers or unbelievers. Some suppose that both parties were Christian strangers, others that they were Gentiles or unbelieving Jews, and others that the poor were believers and the rich unbelievers. But it is best to leave it, as in the Epistle, undetermined; they are taken merely as samples of each class—the rich and the poor. It is well known that those who were not Christians might and did come into the Christian assemblies (1 Cor. xiv. 23).

Ver. 4. This verse has given rise to a great variety of interpretation, owing to the uncertainty of its correct translation. Are ye not partial in yourselves? This version is hardly correct. Some render the words: 'Did you not judge among yourselves,' by thus determining that the rich are to be preferred to the poor? Others: 'Did you not discriminate or make a distinction' among those who as Christians are equal? Others: 'Were ye not contentious among yourselves?' did ye not thus become litigants among yourselves? And others: 'Did ye not doubt among yourselves'—become wavering and unsettled in your faith? The verb in the original is the same which in the former chapter was translated to doubt or to waver (Jas. i. 6); and therefore, although it may also admit of the above significations, it is best to give a preference to that sense in which St. James has already used it. Hence, literally translated, 'Did you not doubt among yourselves' in showing this respect of persons, waver between God with whom there is no respect of persons and the world, and thus become double-minded? Did you not contradict your faith, according to which the external distinction between rich and poor is nothing? For to hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect to persons is a contradiction in terms. The Revised Version has, 'Are ye not divided in your own mind?'—and are become judges of evil thoughts? Here also there is an equal variety of opinion. Some consider 'evil thoughts' as the objects of their judgments, and render the clause: 'Are you not judges of evil dispositions'—of such evil dispositions as a strife of precedence would give rise to. But it is best to take 'evil thoughts' in a subjective sense, as residing in the judges themselves—evil-minded judges, showing themselves to be so by giving an undue preference to the rich. Just as a partial judge may be called a judge of partiality, or, in the same manner, as the unjust judge in the parable is in the Greek called the 'judge of injustice' (Luke xvii. 6; see also Luke xvi. 8). Compare L. 25, 'a forgetful hearer,' literally 'a hearer of forgetfulness.' The word here rendered 'thoughts' also denotes reasonings, dispositions; and hence some render the clause 'judges who reason ill;' who, instead of calmly acting on principles of equity, are led astray by partiality to the rich.

Ver. 5. Elaborate, my beloved brethren. With this verse St. James commences to show the sinfulness of such conduct; and, first, it is in contradiction to the conduct of God,—Hath not God chosen the poor of this world; that is, either those whom the world esteems poor—the poor in the opinion of the world; or those who are poor in relation to this world—the poor in worldly wealth.—rich in faith. Rich in faith is not in apposition to the poor of this world, but the object or intention of God's choosing them—that they
might be rich in faith. Faith is not the quality, but the sphere or element, in which they were rich. These riches consisted in the spiritual blessings which faith procured, and especially in the sonship of believers—in the heirship of the heavenly kingdom. 'The rich in faith,' observes Calvin, 'are not those who abound in the greatness of faith, but such as God has enriched with the various gifts of the Spirit which we receive by faith. These are the heirs of the kingdom, namely, not the spiritual kingdom of Christ on earth, but the heavenly kingdom.—which he hath promised to them that love him; the love of God being the essence of true piety. St. James did not require to prove the truth of this statement; the condition of the Jewish Christians of the dispersion, to whom he wrote, was proof sufficient that although there were a few rich among them, yet they were mostly chosen from among the poor. Compare with this the words of St. Paul: 'God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty' (1 Cor. i. 27). And the same statement holds good in the present day. The rich are under far greater temptations than the poor; they are led to trust in uncertain riches, and to seek their good things in this world, to fix their happiness here, and to forget 'the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love Him.' 'Herein,' says our Saviour, 'shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God' (Mark x. 23).

Ver. 6. But ye, in contrast to God's estimate of the poor. God has chosen the poor of this world, and the poor in faith, while ye, on the contrary, have despised the poor: not so much the poor generally, as the poor among Christians. Now follows a second consideration; that by showing respect to the rich, they give a preference to those who are enemies both of themselves and of Christ.—Do not rich men: it is unnatural to suppose that Christian rich men are meant, but rich men as such, who in their worldliness and pride manifest a hatred to Christianity.—oppress the poor. What law do you keep? The rich unbelieving Jews were the bitterest enemies to their believing countrymen: they fined and imprisoned them, as apostates from Judaism. Thus it was said that Saul made havoc of the Church, entering into every house, and flinging men and women committed them to prison (Acts viii. 3).

Those who suppose that by the rich here mentioned Christians are intended, think that the reference is not to persecution, but to litigation, similar to the abuses which occurred in the Corinthian Church (1 Cor. vi. 6).

Ver. 7. Do not they blaspheme. The pronoun is emphatic: 'Is it not they who blaspheme.' The allusion may be to the attempts of the unbelieving Jews to compel believers to blaspheme the name of Christ. Thus it is said of Saul, that he punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme (Acts xxvi. 11). But it is better to refer it to the blasphemous utterances of the Jews themselves. Thus Justin Martyr tells us, that the Jews were accustomed to blaspheme Christ in their synagogues. Those who suppose that the rich men here mentioned are Christians, think that it refers to the disgrace brought upon Christianity by their ungodly practices: that they blasphemed Christ in their lives. But such a meaning is less natural and appropriate.—that worthy, goodly, or noble name—not the name of 'God,' or that of 'brethren,' but the name of 'Christ.' It does not, however, follow from this that believers were at this early period called Christians. It is a goodly name, for Christ is the Lord of glory, the Founder of Christianity, the Messiah promised to their fathers.—by which you are called or rather, 'which was invoked upon you,' namely at your baptism, when baptized into the name of Christ. The allusion is to the name of God being put upon all children of Israel to distinguish them as His property. 'They shall put my name upon the children of Israel' (Num. vi. 27). So the name of Christ was put upon believers to signify that they belonged to Him.

Ver. 8. If the connection has been variously understood. Some suppose that St. James is anticipating an objection of his readers, that by showing respect of persons to the rich, they were obeying the royal law, in loving their neighbour as themselves; others think that he is guarding his own argument from misinterpretation.—ye fulfill the royal law; the law which is the king of all laws, which includes in itself all other commandments. Others understand the expression, 'the law which like the royal road is plain, straight and level; others, 'the law which proceeds from the great King,' whether God or Christ; and others, 'the law which applies to kings as well as to other men.' But all these meanings are objectionable, because they do not discriminate this special precept. It is to be observed that love to our neighbour is not so much a single command as the principle of all true obedience; it is the chief of all laws, and ministering servants. 'All the law,' says St. Paul, 'is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' (Gal. v. 14).

According to the scripture; here not according to the Gospel—the words of Jesus—but according to the law of Moses (Lev. xix. 18).—Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well. For then it would follow that if you did so, you would not have this respect of persons.

Ver. 9. But if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin, ye violate this royal law, and are convicted of, convicted by, the law. By the law here is not meant a single commandment, as the law against partiality or respect of persons, but the moral law, and which, as regards duties to others, is summed up in this command to love our neighbour as ourselves. —as transgressors, because such a respect of persons is contrary and opposed to a disinterested and universal love to others.

Ver. 10. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point—one particular, one commandment—he is guilty of all: that is, although respect of persons may appear to be the violation only of a single precept, yet it is a transgression of the whole law. The truth of this statement of St. James is founded on the unity both of the Lawgiver and of the law. The same God who gave one commandment gave all; the law is but the expression of His will: and, therefore, whosoever breaks one commandment opposes himself to the will of God. So also love is the essence of the law; and whosoever sins transgresses this royal law of love. 'God,' says Calvin, 'will not be honoured with exceptions, nor will He allow us to cut off from His law what is less pleasing to us. St. James denies that our neighbours are loved by us, when only a portion
of them is, through ambition, chosen and the rest neglected. The Jews have a similar sentiment: 'If a man obeys all the precepts of Moses, but leaves out one, he is guilty of all and of each.' This declaration of St. James was especially appropriate to the Jewish Christians, who were in danger of being led away by the errors of the Pharisees. The Jewish doctors affirmed that if men kept any one precept of the law, it was sufficient; and accordingly some selected the law of the Sabbath, others the law of sacrifice, and others the law of tithes; whilst the law of love was neglected.

Ver. 11. For: the reason of the above assertion, arising from the unity of the Divine Author of the law,—He, namely God, that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill (Ex. xx. 13, 14). Various reasons have been assigned for the selection of these two precepts; but the most obvious is that these are the two first commandments of the second table of the law, containing our duties to our neighbour; the fifth being generally classed by Jewish writers as belonging to the first table.

—Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. There is a Divine unity in the law, as well as in the Lawgiver. We must obey all the laws of God, without exception or limitation; if we offend in one particular, the law is broken and we become transgressors. A man who is a liar, although he may observe all the other precepts of the moral law, is evidently living in open violation of the law of God.

Ver. 12. Do speak ye and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. The law of liberty is not here the moral law, nor the love of our neighbour as a single commandment, but the same as that mentioned in the former chapter: 'Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty' ( Jas. i. 25). See explanation of that passage. Believers are under the law of liberty, and are, therefore, absolved from the condemning sentence of the moral law, and are delivered from the enslaving power of sin, a disposition having been implanted within them which renders them willing to obey the Divine commands. The spirit of bondage is superseded by the spirit of adoption. And by this law of liberty believers shall be judged; their good works will be rewarded, and their voluntary obedience to the moral law which springs from faith in Christ will be graciously accepted. They are no longer under the moral law, as a rule of rewards and punishments, but under grace—this law of liberty.

Ver. 13. For: the reason assigned for so speaking and acting, he shall have judgment without mercy, literally, the judgment will be without mercy to him, who hath showed no mercy. We must show mercy to our fellow-men, if we expect mercy from God. Compare the words of our Lord: 'If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses' (Matt. vi. 15). On the other hand: 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy' (Matt. v. 7). The chief aim of the Gospel is to make men like God; to form the Divine image in the human soul; that they should be merciful, even as their Father in heaven is merciful.—And mercy rejoiceth against judgment, meateth over judgment. Mercy and judgment are here personalized; judgment threatens to condemn the sinner, but mercy interposes and overcomes judgment. The saying is general, and not to be limited either to God or to man; mercy prevails against judgment. 'Mercy,' says St. Chrysostom, 'is dear to God, and intercedes for the sinner, and breaks his chains, and dissipates the darkness, and quenches the fire of hell, and destroys the worm, and rescues from the gnashing of teeth. To her the gates of heaven are opened. She is the queen of virtues, and makes men like to God; for it is written, Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful. She has silver wings like the dove, and feathers of gold, and soars aloft, and is clothed with the Divine glory, and stands by the throne of God; when we are in danger of being condemned, she rises up and pleads for us, and covers us with her defence, and enolds us with her wings. God loves mercy more than sacrifice.' Compare with this Shakespeare’s celebrated lines on the quality of mercy.

---

**Chapter II. 14-26.**

Relation of Faith and Works.

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

15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, *Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit?* Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

16 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.

---

1 insert this
2 in itself
3 one will say
works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou dost not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offereth Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also, was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

CONTENTS. In this passage James continues to enforce practical religion. He tells his readers that faith destitute of works is of no avail to the saving of the soul, and is as useless as a charity which expends itself in kind words, but is destitute of beneficent actions. As the charity is dead, so also is the faith. Faith can only be manifested by works. A mere theoretical belief in God is of no advantage, and differs little from the belief of evil spirits. Such a faith, unproductive of works, cannot justify. Abraham was justified by an active faith when he offered up Isaac; by works did his faith receive its full realization; thus proving that a man is justified by an active and not by an unproductive faith. So also Rahab was similarly justified when she harboured the spies. Faith destitute of works resembles a body from which the living spirit has departed.

Ver. 14. The connection appears to be as follows—James has been showing that true religious worship does not consist in the performance of certain ceremonies, but in active beneficence extended toward the poor and afflicted, and that opposed to this is a respect of persons showing partiality to the rich. He now proceeds further to maintain the more general proposition that a profession of religion, apart from religious practice, is of no value. James carefully separates appearance and reality from each other—the shadow from the substance. As formerly he showed that the hearing of the word without the doing was worthless, and that religious worship was of no avail without active beneficence; so now he asserts that a mere theoretical assent to the truths of the Gospel was also unprofitable and vain.—What shall it profit?—literally, ‘What is the use?’ Faith without works will not profit at the judgment; it will not be conducive to the saving of the soul—my brethren, though a man say, Some critics lay stress on the word ‘say,’ as if the assertion of a faith without works was a mere affirmation or profession, and not a reality. But James admits the existence of a speculative faith; the man is supposed to have faith of a certain kind, though not saving faith.—be hath faith. It is of importance for the understanding of this passage to ascertain what is here meant by faith. James evidently takes the word in its general acceptation; with him it denotes any assent to religious truth, whether it be operative or inoperative. And what he asserts is that if the faith be inoperative, if it be a lifeless principle, unproductive of good works, a mere intellectual assent to Divine truth without its exerting any influence over our heart and conduct, it cannot save us. James undoubtedly considers faith to be a necessary prerequisite to salvation, but only that faith which is productive and accompanied with works.—and have not works. By works, as is evident from the context, James means those works which are the fruits and effects of faith—evangelical works which arise from faith; hence, then, not mere ceremonial works, nor even moral or legal works done previous to and apart from faith.—can faith save him? The article in the Greek must here receive its full force—literally, ‘Can the faith save him?’ that is, the particular faith which such a man possesses —‘this faith.’ Faith certainly does save; nothing can be more evidently the doctrine of Scripture than that our salvation is attached to faith; but not the faith to which James here alludes: Can this faith save him?—this dead, barren faith; this mere speculative belief in the doctrines of the Gospel.

Ver. 15. To prove the uselessness of a barren faith, the apostle illustrates the subject by showing the uselessness of a barren charity, which every one will at once admit; and this illustration is the more appropriate, as love is the indispensable attendant on a living faith—the instrument by which it works (Gal. v. 6).—If a brother or sister—a Christian brother or sister—a fellow-believer—bringing forward more strongly our duty to assist them, and our culpability if we refuse such assistance.—be naked and destitute of daily food—be reduced to a state of extreme destitution. By daily food is meant the food necessary for each day.

Ver. 16. And one of you say to them, Depart
in peace, be ye warmed and filled: warmed in reference to their being naked, and filled in reference to their being destitute of daily food. Expressions of kind wishes toward the destitute; mere words, but no actions. The words are such as, if sincere, would have been followed by corresponding actions. 'Depart in peace,' are the words which our Saviour employed when He dismissed those whom He had cured (Luke vii. 50).—not withstanding ye gave them not those things which are needful to the body, namely, food and raiment. —what doth it profit? What good do your kind words do either to them or to yourselves? Undoubtedly charity, if it have not works, is dead.

Ver. 17. Now follows the application of this illustration. As this love, which merely expends itself in kind words and wishes, is of no value; so neither is the faith of him who professes to believe the Gospel, yet walks not up to his profession. Even so; as charity without works is dead, so faith, if it hath not works, if it be merely a theoretical assent to the truths of revelation, is dead. From this it is evident that by works is not meant merely something which is added to faith, but something which proceeds from it; as life is seen by its actions, so is faith by its works. The works then are those of a living faith, those to which faith gives birth. 'If,' observes Neander, 'James were in the faith where is without works a dead faith, it could not surely be his view that works, which are but the outward manifestation, made faith to be living; but he must have presupposed that faith has the principle of life within itself, from which works must proceed, and which manifests itself in works.'—being alone.

The words in the Greek are not tautological, as they appear in our version, but emphatic. More correctly rendered they are 'by itself,' denoting that a simple assent is useless, or rather 'in itself,' i.e. is wholly and completely dead—has no living root which might spring up—(twice dead, plucked up by the roots), as Jude expresses it (Jude 12). As a tree in winter may not have signs of life, but is not dead in itself; it will put forth shoots and leaves in spring. But faith has no winter; if it has not works, it has no life in it, and ought not to be called faith, for dead faith is not faith.' (Wordworth.) It is, however, to be remembered that James does not deny the existence of a theoretical faith; he distinguishes between faith and faith, between theoretical and practical faith; and to the former, the theoretical faith, he denies that justification can be ascribed.

Ver. 18. Ye, a man may say, Thou hast faith and I have works. There is a considerable diversity of opinion in the interpretation of these words. They appear to be the language of an objector, being the usual form by which an objection is introduced (Rom. ix. 19; 1 Cor. xv. 35); but when examined, they express the sentiments of James, and not those of an opponent. If an objector were to make the opposite: 'Thou hast works and I have faith.' Some, considering the words as those of an objector, give the following interpretation: 'One, defending thee, may say, Thou, who hast not works, hast faith, and I, who declare that faith without works is dead, have works; there is no reason to lay more stress upon the one than upon the other.' But such a meaning is complicated and awkward; it reverses the language of the apostle. Others suppose that the objector is a Pharisaical Jew who, opposing James, maintains justification to be entirely by works without faith; but such a meaning is not borne out by the context. It is best to suppose that the words are not those of an objector, but of a person who agrees with the apostle, and who is here introduced to impart liveliness to the discussion. Nay, one may interpose, Thou hast faith and I have works. Others connect the words with ver. 14, and consider the intervening words as parenthetic, but we do not see how this removes the difficulty. —show me thy faith without thy works, prove to me the reality of your faith. A faith without works is incapable of being proved. To show faith without works is simply an impossibility. If it exist at all in such a state, it exists in a passive or latent form in a man's mind, and cannot be shown to others. Faith is not entirely denied to the man, but living faith is; if faith does not proceed itself by works it is dead, and of no value as regards salvation. —and I will show thee my faith by my works. This is the key to the meaning of James. Justification is denied to a dead faith, and affirmed only of a living faith which manifests itself in works. This is the test by which we are to try the reality of our faith; and this is the test by which we shall be judged at the final judgment. We shall not then be examined as to the pureness of our creed, or the extent of our knowledge, but whether we have fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the sick, and ministered to the afflicted; whether we have practised that religious worship which consists in visiting the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and in preserving ourselves uns摸索t from the world.

Ver. 19. Thou believest that there is one God. Here the existence of a theoretical faith is admitted: Thou assentest to the statement that there is one God, or, as it is otherwise read, 'that God is one.' This particular article of faith is chosen from a Jewish point of view, because the Jews put a high value on it, as the Jews distinguished them from the rest of the world. And it is still the boast of the Jews that their national vocation is to be witnesses to the unity of the Godhead. Hence then: Thou hast more knowledge, and a more correct faith than the Gentiles, who have gods many and lords many. —thou dost well: so far good. There is a certain touch of irony in the language; but the irony does not lie in the words, 'Thou dost well,' but in the whole statement—that a theoretical faith in the unity of God, though in itself good, yet does not essentially differ from the belief of devils. —the devils. By the devils here are not meant the devils in the possessed who trembled before Christ (Matt. viii. 29); nor the heathen divinities considered as demons (1 Cor. x. 20), but evil spirits generally, —also believe: assent to this doctrine—and tremble: the word in the Greek is stronger, 'and shudder.' The force of this addition may be: 'The faith of the nominal Christian is no better than the faith which devils possess; nay, it is not even so good, for the devils not only believe, but they also tremble.' Or it may be: 'The devils believe in God, because unproductive of works and obedience, not only cannot save them, but is the cause of their trembling before the Divine tribunal' (Brückner).

Ver. 20. But wilt thou know, or rather, 'Art
thou willing to know,' to recognise this truth? implying that such knowledge was not palatable to him.—O vain man; that is, O empty man, puffed up with pride, trusting to thy outward privileges, but without seriousness and spiritual life.—faith without works is dead. Some manuscripts read 'is idle,' that is, inoperative or useless; a reading which makes no alteration in the sense. Faith without works is properly not faith at all, but reprobate faithlessness.

Ver. 21. James now adduces two examples—those of Abraham and Rahab—to prove the truth of his assertion that faith can only save if it is productive of good works. And, first, the example of Abraham. Was there any one added to by Paul (Rom. iv. 1-5); but there is no reason to suppose that the one writer borrowed from the other. The example of Abraham would readily occur to every Jew, on account of the importance of that patriarch in their national history.—our father: the same appellation is given by Paul; but here it is given because both James and his readers, the Jewish Christians, were descended from Abraham.—was justified. Some suppose that by 'justified' is meant proved to be justified, and that the allusion is to the manifestation of our justification before men, which can only be by works. Thus Calvin remarks: 'Paul means by the word 'justified' the gratuitous imputation of righteousness before the tribunal of God; and James, the manifestation of righteousness by the conduct, and that before men. In this sense we fully allow that a man is justified by works, as accounting for Abraham's acceptance upon the text. We take the word in its ordinary meaning, 'declared righteous in the sight of God,' equivalent to 'sinned' in a previous verse: 'Can faith save him?—by works.' Paul also appeals to the case of Abraham, but with a desire to prove that he was justified by faith without works. These writers view the matter in different lights. Paul asserts that Abraham was justified by the unseen principles of faith; he simply believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness. James affirms that the faith by which Abraham was justified was a faith which manifested itself by works, and was seen in a remarkable manner by the great act of his obedience—the sacrifice of Isaac; his faith obtained its perfection by works. See ex cursum at the end of this exposition. The plural works, whereas only one work is mentioned, is explained from the fact that the class is named to which the offering up of Isaac belongs.—when he had offered Isaac his son on the altar. This great act of obedience (Gen. xxii. 2) was certainly a work of faith, arising from Abraham's practical belief in God. 'By faith,' writes the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, 'Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac, and he that had received the promises, offered up his only-begotten son, of whom it is said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called; accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure' (Heb. xi. 17-19). It was therefore a most notable proof that Abraham had a living faith, and was therefore in a justified state.

Ver. 22. Seest thou how, or, more correctly, 'seest that,' faith wrought, co-operated, with his works. This cannot mean that works co-operated with his faith in the matter of his justification before God, as if God did not know that he had living faith until it showed itself by works. But the evident meaning is that the offering of Isaac proved that the faith of Abraham was not a dead, but a living and active faith, and that was a verification of Abraham's justification. It was faith that enabled him to perform this work.—and by works was faith made perfect, fully realized, completed; not proved or verified, but perfected. Faith is only perfected when it is embodied or realized in good works. As love is perfected by the practice of works of benevolence, so faith is perfected by the practice of those works which are appropriate to it. By works faith attains its legitimate development or completion. 'Faith creates works; works perfect faith' (Sis). Ver. 23. And the scripture was fulfilled. The same expression which is employed with reference to prophetical declarations; hence 'the scripture was fulfilled.' This great act of obedience on the part of Abraham was a proof of the fulfilment of the scriptural declaration made concerning him.—which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness. This remarkable declaration is also twice quoted by Paul (Rom. iv. 3; Gal. iii. 6). The words are by both apostles quoted from the Septuagint. In the Hebrew the verb 'imputed is in the active, and not in the passive voice: 'Abraham believed God, and he counted it to him for righteousness.' (Gen. xv. 6). This occurred long before Abraham offered up Isaac, indeed before the birth of Isaac. Abraham was in an early period in a justified state before God; this declaration was made concerning him; and by his offering of Isaac the scriptural declaration received its fulfilment and realization. It is therefore evident that this act of obedience was not the cause of Abraham's justification; but, because it proved that Abraham was possessed of a living faith, it fulfilled the words of Scripture.—and he was called the Friend of God; no added as a statement of Scripture which received its fulfilment, but an additional assertion of the favour in which Abraham stood with God. It is not directly stated that Abraham, in consequence of his offering up Isaac, received this honourable appellation, but the blessing which that name denotes is evidently presupposed: Abraham was the Beloved of God. The name is twice ascribed to Abraham in the Old Testament, according to our English version. Jehovah, in his prayer, says: 'Thou gavest this land to the seed of Abra- ham thy friend' (2 Chron. xx. 7). And in the prophecies of Isaiah we read: 'Thou Israel art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend' (Isa. xl. 8). The term, however, is found neither in the Hebrew nor in the Septuagint, but is employed by Philo. And this is still the favourite description of Abraham, both by the Jews and by the Mahometans. By the Mahometans his proper name is substituted by the appellation El-Khalil-Allah, 'the friend of God.'

Ver. 24. Ye see then, from this example of Abraham, how that by works a man is justified. The emphasis is upon works: stress is put upon
the fact that faith must be productive of works.—
and not by faith only. These words do not
admit of the translation, 'and not only by faith:'
as if there were two kinds of justification, the one
by faith and the other by works; or as if faith did
not include and work out the consequence of
works were required to do the rest.
The meaning is, 'not by faith simply,' 'by a faith
without works, which cannot justify either in
whole or in part. It must be carefully observed
that James does not deny that a man is justified
by faith; on the contrary, he presupposes this
truth, as without faith there can be no works, in
the sense in which he employs the term works;
he only asserts that justifying faith must not be
isoev, but must be productive of works.
Ver. 25. The second example which James
adduces is that of Rahab. /ike wise also was not
Rahab. The same example, and the same
incident in Rahab's history, is also adduced by
the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, as an
illustrious instance of faith. The example is not
so obvious as that of Abraham; and we can
assign no sufficient reason why it was selected by
both writers—the harlot: to be taken in its
literal sense, and not to be considered as equi-
valent to impenitent—justified, namely before
God—by works when she received the mes-
sengers, and sent them out another way. This
was certainly a work springing from her faith; it
arose from her firm belief in the God of Israel.
Indeed, Rahab herself gives this as the reason of
her conduct: 'I know that the Lord hath given
you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon
us, and that the Lord is in heaven above and in
the earth beneath' (Josh. ii. 9, 11.). Her receiving
the messengers, and sending them out another way,
was therefore a work that her faith was real and living.
'By faith,' says the author of the Epistle to the
Hebrews, 'the harlot Rahab perished not with
them that believed not, when she had received
the spies with peace' (Heb. xii. 31.). Her deliver-
ance from death is to be ascribed to her faith, but
it was to her faith as active. Thus did she
manifest the reality of her faith. Her faith co-
operated with her works, and by works was her
faith made perfect; and in this sense she is said to be justified by
works.
Ver. 26. For as the body without the spirit
is dead. The 'spirit' here may either be the
intelligent spirit—the soul of man; or the breath
of life—the living principle; as in the expression,
'all flesh wherein is the breath of life' (Gen. vi.
27.).—so faith without works is dead also.
Here faith without works answers to the body
without the spirit. At first sight it would seem
that the comparison, in order to be correct, would
require to be inverted; inasmuch as faith is a
spiritual principle, whereas works are its external
manifestations; so that we would require to read:
'so works without faith are dead also.' But
what James insists on here is not the deadness of
works without faith, but the converse, the dead-
ess of faith without works. According to him,
a faith without works is like a body from which
the living principle has departed; works are the
evidences of life, and if these be absent, the faith
is dead. A mere system of doctrine, however
correct, is a mere dead body, unless it be animated
by a living working spirit. We must not, how-
ever, press the metaphor too far. Strictly
speaking, the works do not correspond to the
spirit, but are only the outward manifestations of
an internal living principle—the proof that there
is life. An unproductive faith is a body without
the spirit; a productive faith is the living body.

EXCURSUS: JAMES AND PAUL.

The relation of Paul and James to each other in
guard to justification is a matter of such
importance that it requires for its discussion a
separate consideration. It is impossible in our
limited space to give a full statement of the
subject; all that we aim at is to point out the
probable solution of the difficulties connected
with it. It is undeniable that there is at least an
apparent opposition between these sacred writers
in their view of justification. We have merely to
state their views in their own language to perceive
the difference. Paul, as the conclusion of his
argument, affirms: 'Therefore by the deeds of the
law shall no flesh be justified in His sight' (Rom.
iii. 20.) and, in the Epistle to the Galatians, he
makes the same assertion: 'By the works of the
law shall no flesh be justified' (Gal. ii. 16.). Whereas James appears to assert the
very opposite: 'Ye see that by works a man is
justified, and not by faith only' (Jas. ii. 26.).
And this apparent opposition is very obvious in
their different statements concerning Abraham's
justification, which both employ to illustrate or
confirm their respective views. Paul says: 'If
Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof
to glory, but not before God' (Rom. iv. 4.). James
asks: 'Was not Abraham our father justified by
works?' (Jas. ii. 21.). Thus, then, it would
appear from the simple reading of these statements,
that Paul ascribes our justification to faith without
the works of the law; whereas James ascribes it,
if not to works, at least to works combined with
faith.

Accordingly, various modes of reconciliation
have been adopted. These may be arranged into
three classes, according to the meanings attached
to the three principal terms—works, justification,
and faith. One class of writers suppose that the
sacred authors employ the term works in different
senses. Some think that Paul speaks of a work
which is done in obedience to the ceremonial law,
and James of works done in obedience to the moral
law. Others think that Paul speaks of the works
of the unregenerate, James of the works of the
true believer. And undoubtedly there is a certain
difference in their use of this term. The works
of which Paul speaks, are legal works done
without faith; the works of which James speaks,
are evangelical works which arise from faith.
But this is not the true solution of the difficulty,
as even evangelical works are excluded from
Paul's idea of justification. A second class of
writers suppose that the term justification is
differently employed by them. Some suppose
that Paul considers justification from God's point
of view, which is by faith; and that James speaks
of justification from man's point of view, which is
by works. But such a distinction in the meaning
of the term 'justification' is not apparent; James
would rather seem that both Paul and James
employ the term in the same sense, as a declara-
tion of righteousness on the part of God. A

[1] Huther supposes that Paul has in view the justification
that paves believers in a gracious relation to God in this
third class of writers suppose that there is a difference in the use of the term faith. Paul, it has been maintained, speaks of faith as an active practical principle — he recognizes no other kind of faith; whereas James employs the term in a much more general sense, and includes in it theoretical as well as practical faith. It is in this direction that we consider the true solution of the question lies.

In any solution we must not forget the peculiar characteristics of Paul and James, the one as the apostle of the uncircumcision, and the other as the apostle of the circumcision. They stood in different relations to the Mosaic law. Paul regarded it as abolished, and he himself freed from its requirements, whereas James adhered to it to the last; and therefore we may expect expressions and statements used by the one in reference to justification which would not be employed by the other, even where no real discrepancy exists. Paul is eminently doctrinal, and therefore faith occupies a prominent place in his theology. James is eminently practical, and therefore works occupy a prominent place in his teaching. Both agree in ascribing our justification to faith, and both assert that the faith must be living; but they contemplate the matter from different points of view. James would hardly assert with Paul that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law, because he regarded faith as only efficacious when it is productive of works; and Paul would hardly assert with James that by works a man is justified and not by faith only, because he admitted of no other kind of faith than one that was living and active. Although, then, we believe that there is no real discrepancy in the opinions of these apostles, yet there is a remarkable difference in their terminology, arising from their individual peculiarities.

Paul and James view justification from different standpoints, according to the different nature of the errors which they opposed. Paul is arguing against those who supposed that they would be justified by their good works. His opponents were the self-righteous Pharisees, who trusted to their own righteousness, and boasted of their obedience to the law. He tells them that their own obedience was imperfect, that the law of God, far from justifying, condemned them, and that the only method of salvation was to exercise faith in Christ. But the faith, to which Paul attaches salvation, is presupposed to be a true and living faith, not the mere assent of the understanding to the proposition that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, but an application of this to our souls' necessities. James, on the other hand, is arguing against those who supposed that an orthodox faith could save, though unaccompanied with a holy life. Such an error was very common among the Jews. They placed their confidence in their external privileges, in their belief in the unity of the Godhead in contrast to the polytheism of the Gentiles; and this spirit was carried by the converted Jews into the Christian Church. James tells them that such a faith, which was merely theoretical and unproductive of good works, was useless; as useless as a barren charity which expended itself in kind wishes. Saving faith must be active; it must be productive of good works; if these be absent, the faith is dead, and will never save the soul. Thus, then, Paul opposes Pharisaical legalism — those who trusted to their own works for salvation. James opposes Pharisaical antinomianism — those who trusted to their religious knowledge and speculative faith. Paul teaches us how a guilty sinner may be justified before God; James reminds us that no man living in sin can be justified, whatever his profession may be. Paul answers the question of the awakened sinner, 'What must I do to be saved?' James exhorts profess believers to walk worthy of their calling. Paul discloses to the Pharisaical legalist the worthlessness of his works; James discloses to the Pharisaical antinomian the worthlessness of his faith.

But not only do the apostles contemplate the doctrine of justification under different points of view; they also employ the term faith in different senses. The faith to which Paul assigns justification is a real, active, and living belief in Jesus Christ; it is the assent of the will to the doctrines of revelation; it is a faith which worketh by love; he knows no other kind of faith. The faith of the Gospel requires action — something to be done; and it is the action which proves the reality and constitutes the value of the faith. Faith, if real, must work; if there are no works, it is a proof that the faith is unreal and a mere pretense. James, again, places his chief stress on the activity of living faith. He uses the term faith in a much more general sense than Paul, as including theoretical as well as practical belief. Faith, he asserts, can only justify when it is operative; if inoperative, if it is a mere speculative belief, it cannot justify; it is a dead faith, a mere body without the living spirit. Not by a mere general faith is a man justified, but by a faith productive of good works.

Paul and James then speak of different faiths, so that, although the one asserts that we are justified by faith without the works of the law, and the other that by works a man is justified and not by faith only, there is no contradiction between them, as they employ the term faith in different senses. Paul asserts that a living faith in Christ is the only cause of justification; James affirms that the faith which justifies must be living, and productive of good works. Paul descends from saving faith to good works as its necessary effects; James ascends from good works to saving faith as their cause and origin. Paul dwells on faith as the efficient cause; James insists on works as the indispensable effects. Paul assigns our justification to a faith which worketh by love; James denies that it can be assigned to a faith which is destitute of works. Paul speaks of a living faith by which the justified man lives; James of a dead faith, even as the body without the spirit is dead. The faith whereof Paul treats is that of the true believer; the faith which James reprobrates is that of the nominal professor. If then, these apostles use the term faith in different senses, there is no contradiction in their statements, even although there is a contradiction in the words by which these statements are expressed.

The full doctrine of Scripture on justification is that a man is justified not on account of his own righteousness, but on account of the merits of
CHAPTER III. 1-18.

Government of the Tongue.

1 My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we

2 shall receive the greater condemnation. For in

3 many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word,

4 the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole

5 body. Behold, we put bits in the horses’ mouths that they

6 may obey us, and we turn about their whole body. Behold

7 also the ships, which, though they be so great, and are driven

8 of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm

9 whithersoever the governor listeth. Even so the tongue is a

10 little member, and boasteth great things. Behold how great

11 a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it

12 defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of

13 nature; and it is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is

14 tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind. But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly

15 poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude

16 of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and
cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth

17 a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and
dimmer? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

18 Who is a wise man and ended with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good conversation his works.

19 with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and

1 teachers 2 omitted the 3 Best MSS. read, But if

4 omit and, and read we also 5 Best MSS. omit the inclination of the steersman willeth

6 forest 7 that 8 Best MSS. omit so

9 the tongue is 10 that which 11 the circle of life

11 nature 12 subdued 13 Best MSS. read, restless

14 human nature 15 subdued 16 Best MSS. read, the Lord and Father

17 assurance 18 Best MSS. read, neither can salt water bring forth sweet

19 conduct .
THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES. [CHAP. III. 1-18.

15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, "sensual," "devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace, that those make peace.

17 party strife 21 is not one descending 23 natural 24 omit and 25 by

CONTENTS. In this chapter, St. James cautions his readers not to be too forward in assuming the office of teachers, but to exercise a wise restraint upon their zeal, knowing that such an office would confer on them a heavy responsibility. This caution leads him to advert to the importance of the government of the tongue. He who can command his tongue, commands himself. This observation he explains by two obvious illustrations, that of the bit which curbs the horse, and that of the helm which guides the ship. The tongue, he observes, though a little member, is a powerful instrument for good or evil. Its abuse gives rise to the greatest mischiefs, and influences for evil the whole circle of human life. It is more unamiable than the wildest animals. By it we are guilty of the greatest inconsistency—blessing God, and cursing His image in man; an inconsistency which never occurs in nature, as no fountain sends forth both salt and fresh water, and no tree produces different kinds of fruit. St. James therefore urges his readers to a candid and benevolent spirit, and to exhibit wisdom and meekness in their conduct. He then distinguishes between earthly and heavenly wisdom; the former is the cause of envy and contention, of confusion and all kinds of wickedness; the latter leads to righteousness and peace.

Ver. 1. My brethren, be not many masters. Either 'be not many of you masters;' or rather, 'be not a multitude of masters'—each one striving to be a master. 'Masters' here used not in the sense of rulers, but of teachers. Hence the sense is: Do not rashly enter upon the office of a teacher. The meaning is not to be limited, as is done by Calvin, to the office of a reprobate—masters of morals; but is to be understood generally. Such an assumption of the office and authority of teachers was very prevalent among the Jews. The Pharisees loved to be called of all men 'Rabbi, Rabbi' (Matt. xxiii. 7). St. Paul, advertting to the Jews, says that they were confident of their ability to be guides to the blind, and teachers of the foolish (Rom. ii. 19, 20); and he finds fault with them for desiring to be teachers of the law, whilst at the same time they understood neither what they said, nor whereof they affirmed (1 Tim. i. 7). And this craving to be teachers would be naturally carried by the converted Jews into the Christian church. The opportunity of exercising the office of teachers was greater in these days of early Christianity than in ours, as it would seem that teaching was not then restricted to a particular class, but was exercised by believers generally. The exhortation is not without its use in the present day. Many, especially in a season of religious excitement, assume the office of teacher, without any qualification of knowledge or experience, and thus expose themselves to the reproof of St. James. Knowing, as ye well know, that we are the teachers. St. James includes himself out of humility, and in order the better to propitiate his readers, shall receive the greater condemnation. The meaning being that as the responsibility of teachers is great, they shall be the more strictly dealt with by God. Knowing that we shall undergo a stricter judgment than others in a private station.

Ver. 2. For the reason assigned for the second clause of the last verse.—in many things: to be taken generally—in many particulars: not to be restricted to the offences of the tongue; the restriction follows in the latter part of the verse—We offend: literally, 'we trip or stumble.' Human life is represented as a way, and particular actions as steps in that way; and hence acting amiss is represented as stumbling. Believers, though they may not actually fall, often stumble—all: a strong expression in the Greek; 'we, all without exception.' If any offend not in word—stumble not in his speech, the same is a perfect man. By a perfect man, here and elsewhere in Scripture, is not meant a man who is absolutely free from sin, but one who is comparatively perfect. Thus Noah, Abraham, and Job were called perfect in their generations; and of Zacharias and Elizabeth it is said that they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless (Luke i. 6). Hence, then, a perfect man is a man who has attained to a high degree of holiness. And certainly a man, whose words are inoffensive, may have his imperfections, but, compared with those who have little command over their tongues, who give an unbridled licence to their speech, he is a perfect man. He that can rule his tongue shall live without strife (Sir. xix. 6)—and able also to bridle his whole body: qualified to keep the body under subjection; that is, has obtained the mastery over himself, inasmuch as it is more difficult to bridle the tongue than to control the actions of the life. A man's character is known by his words: 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh' (Matt. xii. 34): even as the nature of a fountain is known by the quality of the stream which issues from it. Hence the wise saying of Socrates, 'Speak, that I may know thee.' Offences of the tongue are the most common of all offences. There is one that slippeth in his speech, but not from his heart;
and who is he that hath not offended with his tongue?" (Sir. xix. 16). Even the meekness of Moses was violated by a rash word: "he spake unadvisedly with his lips" (Ps. cvi. 33).

Ver. 3. St. James introduces two illustrations to prove the truth of his remarks, that if a man is able to command his tongue, he is able also to command his whole conduct. The first illustration, that of the bit in the horses' mouths, was naturally suggested by what he had just said about bridle on the whole body. Behold. The best manuscripts read, 'But if:' as if St. James had said, 'But if you doubt the truth of my assertion, consider how the horse is bridled.'—we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. As the horses are governed by bits in their mouths, so are we governed by the tongue in our mouths. The chief point of comparison here is that of governing.

Ver. 4. Behold also the ships, which, though they be so great. The ships of the ancients were often very large, as may be seen in the case of the ship which conveyed Paul to Malta, which contained two hundred and seventy-six persons (Acts xxvii. 37); but the comparison is even more forcible in our days, as our ships are still larger, and are driven of fierce winds. These fierce winds may denote human passions, which the government of the tongue controls, but which they are turned about by a very small helm whithersoever the governor listeth: literally, 'whithersoever the inclination or impulse of the steersman willeth.' The little helm controlleth the fury of the winds and so the ship is as an instrument of comparison, namely, the smallness of the instrument employed in governing.

Ver. 5. Even so. Now follows the application of the two illustrations. If we rule our tongues, we govern the whole, for the tongue is to the man what the bit is to the horse, or the helm to the ship. The tongue is a little member: the sense being to the smallness of the helm. The tongue is small in proportion to the whole body, and to many of its members. And boasteth great things: boasteth, instead of worketh or doeth, because boasting is specially applicable to the tongue. The word is not here, however, employed to denote a vain ostentation; for, as is evident from the context, the tongue not only boasteth great things, but makes good its boasts. Hence the meaning is, 'exerts immense influence.'—Behold how great a matter: or 'forest,' as it is to the Greek, suited to the lively and figurative style of St. James. A little fire kindleth a great forest; the allusion being to the greatness of the conflagration, whilst the smallness of the spark is left out of consideration. Some read, 'How great a fire kindleth a great forest;' the allusion being to the greatness of the conflagration, whilst the smallness of the spark is left out of consideration. Some critics translate the words without any reference to size: 'What a fire kindleth what and so forth.' The thing in our version is to be preferred, as being best adapted to the apostle's train of thought, bringing prominently forward the smallness of the fire (comp. Ps. lxix. 7). We are here taught, most emphatically, the power of the tongue. Speech is that which distinguishes man from the inferior animals. It is a powerful instrument for good of evil. On the side of good it preaches the Gospel, pleads the cause of the innocent and oppressed, stirs up to the performance of noble deeds, diffuses the light of truth, procures liberty to the captive, comforts the sad and sorrowful, and supports the dying in their last moments. Sweet waters flow from this fountain of humanity, but bitter waters also flow. On the side of evil the tongue sows the seeds of moral pestilence and death, corrupts men's morals, spreads the leaven of wickedness, persuades to vice and all manner of sin, diffuses the poison of infidelity and godlessness, gives rise to bitter contentions, dissolves friendships, disturbs the peace of a whole neighbourhood, and is not less powerful for evil than for good. 'Many have fallen by the edge of the sword; but not so many as have fallen by the tongue' (Sir. xxviii. 18).

Ver. 6. And the tongue is a fire—possesses the destructive power of fire. A world of iniquity. These words have been differently translated. Some render them as follows: 'The tongue is a fire, the world of iniquity the forest;' but this is an unwarrantable insertion of the words 'the forest.' Others connect the words with what follows: The tongue is a fire. As a world of unrighteousness the tongue is among our members: but it is best to consider the world of iniquity in apposition with the tongue, as is done in our version. Hence the meaning is: the tongue is a combination of all that is evil. The expression of similar import to that of St. Paul, when he calls the love of money 'the root of all evil' (1 Tim. vi. 10).—So is, or rather 'so makes itself,' or 'so steps forward;' so is constituted the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and causeth the current of impurity, and setteth on fire, inflameth, the course of nature. This phrase has been very differently translated, and indeed is in our version hardly intelligible. The word rendered 'course' denotes something that revolves, and is generally used of a wheel; and the words 'of nature' are in the Greek 'of birth,' or metaphorically 'of creation.' Hence the literal translation is 'the wheel of life,' or 'of creation.' Some accordingly understand it of the whole creation, the 'orb of creation;' the meaning being that the tongue sets the universe in flames; but it is extremely improbable that St. James would use such a strong hyperbole. Others consider it as a figurative expression for the body; but such an explanation is forced, and it is improbable that St. James would express that figuratively which he had immediately before expressed in plain terms. Others suppose that by it the successive generations of men are meant—the circle of human existence: the meaning being that, as the tongue set our forefathers on fire, so it has the same pernicious effect on us and on all succeeding generations; but this is a meaning which is too vague and indirect. It is best to understand by the phrase the circle of the individual's own life, and which commences its revolutions at his birth; hence it is to be translated 'the circle or wheel of life.'—The present life of man, says Benson, 'is here compared to a wheel which is put in motion at our birth, and runs swiftly until death stops it. The tongue often sets this wheel on a flame, which sometimes sets on fire the whole machine.'—And it is set on fire, inflameth or inspired, of, or by, hell: Gehenna, the place of future torment.
THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES.  [CHAP. III. 1-18.

128
different from Sheol or Hades, the place of disembodied spirits. Except in the synoptical Gospels, the word Gehenna is only found here in the New Testament. It denotes 'the valley of Hinnom, and was used by the Jews to signify the place of future punishment, because it was in that valley that the rites of human sacrifice were practised, and a perpetual burning was kept up for its cleansing. The reference here is not to the future punishment of the tongue, but to the source from which it derived its destructive properties, namely, from hell—that is, from the devil. 'A bad tongue,' as Estius says, 'is the organ of the devil.' At Pentecost the outpouring of the Spirit was manifested by tongues of fire which lighted upon the disciples, and enabled them to speak with new tongues; the tongue was then set on fire of heaven; but that tongue which we have by nature, unpurified by grace, is often kindled from hell.

Ver. 7. For every kind of literally, every nature or disposition—of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea: the inferior creation arranged under its usual fourfold classification—beasts of the earth, fowls of heaven, creeping things, and fish of the sea—is tamed—better, 'is subdued,' as we can hardly say that all the inferior animals are tamed, many of them being incapable of being so; but they may all be subdued—and hath been tamed, subdued. —of mankind: literally, 'by the nature of men,' answering to the nature of the inferior animals mentioned above; hence 'by human nature.'

Ver. 8. But, expressive of contrast, the tongue, greatly to be considered—whether our own tongue or the tongue of others—can no man tame or subdue. The tongue is more unconquerable than the wildest animal. No man can master his own tongue, or subdue that of the slanderer or the liar; we require the grace of God for this.—it is an unruly evil—incapable of being cured, full of disturbance. The best manuscripts read, 'it is a restless evil'—incapable of being quieted. Full of deadly poison: the reference being to the poison of serpents which was supposed to be connected with their tongues. Compare the words of the Psalmist, referred to by St. Paul (Rom. xi. 13): 'They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison is under their lips' (Ps. cxix. 3). Hence the importance and difficulty of the government of the tongue. We must pray for the grace of God 'to keep our mouths as with a bridle.' We must steer this little helm aright, lest we should make shipwreck of our immortal hopes. We must be cautious of every little spark, lest the infernal flames should burst forth, and spread devastation over the whole circle of our lives.

Ver. 9. Therefore: literally, 'in it,' 'acting in the sphere of the tongue:' hence, instrumentally, 'by it.'—bless we God, even the Father. The best manuscripts read, 'bless we the Lord and Father,' an unusual combination; both terms apply to God the Father. To praise God is the proper use of the tongue. —and therewith, by it, curse we men—the improper and opposite use of the tongue. —which are made after the similitude, or likeness, of God. Man was originally created after the Divine image (Gen. i. 26); and this image, although marred and obscured, is not, as some rashly affirm, obliterated by sin. Thus murder was declared to be punishable by death, because man was made in the image of God (Gen. ix. 6). Man in his understanding and affections, and especially in his conscience, still bears the traces of the moral image of his Creator; indeed, it is by reason of this resemblance that we can attain to a knowledge of the perfections of God, and are rendered capable of religious knowledge. And this Divine image obscured by sin is restored by Christ (Col. iii. 10). This Divine similitude, then, we ought to respect both in ourselves and in others. He who curses man curses the image of God, and consequently God Himself in His image. It is evident that the reference is not to the original condition of man prior to the fall, but to his present state; for thus only can there be any force in the apostle's remark.

Ver. 10. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. There is here a moral incongruity. 'The annals of Christendom,' observes Dean Plumptre, 'show that the necessity for the warning has not passed away. Councils formulating the faith, and uttering their curses on heretics; Te Deums chanted at an Auto da Fe, or after a massacre of St. Bartholomew; the ravings of religious fanatics who are restrained from other modes of warfare, present the same melancholy inconsistency.'

Ver. 11. Now follow, after the apostle's method, two illustrations of this incongruity, taken from the natural world. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place: literally, 'at the same hole or fissure'—from the same spring.—sweet water and bitter: literally, 'the sweet and the bitter.'

Ver. 12. Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs! that is, no tree can bring forth fruits inconsistent with its nature. The illustration here is not, that we must not expect bad fruits from a good tree, or conversely, good fruits from a bad tree, according to our Lord's illustration: 'Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?' (Matt. vii. 16); but only that we must not expect different fruits from the same tree—figs and olives from the fig tree, or figs and grapes from the vine.—so can no fountain yield salt water and fresh; or, as other manuscripts have it, 'so neither can salt water bring forth sweet;' the salt water referring to the cursing, and the sweet or fresh water to the blessing. That cursing and blessing should proceed from the same mouth is as great an incongruity as that salt and fresh water should flow from the same spring. In the natural world no such incongruity exists, as does in the moral world. Man is a seed forth at the same place: literally, 'at the same hole or fissure'—from the same spring.—sweet water and bitter: literally, 'the sweet and the bitter.'
intelligence generally, and knowledge as a practical insight which judges correctly in particular cases. But, if we were to distinguish them, we would rather say that wisdom denotes the adaptation of means to ends, and knowledge the acquisition of particular facts; the knowledge of facts constitutes the materials with which wisdom works. —let him show—let him make good his profession, let him prove his possession of wisdom and knowledge.—out of a good conversation, by a holy conduct.' The word 'conversation' has altered its meaning since our translation was made; then it signified conduct, but now it is almost entirely restricted to speech.—his works with meekness and wisdom; not to be rendered 'in a meek wisdom,' or 'in a wise meekness;' but the genitive of possession, 'in wisdom's meekness,' that is, in that meekness which is the proper attribute of true wisdom; the meekness which belongs to wisdom and proceeds from it. Compare the somewhat similar sentiment of the Psalmist: 'What man is he that desireth light, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. FOR the mouth of the wise man is as the passage tautological; but objective, 'against the truth of God,' namely the Gospel.

Ver. 15. This wisdom, that which gives rise to these virtues, descends from above, but is earthly, in contrast to 'descendeth from above'—belongs to the earth. There are no heavenly aspirations about it; it overlooks or forgets the unseen world; it is limited to that of the man who is 'for the moment' a perfect and humble, not to the spirit. The contrast is well brought out in Jude 19: 'sensual, not having the spirit.' Elsewhere the word is translated 'natural.' 'There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body' (1 Cor. xv. 44). 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God' (1 Cor. ii. 14). There is a distinction drawn in scripture between the soul and the spirit; the soul is the intellectual nature of man, that which qualifies him for this world; the spirit is his religious nature, that which renders him capable of religion, and assimilates him to God. Hence, then, the word is to be translated 'natural,' as upon the whole the best equivalent. This wisdom appertains to our natural mental powers, but takes no cognizance of our spiritual powers; it regards man as an intellectual being capable of knowledge, and not as a spiritual being capable of holiness. These two epithets, earthly and natural, are perhaps negative qualities; the third quality is positively sinful—devillish, devil-like, partaking of the nature of devils, similar to that wisdom which is possessed by evil spirits, like the tongue inspired by hell. This wisdom is often the cause of pride and ambition, of selfishness and malignity, and of all those vices which actuate the spirits of evil. Some suppose that the three great temptations of the world—avarice, a love of pleasure, and ambition—are here referred to; the first of which is earthly, the second sensual, and the third devilish, being the sin by which the devil fell; but this is refining too much. These three qualities—earthly, sensual, devilish—have their contrast in the qualities heavenly, spiritual, and divine.

Ver. 16. For, the reason assigned for the above description of earthly wisdom, moral evil is and strife is; where zeal (in a bad sense) and party-strife are, there is confusion and every evil work—all kinds of wickedness. Certainly the reference is primarily to religious controversy; but the supposition that the controversy between the Jewish and Gentile Christians is here referred to is without foundation.

Ver. 17. But now follows a description of the heavenly wisdom in contrast to the earthly. The heavenly wisdom is described by seven qualities which, as has been well said, are 'nothing but the seven colours of the one ray of light of heavenly truth which has appeared and been revealed in Christ Himself—the Wisdom of God.' The wisdom which is from above is that first in the first place. Purity is its primary quality; all other qualities of heavenly wisdom are subservient to this. We must, however, beware of perverting this remark in the interests of intolerance and party-strife; these are the bitter fruits, not of heavenly, but of earthly wisdom.—pure, free from all impure and corrupt mixtures; separated from everything that offends; no stain of sin must pollute it; everything that is good and abhorrent to its nature. The word is to be taken in its widest sense, as all sin is impurity.—them peaceable, opposed to envy and party-strife; desirous to make and maintain peace. The spirit of love will cause us, as much as possible, to live peaceably with all men; instead of strife there will be a readiness to be reconciled.—gentle, kind, forbearing, considerate, making every allowance for the ignorance and frailties of others, imitating the character of Him who was 'full of mercy and good fruits, benevolent, compassionate to the afflicted, charitable to the poor, ready to extend relief and assistance to the destitute.'—without partiality. This has been variously rendered. Some, 'without contending,' not entering into controversy; others, 'without judging,' not finding fault with others; others, 'not making a difference,' that is, impartial. Perhaps the most correct meaning, and most in accordance with the doctrine of St. James, is, 'without wavering or doubting;' not feeble or changeable, 'without vacillation' (see Note on Jas. ii. 4).—and without hypocrisy, without pretence, showing a naturalness in behaviour, meaning all the kindness it expresses, without affectation, its actions being in accordance with its words.

Ver. 18. And the fruit of righteousness. This does not mean 'the reward of righteousness,' nor 'the fruit which springs from righteousness,' but 'the fruit which consists in righteousness.' So in the Epistle to the Hebrews we read, that chaste-ment yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness (Heb. xii. 11). As bitter emulation and party-strife are the fruits of earthly wisdom, so righteous-
ness is the fruit of heavenly wisdom. And by righteousness here is not meant the imputed righteousness of Christ, but moral goodness—righteousness in ourselves and in others, in habit and in practice.—it sows; the fruit being supposed to be contained in the seed. The sower is not God; but, as is evident from the context, the peacemakers.—In peace. Some render the words "into peace," meaning that they who are of a peaceful disposition will reap a harvest of peace both in this world and in the next; but this is giving a wrong meaning to the preposition. "In peace" denotes the spirit with which the seed or fruit is sown.—of them that make peace. Some render this 'on behalf of them,' or, 'for the good of them that make peace.' But it gives a better meaning to regard the peacemakers as the sowers of righteousness, hence 'by them that make peace.' The meaning of the whole verse is: The seed of righteousness is sown by the peacemakers in a spirit of peace. Only those who are actuated by the spirit of peace are the true sowers of righteousness; whereas 'the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.'

CHAPTER IV. 1-12.

Government of the Passions.

FROM whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts: that war is in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

11 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

12 There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

1 and envy All MSS. omit yet. Put a full stop after war, and omit yet
2 spend it in Best MSS. omit adulterers and
3 is constituted Insert note of interrogation after vain
4 Some MSS. read. He made to dwell
5 Does the spirit that dwells in us long towards envy?
6 dejection exalt you
7 Some MSS. read. One is the lawgiver and judge
8 Best MSS. read, thy neighbour
Chap. IV. 1-12.] The General Epistle of James.

Contents. St. James warns his readers against those evil passions which gave rise to wars and fightings among them. They must moderate their desires, and guard against selfish gratification. If they placed their chief affections on the things of the world, they were alienated from the presence of God, because they did not love Him nor the things of His kingdom. He who is a friend of this world is a foe of God. The quarrels which arise from the evil passions of men—'Nothing,' observes St. Paul, 'induce the body and its lusts to act with kindliness, sedition, quarrels, and wars in this world.' There are different forms of this war of our lusts. There is the war between the sensual inclination and the conscience; between indwelling sin and the principle of grace in the renewed man; and between one sinful lust and another; as for example between avarice and ambition. There is the law of the members warring against the law of the mind (Rom. vii. 23). But it is not to these forms of war that St. James alludes; the lusts are rather considered as a combined force warring against our fellow-men; he does not speak of the state of internal war in the soul, but of active contention against others. In your members. The lusts have their seat in our bodily members; and these members are the instruments they use in accomplishing their purposes. Thus St. Paul says: 'Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof; neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin' (Rom. vi. 12, 13).

Ver. 2. Ye lust and have not. This verse further describes the origin or genesis of these external strife. First, then, is the evil desire; then this desire, being ungratified, leads to hatred and envy; and hatred and envy lead to wars and fightings (comp. Jas. i. 15). The objects of desire are worldly blessings—the gratification of our sinful interests. This spirit of restless desire was also at this time the national character of the Jews; they were restless under the government of the Romans, and eagerly desired national liberty and the lordship over other nations. These desires were especially fostered by their belief in an earthly Messiah, who should bestow material blessings on His followers. This Jewish vice was prevalent among the Jewish Christians, and perhaps the false notion of an earthly Messiah was not eradicated from among them.—Ye kill spirit. 'He that hateth his brother is a murderer' (1 John iii. 15). Compare with this the words of our Lord: 'Ye have heard that it has been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment; but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment' (Matt. v. 21, 22). Not the external act, but the internal disposition, the bitter hatred, is described. Strong and vehement expressions are characteristic of the style of St. James—and desire to have; or rather, 'and envy'—indulge in a
rresentful and envious spirit toward others. — and cannot obtain, namely, that on account of which you indulge in hatred and envy. — ye fight and war; the third stage in the genesis of contention.

— yet; this word is not in the Greek. It is best to stop a full stop after 'war,' and begin a new clause, showing the reason why their desires were not gratified, either because they asked not, or asked wrongly. — ye have not, because ye ask amiss. There seems here a reference to our Lord's declaration: 'Ask, and it shall be given you.' And it is also here implied that we are permitted to ask for temporal blessings, only we must not ask wrongly.

Ver. 3. Ye ask, and receive not: as if to anticipate the reply of his readers that they did ask, but still did not receive the object of their desires. — because ye ask amiss: or wrongly, wickedly; either in an improper spirit, without faith in God as the Hearer of prayer; or rather for improper objects, for worldly things which are pernicious in themselves or prejudicial to the petitioner; for the sole purpose of self-gratification, without any thought of the glory of God. Such asking is equivalent to not asking. — ye may consume it (that which ye ask) on, or spend it in, your lusts: in order to gratify your own sinful desires. The meaning is: if you pray in a proper spirit, for selfless desires, which are the occasion of those bitter contentions among you, would cease to exist.

Ver. 4. Ye adulterers and adulteresses. The best manuscripts read only 'ye adulteresses,' a reading more suitable to the metaphor employed. This appellation might be taken literally, if we referred it to the unbelieving Jews; but, as referring to the Jewish Christians, it can only be understood in a metaphorical sense. It is spiritual adultery to which St. James here alludes. He here adopts the language of an Old Testament prophet. By the prophets God is represented as the 'Husband of His people,' and sin, especially the sin of idolatry, as unfaithfulness to Him. Nor is this metaphor confined to the Old Testament. Our Lord, on two occasions at least, calls the Jews 'an adulterous generation' (Matt. xii. 39; Mark viii. 38) and St. Peter speaks of wicked Christians as 'having eyes full of adultery' (2 Pet. ii. 14). The believer is considered as married to the Lord (Rom. vii. 4); and the world is God's rival, that which seduces our affections from Him. St. James, in using this strong and startling epithet, gives vent to his moral indignation. He is filled with holy anger on account of the contentions that prevailed among them. — know ye not that the friendship of the world. This is not to be restricted to the indulgence of sinful lusts, or to an eager pursuit after the carnal pleasures of the world; but by this is meant an over-attachment to worldly objects, an eager craving after the riches or influence of the world; in short, worldliness, worldly desires without any thought of God, a preference of the world to Him. — is enmity with God. God and the world here stand opposed to each other as rivals: so that we cannot love the one without rejecting the other. — Ye cannot serve God and mammon (Matt. vi. 24). The more the world occupies our hearts, the less room there is in them for God, and the more forgetful are we of the world to come. — whosoever wishes to be — has chosen the world as his portion. — the friend of the world — resolves to cultivate its friendship and favour as his chief good — is, or rather, constitutes himself, sets himself up as, the enemy of God.

Ver. 5. The meaning of this verse is very difficult: it is one of the dark sayings of Scripture. This difficulty arises from two causes: from the fact that no such passage, as St. James apparently quotes, is to be found in the Old Testament; and from the supposed quotation itself being susceptible of different and even opposite meanings. Do you think that the Scripture saith in vain: that its declaration is made for no purpose. These words appear to introduce a scriptural quotation; but no passage can be found which expresses the subjoined sentiment. Various passages, both in the Old Testament and in the New, have been adduced, but not one which is identical with the supposed quotation. Some, indeed, think that the quotation cited is that contained in the Book of Proverbs, mentioned in the next verse, 'God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble,' and that all that intervenes is to be considered as a parenthesis; but this is a forced method of the difficulty. It is best to suppose that St. James alludes, not to any particular quotation, but to the general scope of Scripture: Do you think that the scriptural declarations made in vain? This may refer to the sentiment that follows: or, as we think better, to what precedes, to the scriptural denunciations against worldliness, and the indulgence of hatred and envy. — the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth against envy. — the spirit that dwelleth in us is a spirit different from ourselves, and therefore cannot denote our depraved nature. Accordingly, some think that the 'spirit of evil,' or Satan, is here meant. But, although such an expression as 'Satan dwelling within us' may be admissible, yet this meaning is contradicted by the next verse: 'He giveth more grace,' which would require 'God' to be inserted as its subject. Others suppose that by 'the Spirit that dwelleth in us' is meant the Holy Spirit, and they give to the words 'to envy' an adverbial import: they think that the metaphor introduced by the words 'adulteresses' is still carried on; and accordingly they give the following rendering to the words: 'The Spirit which dwelleth in us jealously desireth us for His own.' But to this it is objected that the word rendered 'envy' is always used in Scripture in a bad sense, and that the words 'us for His own' are inserted in the text. Some render the clause: 'The Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth against envy;' but this gives a false meaning to the preposition. Another translation is to understand by 'the spirit' the human spirit, and to consider it not as the subject but as the object of the verb. Accordingly the following interpretation is given: 'God eagerly desires the spirit that dwelleth in us.' But here also an erroneous meaning is given to the word rendered in our version 'to envy;' and the spirit that

1 This is Huther's solution of the difficulty.
2 So Alford, Brücker, Basset, and Plumptre.
3 So Ehrmann and Dean Scott, who, however, understand by the spirit the Holy Spirit, which is tangential.
dwelleth in us' is a strange circumlocution for the human spirit. It gives the best translation, and the one freest from difficulties, to refer 'the Spirit that dwelleth in us' to the Holy Spirit, and to suppose that there are here two distinct questions: 1. Do you think that the Scripture speaks in vain? Are its declarations against worldliness, and strife, and envy, a mere empty sound? Does the Spirit that dwelleth in us lust to envy? Does He encourage such worldly affections? Are the fruits of the Spirit envy, strife, and worldliness, and not rather love, joy, peace? Some, observes Calvin, think that the soul of man is meant, and read the verse affirmatively, that the spirit of man as it is depraved is infected with envy. They, however, think better who regard the Spirit of God as intended: for it is He that is given to dwell in us. I then take the Spirit as that of God, and read the sentence as a question; for it was the apostle's object to prove that because they envied they were not ruled by the Spirit of God. Another important, and perhaps better attested, reading of the Greek is 'caused to dwell,' instead of 'dwelleth;' but this is also in conformity with the interpretation given above: 'Does the Spirit which He caused to dwell in us lust to envy?' If that be the correct reading, the interpretation given in our version is erroneous; for we deprived nature can never be described as 'the spirit which God caused to dwell in us.'

Ver. 6. But he, that is, God, or rather the indwelling Spirit, the immediate antecedent,—giveth grace, or 'double-minded.' Here also there is a difficulty in determining what 'more' refers to: this depends on the meaning given to the former clause. Some render it 'greater than the world gives;' others, 'greater than the strength of depravity that exists within us.' Perhaps the most correct meaning is: Just because the Spirit does not lust to envy; and yet there is a lust to envy in man; therefore, to overcome this lust, He giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith: 'God is able to give exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think' (Eph. iii. 20). By the pride here are meant the contentious—those who eagerly desire worldly objects; and by the humble, those who have overcome their worldly desires and govern their passions.

Ver. 7. Now follow several exhortations to enforce humility and the subject of the passions. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Because God resisteth the proud, therefore submit yourselves to Him. Submission is the first step of the sinner's return to God; and the same spirit of submission accompanies the believer in every succeeding stage. Submission is the parent of patience, contentment, freedom from petulance, trust, hope, and other blessed and peaceful graces; whereas the want of submission gives rise to ungodly desires, envy, hatred, and all those passions which are the cause of bitter contentions.

Ver. 8. Draw nigh to God: not to be limited to prayer, but to be understood of our intercourse with God generally. And he will draw nigh to you. Compare the words of Zechariah: 'Turn ye unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts' (Zech. i. 9).—Cleanse your hands, ye sinners. The priests before they ministered at the altar, and the people before they prayed, always washed their hands, that intimating the purity with which we ought to approach God. The hands are specially mentioned, as being the instruments of wickedness—and purify your hearts. The cleansing of the hands refers to external, and the purification of the hearts to internal purity; the one to the absence from contentions, and the other to freedom from those lusts which were the cause of contentions; the external and the internal correspond: we must have 'clean hands and a pure heart.' (Ps. xxvi. 4). There is not much difference in the two words here rendered 'cleansing' and 'purifying': the former is freedom from stain or blemish, the latter is consecrated or set apart.—ye double-minded: having, as it were, two souls—the one professing to be attached to God, and the other really attached to the world. The epistles 'sinners' and 'double-minded' refer not to different, but to the same class of persons.

Ver. 9. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep—namely, over your envy and hatred, your strides and contentions, and the miseries occasioned by them. The epistles 'sinners' and 'double-minded' imply the necessity of repentance; and true repentance must ever be accompanied with godly sorrow.—let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness: feelings which are more appropriate for the occasion.

Ver. 10. Humble yourselves. All the above exhortations are enforcements of humility.—In the sight of the Lord, that is, before the Lord, as in His presence. The Lord is, as is usual in the Epistle of St. James, not Christ, but God.—and he shall lift you up, or rather exalt you, both in this world by His grace, and in the next world to His glory. The true way to exaltation is through humility. Compare the very similar words in St. Peter's Epistle: 'Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time' (1 Pet. v. 6); and the words of our Lord: 'Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased, and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted' (Matt. xxiii. 12). Humility is one of the rarest and one of the most lovely of all graces. It is the direct opposite of that contentious, envious, and resentful spirit which St. James here so vehemently condemns;
peace and contentment are its inseparable associates. Humility is the true spirit of all obedience; submission is the perfection of virtue; and resignation to the Divine will is just another term for universal holiness.

Ver. 11. Here a new sentence begins, and yet in close connection with the preceding. St. James returns to the sins of the tongue, and cautions his readers against that sinful judging and censuring which was the effect of their bitter contentions.—Speak not evil one of another, brethren. Evil speaking has its origin in resentment and envy. Those whom we do not like, or who are our successful rivals, we are apt to depreciate. On the other hand, humility in the sight of God will show itself in humility with reference to our fellow-men: we will think humbly of ourselves, and so will not be so apt to undervalue others. Of course, all evil speaking is not here forbidden; we are bound to direct attention to the wicked, as a warning to others; but the evil speaking which St. James here condemns, is sinful censuring; judging the motives and character of men; pretending to see into their hearts, and discerning the motives of their actions; condemning them without good reason from prejudice and envy, and thus usurping the judicial authority of God.—Be not quick to speak evil of his brother and judgest his brother. Judging here is used, as it is often in Scripture, in the sense of condemning. Compare with this the prohibition of our Lord: 'Judge not, that ye be not judged.' (Matt. vii. 1.)—Speaketh evil of the law. By the law here is meant the moral law, that law the summary of which is, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' and which St. James designates 'the royal law.' (Jam. ii. 8.) He who is a serious spirit judges his brother, sets at nought this law of love, and thus speaks evil of it, or undervalues it.—and judgest the law. Some suppose that by this is meant that he who judges his brother, judges the law by setting himself above it, pronouncing on its observance or non-observance by another (Alford). But it rather appears to mean: He that speaketh evil of his brother condemneth his brother; and in doing so, without necessary occasion, usurps the authority of the judge; a meaning, however, which is not essentially different.—but if thou judgest the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge: by condemning thy fellow-men, thou steppest out of thy province, which is not to judge, but to obey it. Judgment is the province of God, the one Lawgiver, not of the subject to the law, and far less of the transgressor of the law.

Ver. 12. There is one Lawgiver. Most manuscripts read, 'There is one Lawgiver and Judge:' and this is more suitable to the context, as it is the province of a judge that is adverted to. These are not many, but one: one pre-eminently and exclusively. All human lawgivers and judges derive their authority from God, and are only to be obeyed when their commands are not opposed to His. God is the source of all authority, the fountain of justice.—who is able: who has both the authority to command and the power to execute.—to save and to destroy. Who art thou: expressing the insignificance of man: thou, who art so ignorantly and so erring, so sinful and so liable to fall; thou, who hast no power and no authority; thou, who art thyself guilty, as a sinner obnoxious to the judgment of God: how darest thou invade the office of this supreme and universal Lawgiver and Judge, and expose thyself to His condemnation?—that judgest another? Compare the words of Paul: 'Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?' (Rom. xiv. 4.)

Chapter IV. 13-6.

Warnings to the Rich.

13 Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain; whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow: for what is your life? 1 It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

Chap. V. 1. Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is

1 will spend there a year, and will traffic.
2 This 14th verse to be printed as a parenthesis.
3 Best MSS. read, For ye are instead of saying insert both
4 howling over
5 are coming on
Chap. IV. 13- V. 6. ] THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES.

135

canked; the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of 10 Jer. xii. 3.

6 slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just: he doth not resist you.

Contents. St. James, having warned his readers against worldliness, and exhorted them to humility before God, proceeds to censure the rich for their forgetfulness of their dependance upon God, their proud confidence in their worldly plans, and their arrogant boasting as if they were their own masters; he reminds them of the brevity and uncertainty of life, and exhorts them to acknowledged God and the world's transactions, and to realize His absolute power over them. He then apostrophizes the ungodly rich, and, like an Old Testament prophet, pronounces their doom. Their riches, their garments, their gold and silver would all perish; they had accumulated treasure for the day of wrath. Especially he mentions three crying sins which drew upon them the Divine vengeance: their injustice toward their labourers, their luxury and self-indulgence, and their oppression of the righteous.

Ver. 13. It is a matter of dispute and considerable difficulty to whom this passage is addressed; whether James is here addressing unworthy members of the Christian Church, who had not yet laid aside the Jewish vices of their unconverted state; or whether he admonishes the oppressors of the Jewish Christians, the unbelieving Jews, the ungodly and rich in this world. Three reasons have been assigned in support of the opinion that unbelievers are here addressed. 1. The address "Go to," again repeated (chap. v. 1), seems to indicate that the words in the two apostrophes are addressed to those without the Church. 2. Those addressed are not designated as "brethren," as is the usual custom of St. James, nor are any marks given to indicate that they are Christians. 3. Their ungodly conduct is so described that it can only be applicable to those without the church, and their doom is pronounced without any call to repentance. Others affirm that we are ignorant of the extent of moral corruption in the early Church, and that it was not the practice of the sacred writers to address those who were outside of the Christian community. Perhaps the most correct opinion is to assume that the first part of the passage, to the end of the fourth chapter, is an admonition to the worldly members of the Church; and that the second part, commencing at the beginning of the fifth chapter, is an apostrophe to the rich and the ungodly in the world. The passage is divided into two distinct portions, each beginning with the address "Go to," and there is no reason to conclude that the persons thus similarly addressed in both paragraphs were the same. We consider, then, that those here addressed in the first paragraph were members of the Christian Church. Go to, a call to attention, found only here and in the beginning of the next chapter. —now: this being the case; an inference from the preceding warning against worldliness and presumptuous confidence. —ye that say, Today or to-morrow; other manuscripts read "to-day and to-morrow," but the difference in meaning is slight.—we will go into such a city: literally, into this city or the city in the intention of the speaker.—and continue there a year: literally, "spend a year." Other manuscripts read, "Let us go into such a city, and let us spend there a year.—and buy and sell: literally, "traffic,"—and get gain. There could be nothing wrong in the mere merchandise; the sin consisted in a presumptuous confidence in themselves, and in a want of realization of their dependence on God. The practice referred to is still very common in the East. Merchants journey to some distant city with their stock of goods, and continue there until the whole is disposed of.

Ver. 14. Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. You are ignorant of what shall happen to you; your health and lives are not at your own disposal. Compare the similar thought in Proverbs: "Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Prov. xxvii. 1).—For what is your life? It is even a vapour. The best manuscripts read, "Ye are even a vapour;" and this is a more lively and graphic form of expression. Ye are a mere vapour; a smoke, or an exhalation from the ground.—that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. A metaphor peculiar to St. James in the Scriptures; and, as has been well remarked, there is hardly a finer image in any author of the uncertainty, the brevity, and the vanity of human life. We are but as a smoke which is only seen to vanish; a vapour which rises from the ground at dawn, and disappears long before noon-day. A somewhat similar image is employed in the Book of Wisdom: "Our names shall be forgotten in time, and no man shall have our works in
remembrance, and our life shall pass away as the trace of a cloud, and shall be dispersed as a mist that is driven away with the beams of the sun, and overcome with the heat thereof" (Wisdom ii. 4). Elsewhere in Scripture the brevity of human life is compared to a shadow that declineth, or to the fading of the flowers. Such is the vanity of life; we appear as a flash, and then are swallowed up in darkness.

Ver. 15. For that ye ought to say: literally, 'instead of your saying.' This verse is directly connected with the 13th, and the 14th verse is to be considered as a parenthesis. Ye say, 'To-day or to-morrow we shall, as matters now are, instead of saying, 'If the Lord will.' Ye assert your self-dependence, instead of humbly acknowledging your dependence on God. —If the Lord will. Compare with this expression of dependence the words of St. Paul: 'I will return again to you, if God will' (Acts xviii. 21); 'I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will' (1 Cor. iv. 19); 'I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit' (1 Cor. xvi. 7).—we shall live and do this or that. The words may be rendered, 'If the Lord will and we live, we shall do this or that.' But our version is better, as both the living and the doing are made dependent on God. The meaning being precisely the same as our common phrase: 'God willing (Deo volente), I shall do so and so.' We must, however, beware of allowing this expression of dependence to degenerate into a mere form, as too frequently the case; it must be the real feeling of our heart. We must not only acknowledge in words, but deeply realize our dependence on God.

Ver. 16. But, in contrast to this spirit of dependence on God; instead of acknowledging God in all your ways.—now, as matters now stand; as is actually the case.—ye rejoice, literally 'ye glory,' in your boastings, in your vauntings, in your vainglory. Ye take a pleasure in this arrogant and presumptuous spirit, as if you were your absolute masters. By their boastings is to be understood not so much their vain talking, as their confident and groundless reliance on their own health and life; in short, a presumptuous reliance on themselves. Yet ye ought to do as Christians; but in your own vauntings—all such rejoicing, or glorying, is evil, is sinful and wrong. It is rebellion against God—casting off your dependence upon Him. Nothing is so hateful to God as a proud and arrogant spirit.

Ver. 17. Therefore: not a mere general inference drawn from what St. James has said in the previous part of his Epistle, but a particular inference drawn from this spirit of vain boasting.—to him that knoweth to do good: not to be limited to mere benevolent actions, 'knoweth to do good works,' but to embrace our whole moral conduct—'knoweth to do what is right;' 'good,' here is opposed to what is sinful and wrong.—and doeth it not, to him it is sin. The omission of good is undoubtedly a sin, as well as the commission of evil. We have here the statement of an absolute principle, which is susceptible of endless applications. The application in the present case appears to be as follows: You have the unquestionable knowledge of the uncertainty of life; you know that it is your duty to realize your dependence on God; if then you do not so, it you act as if you were your own masters, to you it is sin. You know the right and do the wrong, and therefore are convicted of sin. (Compare John ix. 41.)

CHAP. V. 1. Go to now. Whosoever may be the persons referred to in the preceding paragraph, we consider that the rich who are here addressed were unbelieving and wicked men not belonging to the Christian community. Some indeed consider that they are rich Christians; but the charge brought upon them of condemning and killing the just cannot be applicable to believers. Hence, Stier correctly remarks: 'The rich men, whom St. James must here mean, are those already mentioned in chap. ii. 6, 7: those who practised violence on the disciples of Christ, the confessors of the Lord of glory, and blasphemed that good name by which they were called. To them St. James predicts, as a prophet and in the style of the old prophets, the impending judgment to which Jerusalem was doomed, the desolation of the land, and all the miseries which he, like the Lord Himself, speaks of as His coming to judgment and salvation.' It has also been observed that we have here a pure and unmixed denunciation of evil, or a call to repentance. Certainly there is in the words no invitation to repentance, but a mere declaration of vengeance. 'They are mistaken,' observes Calvin, 'who consider that St. James here exhorts the rich to repentance. It seems to be a simple denunciation of God's judgment, by which he meant to terrify them, without giving them any hope of pardon, for all that he requires tends only to despair.' But this must not be absolutely assumed, for we learn in the case of Nineveh that all God's denunciations are likewise exhortations to repentance.—ye rich man: to be taken literally, rich in worldly wealth: the same who were formerly mentioned as the oppressors of believers (Jas. ii. 6, 7). The allusion is not to rich men as a class, but to the unbelieving rich. The words are applicable to all the rich who are living without God in the world; and certainly the rich are under a peculiar temptation of setting their affections upon the things of this world. Riches are too frequently an obstacle to salvation, a weight which prevents the soul soaring upwards to heaven.—woe and howl for your miseries: literally, 'weep, howling over your miseries.'—that shall come upon you: literally, 'that are coming upon you.' The miseries here referred to are those which shall precede or occur at the advent of the Lord; and also, as in our Lord's prophecy, those which occurred during the Jewish war, then close at hand, miseries which were typical of those which would occur at the advent. These miseries in the Jewish war fell heavily upon the rich. They as a class belonged to the moderate party, who, having much to lose, wished to avoid a war with the Romans, and therefore were especially persecuted by the Jewish zealots, who became the ruling party. Nor were these miseries confined to the Jews in Judea, but embraced the Jews of the dispersion—the twelve tribes, scattered abroad. There was at that time a general attack upon the Jews throughout the world. 'St. James,' observes Bishop Wordsworth, 'like a Christian Jeremiah, is uttering a Divine prophecy of the woes that are coming on Jerusalem and the Jews throughout the world.'

1 So Erdmann.
CHAP. IV. 13-V. 6.] THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES. 137

Ver. 2. Your riches are corrupted. We have here a description of the doom that was to befall the rich. Your riches, in which you prided yourselves, and in which you trusted, will be taken from you. Some suppose, on account of the term 'corrupted,' that riches in grain are to be understood, which are liable to corruption; but this is refining too much: the word 'corrupted' is evidently a figurative term used to denote the perishable nature of the riches. The fact is stated, in a prophetic manner, in the past tense, as having already occurred—your riches are corrupted, denoting the certain and impending nature of the calamity: and your garments are moth-eaten. The general idea of 'riches' is here specialized as consisting in garments and in treasure—silver and gold. Among the Orientals garments still often constitute a considerable portion of their riches (compare Matt. vi. 19; Acts xi. 33).

Ver. 3. Your gold and your silver: the other treasures in which their riches consisted—is consanctified: corroded, eaten through with rust. Literally, gold and silver do not contract rust, and hence various explanations have been given, as, for example, vessels plated with gold; but such explanations are childish: the expression may well be employed to denote the perishable nature of money, and, in the next verse, shall be a witness against you: literally, 'shall be a witness to you.' Some render this: the rust which you have allowed to accumulate on them from want of use shall testify against you in the judgment as an evidence of your parsimony and sinful hoarding. Thus Neander: 'As their unused treasures of gold and silver are devoured by rust, so this will be a witness against them, their guilt being apparent from this, that what they should have used for the advantage of others, they have suffered by want of use to be corrupted.' But such a meaning is contrary to the context: it is of the destruction of the rich that St. James here speaks, not of the evidence of their crime. Hence, then, the meaning is: the rust of them shall be a testimony to your destruction; the like destruction shall befall you which befalls your gold and silver; and shall eat your flesh: the reference being not to the destruction of the body by care, to the corroding nature of riches, but to the infliction of the Divine judgment.—as it were fire: fire being the emblem of judgment; like fire shall the rust eat your flesh. So also we speak of the devouring fire. 'The Lord shall swallow them up in His wrath, and the fire shall devour them' (Ps. xxi. 9).—Ye have hoarded treasure together. Some render this: 'Ye have accumulated treasures of wrath for the day of judgment,' similar to the words of St. Paul: 'Thoutreasurer up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath' (Rom. ii. 5). But for this meaning the words 'of wrath' have to be supplied. It is best to render it: 'Ye have hoarded together treasure for destruction; treasure which shall perish.'

Ver. 4. Now follows a statement of the sins of the rich on account of which they are punished. Three sins are mentioned—impiety, luxury, and oppression. The first sin mentioned is injustice. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud. Some connect the words 'of you' with 'cistrah,'—cistrah from you; but our version is admissible, and the more simple. In the law of Moses, it was expressly forbidden to keep back the wages of hired labourers: 'Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him; the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning' (Lev. xix. 13). And again: 'Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy. At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shalt thou go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee' (Deut. xxiv. 14, 15).—cistrah: that is, for assistance to the defrauded, or rather for vengeance on the defrauders; like as Abel's blood cried unto God (Gen. iv. 10). Compare with this the words of Malachi, which some suppose St. James had here in view: 'I will be a swift witness against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, saith the Lord of hosts' (Mal. iii. 5).—and the cries of them that have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. An Old Testament title of God, generally translated in our version: 'The Lord of hosts.' It is only used here in the New Testament, and is highly appropriate, as it was an expression familiar to the Jewish Christians. In Rom. ix. 29, it occurs as a quotation from the Prophecies of Isaiah. It is expressive of the power of God; as, being the Lord of hosts, He has all agencies at His command, and therefore is able to respond to the cries of the oppressed.

Ver. 5. The second sin is luxury or self-indulgence. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton—revelled. The Jews at this time were especially addicted to luxury and debauchery.—ye have nourished your hearts, that in yourselves, as in a day of slaughter. The conjunction 'as' is omitted in the best manuscripts. Various meanings have been given to this expression. Some suppose that it denotes a day of feasting, indicative of the luxurious living of the rich; but the omission of the particle of comparison 'as' is opposed to this meaning, and besides it would be a mere repetition of the previous clause. Others think that it denotes the careless-ness and intemperance of these revelers; that they were like cattles which graze and feed, on the very day of their slaughter, utterly unaware of their danger; the day of slaughter being here regarded as the day of God's vengeance. Perhaps the correct meaning is: You have nourished yourselves like fed beasts prepared for the slaughter. Thus Neander: 'As the ox is fattened which is led to the slaughter, so have ye by your devotion to the service of your lusts, and by enjoying your...

1 The Septuagint generally render the phrase by 'Almighty:' compare Rev. iv. 8.
THE GENERAL EPISODE OF JAMES.

selves in all security, made yourselves ripe for the impending judgment.

Ver. 6. The third sin is the oppression or persecution of the righteous. Ye have condemned and killed the just, or the just one—the just man, as the word 'just' is in the singular. These words have been usually referred to the condemnation and execution of our Lord by the Jews.\(^1\) He is pre-eminently the Just One; and this appears from the Acts of the Apostles to be a common appellation of our Lord in the primitive Church, and perhaps also of the Messiah among the Jews. His murder is ever represented as the crowning sin of the Jewish nation. Thus St. Peter accuses the Jews of having denied the Holy One and the Just, and of killing the Prince of life (Acts iii. 14); and with the same crime does the martyr Stephen charge his accusers: 'Your fathers have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have now been the betrayers and murderers' (Acts vii. 52). And so also Justin Martyr says: 'Ye have killed the Just One, and before Him the prophets.' But there is nothing in the context to indicate this, and the words which follow, 'He doth not resist you,' are adverse to this meaning: they cannot refer to the non-resistance of Christ, as the verb is not in the past, but in the present tense. Some, indeed, suppose that the words denote 'God doth not resist you: that, as a punishment for their crime in killing Christ, God withdrew from them His Spirit; His Spirit no longer strove with them. But such a meaning is far-fetched. Others read it as a question: 'And doth He, that is, God, not resist you?' We prefer the other interpretation, that by the just one is meant just men in general, an individual being taken to represent the class. Christ was the most flagrant, but not the only example of their killing the just. Stephen fell a prey to the fury of the Jews, and many more whose names are unrecorded; and the writer of this Epistle, who also was called the Just, was afterwards an instance of the fact here stated, 'Ye have condemned and killed the just one.'—and he, that is, Christ, if the expression, the Just One, is restricted to Him, though the present tense of the verb is somewhat opposed to this meaning; or the just man, used generally.—doth not resist you, referring either to the patience with which Christ endured His sufferings, or to the patience of just men in general. There is here a tacit reference to the vengeance of God, who adopts the cause of the just.

\(^1\) So Lange, Basset, Dean Scott.

Chapter V. 7-20.

Various Admonitions.

7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.\(^5\) Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned:

8 Behold, the Judge standeth before the door. Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering, affliction, and of patience.\(^7\) Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

9 But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.\(^\ast\) Is any among you afflicted? let him pray.

10 Is any merry? let him sing psalms.\(^\ast\) Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

11\(^1\) being patient over it, until it judged.\(^\ast\) 2 is near.\(^\ast\) 3 Murmur not.\(^\ast\) 4 how that.\(^\ast\) 5 let him praise.
15 Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick,11 and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer18 of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

19 Brethren, if any of you do err18 from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

11 the sick man 18 The earnest prayer
13 be seduced 14 cover

CONTENTS. St. James concludes his Epistle with a variety of admonitions. He first exhorts his readers to patience; they are to exercise forbearance toward their oppressors and trust toward God, being comforted by the thought of the nearness of the advent of the Lord. Meanwhile they are to possess their hearts in patience; not to indulge in murmuring, discontent, and sinful murmuring; but to take the prophets for examples of patient suffering; especially in the case of Job they had a remarkable example of extreme sufferings, and of a happy issue out of them. Next he cautions them against swearing; in their intercourse with one another, their simple word is to be sufficient. He then recommends to them prayer; whether they were in sorrow or in joy, they were to cultivate a devotional spirit; if in sickness, they were to send for the elders of the church, and to use those remedies which the Lord had prescribed; they were to exercise mutual confession and prayer that they might be restored; and as an instance of the efficacy of earnest prayer, he adverted to Elijah, who by prayer opened and shut the floodgates of heaven. He then concludes, and sums up his Epistle with an exhortation to aim at the conversion of the erring, holding out to them the unspeakable blessing which results from converting a sinner from the error of his ways.

Ver. 7. The connection with the preceding paragraph is obvious and direct. St. James, having pronounced the doom of the rich oppressors, now proceeds to comfort the oppressed.—Be patient: literally, 'Be long-suffering;' an exhortation both to forbearance toward their oppressors, and to a trustful waiting on God for deliverance. Their patience must not be short-lived, but enduring. —Thereon: an inference from what precedes; seeing that there is a day of vengeance when the unbelieving and ungodly rich will be punished for their injustice, luxury, and oppression, and consequently a day of deliverance to them.—Brethren. St. James having, in the spirit of an Old Testament prophet, apostrophized the ungodly rich who were outside the Church, now returns to his readers, the Jewish Christians, his brethren both in the flesh and in the spirit—unto the coming of the Lord until this period continue to exercise long-suffering. What is wrong will then be redressed; what the evil will then be removed. The night may be dark and lonely; but the longest night comes to a close. By the Lord here is meant Christ, according to the analogy of Scripture, and the general expectation of the coming of Christ by believers (2 Thess. ii. 1, 2). Though St. James applies the title 'Lord' chiefly to God, yet he had previously applied it to Christ (Jas. ii. 1). Two different meanings have been attached to the phrase 'coming of the Lord.' Some understand by it the coming of Christ in spirit to destroy Jerusalem, when the Romans were employed as the instruments of His vengeance upon the unbelieving Jews, and to which reference is made in the previous verses. Others, with greater probability, understand by it His coming in person to judge the world, or what is usually termed the second advent. How far the sacred writers distinguished between the destruction of Jerusalem and the future judgment—the type and the antitype—we have no means of ascertaining. St. James, according to his usual custom, illustrates the necessity of patience by an example taken from natural life, that of the husbandman waiting for the harvest. —Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. The early and latter rain are often mentioned in the Old Testament as essential for the production of the harvest: 'I will give you the rain in due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine olive' (Deut. xi. 14). The early rain was the autumnal showers, which fell from the middle of October to the end of November, and prepared the ground for the seed. The latter rain was the spring showers, which fell in March and April, and were necessary for the ripening of the crops.

Ver. 8. Be ye also patient: as well as the husbandman; in this imitate his example.—
THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES. [CHAP. V. 7-20.

establish your hearts: possess your souls in patience; 'be ye stedfast and immovable.' 1 Not the weak, but the strong hearts are qualified to cherish patience' (Huther). We need strength of mind to be patient; endurance is an evidence of strength.—for the Lord draweth nigh: the Lord is near; His coming to execute vengeance on your oppressors, and to reward your patience, is close at hand. 'Lest any,' observes Calvin, 'should object, and say that the time of deliverance was too long delayed, he obviates this objection, and says, The Lord was at hand, or, which is the same thing, The coming of the Lord draweth nigh.' Here, also, two different interpretations are given: some referring this phrase to Christ's coming in spirit to destroy Jerusalem, and which was close at hand; and others referring it to His coming to judge the world—to the second advent, properly so called. We give the preference to this latter view, as the natural meaning of the words. But, it is asked, how can St. James say that Christ's second coming draweth nigh? Some solve the difficulty by maintaining that it was so to the sight of God, with whom 'one day is as a thousand years,' and that faith enabled believers to see things as God saw them. But St. James mentions this coming for the comfort of the oppressed, and therefore he must allude to a coming in their estimation near at hand. Others refer it to the then general expectation of the Lord's advent. Believers were then taught to live in constant expectation of the coming of the Lord. This event was not yet in the hearts of the apostles. The close presence of Christ, and the experience of His influence, and our Lord refused to give any revelation as to its time (Acts i. 7); but it was not by the primitive Church regarded, as it is by us, as far removed into the distant future, and as wholly improbable so happening in their day, but as an occurrence which might any time take place—even before that generation had passed away. 'The longing of the apostolic Church 'hasted unto' the coming of the Lord. All Christian time appeared only as the point of transition to the eternal, and thus as something passing quickly away' (Neander). Hence the exhortations of the sacred writers: 'Let your moderation,' says St. Paul, 'be known unto all men; the Lord is at hand!' (Phil. iv. 5). 'The end of all things,' says St. Peter, 'is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer' (1 Pet. iv. 7).

Ver. 9. Grudge not. The Greek verb means to sigh or groan; it is here rendered 'grudge,' because that word in Old English signified to murmur or repine. Hence 'murmur not;' be not impatient. This refers not so much to the feeling of envy—'be not envious to each other'—as to impatience and irritability of temper, which are often the effects of severe or protracted trials. It requires great grace to avoid all murmuring and patience in suffering; especially it is a difficult attainment truly to endure great pain; but God giveth more grace.—one against another, brethren—murmuring gives rise to mutual recrimination.—lest ye be condemned, or judged. Their murmuring against their brethren led them to find fault with them, and thus to accuse them falsely; and this exposed them to the righteous judgment of God, who is the Avenger of all those who are wrongly condemned. There is here one of those manifest references in this Epistle to the Sermon on the Mount (see Introduction). 'The sentiment is precisely similar to the maxim of our Lord: 'Judge not, that ye be not judged.' (Matt. vii. 1).—Behold, the Judge standeth before the door. The near approach of the great unerring Judge should cause us to suspend our judgments. This phrase is evidently equivalent to 'the coming of the Lord draweth nigh,' and therefore by the Judge we are to understand Christ. Christ is at hand; He is even at the door, ready to render to every man according to his work. 'Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire;' denotes the nearness of the advent. Compare Matt. xxiv. 33: 'Likewise, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the door.' In a different sense, in the Book of Revelation, but still denoting nearness, Christ is represented as before the door: 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock!' (Rev. iii. 20). St. James had previously exhorted believers to patience in the endurance of trials by the consideration of this nearness of the advent:—now he warns them by the same consideration against all murmuring and rash judgment of each other.

Ver. 10. Take, my brethren, the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord. Our Lord refers to the Old Testament prophets, the inspired messengers of God.—for an example. It is an argument for patience in affliction that our sufferings are not peculiar, but that others have likewise suffered, especially those eminent for holiness of suffering affliction, or rather, simply 'of affliction.'—and of patience; not to be weakened, as if it were a Hebraism, 'for an example of patient affliction.' The prophets were examples both of affliction and of patience. Theirs were greater than ours, and therefore the patience with which they endured them was so much the more commendable and worthy of imitation. Examples of affliction are not hard to find; we have only to open our eyes, and we shall see greater sufferers than ourselves; but examples both of affliction and of patience are rarer, yet, thank God, they also may be found. We can now take for examples not only the prophets of the Old Testament, but the saints of the New; and there are a sufficient number of such to console us in our sufferings, and to encourage us to a patient confidence in God.

Ver. 11. Behold, we count. St. James here speaks of this not as his own judgment, but as the judgment of all Christians, it may be of all right-thinking men.—them happy which endure: literally, 'blessed that endure;' that is not merely who are in a state of suffering, but who exercise patience in their sufferings, who endure unto the end. Such are blessed: God will not leave their patience unrewarded. Here we have another reference to the Sermon on the Mount; as the sufferings to which St. James primarily alludes arose from persecution: 'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.' (Matt. v. 10, 12).—Ye have heard of the patience of Job. Job is here adduced as a special example; because he was the most remarkable instance both of affliction and of patience in the Old Testament. The patience of Job appears to have been a proverbial expression among the Jews; it is alluded to in the apocryphal book of Tobit (chap. ii. 13). No doubt Job was frequently guilty of impatient utterances; but this
is only a proof that the purest virtue is not free from blemish, and on the whole patience had with him its perfect work. This also teaches us that Job was a real person, and not a mere myth or fictitious character; for if so, an inspired writer could hardly have presented him to his readers as an example of patience. He is also mentioned in the Prophecies of Ezekiel along with Noah and Daniel (Ezek. xiv. 14), who were undoubtedly real persons—and have been. Some manuscripts read Behold, also, the end of the Lord. Some think that by the Lord here is meant Christ; and that by ‘the end of the Lord’ is meant His death, or the completion of His work. Christ, it is observed, the highest instance of patience, is here held out for our example. His death, founded on love and borne in patience, is the great fact which can encourage the suffering Christian to patience. But although this meaning is plausible, yet it is inadmissible, and not borne out by the context. The word here rendered ‘end’ is never in the New Testament applied to the death of Christ; and besides what St. James says was seen, namely, that ‘the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy,’ that is, that He compassionates us in our sufferings, is not the prominent lesson which Christ’s death teaches us. The obvious and natural meaning of the passage, and that which is generally adopted, is to consider that by ‘the end of the Lord’ is meant that purpose which God had in view in Job’s sufferings—the happy termination which He put to his afflictions; how the Lord restored him to more than his former prosperity (Job xiii. 2). The meaning of the passage then is: Consider not only patience and patience, but his happiness issue out of all his sufferings—the design which God had in view in these sufferings, and their result in Job’s restoration—that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy. The lesson to be learned from this example of Job is the proof of God’s pity and mercy comfort and support you amid all your trials.

Ver. 12. Next follows a caution against swearing. There does not seem to be any connection between this caution and what precedes. St. James was perhaps led to it by the circumstances of his readers. But above all things, my brethren—as a caution of the highest importance—swear not. We have in the prohibition, and in the words in which it is expressed, a third manifest reference to the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 34–37). The Jews, as we learn from the Gospels, were very apt to indulge in swearing on trifling occasions; and it was doubtless the continuation of this evil habit among the converted Jews that was the occasion of this prohibition of St. James—neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath. The words are precisely similar to those used by our Lord, only in a more condensed form: ‘I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool.’ It is a question, which has been often discussed, whether all oaths are here forbidden. On the one hand, the words appear sufficiently universal; but, on the other hand, there are scriptural declarations which seem to prove the lawfulness of oaths (Heb. xvi. 16), and there are instances of oaths having been taken by the sacred writers themselves (2 Cor. i. 23). It has also been observed that swearing by God is neither here nor in our Lord’s words forbidden; and that, on the contrary, this is in certain cases commanded in the Old Testament. ‘Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve Him, and shalt swear by His name’ (Deut. vi. 13). It would appear that what St. James has here chiefly in view is the evil custom of swearing in common conversation. Yet so expresses himself that oaths among Christians should be unnecessary—a simple affirmation or negation should be sufficient. At the same time, in some cases, as in courts of judicature, an oath is not only lawful, but may be expected and needful (Heb. vi. 16).—but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay: be content with a simple assertion. Compare Matt. v. 37.—lest ye fall into condemnation: literally, lest ye fall under judgment.

Ver. 13. Is any afflicted? The word rendered ‘afflicted’ is a general term, denoting all kinds of affliction—sickness, pain, bereavement, disappointment, persecution. Here perhaps it specially refers to inward affliction—sorrows, in contrast to misery.—let him pray, prayer being the natural resort of the afflicted.—is any merry? that is, cheerful, in good spirits. It is the same word which St. Paul employs when he exhorts his fellow-servants to ‘be of good cheer’ (Acts xxvii. 36). It literally signifies to be of good mind; hence free from care.—let him sing psalms: literally, ‘let him praise.’ The primary meaning of the word is to touch, then to touch the strings of the harp, to touch the strings of the harp, to praise. We are not to express our cheerfulness in riotous mirth, but in praise and gratitude to God. Nor ought prayer and praise to be separated; they should be combined; our prayers should often express themselves as a praise. So prayer and praise should be a prayer. Thus Paul and Silas in prison prayed and sang praises to God (Acts xvi. 25); literally, ‘praying, they sang hymns to God;’ their singing of hymns was their prayer.

Ver. 14. Is any sick among you? a particular instance of the general term ‘afflicted’: to be taken in its literal sense, denoting ‘bodily sickness,’ and not to be spiritualized as denoting ‘spiritual trouble.’—let him call for the elders of the church: not for the aged men, but for the presbyters of the church; that is, of the congregation to which the sick man belongs. This proves that even at the early period at which St. James wrote his Epistle there was a constituted ecclesiastical government; each congregation had its presbyters.—and let them pray over him. This may denote either literally ‘over his bed,’ or ‘over him’ by the imposition of hands; or figuratively ‘with reference to him,’ that is, ‘for him.’—anointing him with oil. This anointing with oil was and still is much employed in the East as a medicinal remedy in the case of sickness, the oil used being chiefly olive oil. Thus in our Lord’s parable, the good Samaritan is represented as pouring into the wounds of the traveller oil and wine (Luke x. 34). Here, however, the anointing with oil appears to have been a religious ceremony, and to have had a sacerdotal meaning; it was performed by the elders of the Church in the name of the Lord. We read that the disciples, whom our Lord sent endowed with the miraculous powers of healing, ‘anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them’ (Mark vi. 13).—in the name of the Lord: that is, of Christ, and to be connected with ‘anointing.’ The natural meaning is, that the presbyters were to anoint the sick by the authority or command of Christ. There is
certainly no mention of such an injunction, but the ignorance would not exclude the fact; and we have seen that the disciples sent out by our Lord anointed with oil. The name of Christ was the recognised vehicle for the communication of miraculous cures. Compare Acts iii. 6: 'In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Rise up and walk.'

Ver. 15. And the prayer of faith. Some understand this, prayer uttered in faith—believing prayer—confidence in God as the Healer of pestilence, supposing that the reference is to those miraculous gifts of healing with which the primitive Church was endowed, understand by faith what has been called miraculous faith—a belief that one was called upon to perform a miracle—a secret impulse from God to that effect. This faith was one of those extraordinary gifts which were conferred on the primitive Christians, but which are now withdrawn from the Christian Church. 'To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles' (1 Cor. xii. 8-10).

It would appear from Scripture that this faith must be possessed by both parties; the person who performs the miracle must be endowed with this miraculous faith; and the person on whom the miracle is wrought must have faith to be healed (Acts iv. 10).—shall save the sick here, as is evident from the context, shall recover the sick and not be restored to health. There is here no reference to the salvation of the soul. The Greek verb here rendered 'save' is often used in the New Testament of bodily healing. It is to be observed that this cure is not a present cure, but a cure that is to be referred to the prayer of faith—and the Lord, that is, Christ, in whose name he is anointed, shall raise him up, bring him out of his sickness, raise him from his bed.—and if; some render the words 'even if;' but our version is admissible, and to be preferred as simpler.—he have committed sins—the sins being here regarded as the cause of his sickness. Even in the present day sickness is often occasioned by sin; but this appears to have been particularly the case in the apostolic age. Then it would appear that sickness was inflicted by God in the way of extraordinary punishment for sin. Thus it is said concerning those who profaned the Lord's Supper among the Corinthians: 'For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep' (1 Cor. x. 30). Compare also John v. 14.—they shall be forgiven him: the removal of the sickness as the punishment of sin was a proof of its forgiveness.——Such is the excess of the passage; but very different interpretations have been attached to it. Of these there are three which merit consideration. The first is the opinion of the Romanists. It is from this passage chiefly that they derive their sacrament of extreme unction. The anointing with oil has a sacramental efficacy, like the sprinkling of water in baptism, or the participation of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper. When a man is on the point of death he is to send for the priest, who, after hearing his confession, is to administer the communion to him, and to anoint certain portions of his body with the holy chrism in the name of the Lord, so that his sins may be forgiven him. But there is in this practice a manifest perversion of the words of the apostle. The anointing which St. James recommends has reference not so much to spiritual as to bodily healing. It was administered with the view of recovery from sickness, not, as is the practice of the Romanists, administered when, humanly speaking, all hope of recovery is gone.—A second view is to consider the anointing with oil as a mere medicinal remedy. It was generally practised throughout the East. It was enjoined to be administered in the name of the Lord, because the Divine blessing was to be implored on all occasions; and there was good hope for restoration to health resulting from the use of proper remedies, and given in answer to believing prayer. But the great objection to this view is that it is contrary to the spirit of the passage. The whole description certainly leaves the impression that this anointing was a religious service, and that the recovery of the sick was not the result of natural means, but a supernatural effect resulting from the prayer of faith. If the anointing was a mere medicinal remedy, it would have been performed by the physician rather than by the elders of the church. We therefore give the preference to the third view, which considers that we have here a reference to the miraculous gift of healing practised in the primitive Church. We learn from the First Epistle to the Corinthians that this gift of healing was conferred by the Spirit upon many of the early Christians (1 Cor. xii. 9); and from the practice of the disciples of Christ, that they combined the anointing of the sick with the exercise of this gift (Mark vi. 13). Hence, then, we give the following meaning to the passage:—That the elders of the church being sent for anointed the sick man with oil in the name of Christ, and by the prayer of faith miraculously restored him to health. Oil was employed as an external symbol, in a similar manner as our Lord in His miracles sometimes made use of external signs (Mark vii. 35; John ix. 6). It had a special import among the Jews, being the emblem of consecration, and perhaps was here employed to denote that the person cured was consecrated to the Lord. Of course this miraculous gift of healing was not a permanent power to be exercised on all occasions, otherwise there would have been neither sickness nor death in the primitive Church; but it was conditioned by the will of God. Paul undoubtedly possessed and exercised the gift of healing; but still he had to leave Trophimus as Miletum sick, and he could not cure himself of the thorn in his flesh. In the performance of a miracle, then, there was a peculiar impulse of the Spirit. The great objection to the above view is that the sick man was enjoined to call not for those possessed with the gift of healing, but for the presbyters of the church. It is, however, highly probable that those would be selected as presbyters who were the most highly endowed with miraculous gifts.

Ver. 16. Confess your faults. Here we are led especially to think on wrongs inflicted upon others—offences against the law of love; but there is no reason to limit the term to this kind of sin; it comprehends sins against God as well as against man.—one to another. On this verse chiefly do the Romanists found their doctrine of auricular confession, that it is the duty of believers to confess their sins to the priest. But for this dogma there is not the slightest foundation in this passage; the confession is to be made not to the priest, but to one another; it is a mutual confession, so that the
priest should confess to the penitent, as well as to the penitent to the priest.—and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. Some restrict this to bodily healing, as in the case of the sickness mentioned above. And certainly confession of a spiritual healing efficacy is not excluded by this restriction; as the confession and the prayer are mutual, spiritual healing may also be included. The term, therefore, is to be taken generally, including both spiritual and bodily healing. And certainly confession of a spiritual effect was, and is, in the church, a healing efficacy. As, there is no burden heavier to bear than the burden of some guilty secret. Now this burden is lessened, if not removed, by confession. Confession expels sin from the soul, and restores a man to his true self; whereas secrecy retains sin, and causes a man to live a false life.—The effectual fervent prayer. The Greek word here rendered ‘effectual fervent’ has been differently translated. Literally it means ‘fervent, or passionate, or earnest.’ Some, rendering it as passive, render it ‘inward,’ that is, by the Holy Spirit,—inspired prayer. Others render it the prayer of a righteous man availeth much in its working; that is, worketh very effectually. Perhaps the word ‘fervent’ by itself, or ‘earnest,’ gives the correct meaning; the word ‘effectual’ in our version is wholly superfluous; the earnest prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Pray, in order to prevail, must proceed from a strong and holy sense of sin. But there is no reason for this; by this is, a good, sincere, true-hearted man.

Ver. 17. Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are. An instance in the life of Elijah is given as an example of the efficacy of the prayer of a righteous man. Elijah was wholly inapplicable to ordinary men, owing to his peculiar greatness, St. James adds, secondly, to the personality, the humanity of the person we pray for. By this is not meant passionate, or liable to passion, but liable to the same human infirmities and sufferings, of the same nature as we. Compare Acts xiv. 15: ‘We are all men of like passions with you.’ ‘We are all men of like passions with you.’ We pray earnestly; so do the apostles of Christ, and the early Christians. Calvin, by the example of the saints, because we imagine them to be half gods or heroes, who had peculiar intercourse with God; so that because they were heard, we have no confidence. In order to remove this heathen and profane superstition, James reminds us that the saints ought to be considered as having the infirmity of the flesh, so that we may learn to sacrifice what they obtained from the Lord, not to their merits, but to the efficacy of prayer.—and he prayed earnestly; literally, he prayed with prayer; a Hebraism for ‘he prayed earnestly.’—that it might not rain. There is no mention in the Old Testament of this being a prayer of Elijah; it is there given as a prophetic announcement (1 Kings xii. 1); but it is a natural inference drawn from the character of Elijah.—and it rained not on the earth; that is, on Palestine and the adjoining regions.—by the space of three years and six months. The same period is stated by our Lord (Luke iv. 25). Whereas, in the Book of Kings, it is said that ‘the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year,2 namely, concerning the rain (1 Kings xii. 1). But there is here no contradiction, as the third year refers to the time when Elijah repaired the altar of Zarephath, which he did not do until the brook Chereth had dried up, and consequently some time after the famine had commenced. The period three years and six months is remarkable as being the same space of time during which the two witnesses prophesied who had power to shut heaven that it rain not in the days of their prophecy (Rev. xi. 6).

Ver. 18. Let him know, as an inducement to attempt the work of restoring the erring, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way restores him to the truth—shall save a soul from death. Here, evidently, eternal death is meant, the punishment of the condemned soul; a death compared with which the death of the body is but a trifle; thus intimating in the strongest manner the infinite importance of the restoration of the erring. And shall hide a multitude of sins; that is, the sins not of the person who converts, but of the person who is converted; the multitude of his sins are blotted out; his actual sins, not the possible sins which the sinner might have committed, but of which his conversion has prevented the commission. The covering of sins is a common phrase for their remission. Thus, David says: ‘Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered’ (Ps. xxxii. 1). And certainly to aim at the conversion of our fellow-men is a far more generous motive presented to us, than if the apostle had appealed to the personal good which such a work would confer upon ourselves in promoting our own holiness, or even to the glorious reward in a future life promised to those who have turned many unto righteousness (Dan. xii. 3).
INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLES OF PETER.

THE First Epistle of Peter, like that of John, explains its own intention. The latter is declared to be written in order that its readers' 'joy may be full' (1 John i. 4), that they may know that they 'have eternal life,' and that they may 'believe on the name of the Son of God' (chap. v. 13). The former gives the key to its own design in these words: 'By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand' (chap. v. 12). Its object, therefore, is to assure its readers of the truth of that which they had received, and to encourage them to abide by it at all hazards. It was not to Peter himself that they owed their introduction to the kingdom of Christ. It is true that Jews from some of the regions addressed had been present at Pentecost, and may have heard Peter's discourse on that occasion (Acts ii.). But the churches mentioned in the inscription of this letter, were churches which stood indebted to Paul and his associates for their existence. The faith which they had received through this channel had now to be maintained in the face of trials arising from the threatenings or persecutions of the heathen world. It was essential that these scattered believers should see that the Christian vocation for which they might be called to suffer, was worth the suffering for, and that the grace which had been made known to them was the true grace of God. If there was no Paul to do this service for them, Peter was the man to take his place. Could not he set his seal upon his 'beloved brother's' teaching? Could not he testify as none other of the 'living hope,' and of the sureness of the things in which they had been instructed? He had confessed Christ. Upon that confession, and what it proved him capable of becoming, the Church itself was to be built. He had denied Christ, and knew by experience what manner of adversary these Christians had to cope with. As a witness of Christ, he can urge them to witness a good confession in evil times. As once threatened, he can speak to those who are now threatened. So in this letter he carries out the commission given him by Christ in reference to Satan's sifting of himself,—'when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren' (Luke xxii. 32). And the sum of his exhortations in it is an unfolding of the meaning of that simple, piercing question, at once reproof, expostulation, and counsel, and never to be forgotten when once heard, which his suffering Lord had spoken into his drowsy ear in the garden of Gethsemane,—'What, could ye not watch with me one hour?' (Matt. xxvi. 40).

The voice of the Epistle, therefore, has been correctly recognised to be the voice of animation. It is not enough, however, to say of it that it is a letter of strength and confirmation. It is eminently one of reminiscence. It strengthens and confirms by putting in remembrance. It recalls the great facts of grace which had made these
believers what they are. It makes the warm colours of the doctrine in which they had been trained by Paul and their first teachers, revive again. The spiritual truths which they had once received, were the only things which could illumine the dark night of trial which was closing in about them. On these, as on so many tracks of heavenly light shot across the gloom, Peter concentrates their fading attention.

The Epistle was rightly described by Luther as one of the noblest in the New Testament. It is strange that its individuality and independence should have been denied, and that some should still speak of it as a compilation of other men's thoughts, a cento of other men's modes of expression. It is true that there are unmistakable resemblances between it and others of the New Testament Epistles. There are some decided points of conjunction, for example, between it and the Epistle of James. These are so remarkable, indeed, that some regard Peter as reiterating James's teaching, and preparing the way for Paul's. Both James and Peter have a peculiar term for trial; both speak of the manifold temptations; both introduce the grass as a figure of human glory; both cite or echo the same passage from Proverbs; both adopt similar forms of exhortation (cf. Jas. i. 21; 1 Pet. ii. 1). There are things again which this Epistle has in common with the First Epistle of John. Both speak, for example, of Christ as 'the righteous,' of believers being begotten or born again, purifying themselves, etc. Above all, there are striking similarities between Peter and Paul, in the use made of the Old Testament, in the counsels on the subject of the relative duties, in the doctrine of civil and political obligation, and in other matters. These are of a kind to indicate that Peter must have written with familiar knowledge of much that Paul had written before him. They make it difficult not to suppose that he had the Epistles to the Romans and Ephesians in particular before him or in his mind. They have induced some, indeed, to suppose that his First Epistle was purposely constructed to some extent, as regards the introductory greeting and the exhortations to various orders of society, on the plan of Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

But there is nothing wonderful in such resemblances. As the Book of Acts shows, Peter must have been well acquainted with the views and methods of statement characteristic of James. John and Peter, again, were usually together, as long as that was possible. They were to each other what Mary and Martha were to one another. And as to Paul, his system of teaching was certainly not unknown to Peter. Paul is careful to tell us himself how he laid it before the Apostles (Gal. ii. 2). Nor do these apparent repetitions take from the distinct character of the Epistle. They are affinities, not borrowings. Peter puts all in a form of his own. Even when he most reminds us of Paul, he has an independent method of expression. The Pauline formula live to God becomes in Peter live to righteousness. The Pauline idea of dying to sin receives in Peter a notably different phraseology.

The individuality of the Epistle appears in many things. Not a few of its conceptions and terms are peculiar to Peter. Among these may be named the 'kiss of charity' (chap. v. 14), the 'conscience toward God' (chap. ii. 19), the 'living hope,' and the whole description of the inheritance (chap. i. 3, 4), the declaration that baptism is 'the answer of a good conscience toward God' (chap. iii. 21), the phrase 'gone into heaven' applied to Christ (chap. iii. 22), the sections on the preaching to the spirits in prison (chap. iii. 19, 20), and the gospel preached to them that are dead (chap. iv. 6), etc. He has his own modes of expounding the doctrines of Christianity, and of illustrating the Christian life. Thus it has been noticed that good works, which appear in John as the fruits of love, in James as the substance of the Christian life, and in Paul as the results of faith, are in Peter rather the 'tests of the soundness and stability of a faith which rests on the resurrection of Christ and looks to the future'.
INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLES OF PETER.

(Cook). He has his own way of looking at the Person and Work of Christ. It has been rightly observed that the prominent thing with him is the mediatorial position of his Lord, and that this is made to turn upon His resurrection. He presents this in great breadth. Christ is the medium of our regeneration (chap. i. 3), of our belief in God (chap. i. 21), of acceptable sacrifice (chap. ii. 5), of baptism (chap. iii. 21), of the glorifying of God (chap. iv. 11); and it is through His resurrection that we are begotten again to a lively hope (chap. i. 3), and that we come to have faith and hope in God (chap. i. 21). There is a remarkable fondness for dwelling on the character of Christ, and bringing out the power of His example. He is our Pattern in suffering, in respect at once of the unmerited nature of His sufferings and of His sinlessness and patience in enduring them. The Christ, too, with whom Peter connects the great deeds of grace is all the while not so much the Christ of history as the Christ of glory, in the might of His ascension, exaltation, sitting at God's right hand, headship over the Church and all angels, and Second Coming.

The Epistle is distinguished, too, by its comparatively non-systematic form. It is less dialectical by far than any of the greater Pauline Epistles. It is not without its plan. But its unity is not a reasoned unity. The logical particles, which abound in Paul's writings, are rare in Peter. Here the method is simply to let the one sentence suggest the next. There is the habit, too, of insisting on the same truths in repeated forms. Thus the trial of faith like gold tried with fire (chap. i. 7) reappears in the 'fiery trial' of chap. iv. 12; the 'be sober' of chap. i. 13 rings out again in the 'be ye therefore sober' of chap. iv. 7, and the 'be sober,' etc., of chap. v. 8; the injunction not to fashion themselves 'according to the former lusts in their ignorance' (chap. i. 14) is repeated in chap. ii. 11 as a charge to 'abstain from fleshly lusts,' and in chap. iv. 2 as a warning not to 'live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men,' the idea of the well-doing of the Christian as the best argument for silencing the slanderous Gentile (chap. ii. 15), meets us again in the conversation of the wives which wins over the husbands (chap. iii. 1), and in the good conversation in Christ which puts to shame the false, accusers (chap. iii. 16); the thankworthiness of suffering wrongfully (chap. ii. 19) rises again in the happiness of suffering for righteousness' sake (chap. iii. 14), and in the blessedness of being reproached for the name of Christ (chap. iv. 14).

The Epistle is further marked by a perpetual movement among Old Testament ideas, imagery, and language. It represents the Church of Christ as the Church of Israel perfected and spiritualized. The language of Leviticus is introduced when the call of God is stated (chap. i. 15, 16). The Messianic terms of Isa. xxviii. and Ps. cviii. are naturally adopted in describing Christ's position (chap. ii. 6, etc.). The great section on the Servant of Jehovah (Isa. lii. 13–lxxii. 12) has many of its features reproduced here. And all this without the exclusiveness of the old Jewish spirit. It is characteristic of the Epistle, also, to carry practice back to Christian fact and Christian doctrine, and to show that the roots of the former lie in the latter. So it is that it conjoins the 'exhorting' with the 'testifying' (chap. v. 12). And in relation to this, it deals for the most part with objective truth. It has its pointed warnings against the lusts of the flesh. But we find little in it like the Pauline representations of the struggle between two kingdoms in the soul, or the profound experiences of a competition between the evil that the man would not and yet does, and the good which he would and yet does not. Still less do we see of anything like a conflict between intellect and faith. And almost as little of the deep intuition of John. What Peter dwells on is not the subjective but the objective, not the mysteries of the work of grace within us, but the gifts which grace brings to us, and the obligations it
INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLES OF PETER.

lays us under. It is the acts of God that he sets forth,—His foreordaining of Christ, His calling a people, His raising Christ from the dead, etc. And with all this the attitude of the Epistle is distinctively prospective. It lives in the future. What has arrested the attention of most expositors is the fact that its face is turned so steadily to the future. Everything is seen in the light of the end. The ‘appearing’ of Jesus Christ fills the view. The present life of the believer recedes into the background, or is read in terms of what it shall be when Christ returns. Glory and honour are the keynotes of the Epistle. It regards salvation itself as something ‘ready to be revealed in the last time’ (chap. i. 5), and as the end of faith (chap. i. 9). It is engaged with the contents of Christian hope, where Paul might occupy himself with the gladness of the present life of justification, or with the seriousness of the present struggle between grace and nature in the individual. ‘In this Epistle,’ says Wordsworth, ‘Peter views all the sufferings of Calvary as glorified by triumph. He sees Christ’s decease, he sees his own decease, he sees the decease of all Christ’s faithful followers, as invested with a heavenly radiance by the light of the Transfiguration. He writes his Epistle in the joyful light of that prophetic Vision of Glory.’

AUTHORSHIP OF THE FIRST EPISTLE.

There are not a few things in the Epistle which become all the more natural and intelligible if it was written by Peter the Apostle. There are various points of affinity between it and the discourses of Peter which are recorded in the Book of Acts. These are of a kind to suggest an argument in favour of the Petrine authorship from undesigned coincidences. There is a habit of immediate personal appeal. There is an abundant use of direct terms of address, such as ‘to you,’ ‘for you,’ etc., which sharpen general statements into distinct personal applications to the readers. This is seen in passages like chaps. i. 4, 20, 25, ii. 7, iii. 6, etc. There is also the habit of repeating Christ’s own words, or of using expressions which show that these were in the writer’s mind, as in chap. iii. 9, 14, etc. And at several points, in a simple and unstudied style, the Epistle gives a singular reflection of Peter’s personal history. It contains much that is quite in character, if Peter is the author. And external testimony is almost entirely in this direction. It is not quoted, indeed, in the Muratorian Canon, a document of high antiquity and great importance. But it is referred to by Second Peter. There are echoes of it, allusions to it, or citations from it in many of the oldest remains of Christian literature. It is given in the older Syriac Version, in which only three Catholic epistles appear. It is reckoned among the accepted books by Eusebius, in his classification of the New Testament writings. Its Petrine authorship has been contested by some critics in modern times mainly on subjective grounds. It is contested by some still. But it has been generally recognised as among the most richly and securely attested of all the books of the New Testament. The Church has accepted it from the earliest times for what it professes to be, and has regarded it as of eminent interest and worth.

THE PARTIES ADDRESSED—DATE AND PLACE OF COMPOSITION.

There has been great division of opinion as to the parties to whom the Epistle was written. The question is one of great difficulty. If the terms with which the letter opens were alone in view, we should conclude probably in favour of the view that the persons addressed were Jewish Christians. For it would be most natural to take the phrase ‘strangers scattered abroad’ in the literal sense of sojourners of the
INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLES OF PETER.

Jewish dispersion (see note on chap. i. 1), all the more that it is connected with plain territorial designations. And this view has secured the consent of a large number of eminent expositors. On the other hand, the localities mentioned are localities traversed, as we gather from Acts and the Pauline Epistles, for the most part by Paul. The churches in these localities were churches planted mainly by Paul, and predominantly Gentile in character. And throughout the Epistle statements appear (e.g. in chaps. i. 14, 18, ii. 9, 10, iii. 6, iv. 3) which only a very strained exegesis seems capable of suiting to Jews. Hence it has been held by a still larger number of interpreters and historians of the first rank that the churches addressed consisted mainly of Gentile Christians. This view has been adopted in the present Commentary as on the whole the more probable. An intermediate solution has been sought in the idea that the parties were chiefly those who had been proselytes to Judaism before they became Christians. But that has met with little favour.

The date of the Epistle has been brought down by some as late as the period of Trajan’s persecution. But if the Epistle is by Peter, the persecution in view, as now in action, or as casting its shadow over them, must be the Neronic. Some suppose it to have been written at the beginning of Paul’s third missionary journey; others, at the end of that; others, during the latter part of Paul’s captivity; others, immediately after Paul’s release from his two years’ imprisonment at Rome. The most probable opinion on the whole, however, is that it was written after Paul’s martyrdom, and towards the close of Peter’s career, about the year 66 A.D.

The only direct indication which the Epistle gives of the place of its composition is in chap. v. 13; see note on which. We have seen reason to take the statement there made in the literal sense, and therefore to regard the Epistle as written, not from Rome, the mystical Babylon, but from the historical Babylon on the Euphrates.

N.B.—The English text is given according to the original form of the Authorised, as that is reproduced in the Parallel Edition of the Revised Version.

PROBLEMS OF THE SECOND EPISTLE.

The Second Epistle professes to be written by Peter. It refers to a former Epistle written by the same hand (chap. iii. 1.). It indicates acquaintance with the Epistles of Paul (chap. iii. 15, 16). We should infer from it that it was addressed to the same circle of readers as First Peter. And if it is Peter’s composition, it would belong naturally to the very end of his life. It can be shown, too, that there is a not inconsiderable number of terms and peculiar turns of thought which are common to the two Epistles. There are at the same time great differences between them. There are marked differences of style. There are also differences of a broader kind. The exhortations of the Second Epistle, for example, are of a much more general order than those of the First. The details into which the one goes on the subject of social, political, and domestic duty, do not appear in the other. The peril against which the First Epistle aims at strengthening its readers is that arising from the slanders and persecutions of the surrounding heathenism. The peril which the Second Epistle looks to is that arising from corruption within the Church, the seductions of false teachers, etc. In respect of external testimony, too, this Epistle occupies a very different position from the First.

The question, therefore, into which all others affecting this Second Epistle run, is that of its authenticity. Its claim to be the composition of Peter the Apostle has been doubted or denied by a very large number of authorities, and these of widely different schools. The grounds on which these doubts or denials have proceeded
INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLES OF PETER.

have been as various as the schools. Some of them are confined for the most part to the representatives of extreme parties. Others admittedly have weight with all. With some the main thing is the existence in the Epistle of matters which are taken to belong to the developed Gnosticism of the third century. Others lay great stress upon what is believed to be the dependence of Second Peter upon Jude. The similarities between these two Epistles are of a very striking kind. They are admitted even by some who affirm the canonicity and Petrine authorship of the present Epistle, to point very clearly to the priority of Jude. They are held by not a few to amount to borrowings, which are inconsistent with the supposition that the Apostle Peter could have been the writer. Others, who dispute the authenticity of Jude, hold them to be conclusive proof that Second Peter cannot be earlier than the second century. The singular style of the Epistle is also largely insisted on. It is affirmed that, both in phraseology and in theological conception, the difference between the two Epistles which bear Peter's name is too decided to make it reasonable to suppose them to have proceeded from the same hand. It has also been argued that the writer betrays himself by over-anxiety to make himself out to be Peter, and that there was a disposition in the early Church by all means to magnify Peter's position and forge his name. Quite recently, too, an elaborate argument has been constructed to prove the Epistle to be largely dependent on the writings of Josephus. (See Dr. Abbot's articles in the Expositor, second series, vol. iii.) The difficulties and peculiarities attaching to the external evidence have been felt by all.

On the other hand, the adverse arguments drawn from the contents and characteristics of the Epistle have been met with considerable force. It is certainly too much to assert the presence of formal Gnosticism in the Epistle. The attempted demonstration of Peter's borrowings from Josephus has been deprived of much of its power by a close examination of the facts (see especially an article by Dr. B. B. Warfield in the Southern Presbyterian Review for January 1882). If there are marked theological and linguistic differences between the two Petrine Epistles, they are balanced to a considerable extent by a series of equally striking similarities, both in doctrinal statement and in individuality of expression. We have instances of the former in the matter of prophecy (1 Pet. i. 10–12; 2 Pet. i. 19–21), in that of the new birth (1 Pet. i. 22, ii. 2; 2 Pet. i. 4), in that of submission to civil authority (1 Pet. ii. 13; 2 Pet. ii. 10), etc. We have instances of the latter in the use of such special terms as virtue (1 Pet. ii. 9; 2 Pet. i. 3), multiplied (1 Pet. i. 2; 2 Pet. i. 2), conversation (1 Pet. i. 15; 2 Pet. ii. 7), supply or minister (1 Pet. iv. 11; 2 Pet. i. 5, 11), putting off (1 Pet. iii. 21; 2 Pet. i. 14), receiving (1 Pet. i. 9; 2 Pet. ii. 13), etc. It is at the best only a limited value that can be safely allowed to these differences in style. One of the keenest of critics, now the veteran of his school, makes this confession:—

'On the theological and linguistic differences between the two Epistles, which the later criticism has so emphasized, we lay no stress. The two Epistles are too short, have to do with wholly different circumstances; and especially there are no direct contradictions to be found. One of the Epistles is on other grounds proved to be unauthentic. Can this also be brought into account?' (Reuss.) As to the external testimony, it is certain that Origen, at the beginning of the third century, had the Epistle. He notices that there were doubts current about it. But his own use of it, and references to it, indicate that in his time it was generally received as a part of Scripture, and as Peter's composition. Clement of Alexandria, Origen's teacher, also appears to have possessed it, and even to have written a commentary on it. And although this is disputed by many, it is possible that we can trace it back to the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs early in the second century, to Barnabas about 106 A.D.,
INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLES OF PETER.

and even to Clement of Rome about 97 A.D. The amount of early evidence is undoubtedly small. There are also the two serious facts, that it was doubted in the fourth century and earlier, and that it obtained no place in the canon of the Syrian Church. The doubts which took decided shape in the fourth century were gradually overcome, and the Epistle was recognised as canonical for many centuries. The question was revived at the Reformation period, and the weight of such names as Erasmus, Luther, and Calvin was lent to those who were uncertain of the Epistle's claims. In recent times these doubts have been urged with the utmost force, and have prevailed with very many. With the exception of the Syrian branch, the Church as a whole, however, has continued to give the Epistle a place in the canon. From the time of Eusebius, who ranked it with the disputed books, that place has been felt to be less certain than is the case with almost any other part of the New Testament.

Yet the amount of external testimony might be shown to be even in this case far superior to that which is available for the masterpieces of Classical antiquity.
THE FIRST EPISODE GENERAL OF

P E T E R.

CHAPTER I.

CONTENTS.—I. Address and Salutation, vers. 1, 2; II. Ascription of Praise to God for the New Hope into which Believers are born, vers. 3-5; III. The Certainty and Nearness of the Salvation to which that Hope points helping to Joy in Time of Trial, vers. 6-9; IV. The Peculiar Interest of God’s People of these Last Times in this Glorious Salvation, vers. 10-12; V. Exhortations to a Life in harmony with that Hope, and in particular to Holiness, vers. 13-16; VI. As also to Godly Fear, vers. 17-21; VII. And to Brotherly Love, vers. 22-25.

CHAPTER I. 1, 2.

Address and Salutation.

1 PETER, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the “strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, 2 Asia, and Bithynia, “elect according to the “foreknowledge of God the Father, through “sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and “sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:

1 Grace unto you, and “peace, be multiplied.

The writer opens with a greeting which is equally remarkable for its wealth of idea and for its admirable reflection of the combined gravity, tenderness, and animation of the body of the Epistle. In form it reminds us more of the Pauline type of inscription than is the case with any of the Catholic Epistles, excepting 2d Peter and Jude. It seems cast in the mould of Pauline doctrine, and adopts some of the familiar Pauline phrases. It has, at the same time, an unmistakable character of its own. Like Paul, Peter refers at once to his apostleship. He dwells less on that, however, than on the standing of his readers. And the terms in which he describes them and their election are chosen so as to suggest thoughts of the believer’s dignity and security. Thus with its immediate outset the letter begins to fulfil its high design of comforting and strengthening those tried and threatened Christians.

In ver. 1 we have designations of the author and the recipients of the Epistle. The former of these is given in utmost brevity; the latter, as the thing of superior interest, is carried on into the next verse and unfolded in the details of grace. Each of these designations has its peculiar point and intention. The description of the writer, Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, is noticeable for its simplicity and reticence. For his personal identification he uses nothing beyond the new name, the name of grace, Peter, which his Lord had put
THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

upon him (Matt. xvi. 8; John i. 42). He adopts the title apostle of Jesus Christ; and of all the Catholic Epistles, Peter's alone thus commend the writer to the readers' attention by putting forward his apostleship in the proem. But he appends to this official title no further title, such as the 'servant' which Paul adds. Neither does he introduce any explanation of the way in which he came to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, such as is conveyed by the Pauline formula, 'by the will of God.' This latter would be superfluous in the case of one known to have been of the original twelve, one of the eye-witnesses chosen by Christ to be His 'messengers,' and commissioned by Him to go 'into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature' (Mark xvi. 15). The style of introduction differs, therefore, at once from Paul's and from that of James, John, and Jude, the writers of the other Catholic Epistles. This is not without its reason. Addressing churches with which he had no intimate connection, which were probably unknown to him, and which (as the localities show) were numerically Pauline, Peter naturally appeals to his apostolic position in explanation of his writing them, as his warrant for taking the place of their founder, Paul, and in order to bespeak their attention. By limiting himself, however, to the one official title, apostle, he also indicates that his claims upon their regard were not personal, but those general, official claims which were common to him with others. It is something different in the Second Epistle. There he can write to one who has come to closer terms of connection with his readers; hence there he prefixes the name of grace, Peter, by the old name of nature, Simeon or Simon, and adds to the official 'apostle' the wider title 'servant' (Schott). Here nothing personal to the individual Peter is allowed to come into view. As this description of the writer implies the justification which exists on his own side for addressing these Christians, the designation next applied to his readers suggests circumstances on their side which make his call to communicate with them. They are elect sojourners of the dispersion—on which difficult expression, see also the Introduction. The term sojourners corresponds to an O. T. title of Jehovah's people (Gen. iv. 5, 9, 15, 22; Ps. cv. 43), and occurs in the N. T. in a variety of connections (Matt. xx. 16, xxii. 14; Luke xviii. 7; Rom. viii. 33; Mark xiii. 27; Rev. xvii. 14; 2 Tim. ii. 10; 1 Pet. ii. 9). It is not to be restricted to Jews or Jewish Christians, neither does it apply to the Church only, and not to the individual. Nor, again, does it necessarily refer to what passes in the Divine mind. Taken by itself it may express the gracious standing of those addressed, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether Church or individual, and that standing as the result of an act of God which had grasped them as they were in the world and brought them into a new relation with Him. It may refer to the selecting them out of the world and giving them to the fellowship of the people of God (Leighton). It is therefore a note of comfort. If evil impended over the readers, their election by God out of the world of heathen ignorance and hopelessness, and set by God's own act in a new position which made an abiding standing in grace. The second term, strangers or sojourners, is one used of those who are denizens of a place and not citizens; neither natives nor permanent inhabitants, but temporary residents in a land that is strange to them. It describes the readers as having their true city and centre elsewhere than where they were. It is a natural adjunct, therefore, to the term elect. If they were chosen by God's act out of the world, they cannot have their final home here. The third phrase, of the dispersion, is the familiar term descriptive of Jews outside the Holy Land, the whole body of Jews whose lot was cast among the heathen since the Assyrian and Babylonian depredations, remote from their own political and religious centre. In its literal sense here it would describe Peter's readers as belonging to, or having their residence among, the heathen. In its secondary application it may describe them as belonging to the community of the true dispersion settled within certain geographical limits, viz. those of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. The localities are characterized by their north-east by west and south-east to west and north. This fits in well enough, therefore, with the position of one writing from the distant east, although it would not be safe to make much of that. Pontus, the extensive territory stretching along the south coast of the Euxine, connected in classical lore with the story of the Amazons and the legend of the Argonauts in quest of the Golden Fleece, is memorable in ancient history as the brilliant reign of the great Mithridates, and in Christian history as the native country of Aquila (Acts xviii. 2).—Galatia, the country seized by the Gaulish invaders between B.C. 279 and 230, and reduced to a Roman province (apparently with the inclusion of Lycaonia, Isauria, the S. E. of Phrygia and part of Pisidia) by Augustus (B.C. 25), was occupied by a mixed population, mainly Gauls and Phrygians, but with considerable infusions of Greeks and Jews. It was visited twice by Paul (Acts xvi. 6; Gal. iv. 13), and also by Crescens (2 Tim. iv. 10).—Cappadocia, a rich pastoral district of Asia Minor, watered by the Halys, and notable in Church history for the three great Cappadocians, Isa. Gregory of Nyssa, Basil of Cesarea, and Gregory of Nazianzus, became a Roman province on the death of Archelaus, its last king, A.D. 17.—Asia, here, as generally in the N. T., not Asia Minor, but Proconsular Asia, the territory including Mysia, Lydia, Caria, and most of Phrygia, and having for its metropolis the great city of Ephesus, which was the scene of a three years' ministry of Paul (Acts xx. 31), as well as of the preaching of Apollos (Acts xviii. 24). It embraced many churches known to us from Acts and the Pauline Epistles.—Bithynia, the fertile country stretching along the S.W. coast of the Euxine, bequeathed to the Romans B.C. 74, and constituted a proconsular province by Augustus, contained no churches known to us from Scripture. By the beginning of the second century, however, the Christian population must have been considerable. Pliny's letter to the Emperor Trajan (about A.D. 110) graphically describes the multitudes of converts, the deserted temples, and the unsaleable victims.—The list of territories shows that the churches addressed by Peter were for the most part, if not entirely, churches planted and cared for by Paul. It shows further that they were churches which did not occupy, in the cir-
THE FIRST EPISTLE

The means by which, or rather to the sphere within which, the election is made good. The term here used for sanctification is peculiarly Pauline, and being found eight times in Paul's Epistles, and elsewhere only in Heb. xii. 14, and this one passage in Peter. It is also a distinctively scriptural and ecclesiastical term, being first used in connection with the absence of sin in the Divine Mind, and is assured not by any single act of God's love, but by a permanent relation of that love, namely, His Fatherhood. — In sanctification of the Spirit. This points to

153

in whose name the Christian has the assurance that he is so loved by the Father that he shall never depart from him. The Christian therefore is assured of the being found eight times in Paul's Epistles, and elsewhere only in Heb. xii. 14, and this one passage in Peter. It is also a distinctively scriptural and ecclesiastical term, being first used in connection with the absence of sin in the Divine Mind, and is assured not by any single act of God's love, but by a permanent relation of that love, namely, His Fatherhood. — In sanctification of the Spirit. This points to

the means by which, or rather to the sphere within which, the election is made good. The term here used for sanctification is peculiarly Pauline, and being found eight times in Paul's Epistles, and elsewhere only in Heb. xii. 14, and this one passage in Peter. It is also a distinctively scriptural and ecclesiastical term, being first used in connection with the absence of sin in the Divine Mind, and is assured not by any single act of God's love, but by a permanent relation of that love, namely, His Fatherhood. — In sanctification of the Spirit. This points to

in whose name the Christian has the assurance that he is so loved by the Father that he shall never depart from him. The Christian therefore is assured of the
be multiplied. The greeting embraces the familiar Pauline terms, grace and peace, but differs from the Pauline form in the use of the peculiar term multiplied, which occurs again in 2 Pet. i. 2 and Jude 2, and in the salutations of no other New Testament Epistles. It is found, however, in the Greek version of Dan. iv. 3 (LXX., iii. 31) and vi. 25. If the Babylon, therefore, from which Peter writes can be taken to be the literal Babylon, it might be interesting to recall (as Wordsworth suggests) the Epistles, introduced by salutations so similar to Peter’s, which were written from the same capital by two kings, Nebuchadnezzar and Darius, of two great dynasties, and addressed to all their provinces. The grace is the richer Christian rendering of the hail or greeting with which Greek letter-writers addressed their correspondents. The peace is the Christian adaptation of the solemn Hebrew salutation. Those great gifts of God’s love which Peter knew his readers to possess already in part he wishes them to have in their affluence. It is also John’s wish, following his Master’s word (John xv. 11), that the joy of those to whom he wrote may be full (1 John i. 4). As the Father, the Spirit, and Jesus Christ have been just named, Peter omits mention of the sources whence these gifts come.

CHAPTER I. 3-5.

Ascription of Praise to God: specially for the Grace of Hope into which Believers are begotten.

3 * BLESSED be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and unfaded, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

Peter lifts his readers’ eyes at once to the future. He speaks first of their hope, their inheritance, their final salvation, before he alludes to the burdens and fears of the present. There was that in Peter himself which leapt up in natural response to the new hope which came by the Gospel, and we can see from the Acts how he turned with constant expectancy to the future. If he seems, however, to give exceptional prominence to the element of hope, it is not as if he read the Gospel differently from Paul or John, or placed the grace of hope where they put that of faith, or that of love. The circumstances of his readers made it seasonable to present primarily to their view the worth and radiance of a grace which had at the same time so deep a hold upon himself.

Ver. 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The gifts of God’s grace to the believer, and the believer’s relation to God, depend upon the prior relation between God and Christ. Hence it is as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and neither as the God of Israel, nor yet merely as our God and Father, that the Giver of all grace is praised. The term used here for blessed, or praised, which is so frequent also in the Old Testament, and in the New is applied only to God, occurs repeatedly as an affirmative—e.g. who is blessed (Rom. i. 25, iv. 5; 2 Cor. xi. 31). Standing here not in a relative clause, but at the opening of a section, it is rather an ascription, Blessed be the God, etc. It is another form of the same verb that is applied to Mary (Luke i. 28, 42). A totally different word is used in the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v.), where the idea expressed is that of happiness merely. It is possible that in this doxological outburst Peter is simply adapting to Christian use an old liturgical formula of the Jewish Church, or repeating one already familiar to the Christian Church (Weiss). The similarity of phrase, however, between Peter here and Paul in 2 Cor. i. 3, Eph. i. 3, is striking, and suggests to many that the former framed his ascription on the model of that of the latter. In Ephesians, as here, the doxology introduces an exhortation which reproduces its contents, although there the exhortation does not come to expression till chap. iv. 1, while here it follows almost immediately (1. 13)—which according to his much mercy begat us again unto a living hope. The particular grace for the bestowal of which God receives this ascription is hope. And that hope is described in respect at once of its origin and of its quality. It is due to God’s regenerating grace. We have it only because He begat us again, a phrase used in the New Testament only by Peter, and by him only here,
and in ver. 23, embodying, however, the same truth as is conveyed in somewhat different terms by Paul (Tit. iii. 5; Gal. vi. 15), James (i. 18), and John (1 John iii. 9, v. 1), and reflecting the Master's own instructions to Nicodemus (John iii. 3, etc.). It is to be therefore, in the full sense of the new birth or begetting and not to be diluted into the idea of rising out of hopelessness. The direct past (begotten, not hath begotten) is used, because the change from death to life in the individual is regarded as a definite, historical act, once for all accomplished, or perhaps because the regeneration of all is regarded as virtually effected in the historical act of Christ's resurrection. In the latter case Peter would be again in affinity with Paul, whose habit is to speak of all as dying in Christ's death and rising in Christ's resurrection (Rom. vii. 4; 2 Cor. v. 14, etc.). This historical act of regeneration had its motive or standard in God's多い, His love being defined as mercy in reference to the natural misery of its objects, and that mercy being further described, in reference to what it had to meet and what it bestowed, as much or great. Compare the Pauline idea of God's rich mercy (Rom. viii. 4; Eph. iv. 18). The hope which originated thus in God's act is living. With the birth comes the quality of life which distinguishes the believer's hope from all other hopes. These are at the best dim, uncertain longings, dead or lying in wait. 'Beads of morning
Strung on slender blades of grass,
Or a spider's web adorning
In a strain and treacherous pass.'

"They die often before us and we live to bury them, and see our own folly and infidelity in trusting to them; but at the utmost they die with us when we die, and can accompany us no farther. But this hope answers expectation to the full, and much beyond it, and deceives no way but in that happy way of far exceeding it" (Leighton). Peter's fondness for these two ideas, the hope and the living (see the adjective again applied to the Word of God, i. 23, to Christ, and to believers, ii. 4), has been often noticed. It is for bringing us into a region of this kind that he here praises God. The 'unto' here does not express the end or aim of God's act (as in Matt. xxii. 9) or in that we might have a living hope, but in that it is simply an adjective, a region, a place. When we come into the new life we come into a condition or atmosphere of hope, into a region bright with hope, a hope which, like the morning, spreads itself over earth and heaven' (Lillie).

—Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This admits of being connected immediately either with the begat us again—the idea then being that the regeneration takes effect only through Christ's resurrection—or with the preceding clause as a whole, in which case Christ's resurrection becomes the event by means of which we are brought by God's begetting into this new life of hope (so Calvin, Weiss, Huther, Alford, etc.), as the position of the adjective perhaps indicates, it may be connected with the term living (so Luther, Bengel, de Wette, Hofmann, etc.), the sense then being that the hope gets its quality of life through Christ's resurrection—because He lives it cannot but survive and assert itself as a living and enlivening principle.

Ver. 4. Unto an inheritance. Some connect this closely with the hope, as a definition of that to which it points—a living hope looking to the inheritance. Most connect it with the begat, the two clauses introduced by 'unto' being regarded as dependent on the same verb, and the latter clause defining the former more nearly. When we are begotten, that is, to say, into the hope, we are begotten into the inheritance. To have the one is to have the other. So perfect is God's act, so secure against failure the hope which comes by that act. In relation to His begetting us, the future is as the present, the possession is as the expectation. The term inheritance, another characteristic Pauline term, and used by Peter only here (although in 1 Pet. iii. 9, v. 3, we have cognate words), is the familiar O. T. phrase for Israel's possession in the Land of Promise. It is used sometimes of Cuman as a whole, sometimes of the particular lots of the several tribes, and, with few exceptions, in the sense of a portion assigned. The idea of a portion coming by heirship to Israel has a little prominence as the idea of Israel as God's son. In the N. T. it occurs both in the sense of the portion assigned (Acts vii. 5; Heb. xi. 8) and in that of the inheritance proper (Matt. xxi. 38; Mark xii. 7, etc.). It is used, especially by Paul, to express the idea of possession in the future. But while Paul regards the believer as an heir because he is a son (Rom. viii. 17, etc.), he does not appear to connect the idea of possession by way of heirship with his use of the particular word 'inheritance,' probably (so Huther) on account of the O. T. sense being so deeply impressed upon the term. He uses it, indeed, where the notion of heirship is inapplicable, e.g. of God's inheritance in the saints (Eph. i. 18). It is doubtful, therefore, whether Peter has in view an inheritance which comes in virtue of sonship, although the ruling idea of our being begotten favours that. He uses the word in the large sense, inclusive of all that the kingdom of God has in store for the believer in the consummation.—Incorruptible, and unadulterated, and that fadeth not away. This inheritance he describes first negatively and, as suits his character and style, by a number of adjectives, incorruptible, subject to no dissolution or decay, undiluted (a term applied also to our High Priest, Heb. vii. 26), neither tainted nor tarnished, and unfading, unwithering (a word used only here, and in a slightly different form in v. 4). There is perhaps a climax in these negatives, from what has in itself no seeds of decay, to what is proof against external touch of pollution, and from that to what is superior even to the law of changing seasons and bloom succeeded by blight; or, as Leighton conceives it, the gradation may be from the perpetuity to the purity, and from that to the immutability of the inheritance. The sad realities of Israel's heritage in the Land of Promise may be in the background. It is too much, however, to find in these epithets (as Weiss does) allusions to the pollutions which defiled the land, or to the simoom which scourged it. The inheritance is further described positively (in terms much used by many of the Fathers as an argument against the Millenarian doctrine) as reserved in heaven (or, in the heavens) for you. The participle, which is in the perfect tense (has been reserved) points to the inheritance as one which has been prepared from the beginning, and the sphere within which it has been laid up in reserve is the heavens, where God Himself dwells. It is thereby made doubly safe, 'laid up and kept,'
and that 'among God's own treasures, under His own eye, and within the shelter of His omnipotence' (Lilley), although it is yet a thing of the future. Thus is it secured, too, in the possession of the qualities ascribed to it; for into heaven nothing can intrude that corrupts, defiles, or makes to fade. Similar is our Lord's teaching on the treasure and the reward in heaven (Matt. vi. 20, xix. 21, v. 12), and Paul's conception of the hope which has been laid up or deposited in heaven (Col. i. 5). With finest feeling, too, for his readers, Peter puts this as all in reserve precisely for them. No longer using 'us,' as before, he now says 'for you'—for you, sojourners in a land that is not your own, an inheritance is in waiting, which is strange to peril from the 'worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched' (Leighton), from the foul hand that mars them, from the doom that makes nothing here abide 'of one stay.'

Vers. 5. Who in God's power are being guarded through faith. A still better reason why they should lift a thankfully confident eye from the heavenly inheritance. The possession might be reserved for them, and the reservation be to no purpose, if they let themselves be left to the sake of earth and their own weakness. All the more insecurer of it might they seem in their present circumstances of danger and temptation. But if the inheritance is kept for the people, the people are also kept for the sake of the inheritance. The word indicates a different kind of keeping from that expressed by the reserved. It is the military term used both literally (of the keeping of a city as with a garrison, 2 Cor. xi. 23) and figuratively (of the keeping of the heart, Phil. iv. 7, and of the keeping of the Israelite in ward under the law, Gal. iii. 23). The perfect tense used of the reserving of the inheritance (where a past act sheding in its effect was in view) changes now into the present, as only a continuous process of protection can make the people safe against themselves. The efficient cause (so Huther, Gerhard, etc.) of this sustained protection, or, as the term is sometimes more strictly taken, the sphere within which it moves, the force behind which they are shielded as by a garrison, is nothing weaker than God's power,—a phrase to be understood here in the ordinary sense, and not as a title of the Holy Spirit (as Weiss, de Wette, etc., suppose on the false analogy of Luke i. 35). The instrumental cause of this protection, or the means through which the force works to guard us, is faith,—not to be taken in any limited sense (such, e.g., as faith in the future, or a general reliance upon God, with Hofmann, Weiss, etc.), but in the specific Christian sense, the faith which grasps God's power, and which, while itself God's gift, is the subjective response to what is objectively offered. Thus, with the Lord Himself encompassing them as the 'mountains are round about Jerusalem,' and with the hand of faith clinging to the shelter of His power, the people on earth are secure as is the inheritance in heaven.—unto salvation. This is dependent neither upon the immediately preceding term faith (as if the secret of their security was a faith which had this salvation as its specific object), nor with the remote begat us again (so Calvin, Steiger, etc.; as if the hope, the inheritance, and the salvation were three coordinate states into which God's regenerating act brought us), but with the guarded, our salvation being the object which all this protection has in view. This great word salvation, so often upon Peter's lips, and occurring thrice within half-a-dozen verses here, seems used by him preferentially in the eschatological sense. Occasionally in the N. T. it has the simple sense of deliverance from enemies (Luke i. 71; Acts vii. 25), or preservation of life (Acts xxvii. 34; Heb. xi. 7), but it occurs for the most part as the technical term for spiritual salvation, or the Messianic salvation (John iv. 22; Acts iv. 12; Rom. xi. 11, etc.), now in the limited sense of the opposite of perdition (Phil. i. 28), and again in the general sense of eternal salvation; now in the sense of a present salvation (Phil. i. 19; 2 Cor. i. 6), again in that of a progressive salvation (1 Pet. ii. 2), and yet again in that of the completed salvation, which is to enter with Christ's return (Rom. xii. 11; 1 Thess. v. 8, 9; Heb. ix. 28, etc.). Here it is the future salvation, and that not as mere exemption from the fate of the lost, but as the underlying idea of the present distresses and fears of the readers indicates) in the widest sense, somewhat parallel to that of the righteousness, but with a more direct reference to the state of trial, of final relief from the world of evil, and completed possession of all Messianic blessing—ready to be revealed. The expression points to the certainty of the adven of the salvation. The term ready, stronger than the usual about to be, or destined to be, and indicating a state of waiting in preparedness, and perhaps also (in the sense of the verb) to the 'rapid completion of the act' of its revelation in contrast with the long process of the guarding of its subjects (Alford). The word revealed has here the familiar sense of bringing to light something already existent, but undescribed or unseen. In the last two of them, in the time closing the present order of things, and heralding Christ's return. The N. T. writers, following an O. T. conception, regard all history as having two great divisions, one covering the whole space prior to Messiah's times, and the other including all from these times. The former period began to fade to its extinction with Messiah's First Advent. The second period would enter conclusively with Messiah's Second Advent. The former was known as 'this age,' to which, although Christ had once appeared, the apostle's own time was spoken of as belonging. The latter was called 'the age to come,' the final reality of which (although in principle it began with Messiah's first appearing) was as near as was Messiah's glorious return. This Second Advent, therefore, was the crisis once for all separating the two, and the time which marked the end of the one period and ushered in the other was 'the last day' (John vi. 39, and xi. 24, xii. 48), 'the last time,' etc. The salvation needs but the lifting of the veil at God's set time, and that time is on the wing. Christ's return will announce the close of the 'last time' of the old order, and in a moment uncover what God has prepared in secret. Peter does not measure the interval, or give a chronology of Messiah's comings. Yet if we compare this the statement with others (v. 5, 7) touching on Christ's return, we may say with Huther that 'his whole manner of expression indicated that in hope it floated before his vision as one near at hand.'
Chapter I. 6-9.

The Anticipation of this Future a help to joy in Time of Trial.

6 WHEREIN ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season (if 'need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

1 or, for a little while 2 literally, though now . . . pained (or, grieved)
3 in 4 or, proof 5 omit being much 6 omit of
7 or, yet is proved 8 rather, praise and glory and honour 9 in the revelation 10 literally, on
11 rather, greatly rejoice (as in ver. 6) 12 literally, glorified
13 rather, with a more striking abruptness, salvation of souls (omitting the words 'even the' and 'your')

Only now does Peter introduce the sufferings of his readers. Before naming these, he has made the bright realities of their privilege pass in rapid and vivid review. He has led them to look at the hope which is in them, and the future which is before them. And when he comes now to speak of the ills they had to face, he has more to say of their feelings than of their temptations. With quick and tender touch he handles their afflictions, softening their sharpness by disclosing their object. Wisely and with delicate skill he so shapes his statement as to bring the light of the future in upon the darkness of the present, and to make the burdens of the time an argument for joy. Leighton has caught correctly, if not completely, the intention of the paragraph, expressing it also with his own devout simplicity. 'The same motives,' he says, 'cannot beget contrary passions in the soul, therefore the apostle reduces the mixture of sorrowing and rejoicing that is usual in the heart of a Christian to the different causes of both, and shows which of the two hath the stronger cause, and therefore is always predominant. His scope is to stir up and strengthen spiritual joy in his afflicted brethren; and therefore, having set the matter before them in the preceding verses, he now applies it, and expressly opposes it to their distresses.'

Ver. 6. Wherein ye greatly rejoice. As the parallel in iv. 4 shows, the wherein may be taken to summarize the ideas previously expressed, whether in the immediately preceding sentence or in the preceding paragraph as a whole. Some (Gerhard and Leighton) carry its reference, therefore, as far back as ver. 3, so that the connection becomes this, —'in all which blessings into which God begat you, ye rejoice.' Others (Calvin and Grotius, followed by de Wette, Schott, Frommüller, etc.) refer it more particularly to the idea of ver. 4, 5,—'in which inheritance, hoped for and so secured, ye have the object of your joy.' In the present series of verses, however (although it is too much to say that this is his habit), Peter connects one section with another by carrying over the closing word or idea (compare vers. 5, 8, 10). It is more in harmony with this, therefore, to regard the wherein as referring to the immediate antecedent, viz. the 'last time.' In this case it may have the strictly temporal sense (so Wiesinger, Hofmann, Huther, Alford, etc.), the idea then being, 'in which last time, when it comes, you will have your time of rejoicing.' Or it may express the ground or object of joy, —'at which ye rejoice,' i.e. 'which last time is the object of your joy.' This last is to be preferred, as most consistent both with the tense of the verb and with the usage of the Hebrew term which the Greek verb here represents. This particular term for joy, aptly rendered 'greatly rejoice,' is one which occurs very rarely outside
the Septuagint, the N. T., and ecclesiastical literature. It is probably a Greek reproduction (see Buttmann's Greek Grammar by Thayer, p. 5) of a familiar Hebrew verb often used in the poetical and prophetical books (Ps. ii. 11, ix. 15; Job iii. 22; Isa. xliii. 24; Ps. cv. 18, etc.). Like the Hebrew original (which means to 'leap for joy,' or 'rejoice at exultation'), it denotes a strong, a lively joy, intenser than is expressed by the ordinary term, with which also it is often coupled. Peter has in view, therefore, the kind of joy which is affirmed of Christ Himself (Luke x. 21), which He too expressly enjoins on persecuted disciples (Matt. v. 12, where the stronger term is added to the weaker), and which breaks forth in the Magnificat (Luke i. 47).—though for a little now, if need be, grieved in manifold temptations. The 'temptations' (a term wide enough to cover anything by which character is put to the proof) will refer here, whatever else may be included, to the threatenings and slanders which, as we gather from the Epistle itself (ii. 12, 15, iii. 14-17, iv. 4, 12-19), these Christians had to endure from heathen neighbours. Their lot was cast in them. An adjective is attached to these temptations, which is used in the Classics, to describe the many-coloured leopard or peacock, the colour-changing Proteus, the richly-wrought robe or carpet, the changeful months, the intricate orchard. What a picture does this epithet 'manifold,' which is applied by Peter also to the grace of God (iv. 1), by James again to temptation (i. 2), and elsewhere to such things as the divers diseases healed by Christ (Matt. iv. 24), present of the number, the diversity, and the changefulness of these trials! Yet the terror of the fact is at once relieved by a double qualification, first by the words (each of which has here a temporal force), which limit these temptations to the present, and exhibit the breadth ending in a little space; and then by the clause 'if need be,' or 'if it must be so.' This latter (which has the strict hypothetical sense, and not some kind of affirmative sense, with Bengel, etc.; nor yet the subjective sense supposed by Schott, as if 'if indeed there was reason why you should feel grieved in temptation') means that temptations come only where there is a call for them, and suggests that they may not, therefore, be expected in the present. Thus, even the present continually. The great difficulty in this verse is how to deal with the times indicated by the several terms, the 'rejoice' being in form a present tense, the 'grieved' a distinct past, and the word 'now,' with which the latter is connected, again pointing to present time. Some solve this difficulty (Augustine, Bunyan, etc.) by taking the 'rejoice' as an imperative. But Peter does not appear to begin exhortation till ver. 13, and the peculiar tense of the 'grieved' would thus be still unaccounted for. Others (Luther, Huther, Wiesinger, Alford, Hofmann, etc.) suppose that the present 'rejoice' has here the future sense, expressing the certainty of the joy which they are yet to have; and the peculiar tense of the other verb ('ye were grieved') is then explained as due to the writer speaking for the moment from the standpoint of the last time,'and looking back upon the troubles of his own time as things of the past. This is supported by the Syriac and the Clementine Vulgate, and is adopted by Tyndale. But, while the present occurs often enough as a quasi-future, that is the case with particular verbs (such as 'cometh') and in particular connections which naturally suggest the time, and which have no real parallel here. Others (Schott, etc.) rightly retain the present sense in the 'rejoice,' but regard the 'grieved' as a sharp and definite past meant to exhibit the temptations of the believer's day as transitory, even momentary, in contrast with the permanent grace of his joy. This, however, is, to a refinement of ideas to the soravit which it does not express unaided. The explanation seems to be that the 'grieved' has the proleptic force here, which both the perfect (1 Cor. xii. 1; Rom. iv. 14, xiv. 23; 2 Pet. ii. 10) and the soravit (John xv. 6; 1 Cor. vii. 28; Rev. x. 7) have in connection with conditional presents. In the case of the natural sense of the several terms is preserved, and the meaning becomes simply this: 'ye have a present joy, notwithstanding that, if such proves needful, you are made the subjects of some short-lived trouble now.' The certainties of the future make the present a time of joy too deep to be more than dashed by the pain of manifold temptations. Ver. 7. that the proof of your faith, etc. The statement now introduced connects itself closely with the conditional notice of suffering. It points them at once to the ultimate object of their possible subjectio to many painful things now. If this subjection is only as God deems needful, it also looks to an end gracious enough to cast the light of comfort back into the dark and grievous present. In regard, however, both to the sense of particular words and to the mutual relations of the clauses, the verse is one of some difficulty. The term rendered 'trial' in the A. V. is found nowhere else in the N. T. except in Jas. i. 3. A cognate form, however, occurs more frequently, sometimes with a present reference and sometimes with a past (see Cremer, sub voc.), so that it means both actively the process of putting to the proof (2 Cor. vii. 2), and passively the proof, the evidence itself (2 Cor. xiii. 3), or the attestation, the approvedness resulting from the process (Rom. v. 3, 4; 2 Cor. ii. 9, ix. 13; Phil. ii. 22). If the present term, therefore, were strictly parallel to that, it might mean either the act or process of their testing. Of these three senses the first would be analogous to what is expressed by another cognate term in Heb. iii. 3. It is inappropriate here, however, because the act or process of testing cannot well be the thing that is to be in their praise at the last. The second, which is adopted by Steinmeyer, etc., would make the temptations themselves, as the criteria of faith, the thing that shall be to their praise. The third, therefore, is the natural sense here, the approvedness (Huther) of your faith. The idea is thus much the same as your proved faith, your faith as attested by probation. Mr. Hort, however, holds that the term can mean nothing else than the instrument of trial, and supposes that an early confusion may have crept into the text between this word and a very similar form, the neuter of an adjective, meaning 'that which is approved,' which is supported by two of the better critics. More precious as surely it is than gold which perisheth, and yet is tried by fire. With the best editors the simple 'more precious' is to be read for the 'much more precious' of the A. V. Some make the clause dependent on the subse-
The First Epistle of Peter.

With some good MSS. Scrivener reads known here instead of seen. The latter, however, is the better supported reading. The verse has a historical interest, being quoted (from the second clause onward) in the Epistle addressed to the Philippians (chap. i.) by Polycarp, the martyr bishop of Smyrna and the disciple of John, of whom also Irenæus (Adv. Haer. iii. 3), his own disciple, tells us that he was instructed by the apostles, and brought into connection with many who had seen Christ. From the brief vision of the future honour of believers, Peter turns again to their present position, and to that as one with the springs of gladness in it. He takes up the joy already referred to (ver. 6), and, having indicated how the end of their trials should make the burdened present a life of joy, he next suggests how much there is to help them to the same in what they had in Christ now. In presenting the ascended Christ first as the object of love, he uses the term expressive of the kind of love which rises on the basis of a recognition of the dignity of the Person loved—a term which he had hesitated to adopt from his own lips in the scene by the Sea of Galilee (John xxi. 15-17).—on whom, though for the present not seeing him, yet indeed believing. The relative is connected not with the 'rejoice,' but with the 'believing.' It is as they believe on Him that they rejoice. The faith already noticed as the means through which they are kept is reintroduced as a belief in the unseen Saviour which carries unspakable joy in it. Neither the writer himself, who once had seen Christ in the flesh, nor the readers who had not had that privilege, could now see Him, of whom it is said that 'then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord' (John xx. 20). Yet they had Him as the object of their love and faith, and in that they had enough to make their clouded life bright. Their present might seem grievous in comparison with that future of which Peter had given them a glimpse. But if it denied them Christ in the possession of sight, it admitted the deeper possession of Christ. And to have that is to have joy. For joy is the reflex of love and trust. So joy stands next to love in Paul's description of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. v. 22). So Peter, in his prayer with the Lord's words to Thomas in his mind (John xx. 29), lets them into the secret of the blessedness of those who have not seen and yet have believed. 'It is commonly true, the eye is the ordinary door by which love enters into the soul, and it is true in this love; though it is denied to the eye of sense, yet you see it is ascribed to the eye of faith. . . . Faith, indeed, is distinguished from that vision that is in glory; but it is the vision of the kingdom of grace, it is the eye of the new creature, that quick-sighted eye, that pierces all the visible heavens, and sees above them' (Leighton). Faith and love are associated as working together for a gladness of heart which rises to exaltation. Their gracious inheritance in each other is indicated. 'There is an inseparable intermixture of love with belief,' says Leighton again, 'and a pious affection, receiving Divine truth; so that, in effect, as we distinguish them, they are mutually strengthened, the one by the other, and so, though it seem a circle, it is a Divine one, and falls not under the censure of the School's pedantry. If you ask, How shall I do to live? I answer, Believe. But, if you ask, How shall I believe? I answer, Love.'
The First Epistle General of Peter. [Chap. I. 10-12.]

The Peculiar Interest of God’s People of these Last Times in this Glorious Salvation.

10 Of which salvation the prophets have "enquired and searched diligently," who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: "searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." Unto whom it was "revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us," did minister "the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

Chapter I. 10-12.
The paragraph which now follows deals with the relation of the prophets to the salvation of which they prophesied. The salvation itself, however, continues to be the foremost thing. The notice of the prophetic ministry is not introduced with any view of indicating the essential identity of the office of grace with the O. T., or with the witness to the truth of the apostolic proclamation of grace which may be drawn from its harmony with the prophetic (so Gerhard, etc.). Not to recall the fact that these Christians had only to face what the prophets had faced before them, while in respect of privilege they had the immense superiority of resting on a salvation accomplished, where these others had to rest on its promise (Schott). In this last case, the section would, indeed, furnish another reason why they should live a hopeful life. But it says nothing itself of the prophets as sufferers. It comes in, therefore, with the simpler object of exhibiting the grandeur of this salvation in the light of its interest to prophets and even to angels. (So Calvin, and after him the best interpreters.) Ver 9. The subject of this sentence is not the salvation of the N. T. prophets, as Calvin and others had to rest on its promise, therefore, it is limited by this object.

Ver. 10. With regard to which salvation. The salvation here in view is the salvation already introduced first as 'ready to be revealed in the last time,' as a 'salvation of souls.' It is not to be limited either to the completed salvation of the future, or to the partial salvation of the present, but is God's salvation generally. This is indicated by the method of connection with ver. 9. The object of this sentence seems to parallel the preceding 'salvation of souls,' while the introduction of the noun after the relative shows, perhaps, that it is not so closely attached to the immediate antecedent as to make the subject of the clause parallel in all respects to that of the other (Schott). The prophets referred to are obviously the O. T. prophets, as almost all interpreters hold. The supposition is advanced, however, that they are mainly the prophets of the Apocalyptic Church, with some of whom the Book of Acts mentions Peter himself to have been brought into personal contact, e.g. with Barnabas (Acts iv. 36), Agabus (xii. 18, xxi. 10), Judas and Silas (xv. 36). This view is supported by appeal to the prominent position occupied by these N. T. prophets (Eph. ii. 20, iii. 5, iv. 11; 2 Pet. iii. 12), to Peter's statement about the prophetic word (2 Pet. i. 19), and to such phrases as 'the Spirit of Christ which was in them,' which are held to apply rather to Christian than to Israelite prophets (so Plumptre). But, difficult as the paragraph in any case is, some of its clauses become doubly so on this supposition. Neither does the term 'prophets' here stand connected with the term 'apostles,' or with anything else naturally defining it as = those of the N. T. Church.—earnestly sought and searched. Both verbs have an intensive force. The first is used, e.g. of Esau's careful seeking of a place of repose (Heb. xii. 17). The second, though it occurs nowhere else in the N. T., is used by the LXX., e.g. of Saul's resolve to get at David's lurking-place (xvii. 11), and throughout all the thousands of Judah (1 Sam. xxviii. 23). They depict, therefore, the strength and earnestness of the interest with which the prophets gave their minds to the hidden things of this salvation.

The phrase 'the grace unto you' (as it literally is) means the grace destined or reserved for you, not (as Wiesinger, Schott, etc.) the grace which has merely come to you, or which ye have actually got. For this 'grace' is contemplated not from the viewpoint of the apostles, but from that of the prophets. The subjects of this grace are also emphasized here by the pointed 'unto you,' as the very parties now addressed by Peter, and therefore (if it is a reasonable supposition that the Epistle is directed to Pauline, and consequently mainly Gentile, Churches) to heirs of God's grace who were in the mass Gentiles. The entire clause is usually taken to characterize the O. T. prophets according to a function common to them as a whole (Schott, Huther, and most). It would thus have no more point than a general description of the prophets as men who, as a body, spoke of a grace which was meant for others than themselves. But the fact that, while the noun 'prophets' is without the article, the participle rendered 'who prophesied' it suggests that Peter has a certain class of prophets in view (Hoffmann), as the associated terms suggest that he has a particular part of the prophetic communications in mind. Those particularly referred to, therefore, are prophets like Isaiah and others, who spoke of what was the great mystery to Israel—the interest which the Gentile world was to have in the salvation which was 'of the Jews.'

Ver. 11. Searching what, or what manner of time, or better, searching with reference to what (season), or what kind of season. This participial clause, introduced by the simple form of the intenser compound verb 'earnestly searched,' takes up the prophetic study and specifies the point to which it was directed. It was the question of the era at which this grace was to come. Both pronouns refer to the word 'season.' They are not to be dealt with separately, as if the 'what' meant 'which person,' and the 'what manner of' pointed to the time (so Felle, Mason, etc.). In that case the man in whose expected Messiah was to appear, would, as well as the date of his coming, be what they wish to ascertain. But the object of the prophetic reflection is here defined simply as the time itself, or the kind of time—a phrase meaning not (as Steinmeyer) 'the time or rather the kind of time,' but, in a descending climax, 'the time, or, failing that, the kind of time.' By diligent reflection these prophets sought to discover the precise period (whether soon or late), or, if that were denied them, at least the signs of the times. The kind of era (whether, e.g., one of peace or one of war) at which the revelation given them of the destined admission of the Gentile world into Israel's grace was to be made good.—the spirit of Christ in them. This denotes the source of the communication, which formed the subject of the study. So far, therefore, it also explains the impulse under which they both studied and declared them. They rose on the minds of the prophets in virtue of a power
which, though in them, was not that of their own intelligence. The men were conscious that those future things of grace which they saw inwardly came to them not as the foreomens of their own sagacity, but as the communications of a reveling Agent. Hence they both searched them for themselves, and prophesied of them to others. The reveling Power in them is designated 'the Spirit of Christ,' not in the sense of the Spirit that speaks of Christ (Augustine, Bengel, etc.), but in the sense of the Spirit that belongs to Christ, or possibly the Spirit that is identified with Christ. The designation is to be taken in the broad sense which naturally belongs to it (cf. Rom. viii. 9, etc.). It is not to be reduced, contrary to the analogy of the Epistles, to anything so subjective as 'the Messiah-Spirit,' or 'the Messianic Spirit' (Mason), nor, on the other hand, is it used here with a view to the procession of the Third Person of the Trinity (Cook). Its point is caught rather in the well-known sentence of the Epistle of Barnabas (chap. v.)—'the prophets having the gift from Christ Himself prophesied in His Name.' Peter does not draw any distinction here between the Spirit of Christ as a purely official title, and the Spirit of Jesus, or the Spirit of Jesus Christ as the personal title, so that the designation should mean nothing more than that the Spirit of the Messiah (unidentified with the Christ of history) was in the prophets. He indicates rather that the Reveling Agent who gave the prophecy is His grace, as well as His power, to come was Christ Himself—very the Christ now known to the Church as the subject of O. T. prophecy and the finisher of salvation. This is in accordance with analogous modes of stating the Spirit of Jesus Christ as pre-existent, incarnate, or risen. It is admitted, therefore, by cautious exegetes like Huther, that the great majority of interpreters are right in recognizing here a witness to the pre-existence of Christ, and to His pre-incarnate activity in the Church. Only, as the expositions which deal with the term 'Spirit of Christ,' as if it were identical simply with 'Spirit of God,' come short of Peter's intension here. More is expressed than the general identity of the work of grace in the O. T. with that in the N. T., or the identity of the Spirit of God in the former with the Spirit of Christ in the latter (de Wette), or the idea that the Spirit, who worked in the prophets, was the same Spirit of God that Jesus received at His baptism, and since then has possessed (Schmied, Weiss, etc.).—was declaring. The action of the Spirit in the prophets is described first by a verb which, though used often in a less definite sense, has here probably the force which it has in 1 Cor. iii. 13 (of the day that shall declare every man's work), and in a Pet. i. 14 (of Christ showing Peter that he must shortly put off this tabernacle). This operation of the Spirit is further explained by the phrase—when it testified beforehand, or rather testifying beforehand. The verb is one of the most frequent and scarce known in the N. T., in Ecclieastical Greek, or in the Classics. It appears to have a divine and solemn force, explaining the inward declaration of the Spirit of Christ in the prophets to have taken a form which their consciousness could neither mistake nor withstand, the decided form of an attestation of certain facts of the future. It says nothing beyond this, however, and does not necessarily imply (as is supposed by Schott, etc.) that, in Peter's view, speech and not inward vision was the medium by which the Spirit's communications were conveyed to the prophets' minds. The future things thus attested are described as the sufferings unto Christ (i.e., destined, or in store, for Christ), and the glories after them. But whose sufferings and glories? Some take them to be those of believers, and translate the clause, the sufferings of others, and the glories of Christians in reference to Christ. Calvin (as also Luther so far, Wiesinger, and originally Huther) hold them to be those of the Church as the mystical Christ, or rather those of Christ and the Church as mysteriously one. An analogy is then sought in Paul's statement about filling up 'that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ' (Col. i. 24). The use of the official mediatorial name, Christ, both there and here (instead of the personal Jesus Christ), is also supposed to indicate that the subject in view is not the Christ of history, but the Mediator in His official capacity, so that the phrase suggests the mystical application to Christ's spiritual body. Others (e.g., Plumptre) point to the different forms of expression used by Peter when he speaks of Christ's individual sufferings (1 Pet. iv. 12, v. 1), and regard the present sentence as the converse of Paul's, as the sufferings of Christ's body in us, etc. (2 Cor. i. 5), what believers endure for Christ's sake being viewed here as shared by Christ Himself. So Plumptre would translate it, the sufferings passing on to, or flowing over to, Christ. All this, however, is foreign to the context, which speaks of those things as already reported to the readers, obviously as the burden of the preaching which made them Christians. It is not necessitated by the use of the distinctive name Christ. It does not suit the statement that the things which the prophets searched into was the time of those sufferings. For the Church was always more or less a suffering Church, though the sufferings of Messiah were both for the prophets and a people in Israel. It is also inconsistent with the analogy of the cognate phrase in ver. 10, 'the grace unto you.' Hence most interpreters are right in understanding the sufferings to be those of Christ Himself. The glories, therefore, will also be those which were destined by God to come to Christ, in the train and as the reward of those sufferings. The reward of Christ is regularly expressed by the singular, 'glory.' The unusual plural, 'glories,' is chosen here, either in reference to the several steps of His glorification, in His resurrection, ascension, session at God's right hand, and Second Advent (so Weiss, Schott, etc.), or simply as a balance to the other half of the clause, the standing phrase for what Christ had to endure being the plural form, 'sufferings.' The communications, therefore, unmistakably attested by the Spirit of Christ to the minds of the prophets, concerned a Messiah who was destined to obtain glory only through suffering. A suffering Messiah was in any case a conception alien to the Israelite mind. A Messiah who, by His suffering, was to bring grace to the world outside Israel was still more so, and what the prophets strove to apprehend by diligent reflection on the revelations made to them was not the
GENERAL OF PETER.

chap. i. 10-12] the first epistle

fact itself (which was too clearly borne in by the
Spirit upon their consciousness to admit of doubt),
but the period at which it should come to pass.
The communications particularly in view, there-
fore, are probably those made to prophets like
Isaiah, who, in his great Passional (lii. 13-llii. 12),
speaks of the spirit of the nation.

Ver. 12. To whom it was revealed, that not
unto themselves, but (rather) unto you they
were ministering those things. The better
accredited reading here is 'unto you' (not unto
them), Peter, therefore, still laying special stress
on the interest which Gentile Christians, like those here
addressed, had in the ministry referred to. He
says nothing, however, to imply either that the
prophets themselves had no personal interest in
their communications, or that these communica-
tions did not bear upon their own times. He
speaks simply of certain things in these communi-
cations, which the prophets understood to be for
other purposes, and of the ministry which they dis-
charged in relation to those things as a ministry
in which they recognised others than themselves
to have the main interest. The ministry in view
is expressed by a term applicable to any kind of
service, official, or unofficial. It is the word
used by Paul when he speaks of the Corinthians
as 'manifestly declared to be the Epistle of Christ
ministered by us' (2 Cor. iii. 3). Here it refers
evidently to the service of announcing to others
what the Spirit had given to the apostles to
their own minds.
The entire sentence is connected closely with the
preceding by the simple relative. The question,
therefore, is: What is the relation thus intended
between the searching of vers. 10, 11, and the
revelation of the apostles? Peter, therefore, still looks to the
regard the latter as the result or reward of the
former. And this is put in two different ways,
either that they prophesied, and therefore
revelations were given them, because they were
ministering for others; or, that they searched, and
their search was answered by its being revealed to
them that they were ministering for others. But
to make their receipt of revelations (whether in
the wide sense of revelations generally, or in the
narrower sense of the revelation of the one fact
that in some things they were speaking to a later
time) dependent so far upon their own previous
engagement in inquiry, (is strangely out of harmony
with the initiating and impelling activity ascribed
here, and again in 2 Pet. i. 21, to the Spirit.
The connection, therefore, is to be taken either
thus: they searched, and to them, too, it was
revealed; or (with Huther, etc.), 'they searched
searched' as it was revealed to them.' The
revelation in view occasioned and incited their
inquiry. It was discovered to them that in regard
to certain things which the Spirit communicated
they were dealing with things meant for others, and
this fact (place of a mystery of a place
for the Gentile world sooner or later in Israel's
grace) stimulated their inquiry. How this fact
was discovered, or 'revealed,' to them, whether
by means of the Spirit, or simply by the
unmistakable import of the communication itself
regarding the future grace, is left unex-
plained. —which (things) were now reported to
you by means of those who made the glad
tidings (the Gospel) known to you. The relation
of the 'which' here to the previous 'those things'
is not exactly the close relation between relative
and antecedent, but rather that between two
distinct statements, of which the latter is an
extension of the former. The things referred to,
therefore, are not merely the 'sufferings' and
'glories' of Christ, but also the 'grace destined
for you,' all those things, in short, already
said to have been prophesied and searched by
the prophets. The things which were the
subject of prophetic interest and inquiry,
are now referred to as having also formed
the burden of the preaching of those who
carried the Gospel into those Gentile territories,
Asia, Galatia, etc. Peter gives us to (in spirit)
to those who were. The form of the statement,
however, rather implies that he did not rank
himself among them. But if the men
themselves are left unnamed, the power that made them what
they were as preachers is noted. These preachers
were evangelized by the Holy Ghost sent from
heaven. The better reading here is not 'in,
but 'by.' the Holy Ghost, the Spirit being
represented simply as the instrument in whose
might they effected what they did. As the
prophets had their revelations only by the action
of the Spirit, the preachers of the Gospel had
their power to preach only by the Holy Ghost.

But while the Spirit who gifted the
prophets is described as the Spirit of Christ in them,
the Spirit who gifted the preachers is described as the
Holy Ghost sent from heaven—a designation
pointing to the Pentecostal descent of the Spirit,
and, therefore, to the superior privilege of the
preachers. So the statement regarding the
prophets ends, as it began, with facts enforcing the
magnitude of the salvation or grace of which the
readers had been made heirs. The verbs are given
in the simple historical past, 'were reported'
in the 'now,' 'sent,' as Peter carries his readers back from their
present standing in grace to the definite acts and
events which prepared that standing for them once
for all. It is necessary to add that while the
generally-accepted construction of this verse has
been followed, it leaves something to be desired.
Another method of relating the several clauses,
which has to a certain extent the sanction of
Luther's name, has been worked out by Hofmann,
and accepted by some others. According to this,
the verse would run thus, with a parenthesis in
the heart of it: 'To whom were revealed those
things (for they ministered not for themselves, but
rather for others), which were now reported
unto you,' etc. This establishes an apt contrast
between the inward revelation in the one case and
the public reporting in the other. It gets rid of
the awkwardness of making the mere fact that the
prophets ministered certain things for others than
themselves the subject of a revelation, and has
other recommendations to balance the disadvan-
tage of introducing a parenthesis immediately
after the leading verb. —The grandeur of this
salvation or grace is illustrated by one thing else
which, as being itself so peculiar, gets a peculiar
place and expression here—which things angels
desire to look into. By the 'which things' we
are to understand neither 'the whole contents
of the message of salvation' (so Huther, Brückner),
nor the mystery of the spiritual change effected
by the gospel (Schöttler), but simply the things already
mentioned in the section. Those things, the
grace ordained for the Gentiles, and the sufferings
and glories of Christ in relation thereto, which
were prophesied of and searched by prophets, and
THE FIRST EPISODE OF THE EPHERE SE [CHAP. I. 13-16

reported in these last days by Christ's preachers, were also an object of interest to the angelic world. The intensity of this interest is expressed by the strong term "desire," or "long," the word used by Christ Himself in view of His hastening passion, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer" (Luke xxii. 15). Its continuance is indicated by the present tense. Its nature is described by the graphic term which is poorly represented by the 'look into' of the A. V., and is difficult in any case adequately to render. Though perhaps sometimes used of a passing glance at an object, it has usually the idea of intent study, and a study which involves a stooping, bending posture on the part of the student. It is applied to the man who 'looketh into the perfect law of liberty' (Jas. i. 25) as if he were putting himself into the posture of one who gazes into a mirror. It is also applied by Luke (xxiv. 12) to Peter himself 'stooping down' when he peers into the tomb (which passage, however, is somewhat doubtfully accredited); and, again, by John (xv. 11) both to Peter and to Mary as they 'stooped down' and looked into the sepulchre. It is more than doubtful whether Peter had in view here either the two angels whom Mary Magdalen saw in the Lord's tomb, as Canon Cook supposes, or the cherubim overshadowing the ark, as Grotius, Beza, and others imagine. But as the term expresses a change of position in order to view something, it may point at once to the straining interest with which the angelic world as such (the noun is without the article, and denotes angels generally) contemplates the salvation of which even outcasts Gentiles are participants, and the fact that, as they stand outside that salvation, their interest in it is that of spectators who recognise the glory and ponder the mystery of the grace which effects a change of which they have themselves no personal knowledge—the change from sin to holiness (cf. also Heb. ii. 16; Eph. iii. 10).

CHAPTER I. 13-16.

Exhortations to Hopefulness and Holiness.

13 WHEREFORE "gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end' for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ: 14 as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy' in all manner of conversation; because it is written, 'Be ye holy; for I am holy.'

1 Pet. iv. 7, 8. 2 Cf. 2 Mac. xii. 42; Judith xi. 6. 32 Pet. i. 17, 18, 21. 4 Cf. on ch. i.
A Heb. v. 1; Rom. i. 5. 5 Cf. Eph. ii. 19, 20; 1 Pet. ii. 3, 4; 2 Pet. ii. 2; 3 Pet. ii. 20, 21; King. i. 30, 31; see on 2 Pet. i. 10. 6 Rom. xii. 1, 2. 7 Ch. xi. 11, 15, 37; 2 Pet. ii. 18; Rom. xiii. 14; Gal. v. 6; Eph. ii. 3, 5; 1 Pet. ii. 16. 8 Cf. Eph. iv. 18; and cf. Wind. xiv. 29. 9 Ch. i. 18, ii. 13, ii. 11, ii. 16; 3 Pet. ii. 7, iii. 11; Gal. i. 13; Eph. iv. 25; 1 Tim. iv. 12; Heb. iii. 7, 13; Jer. iii. 13.

1 Literally, Wherefore having girt up the loins of your mind, be sober hope perfectly 2 that is being brought or, in 3 literally, children of obedience 4 rather, after the (pattern) of the Holy One who called you 5 or, prove ye yourselves also holy 6 living, conduct, or behaviour 7 Ye shall be holy

The rapid outline of the magnificence of the salvation prepares the way for what is to be urged in the form of duty. The Preface, which has so much of the Pauline style both in idea and in conciliatory intention, has closed by adding to the prophets and evangelists, who are named as ministers of that salvation, angels as rapt students of the same. From this Peter passes at once to the main burden of his Epistle, and begins by giving a series of counsels which extend into the second chapter. These counsels deal successively with hope, holiness, godly fear, brotherliness, and increase in grace. They are all coloured by the light of consolation. They are all practical unfoldings and personal applications of what has been already instanced in the Preface. They are enforced by considerations drawn from the realities of the spiritual calling. A reason for each is found in the grace which is possessed. Here, as everywhere, the ethical precepts of the Gospel are rooted in the facts and truths of Revelation, and receive their moral momentum from the prior gift of grace.

Ver. 13. Wherefore: the exhortation is thus made immediately dependent on the previous statement of grace. The duty is born of the
I. 13-16.] THE FIRST EPISTLE

GENERAL OF PETER.

hopeness which is urged. This is usually taken
be still more distinctly described by the ad-
ition of the term which is rendered ‘to the end’
by the A. V. It is doubtful, however, to which
of the two clauses this adverb (which is found
both in the New Testament, and which has
the larger sense of ‘completely,’ ‘so as to leave
nothing lacking,’ rather than the temporal force
‘to the end’) is to be attached. It may qualify
the sobriety (‘practising a perfect sobriety’) —
a connection entirely in point, and saving one of
these related phrases from being left in an un-
qualified independence unlike the other two. If
it is attached to the ‘hope’ (as most interpreters
attach it), it defines it as one that will rise to
the full idea of a regenerate hope, and leave
nothing to desire. Once let a guard be established
against the natural waywardness of thought,
and let the self-collectedness be sustained which
looks with a calm eye upon earth’s joys and
sorrows, and they will be able to lead a life of
hopeful expectation worthy of that act of God’s
grace by which they were begotten into hope.

For the grace. It is questioned, whether
we should translate ‘for the grace’ or ‘on
the grace.’ The construction is peculiar, and
found exactly, indeed, nowhere else, in the New
Testament, except in 1 Tim. v. 5 (1 Pet.
iii. 5 also, according to the received text, but
not according to the best editors). It is not
uncommon, however, in the Greek Version of
the Old Testament. Some take the sense to be—
make the grace the strength or foundation of
your hope. So Hither considers grace to be
presented here simply as that ‘from which the
fulfilment of hope is expected,’ and others (e.g.
Mason) hold it introduced as that in the strength
of which we are confidently to look for glory.
The truth which is struck, however, is deeper. Grace
is exhibited here as the object of our hope, and
the shade of meaning suggested by the uncommon
construction is simply in that our hope is to be
turned fully and confidently toward it. What is
otherwise called glory or salvation is here called
grace, the believer’s present being seminally the
believer’s future, and glory being the blossom of
which grace is the bud. —which is being brought
unto you: not ‘which is to be brought,’ as if the
object of hope were remote, and wholly of the
future; but ‘which is a-bringing’ already on the
wing, and bearing ever nearer.—In the revelation
of Jesus Christ, that is, at His final advent.

Both the currency of the phrase itself and the
close connection instituted by the opening
‘wherefore’ between the ideas of this section
and those of the Preface forbid us to understand
it of the present revelation of Christ in the Gospel.

Ver. 14. As children of obedience: a second
counsel is thus introduced, dealing with a holiness
which is to be not less complete than the hope.
The one rises naturally out of the other. Hope
is a sanctifying principle, promoting holiness,
while it is itself also brightened and strengthened
by it. It is in the character of ‘children of
obedience’ that they are charged to aim at a
perfect holiness. It is as becomes those with
whom obedience (here again in the largest and
most inclusive sense) has become a new nature.
The familiar Hebrew figure for permanence of
quality represents them as drawing the inspira-
tion of their life from obedience, as related to it
like children to a mother.—not fashioning your-
Exhortation to a Life of Godly Fear.

17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: forasmuch

1 Cor. ii. 27; Acts xxi. 14; Rom. xvi. 9; Col. iii. 23; 1 Pet. iii. 15; 2 Tim. iv. 17; Heb. xi. 9; Ps. cxvii. 9; 1 Cor. x. 18; 1 Thess. ii. 9.

1 rather. And if ye call on Him as Father... omit here
as ye know 4 that ye were not 9 redeemed with 4 corruptible things, as silver and gold, 4 from your 9 vain 4 conversation 4

19 received by tradition from your fathers; 5 but with the precious 5 blood of Christ, as of 4 a 5 lamb 5 without blemish and without

20 spot: who verily 5 was 5 foreordained 10 before the foundation of the world, but was 5 manifest 11 in these last times 11 for you, 12 who by him 14 do believe 13 in God, 13 that 11 raised him up 13 from the dead, and gave him 11 glory; that your faith and

hope might be in God. 10

8 better simply, knowing
9 more strictly, that ye were redeemed not with corruptible things, silver or

gold

6 manner of life, or, walk

7 ancestral, or as in the Revised Version, handed down from your fathers

emiss of, or arrange as in Revised Version, but with precious blood, as of a

lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ

indeed literally, foreknown

10 literally, at the end of the times

11 i.e. on your account

12 through him

13 rather, are believers on God

14 raised him, or, aroused him from the dead

15 or, so that your faith should also be hope toward God

The exhortation to a walk in holiness is followed immediately by an exhortation to a walk in godly fear. The way in which this section is connected with the preceding shows that the latter charge is given in intimate kinship with the former, as the former rises naturally out of the exhortation to hope which forms the basis of the series of counsels. 'Fear' is presented here very much as it is in Paul's 'perfecting holiness in the fear of God' (2 Cor. vii. 1). It is obviously the fear which is born of grace, in contrast with the fear which 'hath torment' (1 John iv. 18) as born of nature, and the fear which goes with the spirit of bondage born of the law (Rom. viii. 15). It stands in the nearest relation, therefore, to holiness, serving as its safeguard, acting as its incentive, encompassing it as the atmosphere in which it lives. It is enforced in the following paragraph by two large considerations, the imparlant righteousness of God (ver. 17), and the price which it cost Him to redeem their life from its vanity (vers. 18-21). The 'fear' which is thus recommended is shown thereby all the more clearly to be not only consistent with the filial freedom of the believer, but essential to a walk worthy of his calling, elevating where fear usually degrades, and helping to nearness and likeness to God where fear tends naturally to distance. The connection of the several clauses, however, and the precise succession of ideas are by no means easy to determine. Most interpreters regard the 18th verse as simply supplementary to the 17th, and as pointing the injunction to a walk in godly fear more strongly. Some (e.g. Hofmann), on the other hand, take the thought of ver. 17 to be complete within itself. In that case the statement of the price of redemption would be introductory to the subsequent exhortation to brotherly love. Others (e.g. Schott) think that the 18th verse is intended to explain the connection between the two parts of the 17th, the price, which it has cost God to bring in a redemption that has opened so glorious a future, making the judgment which must precede that future all the more solemn, and serving, therefore, to exhibit all the more seriously the need of a walk in godly fear.

Ver. 17. And if ye call on him as Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to each man's work. The A. V. misses the point by failing to notice that there are two distinct preconditions, namely, that He whom all believers invoke in prayer is Father indeed, but also and none the less Judge. If it is right to discover, as most do, a reference in this to the Lord's Prayer, Peter would seem to remind them that the God whom Christ had taught them to look to as Father is One in whom there is no breach between parental love and judicial rectitude, and with whom there is none of that partiality on which it is natural to presume in the case of earthly fathers. The verb, meaning (as the A. V. correctly translates it) to 'call on,' or invoke, and not merely to name, suits in any case the idea of prayer. The 'judgeth' is in the present tense, not as predating a Divine judgment which goes on now in distinction from the judgment of the future, but simply as denoting the prerogative or function of judgment which belongs naturally to this Father. The qualifying term, 'without respect of persons,' occurs nowhere else in this particular form, although similar forms are used in reference to God by Peter himself in the discourse following the visit of Cornelius (Acts x. 34), as well as by Paul (Rom. ii. 11; Eph. vi. 9; Col. iii. 25), and, in reference to men, by James (i. 9). The Old Testament formula, 'to accept the coun-
ience of any one,' on which they found, is used
indeed both in the good sense of being well
inclined to one, and in the bad sense of showing a
partial favour. But in the N. T. it has only the
good sense. The standard of this judgment,
which is oftener said to be our works, is here
described as each man's work, the singular
'work' pointing to the unity which each man's
life with all its particular acts presents to God,
while the significant 'each' indicates that this
impartial and just God takes men not in the
mass, but individually, and every man for himself,
whether son or not. In fear pass the time of
your sojourning (or, more simply, and with
obvious reference to the 'walk' of v. 15, as during the time of your sojourning). The fear
(in the original set emphatically first in the clause)
which is so characteristic a note of Old Testament
piety, occupies also no small place in the N. T.
It appears there both in the large sense of reverence,
or the feeling which makes it a pain to the
child to dishonour or grieve the Father,
in the general sense of the feeling which a man
has who is on his guard, knowing that he may err
(which Schott thinks is the point here), and in the
more specific sense of the feeling which the Judge
inspires, and which, as Calvin observes, is here
opposed to the sense of security. Thus motives
to a walk of serious circumspection are drawn from
these various considerations to God as to the
necessity of the attribute of judgment, which
reflects itself on every man individually and without
exception, that He sees men's scattered acts in
the unity which is given them by their determining
impartiality, and it is therefore, as one work which must stand as a whole on one
side or other, and that He judgeth impartial
judgment which can extend no exemption and
indulge no favouritism towards the sons whose
privilege it is to appeal confidently to Him as
Father. The character of the time, too, should
itself be a motive to the same—a time of so-
journing, of separation from the true home, and
therefore a time when there is about us, both in
pleasure and in persecution, so much to tempt us
to forget the Father's house and resign ourselves
to the walk of the children of this world.

Ver. 15. Knowing that not with corruptible
things, silver or gold, were ye redeemed.
The injunction to a walk in godly fear, which is sus-
pected by motives of this strength and variety,
was implicitly enforced (as Huther rightly notices)
by the relation which the cognate terms of vers.
15 and 17 indicate between the God who calls
them and the elect who respond by 'calling on'
Him. It is now more explicitly enforced by a
positive statement, the terms of which are difficult
to construe, but the sense of which is that the
thought of what it cost to help them to break
with the old walk of heathenism should be argu-
ment enough for cultivating now a walk of gravity
and circumspection. A redemption is in view
which is expressed, by a passage that is found in the
N. T. only in other two passages (Tit. ii. 14;
Luke xxiv. 21), although several terms connected
with it occur not unfreqently. It has radically the
sense of redeeming by payment of a ransom price.
Of the three New Testament occurrences, one has
the political or theocratic sense of delivering the
kingdom of Israel, and the specific idea of price
recedes into the background (Luke xxiv. 21).
The other two keep the idea of the ransom price
in the foreground. In the Old Testament, the
term and its cognates are used in a variety of
cases, e. g. of recovering something which has been
devoted by substituting an equivalent in its place
(Lev. xxvii. 27), of buying back something that
has been sold (Lev. xxx. 25), of ransomimg souls
by a money payment to the Lord when Israel was
numbered (Ex. xxx. 12-16), of redeeming the
first-born by a price paid to Aaron (Num. iii.
44-51). The terms apply in the New Testament
to ransomimg from the bondage of evil (Tit. ii.
14), as well as from the penalty of evil. Here
the ransom price is stated first negatively as not
'corruptible' (or 'perishable') things, not even the
most valuable of them, such as The form of the words here used for silver and
gold is that used generally, though not invariably,
for the coined metals, pieces of money; hence some
think that the writer has in mind here the sacred
money paid for the redemption of the first-born
or as the expiation-money for those who were
enrolled by being numbered. But the contrast
with the 'precious blood' makes such a limitation
inapplicable. The A. V. here gives ' and for 'or,
which is the case also in other passages (Mark vi. 11; 1 Cor. xi. 27), and is due
(as is suggested by Lillie) probably to following the
Genevan and Bishops' Bibles—from yon vain
walk hanged down by your fathers. What
they were ransomed from is a particular manner
of life which formed a bondage too strong to be
broken by any ordinary ransom. This manner of
life is described as 'vain,' the adjective here
selected as the note of 'vain' implying not so
much the hollowness of the life as its futility and
uselessness—the fact that it missed its aim, and
that nothing of real worth issued from it. It is
further described by a term meaning 'ancestral,' 'hereditary,' or 'traditional,' which indicates how
mighty a spell it must have wielded over them.
It was a life 'fortified and almost consecrated
to their hearts by the venerableness of age and
ancestral authority' (Lillie), and thereby en-
trenched the more strongly in its vain form. Both
these terms suit Gentile life. The 'vain' expresses
what a life is which has no relation to God. It
rules the other phrase 'ancestral,' or 'handed
down from your fathers,' and makes it descriptive
of a Gentile life rather than a Jewish life (also
the Introduction). What could set them free from
the despotism of a life, poor as the life might be,
which not only ran the course of natural inclina-
tion, but laid upon them those strong bonds of
birth, respect for the past, relationship, habit,
example? Nothing but a new moral power.
Peter reminds them, which it cost something incal-
culably more precious than silver or gold to bring
to, in order to the life of the Messiah.

Ver. 19. but with precious blood, as of a
lamb blameless and spotless, to wit Christ's.
The construction here is doubtful and difficult,
owing to the term 'Christ's' being thrown to the
end. The view which is adopted by the present
arrangement of the words in the original affects
our understanding, not instead of the main idea,
but of the exact relation which the two terms
'lamb' and 'Christ' are intended to occupy to
each other, and the precise force of the 'as by
which they are connected. The clause may be
construed (so Steiger, etc.) thus—' with precious
blood, as if with the blood of a lamb . . . to
wit, Christ; ' or (so Lillie, etc.), with the precious
blood, as of a lamb . . . of Christ;" or, "with precious blood, as of a lamb . . . the blood of Christ" (so Beza, Alford, etc., and substantially Wiesinger, Hofmann, Alford, and the R. V.). The first of these explains, and gives greater importance to the idea of the 'lamb' than to the mention of 'Christ.' The second is urged on the ground that blood is not of itself a true contrast to 'corruptible things,' and that neither blood of itself nor the blood of a sacrificial animal, but only Christ's blood, has value in redemption. The third is both simpler and more in harmony with Peter's style, as this is not the only instance of terms introduced as an antithesis, (cf. ii. 7). Hence we have the cost of redemption defined here first as 'precious blood,' and not any "corruptible thing" (the Old Testament view of the life in the blood giving reality to the contrast), then as Christ's blood, and further as blood with the ethical value of blood shed by One in the character of spotlessness and blamelessness. The 'as,' therefore, is not a mere note of comparison, but an index to the quality of the subject, and to the worth of the life surrendered. The point of the statement is not to institute a direct comparison between Christ and a lamb, nor to represent the means by which the redemption was effected as comparable in value to the blood of a stainless lamb (Schott, etc.), nor to explain why the blood of Christ is precious beyond the preciousness of all corruptible things, namely, in so far as it is the blood of the Christ who is distinguished as the perfect Lamb (Isa. iii.), but to exhibit the cost of the redemption from the heathen life of sin as nothing less than the surrender of a life of sinlessness. A death was endured by Christ which had in it the ethical qualities figured by lamb-like blamlessness and spotlessness, and only such a ransom could bring in a new constraining power sufficient to break the thraldom of the vain hereditary manner of life to which these Gentiles had been helpless slaves. The reference to a lamb in this connection has an obvious fitness on Peter's lips. It was in the character of the Lamb, as that name was proclaimed by the Baptist, that Simon, by his brother Andrew's intervention, first recognised Jesus to be the Messiah (John i. 35-42), and the impression of that first recognition of the Christ could never be effaced. The terms 'blameless' and 'spotless,' too, are terms applicable to the lamb of the Old Testament system, with which every Israelite was so familiar. The former represents the usual Old Testament phrase for the freedom from all physical defects which was required in the sacrificial victims (Ex. xii. 5; Lev. xxii. 20, and cf. Heb. ii. 14). The latter, though not found in the New Testament, except in a moral sense (2 Pet. iii. 14; 1 Tim. vi. 14; Jas. i. 27), and applied properly only to persons (except perhaps 1 Tim. vi. 14), expresses summarily other ceremonial perfections which were necessary in the offerings (Lev. xxii. 18-25). The lamb particularly in Peter's view here, is variously identified, as e.g. with the Paschal Lamb (Wiesinger, Hofmann, Alford, etc.), with the lamb of Isa. (ii. 3), with the lamb of the Old Testament service and realized in Christ. The dispute is of small importance, as it is not probable that these different lambs would be sharply distinguished in the consciousness of the Israelite. The fact that Peter is dealing here with the question of a ransom from a certain bondage makes it reasonable to suppose him to have before his eye some lamb that occupied a well-understood place in God's service, viz. under the old economy, and points, therefore, to the Paschal Lamb, which was associated with the release from the bondage of Egypt, and was also the only animal that could be used for the service to which it was dedicated. On the other hand, it may be urged in favour of the lamb of Isa. iii. 7, that Peter elsewhere seems to have that section of prophecy in view, that the Old Testament itself (in the Greek Version) employs a different term for the Paschal Lamb in capital sections, and that the character of this statedly another word than the one used by Peter for the Paschal Lamb. In either case the lamb is introduced here not with immediate reference to its sacrificial character, but in respect of those ethical qualities which are expressed by the adjectives. The expiatory or sacrificial value of Christ's death is no doubt at the basis of the statement, and the idea of ransom from sin as a power is not disconnected from the idea of a ransom from sin as a penalty. But the redemption which Peter deals with here, being a redemption from the spell and thraldom of a vain mode of living, is an ethical redemption, and Christ's death is presented immediately here as a spiritual power breaking a certain despotism. How Christ's death carries this weight with it is not explained, except in so far as the whole statement suggests qualities in it which made it a new and supreme constraining power. Ver. 20. Who was foreordained from the foundation of the world. The cost of this redemption is still in view, and is presented in a yet stronger light by a statement bearing at once on the dignity of the Efficient Agent, the date of the Divine purpose, and the number of subjects for whom it was destined. Peter reverts to the idea of i. 2, and represents the Efficient Agent of the redemption as appearing indeed in time, but provided and kept in view before all time. The phrase, 'from the foundation of the world,' used by Paul (Eph. i. 4), and by Christ Himself in reference to His own pre-incarnate life (John xvii. 24), and occurring also repeatedly in the form 'from the foundation of the world' (Matt. xiii. 35, xxv. 34; Luke xi. 50; Heb. iv. 3, ix. 26; Rev. xiii. 8, xvi. 8), carries us above all time into an eternity out of which time and history issued, and in which God's purpose was formed. In this pre-mundane eternity Christ was contemplated and recognised as that which He was shown to be in time. The E. V. here departs from the literal translation, which it retains in the other six places in which the verb or its noun occurs, and substitutes 'foreordained' for 'foreknown.' The foreknowledge no doubt here, as in i. 2, means not mere prescience, but recognition, and lies near the idea of providing or determining. But while knowledge and will may be identical or coincident in the Divine mind, they are distinct things in our minds. The revelation of God, adapting itself to the modes of our thoughts, distinguishes between these two things, prescience and foreordination, and in the present passage indeed mentions them as distinct (Acts ii. 23). It is right, therefore, to keep the literal sense: 'foreknown,' the idea being simply this—that Christ was eternally in God's vi. w. and before God's mind as the Agent of this redemption. It is not necessary, therefore, to suppose (with
Hofmann, Alford, etc.) that there is a comparison here between the lamb that was singled out of the flock and marked out for the Passover sacrifice some days before the occasion (Ex. xiii. 3-6), and Christ predestined in eternity for a service in time—but was manifested: the tense changes here. The 'foreknown' is expressed by the perfect; literally, 'has been foreknown,' in reference to the place held and continuing to be held by Christ in the Divine mind. The 'manifested' is in the past, since what is in view is the historical manifestation once for all accomplished. The verb, which in ver. 4 is used of the future advent of Christ, to that understanding all the better of the continuous manifestation of Christ by the preaching of the Gospel, nor of His coming forth from the secret counsel of God, but simply of His first advent. And as the verb describes the revelation of a 'previously hidden existence' (Frommskill), the best exegists agree in regarding the statement as inconsistent with the theory of a merely ideal existence of Christ before His appearance in history, and as a clear witness to Peter's belief in His pre-incarnate existence. The A.V., unlike almost all other Versions, curiously renders the participle 'manifest.' here by the adjectival 'manifest.'—at the end of the times. So we should read, with the best authorities, instead of 'in these last times.' The present time, the interval between Christ's two comings, is the end of the times as being the period beyond which there is to be no new revelation of grace. It is Christ's first advent that has made the present time the last.—on account of you. The preciousness of the redemption has been carefully set forth by four different definitions of its cost which have risen in a climax from the simple notion of a ransom to the value arising from the ethical quality of Him who shed it, to that of Christ's blood, and finally to that of the blood of the Christ who was eternally in God's view as the Ransom. A fresh wonder is added to it now by these words, which bring it home personally to the readers, and show the interest of degraded Gentiles, such as they, to have been contemplated by it all.

Ver. 21. Who through him have faith toward God. The better accredited reading replaces the participle which the A.V. renders 'who believe' by the adjectival 'believing,' or 'faithful,' which is elsewhere used of having faith in the promises of God (Gal. iii. 9), in Jesus as the Messiah and Author of salvation (Acts xvi. 1; 2 Cor. vi. 15; 1 Tim. v. 16), and in the fact of His resurrection (John xx. 27). The object of the belief is elsewhere expressed by the simple dative (Acts xvi. 15, etc.), or by the preposition 'in' (Eph. i. 1), but here by the preposition 'toward.' This more forcible phrase, therefore, exhibits the readers not merely as believing, but as raised to the condition of a settled and loyal faith, and as having God Himself, and nothing lower, for the object of this new conviction. And it is 'through Him,' as Peter emphatically reminds them, that they have this new faith. Christ, not only Christ, by all that He had taught and all that He had been on earth, was the means of leading them to this knowledge of God and trust in God. The description loses most of its point and pertinency if Gentiles are not allowed to be in view here. It might be said of Jews, indeed, that they were brought by Christ to a better faith in God, but only of Gentiles, that they owed it to Him that they had ever come to take God as the object of their trust. Thus, too, the connection between this sentence and the preceding becomes natural and weighty. The fact that these Gentiles, once 'without God and without hope in the world,' had been brought through Christ to know God, and rest their faith in Him, is a witness to the truth of Peter's statement that even they were in God's view when the Christ, who had been eternally before His mind as Ransom, was manifested in time—

who raised him from the dead: Peter repeats here what he had said without reminder immediately after Christ's departure (Acts ii. 24, iii. 15, 26), and had proclaimed as the fulfillment of prophecy (Acts ii. 31-35). Compare also Paul's repeated ascription of Christ's resurrection to God's act (Eph. i. 20; Gal. i. 17; 2 Cor. iv. 14; Rom. iv. 24, v. 11, etc.)—and gave him glory. The consistency of this with Peter's own earliest teaching (Acts ii. 36) is apparent. Its consistency with Paul's view of the 'name which is above every name' as a gift from God (Phil. ii. 9), and with Christ's own prayer for a glorification at His Father's hand, puts it out of the question to suppose (as some argue) that Peter's view of the Person of His Lord was less consistent than Paul's, or that he thought of any other subordination of Christ to God than the voluntary subordinate, compatible with equality, which the Son assumed, and for which He received reward from His Father, as the apostle consistently teaches, and as Christ Himself taught them when He spoke of the Father as giving Him all judgment (John v. 22), giving His work and His words (John xvii. 4, 8), His glory and even His life (John xvii. 22, 26). It is not Christ's new claim, or that He thought of any other subordination of Christ to God than the voluntary subordinate, compatible with equality, which the Son assumed, and for which He received reward from His Father, as the apostle consistently teaches, and as Christ Himself taught them when He spoke of the Father as giving Him all judgment (John v. 22), giving His work and His words (John xvii. 4, 8), His glory and even His life (John xvii. 22, 26). It is not Christ's new claim, or that He thought of any other subordination of Christ to God than the voluntary subordinate, compatible with equality, which the Son assumed, and for which He received reward from His Father, as the apostle consistently teaches, and as Christ Himself taught them when He spoke of the Father as giving Him all judgment (John v. 22), giving His work and His words (John xvii. 4, 8), His glory and even His life (John xvii. 22, 26).
Chap. I. 22–25.] THE FIRST EPISTLE

God, is followed. It is doubtful, however, whether the Greek phrase so rendered ever loses the idea of *purposa*, even where it may seem to deal with *result*. Taking the 'hope,' therefore, to be applicable to the 'faith,' we should translate *that your faith should also be* (as indeed it is) *hope toward God.* We have thus a new idea added to the previous train, and see how each of the prior clauses makes its own distinct contribution. Christ's death delivered them from the slavery of their vain life. Christ's manifestation was the means of lifting them to a faith of which God Himself, whom otherwise they would not have known, became the Object. Christ's resurrection opened the gates of the future, and gave them a new hope, which also had God for its Object. And in raising Christ from the dead, and giving Him glory, God had it in view to make them what they now are, children of hope as well as faith, and to raise them not merely to faith, but to a faith rich in hope, to a faith which should now be hope in Himself. What this God whom they now believed in had done in Christ's case woke in them the certain hope of a future in which He would give them joy over the 'heaviness' and ' manifold temptations' of the present. And this, too, was a reason why they should live their present life in holy fear, lest they might come short of what God intended for them.

CHAPTER I. 22–25.

Exhortation to Brotherly Love heartfelt, and without reserve.

22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

1 Having omitted the Spirit's original version of the text. The exhortation to brotherly love, which is next introduced, is not without a living connection with the preceding. The circumstantial walk which has been enjoined is a walk such as befits those who are living toward a home which it would be misery to miss, and are conscious of what it cost to redeem them. But a walk so recommended leads naturally to brotherly love. If they are sojourners together in an alien community, all the less should they think of falling out by the way. If they are redeemed together by the same great price, all the more should they take a common interest in the household of faith. The terms in which this counsel is given contain nothing to warrant the supposition that Peter had to deal with dimensions which had burst out between Jew and Gentile in these scattered churches. The trying circumstances of the churches may have been sufficient occasion for the counsel. Times of fear and threatening develop latent selfishness, and provoke hardness of feeling toward others. The injunction, however, is not merely to brotherly love, but, as if that might be taken for granted as existent, to a brotherly love of a particular kind and measure. As he has already urged those who were born anew into hope to set their hope intensely on its proper object (ver. 13), so now he urges those whom grace has lifted up with the new spirit of brotherly love to let it be earnest and unreserved. And this duty, like the previous duties, is shown to rise naturally out of the prior gift of God, His gift of a new life through the great deed of regeneration.
Ver. 22. Having purified your souls. The verb translated 'purified' is one which occurs only seven times in the New Testament. It is of frequent occurrence, however, in the Old, being the technical term used by the Greek Version for the ceremonial purification of the priests in preparation for Divine service, and applied also to the ceremonial 'sanctification' of the people (Josh. iii. 5, etc.), to the 'separation' from wine and strong drink which the Nazarite vow involved (Num. vi. 2-6), etc. In four out of the seven New Testament occurrences (John xi. 55; Acts xxi. 24, 26, xxiv. 18), it has the religious or ceremonial sense which it invariably has in the Old Testament. In the present passage, as well as in Jas. iv. 8, and 1 John iii. 3, it has the ethical sense (expressed also by another verb, e.g. in Acts xv. 9), although the original idea of a religious consecration or separation also adheres to it. What it implies, therefore, is a moral purification from everything inconsistent with a religious destination. And the subject of this is 'your souls,' the word 'soul' having here the sense of the 'region of the feelings, affections, and impulses, of all that peculiarly individualizes and personifies' (Elliot). The purification is to go, therefore, to the very 'centre of the personal life,' to the very core, out there the selfishness that is inconsistent with their Divine destination. And this is represented as the moral condition on which the fulfilling of the precept necessarily depends. This seems to be the point of the participle which, being in the perfect, exhibits the purification neither under the aspect of a process which must be continually sustained (so Calvin, the Vulgate, etc., deal with it as if it were a present), nor under that of a thing made good once for all at the crisis of conversion and now taken as the ground for the exhortation (so Bengel, Wiesinger, the 'seeing that' of the E.V., etc., as if the tense had been the simple narrative past). It is intimately connected with the following imperative. Yet neither so as to become itself an imperative co-ordinate with that (Luther, etc.), nor as denoting what must always be attended to: to receive the effect is to be given to the charge (Schott, Huther, etc.), but either as pointing to the fact that 'faith even in its first actions had purified, and in its continuous exercise was still purifying their souls' (Lillie), or as simply indicating a mental preparation which they are instructed to attend to as the sine qua non to their observance of the charge. This last brings out best the marked difference between the tense of the participle and the tense of the imperative, and gives the pertinent idea, that in order to exhibit the acts of love of the kind here enjoined on all the particular occasions which may arise for them, they must first see to have the disposition of love—the disposition of souls cleansed of selfishness.—In the obedience of the truth. The same term (a peculiarly New Testament term, unknown to classical Greek, and occurring only once in the Greek Version of the Old Testament) for 'obedience' is used here as in ver. 2, 14, and is not to be identified with faith, but taken in the sense of obedience to God's will, and specially to that will as revealed in Christ, 'that they may prostrate the whole of their nature to the precepts of the Spirit,' which the E.V. inserts, as no part of the original text.—unto brotherly love unfeigned. The 'unto' may express either the end or object which the purification aims at, or the result it actually reaches. The latter is more appropriate here, the idea being that if they have been so purified, they cannot fail to have the disposition here in view. The purification implies, the creation of a disposition which is alien to all love that is unreal or selfish. The term for 'brotherly love' is of less frequent occurrence in the New Testament than might be expected, being confined to the writings of Peter (here and in 2 Pet. i. 7) and Paul (Rom. xii. 13). The E.V. translates it 'kindly love,' 'selfish love,' 'love to one another,' 'the love of the brethren,' etc. (cf. Jas. iv. 9), and the Epistle to the Hebrews (xiii. 1). Under various forms of expression, however, a large place is given by the New Testament writers, on the basis of Christ's own teaching (John xiii. 31), to the peculiar love which Christians are to cherish to each other. While Peter and Paul, however, exhibit it in its more general aspects, as an active grace taking shape in deeds of self-sacrifice, and as a means of producing in the soul, secondary to the wider grace of charity, it is John who specially unfolds it in the grandeur and newness which the new motive drawn from Christ's love, and the new standard presented in Christ's example, give to brotherly love. It is here described as 'unfeigned,' not hypocritical or wearing a mask, as the term implies. For, as Leighton puts it, 'men are subject to much hypocrisy this way, and deceive themselves; if they find themselves diligent in religious exercises, they scarce once ask their hearts how they stand affected this way, namely, in love to their brethren.'—from the heart love one another intensely. That is, they have the purified personality which comes by receiving what God has revealed in Jesus Christ; and having the disposition of unfeigned brotherly love which that purification creates, let it display itself heartily, and without hesitation or hindrance, in acts of love to your fellow-believers. The phrase 'from the heart' (the adjective 'pure,' inserted by the E.V., is better omitted, the sentence being on the whole adverse to its genuineness) is to be attached not to the previous clause, but to the 'love one another,' and expresses one quality of the affection, its spontaneity (Rom. vi. 17) and sincerity; 'let the cleanliness of the stream that brightens and gladdens the scenes of your daily intercourse attest the purity of the fountain whence it flows' (Lillie). The adverb 'sincerely' (an adverb of degree, not of time, meaning, therefore, more than merely 'continuously') adds the note that it is to be with strained energies, as Huther, etc. put it; or 'unfalteringly,' as Humphrey suggests. Here, therefore, as elsewhere, Peter speaks of the degree of grace (cf. 2 Pet. iii. 18). But while he limits himself here to the measure by which love should itself attain, the Second Epistle (i. 7) represents brotherly love as rather a step in a
graduation of which charity is the height. So Paul (1 Thess. iii. 12) urges an increase and abounding in love, not merely in the form of brotherly love, but as if the one, so far from arresting, promoted the other, in the larger form of a love embracing all men. 

Ver. 23. Being born again, or rather, having been begotten again. On this see also ver. 3. The tense denotes a subsisting state due to an act in the past, and, therefore, here a new life in which they stand in virtue of a decisive change equivalent to a new birth. If the three verbs which follow are regarded, as they are by almost all interpreters, as making one paragraph with the preceding verse, they must be understood to enforce the exhortation to a sincere and intense brotherly love. There is some difficulty, however, in establishing a sufficient connection, specially in view of the fact that there is no reference to community of life as the consequence of regeneration, but only a reference to the nature of the life which comes from an incorruptible source, through a Word which has the qualities of life and permanence. This being the case, and the injunction to brotherly love, as given in ver. 22, being complete within itself, it is suggested to connect vers. 23-25 with i. 1-3. We should then have an exhortation (in i. 1-3) to a right use of God's Word, needed here on the consideration (thrown forward, as is the case with so many of Peter's counsels, before the charge itself) that it is to that Word that we owe our new life. The run of thought then would be clear and simple—ye are possessors now of a new life which, in contrast with the transitoriness of the natural life and its glory, is an incorruptible, permanent life; but this you owe to the power of God's living and abiding Word; therefore use that Word well, feed on it, nurture your life by it. Following this usual connection, we shall have to regard the previous exhortation to a brotherly love of a pure and whole-hearted order as now supported by the consideration that, in virtue of God's act of regeneration, namely their being regenerated in their veins' (Leighton, and virtually Schott), or that the regeneration, which alone makes this kind of love a possibility, also makes it an obligation (Huther, etc.). Or, better (with Weiss and, so far, Alford), we shall have to suppose that Peter now finds a further reason for holding themselves pledged to a life of love of this tenor, in a fact of grace of earlier date than even the purification of soul already instanced, namely, the decisive deed of God's grace in bringing them first into the new life by the instrumentality of His Word. The special qualities of the instrument of their regeneration, namely those of 'living' and 'abiding,' are then named as arguments for rising to that high strain of persevering, undecaying love which befits a life which itself is lifted above the inconsistency, finiteness, and perishableness of the natural life—not of (or, from) corruptible seed, but incorruptible.

The preposition denotes the source or origin of the life, and declares it to be in that respect unlike the natural life. The latter originates in what is producible, and is itself, therefore, transitory and changeful. The former originates in what is incorruptible, and therefore is itself unsusceptible of failure or decadence. The word here translated 'seed' occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It is taken in that sense by almost all commentators, and this seems to be favoured by the qualifying adjective attached to it. Neither is that a sense absolutely strange. It is found, though with extreme rarity, both in the classics and elsewhere (2 Kings xix. 29; 1 Mac. x. 30). The word, however, should mean naturally 'sowing,' which sense (along with the secondary meanings of 'seed-time' and 'offspring') it has in the Classics. Here, therefore, it refers to the Divine act, described as a begetting, which is the point of origin for the new life.—through God's living and abiding Word. There is a change in the preposition now, of which some strange explanations are given. It is not because Peter now passes from the figure to a literal designation of the medium of regeneration (Schott, Weiss, etc.), nor because the Word of God is now to be distinguished as a regenerating instrument from the Spirit of God implied in the foregoing 'seed' as the regenerating power in the Word (de Wette, Brückner), nor is it even to mark out two different aspects of the same Word, namely the Word as external instrumentality in the production of the new life, and the Word (in the character of 'seed') as an internal principle of the new life (Huther). It is due simply to the fact, that having named the act of God, which is the originating power, Peter now names the medium through which that takes effect (cf. Jas. i. 18). The Law or 'Word' by which God begets us is neither the Personal Word, Christ, by whom God has spoken finally, nor the written Word, the 'Scripture,' with which Paul opens his quotations, but, as in Heb. iv. 12, Revelation, or the declared will of God, and here that will as declared specially in the Gospel. Though the Word of God does not assume in Peter the form to which John carries it, it may yet be fairly said that it is 'more here than any written book, more than any oral teaching of the Gospel, however mighty that teaching might be in its effects' (Plumptre).

The context shows Peter to be viewing it as a voice which penetrates man's nature, and that quickening principle, 'a Divine, eternal, creative power, working in and on the soul of man' (Plumptre), and nearly identified with God Himself, just as in Heb. iv. there is an immediate transition from the Word (ver. 12) to God Himself (ver. 13). It is not quite clear which of the two subjects, God or the Word, is qualified by the adjectives 'living' and 'abiding.' The order in the Greek is peculiar, the noun 'God's' being thrust in between the two adjectives. Most interpreters agree with the E. V. in taking the Word to be the subject described here as 'living' and 'abiding,' in favour of which it is strongly urged that the passage which follows from the Old Testament deals not with God's own nature, but with that of His Word. The peculiar order of the Greek is then explained as due to the quality 'living' being thrown forward for the sake of emphasis. On this view the thing most decidedly asserted is the life which inheres in the Word, and the subsequent citation from Isaiah would be introduced to express the contrast between the Word of God in this respect and the best of all natural things. The arrangement of the terms points, however, more naturally to God as the subject described by the epithets, and in support of this, Dan. vi. 26 is appealed to, where God is similarly described, and, indeed,
according to one of the ancient Greek translators, in precisely the same terms. Calvin, therefore, supported by the Vulgate, and followed by some good exegetes, prefers the view that these epistles "living" and "abiding" are given hence to God Himself, with reference to His Word, as that in which "His own perpetuity is reflected as in a living mirror." In this case we should have the same kind of connection between God and His Word as we have also in Heb. ii. 12, 13, where the conception of the former as having all things naked and opened to Him, and that of the latter as quick, powerful, and piercing, lie so near each other, and the following citation would have a more distinct design of affirming the Word to be partaker of the very life and perpetuity which inheres in God Himself. In either case the quality of "abiding" is not a mere superaddition (as Huther, etc., make it), but rather so weighty an inference from the "living" that it alone is expounded in what follows. For the dominant idea is still the kind of love which believers should exhibit toward each other, namely, persevering lasting love and the general intention of the closing verses is to show that while to the unregenerate all that is possible may be a love changeable and transient like the nature of which it is born, the regenerate are made capable of, and thereby pledged to, a love of the enduring quality of that new life which, like God Himself and God's Word, lives and therefore abides. The words "for ever" are omitted by the best authorities.

Ver. 24. For all flesh is as grass. Peter breaks off into the rapid, vivid terms in which the prophet of Isa. xl. speaks of his commission. The air is full of inspiration, of Divine calls and promises. (Arnold). The prophet gives a voice to him, Cry; he asks what he shall cry, and the voice gives him as his cry this "antithesis between the decay—"it may be the premature decay (for the breath of Jehovah "bloweth" "sore" "it listeth")—"the brightest and best of earthly things are liable, and the necessary permanence of Jehovah and His revelation" (Cheyne). The particular revelation or "word there affirmed to stand infallibly for ever is God's promise regarding Israel. Here that is identified with the word now preached through the Gospel. The phrase "all flesh" (which in the Old Testament is characteristic of certain books only, occurring, e.g., repeatedly in the Pentateuch and the second half (never in the first) of Isaiah, four times in Jeremiah, three times in Ezekiel, once in Zechariah) embraces man and all that is of man as he is by nature.—And all its glory as flower of grass. The reading followed by the E. V., "the glory of man," must yield to the better reading, "its glory." If the "flesh," therefore, is compared to grass (a familiar biblical figure of transient human life, cf. Ps. xc. 5, 6, ciii. 15, 16; Job viii. 12, xiv. 2; Isa. vii. 17, 12; Jas. vii. 10, 11), and one to which the rapidity of growth and decay in Eastern climates gives additional force, the "glory" of the flesh, by which is meant its goodliest outcome, "the most splendid manifestations of man's life, is compared to the still more tender bloom that brightens on the flower only to fall off. 'There are no fields of samanth on this side of the grave; there are no voices, O Rhodope, that are not soon mute, however tuneful; there is no name, with what ever emphasis of passionate love reiterated, of which the echo is not faint at last' (Landor).—withered was the grass, and the flower (the word "sharon" is not sustained by the best authorities) fall off. A life-like picture of the actual occurrence, the tenses used being those of direct narration (aptly given by Wycliffe—dried up... fall down), which may be rendered, as in the E. V., by our English present, as expressing what takes place gradually, but which rather represent the thing as witnessed by the eye of the reporter. —But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. Having the Gospel immediately in view, Peter subordinates "the word of the Lord" here, for "which is the life of our God," which is the phrase in Isa. xi. 8, in both the Hebrew text and the Greek. Other departures from the Old Testament passage, as we have it, also appear, some of which are of minor interest, others of a remarkable kind. Not only is the qualifying "as" introduced before the "grass," the stronger term "glory" given for "goodliness," the phrase "flower of grass" substituted for "flower of the field," and "faded" (as in the Hebrew) by "fell off," but the important section of the Hebrew text which ascribes the decadence of grass and flower to the Spirit of the Lord blowing upon them (ver. 7) is entirely omitted. In these particulars, Peter follows the text of the Greek translation. On the other hand, he departs from the Greek text, and returns to the Hebrew, in adopting "all its glory" instead of "all the glory of man." It appears, therefore, that Peter makes a very free quotation or variants, that he does not bring in this passage as a formal quotation sustaining his statement by an appeal to Scripture, but simply expresses in Old Testament words which come easily to his lips a reason for the incorruptible life which he attributes to the new life, namely, that it is due to the action of a power which endures like God Himself. This is supported by the fact that the passage is introduced not by the ordinary conjunctive "for," but by a different term, used also in ver. 16, meaning rather "because."—And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you, or rather, the word of the gospel which was preached unto you (Rom. x. 16). The sentence is not parallel, as it is taken by many, to Rom. x. 5-13, where the nearness or accessibility of the Word is in view. What is affirmed is not that this Word, of which things so glorious are said, is yet so near them as to be at their hand in the Gospel, but that the good tidings which were brought to these Asiatic Christians by Paul and his comrades were nothing less than that Word of the Lord of which the prophet spake, and nothing less enduring than the Voice of the desert had proclaimed that Word to be. So Peter identifies the revelation in the form of the ancient word of promise with the revelation in the form of the recent word of preaching; which he says, also, was not merely to them, or for their benefit, but unto them, addressed to them personally and borne in among them. He gives implicit witness at the same time to the fact that what he himself had now to teach them was nothing but the same grace which Paul and others had proclaimed. Hence the past tense, "was preached," as referring to their first acquaintance with the Gospel, when others than he who wrote to them had been the means of conveying to them the Lord's enduring Word, and thus creating in them a life capable of
Chapter II. 1-3.

Exhortation to live on the Word with a view to Growth in Grace.

1 Therefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile,
   and hypocrisy, and envy, and all evil-speckings,
2 as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word,
3 that ye may grow thereby: ^4 if so be ye have tasted that
   the Lord is gracious.

1 Having put off, therefore ^2 the spiritual milk which is without guile (as in R. V.), or, earnestly desire
   ^3 the rational, guileless milk
   ^4 if indeed ye tasted
   ^5 good

The duty which is next to be urged is introduced by ‘therefore,’ and is thus given as one which follows naturally upon what has just been stated. The pulse of two thoughts, which have ruled the preceding section, beats in this new paragraph—that of brotherly love and that of the new birth. Of these the second is the more prominent, the immediate link of connection being between the ‘born again’ of i. 23 and the ‘new-born babes’ of ii. 1. The fact that these converts live a new life, which they owe to an incorruptible Source, is an argument for cherishing the life so that it may grow and develop all its gracious capacities. The fact that this new life has come to them through the medium of the enduring Word of God, which has made it the recipient of its own qualities, is an argument for making that Word, as in the Gospel it is preached to them, their soul’s very food. But if the life is of the high strain which should expand into a brotherly love as constant and unceasing as natural affection is apt to prove transient and fickle, growth in this life implies the renouncing of every base feeling, word, and act. The things which are to be put away are things inconsistent at once with brotherly love, with a right use of the Word, and with growth unto final salvation. They are unlovely dispositions of the old nature, which form the common temptation of all Christians, and the spiritual soul of no single class or nationality. They cannot be said to ‘point, especially in the hypocrisies and “evil-speckings,” to the besetting sins of the Jewish rather than the Gentile character, as condemned by our Lord (Matt. xxiii. & al.) and St. James (iii. iv.).'
off' which is involved in the 'putting on' of the 'new,' 
(Eph. iv. 24, 25; Col. iii. 8, 10). 
The vices to be denounced, therefore, are 
compared implicitly to a foul garment enwrapping the 
old man. They are the 'Nessus shirt' of corrupt 
habits which the new man tears off. This 
denunciation is represented here (the present 
being in the simple past) as preparatory to, and 
the condition of, the fulfilment of the positive 
charge which follows. — therefore, i.e. = having 
by help of the Word an undying life capable of an 
untarnished growth, forwear i.e. everything hostile 
to the life, and by a right use of the Word foster it 
till it grows to the perfection of final salvation. 
all (or, every kind of) malice. The noun, which 
in the Septuagint, e.g. Amos iii. 6; Eccles. 
vi. 14, xii. 1; and once in the N. T.; Matt. 
vi. 34, has also the objective sense of calamity or 
trouble) may mean either wickedness, viciousness, 
in general (as in 1 Cor. v. 8, xiv. 20; Acts 
viii. 22), or, in particular: (cf. Rom. i. 29; 
Eph. iv. 31; Col. iii. 8; i. iii. 3; Jas. i. 21), 
malevolence, the wish to injure. On the 
ground of its apparent import in ver. 16, some give it 
the former sense here, in which case it would be the 
parent disposition, of which the things which 
follow are the issue. The latter sense, however, 
is favoured both by the repetition of the 'all' 
with the 'guile' (which would give us a second 
generation), by the analogy of Eph. iv. 31, 
Col. iii. 8, Jas. i. 21, and by the relation of 
the whole sentence to the previous charge to 
brotherly love. The 'wickedness' which the 
R. V. places in the text, therefore, should go to the 
margin, and its marginal 'malice' should occupy 
the position of the 'guile', i.e. every form of the 
disposition to reach selfish ends artfully or 
by deception. In iii. 10 this is re-introduced in 
relation to speech, as that is dealt with in Ps. 
xxxiii. 13,—and hypocrisy and envies. The 
transition to the plural indicates perhaps that acts 
are now in view, the unlovely acts which arise in 
those dispositions of malice and guile. These 
hypocrisies are in strong contrast to the love 
'unfeigned,' literally 'unhypocritical,' in i. 22. 
The word (which is used in Gal. ii. 13 with the 
softened sense of the dissimulation of Cephas and 
the Jews, which amounted to a practical denial 
of their better insight) covers here all the 
insincerities, the masked acts and concealments 
into which the heart full of malice and guile 
drives one in relation to his fellows. The 
enbies (the only vice in this list which is 
explicitly named in Paul's enumeration of the 
'works of the flesh,' Gal. v. 20, 21) embrace 
every exhibitions of jealousy and grudgling.—and all 
evil-speaking. The term is one of rare occurrence. 
The cognate verb, indeed, is found 
occasionally in the Classics, and there with the 
twofold sense of 'babbling' and 'railing.' But 
the noun itself is unknown to classical Greek, 
although it is found occasionally in the Septuagint 
(Wisdom i. 11), the Fathers (e.g. Clem. Rom. 
and Polycarp), and in one other passage of the 
N. T. (2 Cor. xii. 20). It means literally 
'speaking against,' and will include all words 
of detraction, railing, defamation, and the like. 
The five evils mentioned here may be antithetical 
to either of two things,—the brotherly love 
formerly in view, or the character implied in the 
immediately succeeding designation, 'new-born 
babies.' The close connection between the two 
parts of the verse, and the introduction of vices 
like guile and hypocrisy, which are opposed directly 
to simplicity and sincerity than is love, 
favour the latter word. In that case, the point 
would be the renunciation of everything alien to 
child-like candour, to the transparency and 
healthfulness of the child-like character. The 
former view is generally preferred, however, and 
is supported by the prevalent tone of the evils 
specified, as well as by the relation of dependency 
in which this charge stands to the former. It 
is doubtful whether much is intended by the 
particular order in which the things are given. It 
is supposed, e.g., that the malice comes first, as 
being 'the main cause of dissensions,' and that 
them we get naturally 'guile the inward 
disease, hypocrisy its outward manifestation, and, as 
as result of the consciousness of evil, envy in its 
various forms, specially directed against those 
who have the peace in which the hypocrite knows 
that he is lacking; a feeling which sooner or 
later breaks out in calumnious aspersions' (Canon 
Cook). But if any inner connection is to be 
traced at all, it is rather that the malice which 
precedes evil to a brother, is named first as at 
the root of all; that this carries with it the 
guile which secretly works, and in the hypocrisies 
which, and the ends of self, reveals itself in the hypocrisies 
into which it is driven to deceive the eye; while 
the masked acts by which we put our 
assault upon a brother's good, exasperate our 
envyings of his good, and these find vent in evil- 
speaking or overt attempts to talk him down. 
Ver. 2. a. new-born babes. Of twofold use: 
child, one of which corresponds etymologically to 
our 'infant,' and means the child yet incapable of 
speech, and then more generally (as in Gal. iv. 1) 
a minor, the other the child at the stage of birth, 
or at the tenderest age (cf. Luke xviii. 15; Acts 
vii. 19), it is the latter that is used here, as it is 
also used of Timothy (2 Tim. iii. 15), and of the 
infant Jesus (Luke ii. 12, 16). It is not used, 
however, in the metaphorical sense in which the 
babe (as designated by the other word) 
unwitting knowledge is contrasted with him who is of full age 
(Heb. v. 13), or the immature and carnal with the 
spiritual (1 Cor. iii. 1). It expresses a simple 
fact here, the recency of the Christian life in these 
converns, which is marked still more emphatically 
by the addition of the strong adjective (nowhere 
else used in the N. T.) 'new-born.' The contrast 
is not between Christians at different stages of 
Christian maturity, but between these converts as 
one they were and as now they have just come 
to be. And it is in this character (the 'as' here 
again being the note of quality or fact, not of 
comparison) that they are charged to long for 
the pure, rational milk. The verb (an intensive or 
compound form) means not merely 'desire' (as 
the E. V. renders it here, although elsewhere it 
deals better with its force, e.g. Rom. i. 11, 'long; 
1 Thess. iii. 6, desire greatly,' etc.), but 'ex- 
cessively desire,' or 'long for,' as with our 
healthy appetite of the child, with whom it is so 
natural to turn to the 'food convenient' for it, 
that, as Bengel says, it is capable of nothing but 
this desire. It is difficult to convey the precise 
sense of the three words which follow. It is 
clear, however, that they describe the food for 
which these converts are to cultivate an appetite, 
and the E. V., though literally inexact, gives a
sufficiently correct representation of their general import by its rendering 'sincere milk of the word.' The term 'milk' here does not mean the elementary doctrine which is suitable for babes in Christ in contrast with the 'meat' (1 Cor. iii. 3), or the 'strong meat' (Heb. v. 12-14), which elsewhere is said to be for the full-grown. It is simply a figurative expression for the food which they must have, seeing that they are now in a new life. They themselves are not compared to babes, but said to be babes, as having been only recently ushered into the Christian life. And their food is not compared to milk, but said to be milk. But this is at once qualified by two adjectives which exhibit its nature. One of these is resolved into a noun, 'of the word,' by our E. V. and some other versions, as well as by Beza, Bengel, etc. This brings out the sense well enough, but is not itself a correct translation. What the food is which is indicated by the 'milk,' is not stated, but is left to be inferred from the context, which certainly points neither to the Eucharist, as some strangely imagine, nor even to Christ, as the Logos preached in the Word (so Weiss), but simply to the Word itself. And to make this plain, an adjective is attached which occurs often in the Classics, and in a variety of senses (e.g. belonging to speech, possessed of reason, logical, etc.), but in the N. T. is found only once again (Rom. xii. 1). In both its N. T. occurrences (and even in ecclesiastical Greek, the expression of the angels being described, e.g., in the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, as a 'rational and bloodless offering') it seems to mean rational, or spiritual (though these English words poorly express the idea), as opposed to literal or physical. In the Pauline passage it designates the new sacrificial service to which the Christian is pledged by Christ's sacrifice, as one in which the mind is engrossed, which cannot be discharged by the hand without the heart or as an opus operatum like the legal circumstantial service of the Jew. In the present passage it explains the 'milk' to be food for the soul, not for the body; spiritual milk for the spiritual Jew, not material milk as for the natural babe. But this is further defined by a second term, which signifies 'guileless,' and in which, therefore, there may be an echo of the 'all guile' of ver. 1. Two shades of meaning, however, are possibly involved. If the figure of the 'milk' is regarded as sunk in the idea of the Word to which it points, the term will be rendered 'sincere' (as in E. V. and the Geneva Version), or 'without guile' (as in Wycliffe), or 'without deceit' (as in Cranmer; Tyndale gives 'without corruption'). The point then will be that the Word is pure, 'uncrafty' (as Jeremy Taylor puts it), incapable of deceiving or corrupting; with which may be compared the use of the cognate verb in 2 Cor. iv. 2, 'handling the Word of God deceitfully.' If, as is more likely, the figure rules the term, it may be rendered 'unadulterated;' free from any foreign element hurtful to the life; an anathema to which is found (see Litt.) in Shakespeare's 'the innocent milk in its most innocent mouth' (Winter's Tale, iii. 2)—that ye may grow thereby. The best authorities add here the important words, 'unto salvation,' which if these converts in thought at once from their present infancy in grace on to what they are designed to be in the ultimate manifestation of the sons of God. The unflagging spiritual appetite or 'longing' which is spoken of is to be cherished with this in view as its most proper object—i.e. the growth from strength to strength, until they reach the measure of final redemption. This increase will be secured, and that goal reached, only 'thereby,' or rather, 'therein;' that is, so far as the Word is made the mental food in which their new life instinctively seeks its nourishment, and made this with that great object in view. Any other use of the Word of God comes short of a worthy use. 'To desire it only for some present pleasure and delight, that a man may find in it, is not the due use and end of it: that there is delight in it, may commend it to those who find it so, and so be a means to advance the end; but the end it is not. To seek no more but a present delight, that vanishes but with the sound by the words that die in the air, is not to desire the Word as meat but as music' (Leighton).

Ver. 3. If indeed ye tasted that the Lord is good. A condition is added which represents the previous charge as one which is applicable indeed only to those who have a particular personal experience (expressed as tasing), but obviously applicable to such, and certain to recommend itself to them. The sentence puts the condition as one which may be held to be made good, =if, that is to say (and that I take for granted), ye tasted. The tense (a simple historical past, not 'have tasted,' as both A. V. and R. V. give it) describes the experience or belonging definitely to the past, and points, therefore, to what they found the Lord to be when they first came to know Him. The adjective has not so specific a meaning (although, it approaches that) as is implied in the 'gracious' by which both the A. V. and the R. V. render it. Neither has it here the sense of 'sweet,' as if the Lord Himself were viewed as the 'rational unadulterate milk,' and declared now to be as milk 'sweet' to the taste in the sense in which meats and drinks are pronounced 'sweet' or 'good.' It designates moral goodness under the twofold aspect of attractiveness and kindly disposition or active beneficence, as distinguished from other adjectives which describe goodness on the side of its sterling worth and its gentleness. The idea, therefore, is that if, as Peter assumed it to be the case, they had found Christ Himself to be good in their own first inward perception of what He was, then He was not but hunger for that living Word of the Gospel by which they had received Him and life with Him, and make such use of it that their life should be a growing life and themselves children, dwelling in brotherly love, and advancing in meekness for the children's inheritance. It is not necessary (with many interpreters) to limit this goodness of the Lord to the active beneficence of which the providing of this preached Word was the special proof. The source of the verse shows the sense to be more general. For Peter seems to have in mind here the 34th Psalm, one of the eight Psalms which are referred by their inscriptions to the painful period of David's life during which he was a fugitive from Saul. The particular words which he reproduces are those in which the Psalmist calls on God's saints to make proof for themselves of that kindness which throws the shield of angelic protection round them,—words on account of which the early Church made this Psalm its Communion Psalm (see Delitsch in loc.). In order to adapt it to
THE FIRST EPISODE GENERAL OF PETER. [CHAP. II. 4-6.

his present purpose, Peter makes certain changes on the sentence, dropping the imperative form, and giving the single term 'taste' instead of the two terms 'taste' and 'see,' by which the Psalm expresses the spiritual experience which leads to spiritual perception. And what is said of the Jehovah of the O.T., Peter applies thus to Christ without further qualification. If they had once tasted this goodness, they must have the appetite, and that would keep their life from being stunted. If they had once known what the Lord Himself is, they could not but long for that Word which is His preacher, that they might have an ever-deepening experience of His goodness.

CHAPTER II. 4-6.

Exhortation to Continuous Building on Christ, the Foundation.

4 To whom coming, as unto 1 a living stone, 2 disallowed 3 indeed of men, but chosen 4 of God, 5 and 6 precious, 7 ye also, as lively stones, are built up 8 a spiritual house, an holy 9 priesthood, to offer up 10 spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, 12 Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner-stone, 13 elect, precious: 14 and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 15

It is supposed by some (Schott, etc.) that the previous section has already had in view the future of the Church, and not of the mere individual, its import being that by a right use of the Word the members of the Church should increase in love as a brotherhood, and the Church itself advance towards its glorious end. In that case, the verses which now follow would be a mere extension of the former paragraph. Up to this point, however, Peter has dealt rather with what concerns the individual believer's own ripeness for the inheritance of the saints, and now he speaks of what relates to the realization of the idea of the collective body, the Church. With the change of view there comes a change of figure. The conception of a life growing passes over into that of a building increasing. At the same time the Word or Revelation, which is the means of the life with its growth, gives place to the Lord Himself, who is the foundation of the structure with its increase, and the idea of union with Christ Himself as the first and the last thing in the regenerate life, which was but dimly conveyed by the preceding statement, is now exhibited in all its breadth. The description which is now commenced of what believers are meant to be in their collective capacity as the Church of God, is continued for some time, and carried into the details of their relations to the ancient Church of God in Israel (vers. 7-10), to the world and civil society (11-17), and to various orders of life.

Ver. 4. To whom coming. The relative form of the sentence indicates its intimate connection with the previous section. The connection, however, is not between an exhortation and a statement of privilege appended in support of the exhortation, but between two exhortations which, while in themselves distinct, have a meeting-point in what is said of the Lord. This verse, therefore, gives a further explanation of the primary condition of all growth, namely, union with this Lord Himself. They who have tasted that He is good have an irresistible attraction to Him, and it is by giving effect to this attraction that they grow. If the Church, too, is to increase into that which God means it to be, its members must not only feed upon the Word, but come constantly to Christ Himself. Though the verb by which this is expressed is the verb from which the word proselyte is derived, it is fanciful to suppose that Peter had in his mind anything relating to the modes of admission for Gentile converts into
Judaism. Neither is he alluding specially to service. It is held, indeed (e.g. by Schott), that Christ being represented here not as the source of the individual believer's life, but rather as the foundation of the structure which is being built up of many believing individuals, the 'coming' naturally refers neither to the first act of faith nor to the daily renewal of personal fellowship, but to the stated coming with all the powers of the regenerate life to Christ for purposes of service. This is for that would be that the giving of ourselves to Christ's service in the great work of rearing the spiritual temple is to be made our recognised mode of conduct. But the construction of the verb (which is unusual here) points rather to something more than a simple approach to one—to a close approach or intimate association; while the present tense describes that as a habit. The idea, therefore, is simply this—that the spiritual rock, or Christ the foundation can be made good only in so far as we, the builders, are ourselves ever coming into close personal union with the same Christ. The verb selected for the expression of this union, meaning as it does to attach oneself closely to an object, is in perfect harmony with the figure under which both Christ and believers are represented here—*a living stone*. The E. V. interprets as *unto*. The original, however, is bolder. It has no such note of comparison, but designates this as 'God directly a living stone'; in which phrase the main thing, too, is the noun *stone*, not the qualifying adjective *living*. Christ is spoken of under the figure of a stone simply because in relation to the House He is the foundation stone which is identical with the personal name Peter, and this prevents us from supposing (with Bengel, Canon Farrar, etc.) that the apostle was thinking here of the new name (Peter = *rock* or *stone*) which he had himself received from Christ. He uses the term simply as a well-understood Old Testament title of Messiah, as he uses it again in his discourse after the healing of the cripple (Acts iv. 11), and as Christ Himself employs it in order to point the application of the parable of the wicked husbandmen (Matt. xxii. 43). Peter, indeed, as some suppose, may have been that 'one of His disciples' who, as Jesus 'went out of the temple,' said unto him, 'Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here;' and who now pointed his readers to that Master Himself as the chief cornerstone of a more glorious temple slowly rising out of more imperishable material. The adjective *living* is attached here, as it is also to the subsequent 'stones,' simply as a note of the figurative application of the noun. It does not refer to the Resurrection of Christ, neither does it express the idea that Christ became this 'living foundation' only through death, or that He lives to make Others alive, or that 'He penetrates and fills with His life the whole organism of believers, and causes it to grow' (Fettnuller). For less is the expression analogous to the phrase *living rock*, describing the stone in its natural state as distinguished from the stone broken and hewn—rejected indeed of men, but with God chosen, honourable. There is no reference here to the Jews as distinguished from others. There is simply a broad contrast drawn between two kinds of treatment accorded to the 'living stone,' one on the side of men, and another on the side of God. It is much in Peter's habit to draw such contrasts (cf. Acts ii. 23, 24, iii. 13–15, iv. 10, v. 30, 31, x. 39, 40). Hence, too, instead of the 'builders' of Ps. cxviii. 22, we get the more general phrase 'men.' The verb which the E. V., following Tyndale, Cranmer, and the Geneva Version, translates *manus* (as it does again in v. 7, but nowhere else in the N. T.), conveys the stronger idea of rejection after trial, or on the ground of want of qualification. Here 'rejected' is given by Wycliffe, and 'reprobated' by the Rheims, and outside this Epistle the verb is invariably rendered 'reject' in the E. V. The value which the stone has in God's sight is expressed by two adjectives, one of which describes it as 'chosen,' or 'elect' (i.e. chosen by God as qualified for His object); while the other describes it as consequently 'honourable,' or 'in honour' with Him as such (the term being somewhat different from the 'precious' in i. 19). Other epithets, which in Isa. xxxviii. 16 are descriptive rather of what the stone is to be in the building than of what it is in God's estimate, are omitted.

Ver. 5. Be ye also as living stones built up. The verb admits of being construed either as indicative or as imperative. The former is preferred by the E. V., in which it follows Tyndale, Cranmer, and the Geneva. The same rendering is adopted by not a few of the best interpreters (Bengel, Wiesinger, Weiss, Huther, Schott, Alford, etc.), as most consistent with the use of the similar 'be ye!' in i. 15, with the hortatory force which seems inherent in the participle 'coming' (ver. 4), and with Peter's practice of introducing charges in the form of imperatives accompanied by participles expressing the conditions of their fulfilment (i. 13, i. 17, 18, i. 22, ii. 1, 2). The imperative, too, may be of the middle form = build yourselves up (Luther, Steiger, Plumptre), or better, of the passive form =be ye built up, as the E. V. gives in the margin, here following Wycliffe's 'be ye above builded,' and the 'be ye also yourselves superdified' of the Rheims. So Peter, as his wont is, charges them to do on their side what has been made both possible and a matter of duty by what has been done on God's side. The foundation is laid by God, let them make their edifice, and be built upon it. And the character (such again is the force of the 'as') in which they are to do this is that of *living stones*—a spiritual house. Though the noun means simply 'house,' and not 'temple, and the adjective 'spirited' is added simply to distinguish it from a material structure, it is no doubt the temple that Peter has in view. The phrase itself may be in apposition to the subject 'ye' (Hofmann, etc.), or (as most prefer) it may
express the end contemplated in the being built. It may be that they are to be built up on the Foundation in the character of, or because they are, a spiritual house; or it may be rather that they are to be built up in order to make a spiritual house. At this point Peter introduces the idea which was so alien to the Jewish mind (cf. Mark xiv. 58; John ii. 21), but by this time as familiar to him as it was to Paul (Eph. ii. 20-22, etc.), that the real temple of God was not the great House in Jerusalem, and that Christ's flock, without distinction, too, of Jew and Gentile, was the true Israel, temple, and priesthood of God. It is possible, as Dean Pusey triumphantly and being built up in Christ, in speaking of the Church in these terms, Peter recalled the great declaration made to him by Christ Himself, the full significance of which he had been slow enough to take in, on the subject of the Church, and the rock on which its Lord was to build it (Matt. xvi. 18). 'This thought of a Divine temple consisting of living men, and of a corner-stone by whom and in whom they could alone cohere, may be traced throughout the whole Epistle. From first to last he seems to be thinking of them as a unity which existed for them, and which they might enjoy in spite of their dispersion, if only they would recognise the living ground of it, if only they would move round the true centre, not to try to exist as separate atoms apart from it.' (Maurice, Unity of New Testament, p. 336.) -unto (or, with a view to) a holy priesthood. The evidence of the best authorities makes it necessary to support the position 'unto,' which at first sight creates an awkward connection. The awkwardness, however, is only in appearance. It is the new reading that gives by far the deepest and most apposite sense here. It indicates a further and an immense and the being built up in Christ. They are to be so built in order to make not only a spiritual house, but also a holy priesthood, and the spiritual house itself is to rise with a view to, or, so as also to become, the holy priesthood. As God's people once were, the house and the priesthood were distinct; now they are one. 'Under the Old Covenant Jehovah had His House, and His priests who served Him in His House; the Church fulfills both purposes under the New, being both His House and His holy priesthood (see Wiesinger and Frommeller). The epithet 'holy' simply marks off the priesthood as consecrated according to the idea of a priesthood. The noun expressing the priesthood itself is one entirely strange to profane Greek, but found in the LXX., and once again in the N. T. (ver. 9 of this chapter). It denotes priests not in their individual capacity, but as a collective body or college. It by no means follows, however, that it implies the existence of different degrees of priesthood among Christians (Canon Mason), or that it bears upon 'the office of a vicarious priesthood, representing and acting on behalf of the body corporate' (Canon Cook). The one thing it affirms is that all Christians as such, and without distinction, constitute a priestly fraternity corresponding to the community of priests established under the Law, and realizing the complete idea of a priesthood which the former college, with its limitation in numbers, and its sharp separation from the people, and its ritual service, imperfectly and distantly exhibited.' The name priest,' says John Owen, 'is nowhere in Scripture attributed peculiarly and distinctly to the ministers of the Gospel as such; that which puts a difference between them and the rest of the people of God's holiness seems to be a more direct participation of Christ's prophetic, not sacerdotal, office. When Christ ascended on high, He gave some to be prophets, Eph. iv. 11; none, as we find, to be priests. Priests are a sort of church-officers whom Christ never appointed' (see Dr. John Brown in loc.). In the next few verses, Peter lingers lovingly over this great principle of grace, the priesthood of all believers, the right of every soul to go direct to God with its sins, and receive for itself His forgiveness through Christ,—the principle which the early Church proclaimed ('are not we also priests?'—Tertullian, de Exhort. Cathol., chap. vii.), which was lost in the theology and ecclesiasticism of the Medieval Church, although it lived in its hymnology, which finally revived in the Theses of Luther, and became the keynote of the Reformation,—to offer up spiritual sacrifices. If Christians are the spiritual house and the holy priesthood which make all necessity for a separate temple and a limited priesthood vanish, they may come in priestly fashion Him whose house they make. Their service is to offer sacrifices, and these, in conformity with the service itself, must be material but 'spiritual.' In the O. T., the pass offerings had to be offered first in order that access might be secured, and only after these, and in their train, came the sacrifices of consecration, praise, and thanksgiving. Under the N. T., access has been opened once for all by Christ's sacrifice for sin, and the only sacrifices which this priesthood is called to offer, or is capable of offering, are of the latter order. They embrace first the consecration of our living active selves, which is described as the presenting of our bodies a living sacrifice (Rom. xii. 1); and then those offerings which are the expression of that consecrated life,—the sacrifices of our praise and thanksgiving (which are compared to the fruit of our lips, Heb. xii. 12; cf. also Ps. i. 23, xvi. 17; Hos. xiv. 3), of our prayers (which are likened to incense, Ps. xiii. 2), of beneficent deeds and charitable giving (1 Cor. xiii. 16), of broken spirits and contrite hearts (Ps. li. 17), of obedience, the superiority of which to the sacrifices of the Law was declared so early as by Samuel to Agag (1 Sam. xxvii. 22), and finally, if need be, of a spent life or martyr's death, which Paul speaks of under the figure of the pouring out of the heathen libation, or the Jewish drink-offering, which accompanied the sacrifice (Phil. ii. 17). The verb used here in the sense of 'to offer,' is the usual LXX. term for the offering of sacrifice, and means properly to 'bring up to the altar.' It occurs thrice in the N. T. with the literal sense of 'carrying up,' or 'leading up' (Matt. xvii. 1; Mark ix. 2; and, in reference to the Ascension, Luke xxiv. 51). It is never found in the sacrificial application either in the Pauline writings or in the Classics, but has that sense again in ver. 24 of the present chapter, once in James (ii. 21), and thrice in Hebrews (vii. 27; ix. 28, xiii. 15)—acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. This clause may be attached to the verb, so that the sense will be 'to offer up through Jesus Christ acceptable sacrifices to God. This connection has in its favour the analogy of Heb. xii. 15, and is urged on the ground that not only the acceptance of what is offered, but the very possibility of
II. 4-6.] THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

is dependent on Christ; so Alford, de Weiss, etc. It is better, however, on the one hand to connect it closely with the noun, both in the immediate vicinity of the noun, name or name without such an addition the acceptance of the N. T. sacrifices (as due directly and to Christ) is not distinguished from the name of the O. T. sacrifices (as dependent on ritual observances). The meaning, as it seems to be (as Luther, Bengel, Wetstein, Hofmann, Huther, etc., read it) = to offer ritual sacrifices which through Jesus Christ is acceptable to God. To Him to whom we are to be the continuation of the sacrifice that partakes of the divine name as a priestly act, and the continuance of the acceptance of all that we are as his priests.

6. Because it is also contained in the word of the prophet (or, in a scripture). The passage is in the context of the prophet's stern declaration of the Samaria and anathema against the nations of Judah. Break suddenly on the people, and assuring them of the security which will 'justify their faith in the permanence of the temple-building and the solidity of the foundation' (Cheyne), the passage is introduced (therefore, the same as has been found ready in similar connections i. 16, 24). states that Peter is not making an express act for the time to establish, by the authority of Old Testament, which was justly giving in familiar Old Testament manner naturally to his pen, a reason why he states it to be. This is ed by the indefinite and impersonal phrase, contained in Scripture or, in a scripture (Psalm 69:14). 'The word is double, as so the fact that the words are given exactly as they stand in the Hebrew text only as the LXX. Version renders them, is also the same as with Paul's use of them in 1. 33) with a number of significant variations. The point of the passage, therefore, seems his: the reason why they are to be built as the name of the old priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices, lies in no God's will, that is described in the verse, to make Christ the foundation of His church. (cf. Hofmann, Schott, Behold, I lay in Zion). So Paul, too ix. 33) gives it, instead of Isaiah's more statement, Behold, I lay in Zion for a stone (literally, I am He that hath founded), the LXX. puts it, Behold, I lay to the stones of Zion. The object of this is laid down to Isaiah, a stone, a tried stone, a corner-stone, a sure foundation. But of introducing the object simply as a new being the designation that by a series of corner-stones (which Ewald and Delitzsch agree ordering rather, 'a tried precious corner-stone') Peter names the case of a chief corner-stone, and then as to these corner-stones, transforming order, and omitting some of his terms again (Rom. ix. 33), seems to take the notion from Is. viii. 16, but from Isa. ix. 10, where 'the stone' (or, stone), shall be. The corner-stone is that stone in

the foundation on which the angle of the building rests, and which is all-important to the stability of the building and the coherence of its parts. There is no reference here, however, to the union effected through Christ between Jew and Gentile (as Luther supposes), far less to Christ as 'the connecting link of the Old and New Testaments' (Frommell).—and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. The Hebrew text gives simply, he that believeth, leaving the object unnamed. The phrase 'on him' (or, as it may also be, 'on it') which Peter introduces (as also does Paul, Rom. ix. 33) is found, however, in some MSS. of the LXX. The clause which appears at once in Peter, in Paul, and in the LXX. as 'shall not be confounded' (or rather, put to shame), stands in the Hebrew text as 'shall not make haste,' or 'shall not flee in trepidation,' i.e. shall stand firm. The clause, therefore, is not a mere parallel to the previous 'grow unto salvation,' pointing to security in the final judgment (Schott), but gives a general assurance expressive of the confidence of those to whom the prophetic promise is fulfilled in Christ. The passage as it stands in Isaiah is set over against the Egyptian alliance which was sought at the time, and against the hurt and shame which are declared in the same connection (e.g. xxx. 1-7) to be destined for those who lean on Egypt instead of Jehovah. If this was in Peter's mind, the words would suggest the difference (confidence for the one, disappointment and shame to the other) between those who hold by Christ and those who cling to old national connections, and would appeal with peculiar force to those Christians who were in danger of yielding to the power of social surroundings in times of peril. In any case, the passage was admitted by the Rabbs to be of direct Messianic import. But whether the stone immediately in Isaiah's view is to be identified with Jehovah Himself, with the Davidic King, with the theocracy, with the Temple, or with the promise made to David and his house (2 Sam. vii. 12, 16), in Peter it is Christ Himself who is that Son of David in whom the kingdom was to reach its final glory, and in whom that promise is fulfilled. In both connections faith is specified. But while in the prophet it is faith in the sense of confidence, or in the sense of belief in the future fulfilment of a promise, in the apostle it is faith in the sense of personal reliance on Him who was promised and had appeared. In both cases, too, an assurance is attached to the faith—in Isaiah, that the Israelite who remains faithful instead of seeking secretly to Egypt shall not need to flee; in Peter, that the Christian who relies on Christ shall not be put to real shame, however scornfully handled. The best interpreters are practically at one in recognising the doctrinal bearings of this brief but important section. Peter here expresses what Bishop Lightfoot (Comm. on Philip. i. 17) holds Paul's language also to express, 'the fundamental idea of the Christian Church, in which a universal priesthood has supplanted the exclusive ministrations of a select tribe or class.' Neander concludes that 'when the apostles applied the Old Testament idea of priesthood to Christianity, this was done invariably for the simple purpose of showing that no such visible particular priesthood could find place in the new community.' And Huther affirms the idea which is here expressed to be opposed not only to the catholic doctrine
of a particular priesthood, but to all teaching with regard to the office of the administration of word and sacrament which in any way ascribes to its possessors an importance in the Church, resting on Divine mandate, and necessary for the communication of salvation (i.e. priestly importance).

CHAPTER II. 7-10.

The Honour pertaining to Christians as the True Israel.

7 **Unto you** therefore which believe **he is precious**: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient; whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

---

1 It may be You, or simply. Yours
2 or, as the R. V. gives it in the margin, is the honour. The A. V. has he is an honour in the margin, while the R. V. has the preciousness in its text.
3 or, with the R. V., for such as disbelieve rejected
4 literally, this was made head of the corner
5 or, with R. V., and, a stone of stumbling, etc.
6 literally, who stumble at the word, and so, to those who stumble, etc., or, with R. V., for they stumble
7 or, as margin of R. V. stumble, being disobedient to the word
8 or, race
9 or, kingly
10 literally, a people for acquisition, or, as R. V. gives it, a people for God's own possession
11 literally, virtues, or, with R. V., excellences
12 who once were no people
13 literally, been compassionated

The central thing in the preceding paragraph was the Stone with the structure erected on it. The sudden transition from the figure of babes growing to that of stones built up, is by no means characteristic only of Peter. In Paul we have even bolder instances of apparent confusion of metaphors, as when in one breath he represents believers as at once walking, rooted, and built up in Christ (Col. ii. 27). This disregard of the ordinary congruities of figurative speech, however, is not due to mere rhetorical vehemence overlapping the accepted proprieties of style. It has its reason in the nature of the realities of grace, which language is strained to express, and in which things meet which are otherwise distinct. As Paul's seeming mixture of the similes of walking, rooting, and building has its explanation in the spiritual fact that the union with Christ,
II. 7–10.] THE FIRST EPISODE

GENERAL OF PETER.

183

his phrase 'in Christ' denotes, is at once weight within which the life of the Christian world is rooted, and the vision on which it stands; so Peter's seeming on between growth and building is but a way of the fact that the edifice of which he is a living one, which increases by the process of growth. How much this in to be built up on Christ by coming ever involved for these readers will be understood, however, if it is remembered that to Christ in those days meant for the Jew who lived among the Gentiles, the Church of God, and for the Gentile the bond of national religion and of social usage. It is not without reason, that at this point the writer pauses for the more than compensation for all such di-loaction to be found in the honour accrues through that attachment to Christ and has been depicted as the coming of living to be built upon a living foundation. This is a memorable description of descriptive terms ered from the Old Testament Israel to the

7. For you, therefore, who believe in the:
The statement of the dignity of the in union which is interwoven with and both sense the New Testament Assurance to these New believers, "who believe in the original (=for you, therefore, is your, for you, I say, who believe), because fully on the ground of their faith (which is not as a condition here, but as a fact) that assurance is applied to you. The prominent of 

4 may mean either to your advantage, or

1 belongs. The margin of the R. V., indeed, in your sight.' But that is to introduce the five estimates of believers where Peter deals with objective privileges. The difficulty, is to catch the point of the noun which is the thing that thus belongs to them or their advantage. Not a few interpreters, as Luther, Calvin, and Erasmus, as well as many of Tyndale's critics, were of the opinion that Christ as the subject, and the noun as the et. The E. V. follows this, giving 'he is in the text, and 'he is an honour' in the . This is opposed, however, both by the Greek which marks out the noun as and not as predicate, and by the close with the immediately preceding sentence which is indicated by the reduplicating phrase before upon the previous 'he that sh.' Most interpreters now agree that the of the sentence is not Christ Himself, but is called (in reference, that is, to duty expressed in the former sentence) person, i.e. the honour already spoken of that the predicate is the 'for you.' as also recognised, indeed, by Wycliffe and his Version. There is some difference, as to the precise reference of the noun. Gerhard, Brückner, Weiss, Schott, Huther, take it to repeat in positive form what was in the negative clause, 'shall not be put me.' Others (Wiesinger, etc.) think it refers to the description of the Stone as as 'or 'honourable' (ver. 6), the sense that the Stone has in God's sight is a value which it has for them who believe. This seems favoured by the rendering of the R. V., 'for you . . . is the preciousness.' Others (Alford, Frommiller, Cook) combine these references, and this comes nearest the truth. The sentence takes up the whole idea, which has just been expressed, of an honour in which the foundation stands with God, and what that fact carries with it to believers. Mr. Humphry, therefore, rightly takes the full sense to amount to this, 'For you who believe in Him, for your sakes, is this preciousness, this honour which He possesses; that so far from being 'put to shame' (ver. 6), ye may partake of, be yourselves precious in the sight of God' (Comm. on Rev. Version, p. 440).

—but for such as are disobedient. The reverse side of the prophetic assurance is now exhibited, and, as the omission of the article indicates, the persons are named now in a more general way, not as if definite individuals were in view, but so as to include all of a certain kind. The reading varies here between two participles, both of more positive import than the simple 'unbelieving,' and differing slightly from each other. They mean 'disbelieving,' or 'refusing belief,' and point, therefore, either to the state of disobedience which is the effect of unbelief (Alford), or (as the form which is on the whole better supported, rather implies) to the mind that withstands evidence.—The stone which the builders rejected, this was made the head of the corner; instead of saying simply that stone, in place of honour belongs to the disbelieving. Peter gives in the words of Scripture a less direct, but more terrible, statement of the lot of such. Two passages are cited. These are not run into one, however, as the A. V. suggests, but are given as two distinct quotations simply connected by 'and,' as the R. V. puts them. Portions of the sections from which these are taken are fused into one sentence in Rom. ix. 33. The first, which is given according to the LXX., is taken from Ps. cxvii. 22. That Psalm is generally regarded as a post-Exilin composition, and its occasion has been variously identified with the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles in the year of the Return, as recorded in Ezra ii. 4 (so Ewald, etc.), with the laying of the foundation-stone of the Second Temple, as described in Ezra iii. 8–13 (so Hengstenberg, etc.), with the consecration of the Temple, as related in Ezra vi. 5–18 (Delitzsch, etc.), or with the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles which Nehemiah (viii. 13–18) reports to have taken place on the completion of the new Temple. In the Psalm, therefore, the Stone would be a figure of Christ Himself, rejected by the powers of the world, but chosen by God for a position of unexamined honour. But the Messianic application of the passage has its ground in the fact that Christ Himself, and only Christ, was personally and truly that 'Servant of Jehovah,' that 'first-born' of God that Israel was called as a nation to be, and that the destiny which was so partially fulfilled by Israel was finally realized in Him, who was of the seed of Israel. So Christ uses the passage in direct reference to Himself (Matt. xxii. 42–44; Mark xii. 10, 11; Luke xx. 17), as it is again applied directly to Him by Peter (Acts iv. 11).

Ver. 8. and. A stone of stumbling and rock of offence. The second passage is taken from Isa. vii. 14, and is given according to the Hebrew,
not according to the singularly divergent version of the LXX. What is said there of Jehovah of hosts, may be thus stated, that, while He is a sanctuary to those who sanctify Him, He will be a Stone for striking against, and a rock of stumbling to the mass of the faithless people of both kingdoms, is here affirmed of Christ. The terms, too, denote not what the disbelieving feel Christ to be (so Luther, etc.), or the offence which they take at Him, but what He in point of fact must prove objectively to them. Compare Simeon’s declaration of what the infant Saviour was destined to be (Luke ii. 34, 35) — a difficulty has been felt by not a few interpreters with the positive form in which Christ is here said to have been made what these prophetic statements represent Jehovah as certain to be to particular classes. But Peter says nothing more here than what Paul affirms when he speaks of the same persons being a savour of life unto life, and a savour of death unto death (2 Cor. ii. 15), and nothing beyond what had been expressed — still more strongly, indeed, and in terms of the same citation by his Lord Himself (Luke xx. 17, 18) — the truth that God’s grace is not a neutral gift, but becomes its opposite to its scorners. Special difficulty has been felt with the statement that Christ was made to the disbelieving head of the corner. It is proposed, therefore, to construe the sentence in an entirely novel way, namely, ‘He then who on the one hand is an Honour to the believing and to the disbelieving, on the other hand the Rejected One, the Stone rejected by builders, was made to the one class head of the corner, and to the other a stone of stumbling,’ etc. (Hofmann). Others explain it on the principle that a stone which is not recognised by the eye of the ungodly, but which is to be the stumbling block, is such as the Reformed Church in the Rhine is. Peter in the Rhemish neither do believe wherein also they are put, and so substantially also Wycliffe and Cranmer. But the Genevan House unto the which thing also they were ordained. There are also those (and this third class embraces the great majority) who recognise a distinct assertion of a Divine ordinance. This is undoubtedly the only valid exegesis. It is impossible to adjust the terms to any less positive idea. The opening words cannot be so understood as to an account of which, but denote the destiny or end which is set for the disobedient. The verb means here, as repeatedly elsewhere, ordain, constitute, appoint, and the ‘also’ has its ascensive force, indicating that there is some strike against (Gerhard, Steiger, etc.). But the point may simply be that the Divine demonstration of Christ as made the very thing which they refused to admit in Him, itself puts the disbelieving to the shame against which the believing are declared to be secured. ‘God thus poured into their own bosom the contempt which they had poured upon His Son’ (Lillie) — who stumble, disobeying the word. ‘He does not an independent sentence, whether it be construed as = ‘They who stumble are disobedient,’ etc., or as = ‘These stumble,’ etc., or (with Hofmann on the uncertain analogy of the use of the relative as an explanation in Matt. xxvii. 40) as ‘As for those who stumble . . . . no what fate were they appointed!’ It continues the previous statement, and that, too, not as appending a reason for it (so apparently the R. V., ‘for they stumble’), but in the simple form of an explanation = ‘that is to say, to those who stumble,’ or, as the A. V. puts it, ‘even to them which stumble.’ The Vulgate and the other English Versions, Wycliffe, Tyndale, Cranmer, the Geneva, the Reims, as also the A. V. and the older commentators, such as Erasmus, Luther, etc., agree in making the word ‘word’ dependent on the ‘stumble.’ Most now, however, following the Syriac, Bengel, etc., rightly connect the word with the ‘disbelieving,’ both because the ‘stumble’ has been already sufficiently defined, and because the particle otherwise would be a pointless addition. The stumbling (again in the objective sense) and the disobedience are related to each other as simultaneous things, or as cause and effect. Christ is what He is declared to be to a certain class, when or because they disobey the Word. He is made a stone of stumbling only to those who, by rejecting that Word, in point of fact that turn God’s grace in Christ to their own reproach . . . . wherewith also they were appointed. A solemn expression of the truth that not only is it so, but it cannot be otherwise. The apparent severity of the statement has been so acutely felt, that a variety of exponents have been attempted with a view to change or mitigate it. Three classes of interpretations have to be noticed. There are those entirely unreasonable interpretations which refuse to see that Peter has God in view as the Author of the ‘something’ and add to the verb ‘were appointed’ some such explanation as ‘by Jewish prejudice’ (Hottinger), ‘by Satan’ (Arbutus), or ‘by Old Testament prophecy’ (Mason). There are those, again, which endeavour to make the clause a single sentence with the preceding. This is the case with Erasmus, Luther, etc., and also with several of our older English Versions. Thus Tyndale gives ‘believing not that whereof they were warned,’ the Rhemish ‘neither do believe wherein also they are put,’ and so substantially also Wycliffe and Cranmer. But the Genevan has unto the which thing also they were ordained. There are also those (and this third class embraces the great majority) who recognise a distinct assertion of a Divine ordinance. This is undoubtedly the only valid exegesis. It is impossible to adjust the terms to any less positive idea. The opening words cannot be so understood as to an account of which, but denote the destiny or end which is set for the disobedient. The verb means here, as repeatedly elsewhere, ordain, constitute, appoint, and the ‘also’ has its ascensive force, indicating that there is some strike against (Gerhard, Steiger, etc.). But the point may simply be that the Divine demonstration of Christ as made the very thing which they refused to admit in Him, itself puts the disbelieving to the shame against which the believing are declared to be secured. ‘God thus poured into their own bosom the contempt which they had poured upon His Son’ (Lillie) — who stumble, disobeying the word. ‘He does not an independent sentence, whether it be construed as = ‘They who stumble are disobedient,’ etc., or as = ‘These stumble,’ etc., or (with Hofmann on the uncertain analogy of the use of the relative as an explanation in Matt. xxvii. 40) as ‘As for those who stumble . . . . no what fate were they appointed!’ It continues the previous statement, and that, too, not as appending a reason for it (so apparently the R. V., ‘for they stumble’), but in the simple form of an explanation = ‘that is to say, to those who stumble,’ or, as the A. V. puts it, ‘even to them which stumble.’ The Vulgate and the other English Versions, Wycliffe, Tyndale, Cranmer, the Geneva, the Reims, as also the A. V. and the older commentators, such as Erasmus, Luther, etc., agree in making the word ‘word’ dependent on the ‘stumble.’ Most now, however, following the Syriac, Bengel, etc., rightly connect the word with the ‘disbelieving,’ both because the ‘stumble’ has been already sufficiently defined, and because the particle otherwise would be a pointless addition. The stumbling (again in the objective sense) and the disobedience are related to each other as simultaneous things, or as cause and effect. Christ is what He is declared to be to a certain class, when or because they disobey the
disobedience and stumbling that the latter is the result of the former. The historical relation established between these two things has its ground in the eternal purpose of God, and the New Testament does not shrink from carrying back (and in the least qualified terms, cf. Rom. ix. 21, etc.) the gravest moral facts of history to the Divine mind. At present, however, Peter speaks directly not of the foreordaining counsel of God, but of the fact that things are so ordered in time, that unbelief carries in its train the horning to men's own hurt of that grace of God in Christ which brings honour to the believer. Weiss, therefore, deals more fairly than most with the exegesis of the passage, when he says that it "does not speak of the foreordination of individuals to unbelief, or to exclusion from the kingdom of God; it states that in accordance with a Divine arrangement the disobedient are appointed to stumbling, i.e., however, not to going astray morally, but to destruction." (Bob. Theol. i. p. 208, Eng. Trans.). This Divine order or determination of things, however, which links together subjective aversion to truth and objective penalty, is a mystery to which it is not less than to that of the Divine foreordination, Leighton's words apply: "Here it was easier to lead you into a deep than to lead you forth again. I will rather stand on the shore and silently admire than enter in."—Ver. 9. But ye are an elect race. From these thoughts of terror Peter returns to the brighter side of the compensation which the believer has for temporal loss and trial, and instances in a single breath four great titles of Christian honour. These express the incomparable superiority of the life of faith over the life of disobedience; for the emphatic "but ye" contrasts the readers not with the Old Testament Church, but with those just described as destined to stumble. They exhibit the Christian life, therefore, in antithesis to a life rooted in mere nature and nationality. They recall at the same time the fact that these scattered scattered scattered are, according to the New Testament standard, that very Church of God which national Israel was meant to be according to the Old Testament standard. It is more than doubtful whether, in the use of the successive terms, Peter has taken them from the New Testament standard, and from LXX., Peter had in view any such distinctions as those between people of like race, people of like customs, and people as an organized body (Steiger). But all four terms point to the fact that believers are not a mere aggregate of individuals, but form a unity, and, indeed, the only unity worthy of the name. So they are designated, first of all, in words suggested probably by Isa. xliii. 20, a race (not merely a generation, as the A.V. here, and only here, renders the term), a body with community of life and descent; and elect in so far as they were made by God's choosing and separating them out of the world,—a royal priesthood. This second title is taken from the description of Israel in Ex. xix. 6, and is of somewhat uncertain import. It is variously taken to be equivalent to "kings and priests" (Lillie, on analogy of Rev. i. 6); a magnificent priesthood (Aretius), a priesthood exercising kingly rule over the world (Wiesinger), a priesthood serving a king (Weiss), a priesthood belonging to a king and in his service (Huth).

'a priesthood of kingly honour' (Hofmann), 'a kingdom of priests' (Schott). The form of the adjective used here (and probably nowhere else in the New Testament) means, however, belonging to a king, or worthy of a king, and never 'consisting of kings,' or 'having kingly rule.' The phrase itself, too, represents a Hebrew phrase which is understood, indeed, by the Syriac Version, the Targums, the Septuagint, and a few commentators, such as Keil, to denote a kingdom of priests, or a body of priests with kingly honour, but is held by most to mean a kingdom consisting of priests, a community ruled by a king, and dedicated to His service, and having the priestly right of access to His throne (see Gnila on Ex. xix. 6). Hence the import of the title as applied by Peter depends on the question whether he uses it in the proper sense of the Greek terms, or in the sense of the original Hebrew as inexactely rendered by the LXX.. In the latter case, it will mean 'a kingdom indeed, but one of priests.' In favour of this it is urged that it retains the analogy of the other titles, each of which names some purely natural or national community, and qualifies it by a distinctive epithet. They are named, that is to say, a race, but are distinguished from others as elect, a nation but a holy one, a people but a peculiar one, and, in the same way, a kingdom but one of priestly order and membership. In the former case, the idea will be simply that of a priesthood 'belonging to a king,' or 'of kingly honour.'—a holy nation, i.e. a commonwealth consecrated to God,—a title taken again from Ex. xix. 6, and in the same connection as there.—a people for possession, i.e. a people whom God has taken for His own. The A.V., following Tyndale, the Genevan Version, and the Bishops' Bible, and induced probably by the Vulgate's rendering, gives 'peculiar' (as also in Tit. ii. 14),—a word which, having lost its etymological sense, is now an inappropriate rendering. Wycliffe gives 'a people of purchasing;' Cranmer, 'a people which are won;' the Rheims, 'a people for possession.' The noun occurs again in 1 Thess. v. 9 (A. V. 'to obtain'), 2 Thess. ii. 14 (A. V. 'the obtaining'), Eph. i. 14 (A. V. 'purchased possession'), and Heb. x. 39 (A. V. 'saving'). The English verb is translated 'purchase' (Acts xx. 28; iv. 13). The noun may have either the active sense of acquiring, acquisition, or the passive sense of the thing acquired. It is wrongly taken in the former sense here, however (Schott, e.g.), which makes it = a people yet to be acquired), because Peter deals not with what God is to make His people in future, but with what He has made them now. The phrase reproduces, with some change in the form, the idea expressed in Isa. xxxii. 21, as well as in Ex. xix. 5. The Hebrew term used in the latter passage occurs again in such passages as Deut. vii. 6 (A. V. 'a special people'), iv. 2, xxvi. 18; Ps. cxxxvi. 4 (A. V. 'peculiar treasure'); Mal. iii. 17 (A. V. 'jewels'). It denotes property,—not, however, mere property as such, but precious property, or rather perhaps property belonging specially and individually to one. Here, therefore, it is sufficiently well rendered by the R. V., 'a people for God's own possession.'—that ye should show forth, or rather, as the verb implies (which occurs nowhere else in the N. T.), that ye should tell out. So Wycliffe gives 'tell' and the Rheims 'declare,' while Tyndale,
THE FIRST EPISODE GENERAL OF PETER. [CHAP. II. 7-10.

Cranmer, and the Genevan have 'show.—the excellences. The Greek word is the familiar term for virtues, and so it is rendered here by the margin of the A. V., as well as by Wycliffe, Tyndale, Cranmer, the Genevan, and the Rheinish. It is used, however, by the LXX. as equivalent to the Heb. term for praise or praises. So it occurs in the passage (Isa. xliii. 21) which Peter has in mind here; and as the prophet speaks there of the people whom Jehovah had formed for Himself as having a vocation to relate how He had glorified Himself in them (see Delitzsch, in loc.), it is reasonable to suppose that the term here denotes not the words of praise, but (as it is used also by Philo) the things which evoke praise, the excellences of God, whether in the sense of the excellent deeds of His grace (so Schott, as most nearly expressing the idea in Isaiah), or His excellent attributes manifested in these deeds (Huther and most). It is with this object that they are made what they are. If they are what these titles indicate, it is not with a view to their own glorification, but to qualify them and put them under obligation to publish these excellences of God to others. This 'showing forth' may apply, as it is largely taken, to the duty of glorifying God by the fruits of a new life. But, as the verb is used regularly of verbal declaration, and as the LXX. rendering of Isaiah's phrase (xliii. 21) has a similar force, what is intended rather is that the N. T. Israel is set to continue the prophetic vocation of the O. T. Israel, and is made what it is in order to proclaim Christ to those outside, as its predecessor was made God's people in order to be His preacher to the nations.—of him who called you, that is, as formerly, God, not Christ. —out of darkness into His marvellous light. It is to make too little of the term 'light' to say that it refers simply to the Christian life. It is to make too much of it, however, to say that it points to God's own presence or Being as that to which they are called. God is light, but He is also in the light (1 John i. 5, 7). The familiar figures point here simply to two contrasted spheres of existence, to one as that of heathen ignorance and hopelessness, to another as that of holiness and serenity. This latter is 'His light,' the sphere of existence which belongs to God, the new kingdom which also is 'marvellous' (perhaps Ps. cviii. 23 is still in Peter's thoughts) to eyes opened to see it, as is to 'idle orbs' the sight of sun, or moon, or star throughout the year, or man, or woman' (Milton).

Ver. 10. Who once were no people, but are now God's people. A solemn and summary conclusion, sketching in two bold strokes the vast contrast between their present and their past. The contrast is drawn in order that in the recollection of their past they may find an incentive to adhere at any cost to their prophetic vocation of telling Jehovah to others the excellences of God. Once they were not only not God's people, but 'no people.' National connection they might have had, but the unity that makes a people worthy of the name of a people they had not. Their lack of relation to God involved lack of that relation to each other which merges differences of race, speech, worship, custom, opinion. Now they are not only a people, with the bonds of a true people's union, but God's people, owned of Him and administered by Him—who once had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. If they were in time past no people, the reason lay here, that God's mercy had not brought them into relation to Himself. Two participles briefly express this, and they vary in tense. The former is the perfect, as referring to a state in which they had long continued previously. The latter is the historical past, as referring to a definite act of God which changed the state. Once they had been in the condition of persons not compassionated; now they are persons once for all compassionated of God. The verse is a free adaptation of the prophetic passage (Hos. ii. 23), in which Jehovah, reversing the ominous names, Lo-ruhamah and Lo-ammi, given in the first chapter (vers. 6, 9), says of Israel, 'I will compassion Uncompassioned, and to Not-much-people I will say My-people, and he will say My God.' Peter's reproduction is of the most general kind, omitting the characteristic notes which apply specially to a people who had once been God's people, and had lapsed in order to be restored. Though in Hosea, therefore, the words are spoken of Israel, it does not follow that they must refer to Jews here. Paul applies them to Gentiles (Rom. ix. 25), and that Peter's view-point is the same appears from the form which he has given to the contrast, which is too absolute to suit those who, while originally God's people, had ceased to be true to that vocation, and had lost on that account God's favour. (See also the Introduction.)
CHAPTER II. 11, 12.

Exhortation to Purity of Life in face of the Heathen.

11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that, whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of their visitation.

12 See refs. to ch. x. 14; Acts xvi. 29, 30; 1 Thess. v. 22; 1 Tim. iv. 13; Rom. xv. 17; 2 Cor. i. 15; Heb. xiii. 13, 14; Gal. iv. 18; Heb. xiv. 3; Jas. iii. 17, 18, etc. 

13 See refs. to ch. i. 14. Acts vii. 6, 25; Eph. ii. 19; 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2; 2 Cor. i. 15; Heb. i. 3, 13; ii. 1; 2 Cor. i. 15; etc. 

14 See refs. to ch. i. 14. Ch. iv. 10; Rom. vii. 6; Gal. iv. 18; Heb. xiv. 3; Jas. iii. 17, 18, etc. Ch. iii. 16, 17; Job xiv. 3; Prov. iv. 13; Prov. iv. 19; Prov. xi. 31; Prov. xiv. 13, 15; Prov. xxi. 31; Prov. xxiii. 13; Prov. xxiv. 13, 15; Prov. x

The mode of address indicates a distinct point of transition in the Epistle. The writer has dealt so far with what holds good absolutely of Christian privilege and Christian responsibility. He begins now to enforce what Christians are concerned to be and to do in certain particular circumstances and connections. And before proceeding to specify their obligations in society and in the various relations of life, he sets before them, in the form of an affectionate personal appeal, the attitude which they ought to maintain generally in presence of the impure and hostile surroundings of heathenism. The kind of life which they are sedulously to cultivate in presence alike of the temptations and of the misrepresentations to which they are exposed from their Gentile associates is stated both on its negative side and on its positive. It is recommended, too, by considerations drawn from their own position, from the injuriousness of the things to which they are tempted, and from their vocation to glorify God. 

Ver. 11. Beloved, I beseech you as strangers and sojourners. The injunction is given in terms of tender urgency. The opening designation occurs no less than eight times in the Epistles of Peter, and in every case except the present the A. V. translates it simply 'beloved,' not 'dearly beloved.' Paul has a peculiar fondness for it (cf. Rom. xii. 10; 1 Cor. xiv. 14, xv. 58; 2 Cor. vii. 1, xii. 19; Phil. ii. 14, iv. 1). Here, as also at iv. 12, the direct and appealing address marks a turning-point in the Epistle. The verb, too, embraces at least the two ideas of beseeching and exhorting, and is variously rendered in different connections by the A. V. call for (Acts xxviii. 20, etc.), entreat (Luke xv. 28, etc.), beseech (Matt. viii. 5, etc.), desire (Matt. xxviii. 32, etc.), pray (Matt. xviii. 32, etc.), exhort (1 Pet. v. 1, 2), comfort (Matt. ii. 18, etc.). They are appealed to in the character of strangers and sojourners; of which terms the latter is the one used in the first designation of the readers (see note on i. 1, and compare specially Ps. xxxix. 12), and conveys a somewhat different idea from the 'pilgrims' of the A. V., while the former denotes properly residents without the rights of natives. They have manifestly the metaphorical sense here, applicable to all believers as citizens of heaven. It is doubtful whether any distinction between them is intended here, although Bengel discovers a certain climax in them, Christians being described by the first as distant from their own house, and by the second as distant even from their own country. Former exhortations were grounded on the idea of 'children of obedience' (i. 14); these, it follow are grounded on their being children whose home is not where temptation works. To abstain from fleshly (or, the fleshly) lusts. The 'lusts' are, as in i. 14, not merely the fleshly sensualities which had attained such monstrous strength in the heathenism of the time (though these may well have been particularly in view), but all inordinate passions and desires, all that would come within Paul's enumeration of the works of the flesh (Gal. v. 19-21), or John's description (1 John ii. 16) of 'the world's accursed trinity' (Leighton). They are called fleshly (cf. Paul's 'worldly lusts,' Tit. ii. 12, and 'lusts of the flesh and of the mind,' Eph. ii. 3), as being rooted in, and affected by the quality of, the 'flesh' or nature of man, both physical and psychical, as now degraded. When Paul (Rom. vii. 14) speaks of himself as 'carnal,' he uses a still stronger form of the adjective, one denoting the personality as more than of the quality of the flesh, as having the 'flesh' for the substantial element of its being.—which war against the soul. The 'which' might be rendered 'as they,' Peter, as the particular pronoun indicates, does not signalize certain lusts, namely, those which war against the soul, but takes fleshly lusts as a
whole, and describes them as being all of a quality hostile to the soul, and this quality in them he makes a reason for abstaining from them. They may work "in our members." (Rom. vii. 5), consume our strength, and injure us in our interests, but the 'soul,' the very centre of the personal life, is the object of their assault. The verb is nowhere used again by Peter in this figurative sense of carrying on a warfare (not merely besieging), but has a similar sense in 2 Cor. x. 3; 1 Tim. ii. 18; Jas. iv. 1.

Ver. 12. Having your manner of life among the Gentiles seemingly. The negative abstention from impieties is now defined as involving a positive purity. The life of self-restraint in the heart of corrupting heathen associations is to be a life so honest, or rather (with Wycliffe and the Rhemish) so good, so fair and honourable, that even the Gentiles may confess its attractiveness. — that, wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by reason of your good works, witnessing (these as they do) glorify God. Their outer life, with all that in their behaviour which is open to the observation and judgment of others, is now specially dealt with, and they are counselled to make that a spectacle of good works which even prejudiced and hostile eyes shall be unable to contest. With this ‘speak against you’ compare the ‘as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against’ (Acts xviii. 22). The ‘that’ expresses the object which is to be aimed at in keeping this semblance of conduct. A V. (with Beza, the Bishop Usher, etc.) wrongly renders ‘whereas.’ Equally wrong is the ‘while’ or the ‘since’ of others. The word means ‘wherenin’ (as A. V. in margin), or ‘in the thing in which,’ and the idea is that in the background of their dealings, and in the ground for speaking ill of you, they may yet find ground for the reverse. This matter, which is to be turned from a ground of accusation to a ground of honourable recognition, or (as it is here put) a ground of glorifying God, need not be identified particularly with the ‘good works’ (Steiger), their ‘whole tenor of life’ (de Wette), their Christian profession generally (Hofmann, Huther), or their abstention from fleshly lusts. It points to whatever part of their Christian practice their Gentile neighbours seized as the occasion of slander. The term translated ‘witnessing’ (which is used in classical Greek as the technical term for admission into the third and highest grade of the Eleusinian mysteries) occurs again in the New Testament only in 1 Pet. iii. 2, and in the nominal form in 2 Pet. i. 16 (‘eye-witnesses’ of His majesty). It expresses here keen personal observation. The name applied to these believers, ‘evil-doers,’ is of importance. It is that which is also given to Christ Himself by the chief priests (John xviii. 30), and outside Peter’s Epistles it occurs nowhere else in the New Testament except in that instance. Neander (History of the Planting of Christianity, ii. p. 374, Bohn) is of opinion that the ‘Christians were now persecuted as Christians,’ and according to those popular opinions of which Matt. x. 22, advantage were looked upon and treated as ‘evil-doers’ . . . malefici. Whether the name will bear the sense of state criminals here, however, is doubtful.

The accusations thrown out against them as practising murder, magical arts, infanticide, cannibalism, and gross immorality belong to the later periods of which we read in the Apologies (e.g. Justin Martyr’s Apol. i., Tertullian’s Apol. xvi.), and in writers of the age of Eusebius (Hist. Eccl. iv. 7, v. 1), and Augustine (De Civitat. Dei, xvi. 53). At an earlier date the famous letter of the philosopher Plotinus to the Emperor Trajan, in which he reports the examination of the followers of Christ in the very territories here addressed by Peter, admits that nothing had been discovered in them worth of death, but charging them with a stubborn and inflexible obstinacy which he deemed worthy of punishment. Earlier still, we gather from the Roman historians Suetonius (Nero, ch. 16) and Tacitus (Annals, xv. 44) how they were spoken against as men of a ‘new and malignant superstition,’ as ‘hateful for their enormities,’ as ‘convicted of hating the human race.’ And it is easy to see how at the very earliest period to which this Epistle may be referred, and before the state had directed its attention to them, their abstention from such familiar pleasures as the public spectacles, their non-observance of any heathen customs, their gatherings for fellowship and worship, would expose them to popular odium and to the misrepresentation of their pagan neighbours. Peter’s exhortation is not to isolate themselves, but to be so careful in their behaviour in the sight of the heathen till they found a ‘silent witness and ally’ (Lillie) in the hearts of their calumniators themselves. It is generally recognised that Peter has in mind here his Lord’s words upon the Mount of Olives (Matt. xvi. 16).—In the day of visitation. Definition of the time when the heathen will glorify the God whom they at present discredit in dishonouring His servants. What is this day? Some take it to be the day of judicial examination; the day when these Christians would have to stand examination at the hands of heathen officials (Eccum., Bengal, at first, etc.). It is, however, manifestly God’s day, and not man’s, that is in view. Is it then, His day of mercy, or His day of judgment? The word (either as noun or as verb) occurs not unfrequently of gracious visitation (e.g. the LXX. rendering of Gen. xx. 1; Ex. iii. 16; iv. 31; v. 1; Sam. ii. 21; Job x. 18; and in the New Testament, Luke i. 68, 78; Acts x. 14). It is applied also to God’s visitations in chastening or punishment (Jer. ix. 24, 25, xlv. 13, xlv. 9; Ps. xii. 6; Ex. xx. 3). Hence a variety of interpretations. Some think the day is meant when the Christians themselves shall have to bear God’s chastenings in the form of the persecution which even now overhangs them, and when their patience shall turn out (as we know indeed from history it not seldom did turn in such cases) to the conversion of their adversaries. Others hold the reference to be to the temporal calamities by which God now visits and judges the heathen, or to the final adjustments of the last day. On the analogy of 1 Cor. v. 20, it is also affirmed that what is in view is the practical, though unwitting, confession of God’s glory which will be recognised at the last judgment in the fact that the goodness of the Christian life and the true cause of heathen slanders (Schott). It is in harmony, however, with the context, with the analogy of Matt. v. 16, and especially with the declaration of James in the Council of Jerusalem (Acts xv. 14), to interpret it (with Hofmann, Huther, and the great majority of
CHAPTER II. 13-17.

The Attitude to Constituted Authority which is implied in the Honest Conversation or Seemly Manner of Life.

13 **Submit** yourselves to every **ordinance of man** for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; 14 or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well. For **so** is the **will** of God, that with **well-doing** ye may put away the ignorance of foolish men: 16 as free, and not using your **liberty** as occasion to the **malice** 17 of others, but as **servants** of God. **Honour** all men.

**Love** the brotherhood. **Fear** God. Honour the king.

The relative duties of Christians are now taken up as essentially concerned in that self-restraint and seemliness of conduct which was to be the best refutation of mischievous misrepresentation, and the best victory over adversaries. Civil and political relations are handled first of all as those which most expose Christians to the misjudgment of the heathen, and as containing secret elements of temptation to Christians themselves. The primary duty of submission is largely dealt with, and with good reason. The revolutionary aims of men who were 'turning the world upside down' (Acts xvii. 6) seems to have been among the earliest imputations thrown out against the adherents of the new faith. The spirit of resistance to the Roman power filled the breasts of the Jews of these times, and it was easy to identify the new sect with the old. There was much, too, in the characteristic beliefs of the Christians, their absolute loyalty to Christ the King, their faith in the equality of men, in a liberty with which Christ had made them free, in the approaching end of things, and the like, that might all too readily provoke in themselves a false attitude to the powers that were. 'Submission, therefore, was at this time a primary duty of all who wished to win over the heathen, and to save the Church from being overwhelmed in some burst of indignation which would be justified even to reasonable and tolerant Pagans as a political necessity' (Farrar, *Early Days of Christianity*, i. 162).

Ver. 13. Submit yourselves. The verb has this middle sense here rather than the purely passive force of 'be subjected,' or (as the R. V. puts it) 'be subject.'—to every human institution. The noun is variously rendered in our A. V. *creation* (Mark x. 16, xiii. 19; Rom. i. 20, viii. 22; 2 Pet. iii. 4; Rev. iii. 14), *creature* (Mark xvi. 15; Rom. i. 25, viii. 19, 21, 39; 2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15; Col. i. 17, 23; Heb. iv. 13), *building* (Heb. ix. 11), and *ordinance* (only here). In the New Testament it appears to denote the act of *creation* (Rom. i. 20), anything created, the *creature* (Rom. i. 25, viii. 39; Heb. iv. 13, etc.), the complex of created things, *the creation* (Mark x. 6, 15, 19; 2 Pet. iii. 4, etc.), mankind as a whole (Mark xvi. 15, etc.), *nature* as distinguished from man (Rom. viii. 19-21) while it is also used metaphorically of the new *creature.* Hence some (e.g. de Wette, Erasmus, etc.) take the sense here to be 'to every human creature' which manifestly would mean too much. In classical Greek the term, however, means the act of setting up, founding, or instituting something, and here, therefore, it is generally taken to mean something that is *established,* an institution or ordinance. It is not to be limited, however, to magistracy only, or to
persons in authority, or to magisterial laws (Luther), but is to be taken in the absolute sense, embracing under it all the different forms, kingship, magistracy, and the rest, which follow. It is described as 'human,' not exactly in the sense of being founded on the necessities of human society (Lillie), or as dealing only with things pertaining to man in contrast with other institutions which deal with things 'pertaining to God;' but either (as most interpret it) in the sense of being established by man, or (with Hofmann, and now Huther, etc.) in the sense of applying to man, ordering man's social and political life and relations. The latter view is favoured both by the fact that the cognate verb (the proper force of which reappears in this exceptional use of the noun) seems never to have been used in the New Testament of merely human agency, and by the consideration that subjection to every ordinance which man himself may set up seems too wide a charge,—for the Lord's sake. The spirit which should animate us in practising such submission is thus solemnly added. And that is the spirit which recognises something Divine in human institutions (as Wiesinger presumes to vaguely put it), or, better, the spirit of consideration for Christ, who would be dishonoured by the opposite (Hofmann), or more simply, the thought that Christ wills it so. This pregnant statement of motive, therefore, elevates incalculably the duty itself. It implies that our submission will come short of its standard if the duty is viewed as a merely secular thing, or if the Divine purpose in civil institutions and governments in them are not acknowledged. It shows, too, that the very thing which might seem to weaken the sense of ordinary civil and political obligation, namely the peculiar duty of loyalty to Christ as Head, makes such obligation more binding on the Christian.—whether to the king as sovereign. Peter passes now from institutions in the abstract to their concrete representation in persons. The subjection which is inculcated to the former is inculcated to the latter, in cases with equal lack of qualification. He does not pause to pronounce on different kinds of government, constitutional, despotic, or other, or to adjust his statement of the duty in relation to the different characters of administrations and administrators. He takes the things and the persons as they are then were, and, on high spiritual grounds, recommends an inoffensive and respectful attitude towards them. While he speaks of them with the same breadth of spirit as Paul (e.g. in Rom. xii. 1-7), his standpoint is not quite the same. He does not deal with them here as Paul does there, in respect of what they are as powers 'ordained of God,' but simply in respect of this duty of submission. Hence he can speak absolutely. For the duty of submission must stand even when positive obedience cannot be rendered, and when (as in his own case, Acts iii. 19, 31, v. 28-32, 40-42) the mistreatment of the powers that be forces us to say, 'We must obey God rather than men.' Peter's statement is something essentially different from any so-called doctrine of 'Divine right' or 'passive obedience.' Writing as he is to Roman provinces, he signals first of all the Roman Emperor. To him submission is due on the broad ground of his sovereignty; for no comparison is meant here between him and other rulers, such as the 'supreme' of the A. V. may suggest. He is designated by a title (occurring also in Matt. x. 18, xiv. 9; John xix. 15; 1 Tim. ii. 2, etc.) which would be appropriate enough on the lips of non-Romans, as the Greek language had as term exactly equivalent to the Latin word for Emperor, or in subject territories, but not in Rome itself. Horace (Carmin. iv. 14) might name the Emperor Augustus lord of the world, but not 'king.' The title, though it continued to be applied to priests in the religious phraseology of Rome, ceased to be given to the head of the Roman state from the time of Tarquin's expulsion (Cic. Rep. 2, 20, 53), and the odium which clung to it all through the Republic follows into the imperial times. Speaking of the so-called 'royal laws' of the later empire, Gibbon (Decline and Fall, ch. xxiv.) says 'the word (lex regia) was still more recent than the thing. The slaves of Commodus or Caracalla would have started it the name of royalty.'

Ver. 14. or to governors, i.e. administrators of provinces, procurators, propretors, proconsuls, as also Aristarch and other officials. Wycliffe renders it 'dukes;' Tyndale, the Genevan and the Rheinish, 'rulers.'—as set through him, that is, through the king; not, as some (including even Calvin) strangely imagine, through the Lord,—a reference to the precedent not only by the parallelism with 'as supreme,' but also by the choice of the peculiar preposition 'through.' These governors should have our submission, because they are the king's delegates,—for punishment of evil-doers. The object, with a view to which they are sent with their delegated powers, is itself a reason for yielding them respect and subjection. They are meant to be on the side of order and right, and therefore on the side of God. The idea of their office is the repression (the word is a very strong one = vengeance, as Wycliffe puts it; it is rendered 'revenge' in the Rheinish Version) of the evil, and the protection and praise, i.e. the honorary recognition of the good (this last term, literally = well-doers, occurring only here in the New Testament). Peter says nothing of the questions which may be forced upon the Christian when the idea of the office is perverted, or when the governor inked in his person and personal ends. Neither does he suggest that the duty of submission extends the length of abstention from the use of ordinary civil rights in withstanding the unjust action of rulers. Paul made the most of his rights as a Roman citizen, and carried his appeal from governor to Caesar (Acts xvi. 37, xxii. 25, xxv. 11). He speaks, nevertheless, of the heathen magistrate as the 'minister of God,' and of the duty of being 'subject not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake' (Rom. xiii. 4, 5). The rule that injures is to be obeyed until it can be amended. The rule that offends morality and conscience is not to be obeyed; yet its penalties are to be submitted to.

Ver. 15. for so is the will of God, i.e. the will of God is to the following effect (cf. Matt. i. 18, where the same word is rendered 'on this wise'), namely, that by well-doing ye silence the ignorance of the foolish man. The 'well-doing,' which might mean doing deeds of kindness or mercy (Mark iii. 4; Acts xiv. 17), has here the more general sense of rectitude or dutifulness of conduct. The
II. 13-17.] THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

silence' means literally to muzzle, and be rendered 'gag.' But it has the
airy sense in its other New Testament
uses, with the single exception of the two
scriptures of Cor. vi. 16) in which
I Testament prohibition of the muzzling of
x that treadeth out the corn,' is quoted;
therefore, that sense should be retained.
Those other occurrences are all of pic-
nic interest—viz., Matt. xxii. 12, 34, in
to the speechlessness of the man with-
out dinging garment, and the silencing of the
bees; Mark i. 25, Luke iv. 35, of Christ's
o the unclean spirit, 'Hold thy peace,'
39, of Christ's word to the raging sea.
II. The noun used for 'ignorance' here
is the idea (which it also has in its only
few Testament occurrence, 1 Cor. xv. 34, as
unfrequently in the Classics) of wilful,
ul ignorance. There is a similar ethical
in the 'foolish,' which here (as in Luke
xii. 20) has the idea of culpable senseless-
which appears in such Old Testament
ep. 9, 2, and which is twi,
by a different adjective in Rom. i. 21.
phrase, too, may mean not merely of
men' generally (as the A. V. and R. V.
xut it), but of the 'foolish men,' with
ilar reference to the already mentioned an-
ing against them as evil-doers.' The fact,
that it was God's purpose to make the
ives of His servants a means of silencing
positions of their enemies, was a further
f理由 proving themselves loyal citizens and
ive subjects.
15. as free, and not as having your
as a covering of wickedness, but as
servants of God. Liberty is apt to de-
many into licence. Milton speaks of those
's Law for freedom in their senseless mood,
d still revolt when truth would set them free;
since they mean when they cry liberty.'
ain possessed by the new sense of freedom,
at might think it strange to be the servant,
and of such men as heathen rulers were.
guards his readers against this secret
of making their liberty in Christ a pleas-
blatant in the State, and presents it
reason for order and subjection, and
spirit in which these duties should be
. Because they were free they were to
missive; for the 'and' introduces an
ition of the 'free.' Their freedom was not
ed as a means for concealing or palliating
ness, and they themselves, while free,
so God's bond-servants and under obli-
to fulfill His will. 'The freedom of
isa bond freedom, because they have
free in order to be bond-servants to God;
see bondage, because they obey God and
ate not of constraint, but spontaneously'
de. The 'cloak' of the A. V. is apt to
'ng,' and is used in the Old Testament to
the covering of badgers' skins upon the
e (Ex. xxvi. 14). It has no reference
to soap or the soap put on by
laves. Nevertheless it mean 'cloak,' in
the figurative sense of something that
true character of conduct. The English
 mostly give 'malice' or 'maliciousness'
rendering of the other noun,—in this
following, and perhaps misunderstanding, the
Vulgate. The Bishops' Bible, however, gives
'naughtiness,' and, though the word has also the
more specific sense, and not a few interpreters
prefer it here, this more general meaning of
'wickedness,' 'evil conduct,' is more in harmony
with the context. (See also on ii. 1; and for
the idea as a whole, compare 2 Pet. ii. 19; Gal.
v. 13; as also 1 Cor. vii. 10; Rom. xiv. 13.)—
The connection of this 16th verse is uncertain.
Our view of its application will be modified
according as we relate it to what precedes or to
what follows. Some take it as an introduction to
ver. 17, and as stating, therefore, that Christian
freedoms mean the giving of their dues to all the
four subjects distinguished there (Steiger, Lach-
mam, Plumptre, etc.). But it is not easy to see
how the statement of ver. 15 bears particularly
on such a precept as the third in ver. 17, 'Fear
God.' Others connect it with ver. 15; in which
case its import is that the 'well-doing' by which
adversaries are to be silenced must be in the
exercise of a liberty implying freedom from deceit,
and rejoicing in service (so Tyndale, Erasmus,
Luther, Calvin, Hofmann, Wiesinger, Alford,
etc.). A third connection is also proposed (by
Chrysostom, Bengel, Schott, Huther, etc.), namely,
with ver. 13; in which case it becomes a definition
of the general injunction, 'Submit yourselves,'
which rules the whole section. This last is on
the whole the best, as giving the principle that the
submission which was enjoined in all these civil
and political relations was to be rendered not in
an affect spirit, or with concealed motives, but in
consistency with a liberty in Christ which was also
free submission to God's will and entire
loyalty to His service.

Ver. 17. Honour all men. A group of four
precepts now follows, which Leighton compares
to 'a constellation of very bright stars near
	gether.' They are remarkable for the clear-cut
form of expression in which they are cast, and for
their absolute tone. Each is perfectly intelligible
in itself. But it is not easy to discover the
relation, if any, in which they stand to each
other, and the reason for their introduction at
this particular point. The first deals with what
is due to men as such. For the 'all men' is not
to be limited to 'all to whom honour is due'
(Bengel), nor to all governors such as those
already mentioned. Apart from all questions
of station or even quality, and besides what we
owe them in the distinctive relations of brother-
hood and magistracy, all men are to receive our
honour. By this is meant not exactly the
'submission' previously enjoined, nor even the
somewhat conditioned esteem which Huther (with
Weiss, Wiesinger, Schott, etc.) calls 'recognising
the worth which any one possesses, and acting
on that recognition,' but, more broadly still, the
practical acknowledgment of the dignity of man
as such, and of his natural claims upon our
consideration and respect. It is the recognition
of what all men are as bearers of the Divine
image, 'the idea of a dignity belonging to man
as man,' which, as Neander says, 'was unknown
to the times preceding Christianity' (see also
Dr. John Brown in loc.).—love the brotherhood.
The followers of Christ were distinguished
by Himself from the mass of men as brethren
(Matt. xxvii. 8), and that name they seem to have
adopted naturally as their own earliest designa-
The brethren in their social or corporate capacity are the 'brotherhood,' and to this fellowship we owe the deeper debt of personal affection. The precept has been given already in rich detail (i. 22). It is re-introduced here, however, in an entirely new connection—fear of God. With this compare Christ's own words in Luke xii. 4, 5, and see also note on i. 17. The reverential awe which is due from the subject to supreme authority, and from the child to supreme perfection, which makes it to the one a dread and to the other a pain to offend, is what is to be rendered (cf. for its New Testament position, Heb. xiii. 25; 2 Cor. vii. 1, 11; Phil. ii. 12; etc.) to Him who is the Maker of all men, the Father of the brotherhood, the King of kings—honour the king. That is, in the practical form of fealty, and where that is impossible, in submission. The two latter precepts occur together, and in the same order, in Prov. xxiv. 21. Are these four precepts so many pearls unstrung? Or are they a connected series, in which the one limits or defines the other? By some they are regarded as four particulars in which the previous 'well-doing' (ver. 15) is to be exhibited. In this case, too, a climax is usually discovered in the first three, while the fourth is taken to be a return to the relation which suggested the general statement of 'well-doing' (Huther, etc.). Others think the first a general statement, of which the three following are applications (Alford, etc.). But this can scarcely suit the third at least. Others consider them to cover the two great departments of life, the civil and the religious, and to show how duty in the former is limited or defined by duty in the latter (Scholz). If any inherent connection is to be found at all, it is in this last direction that it is to be sought. The closing precept indicates that Peter has still in view the civil and political duties. The verse, therefore, is introduced perhaps as a final qualification or explanation of his statement of these duties. It is appended as a safeguard against the supposition that such 'submission' to rules must interfere with other obligations. The general principle of giving to all their dues, he means, is unaffected by what has been said. Honour to men as such, and the deeper sentiment of love to the brotherhood, reverence to God and honour to the king, are in no manner of conflict. The one is not to be rendered at the cost of the other.—The last three precepts are expressed in the present tense, as dealing with habitual modes of conduct. The first precept is given in a tense which does not express habitual continuance. The difference is explained by some (e.g. Alford) as due to the fact that the honour which is to be rendered to all men is presented here as a due which is to be given promptly and at once to each as occasion arises.

CHAPTER II. 18-25.

Duties of Christian Slaves, and these specially in the light of Christ's Example.

18 SERVANTS, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. 19 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffetted for your faults, ye shall 'take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: who his own self submitted yourselves. R. V. gives be in subjection or, perversity, on account of the consciousness of God if, when ye do wrong, and are buffeted you when suffering it left it or, himself
Chap. I. 18-25. THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER. 193

"bare our sins in his own body" on the tree, that we, being "dead" to sins, should live unto "righteousness: by 25 whose "stripes" ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the "Shepherd and 2 Bishop" of your souls.

Rom. vi. 20; 2 Cor. iii. 17; Gal. ii. 19

18 or, with the margin of R. V., carried up
19 or, with R. V., having died
20 or, with the margin of R. V., brasure
21 or, as R. V., ye were going astray like sheep
22 or, Overseer, as R. V. in margin

The household is next dealt with as an institution obviously included under the 'every ordinance of man' (ver. 13). And in the house the duty of servants is first declared. The bond-servant formed an extremely numerous class both in Greek and in Roman society. Rich citizens possessed slaves sometimes by the thousand. Fliny tells us, for example, of a single proprietor, Claudius Isidore, leaving by will upwards of four thousand slaves (Nat. Hist. xxxii. 47). They occupied a position of the most miserable helplessness. As himself the slave had nothing, and was nothing. In the eye of the law he had no rights. Varro, 'the most learned of the Romans,' in a treatise written only between thirty and forty years before the Christian era, gives a classification of 'implements,' and first among these appears the slave (De Re Rustica, i. 17). Aristotle defines the slave as a 'live chattel' (Pol. i. 4). In his case there could be no such thing as relationships. Not till Constantine's time did the law begin to recognise marriage and family rights among this class. His master's power over him was absolute. No punishment—the scourge, mutilation, crucifixion, exposure to wild beasts—was too much for him. Not till Hadrian's time was the lesson of life and death taken from the master. Though there is ample reason to believe that often personal kindness secured for the slave what the law denied him, history has many a page dark with the record of the cruel woes and tragic wrongs of the slave. It is no wonder, therefore, that when Christianity entered with its Gospel of freedom and its abolition of all distinctions between bond and free, in Christ, and made numerous converts, as we know it did, from this class, questions both grave and numerous arose as to the relation of the Christianised slave to the heathen master and the heathen law. Hence the distinct place given to the slave in Peter's counsels. Hence, too, the large space given by Paul to the slave's matters, not only in the Epistle to Philemon, but in important sections of other Epistles (e.g. 1 Cor. vii. 20-24, xii. 13; Gal. iii. 28; Eph. vi. 5-8; Col. iii. 21-25; 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2; Tit. ii. 9, 10) addressed to very different parties.

Ver. 18. Servants, submit yourselves to your masters. The term for 'servants' here is different from the one by which Paul so frequently expresses the idea of the bond-servant. It occurs only thrice again in the N. T., once in Paul's writings (Rom. xiv. 4), and twice in Luke's (Gospel, xvi. 13; Acts x. 7). It means, literally, 'one belonging to one's house,' 'a domestic,' and in Acts x. 7 it is translated by our A. V. 'household servant.' In the best period of classical literature (e.g. Herod. viii. 106; Soph. Trach. 894), as also at least occasionally in the Apocrypha (Sirach iv. 30, vi. 11), it is applied not unfrequently to all the inmates of one's house, or to the 'family' in the present sense. Hence some suppose that in the present passage it includes all domestics, bond and free. Others (Steiger, etc.) think it is selected in order to cover the class of freedmen who contributed largely to the earliest conversion. But as the more usual sense of the word is that of 'slave,' as it has that meaning in such passages of the LXX. and the Apocrypha as Ex. xxi. 27, Prov. xxvii. 2, Ecclus. x. 25, and as that idea is certainly most germane to the context here, it is generally taken to denote bond-servants in the present passage. Peter selects it probably with a conciliatory purpose, as a more courteous term than the common one. It presents the slave in closer relation to the family, and so conveys a softened view of his position. The phrase 'submit yourselves,' or 'make yourselves subject,' is really in the participle form, 'submitting yourselves,' and is connected, therefore, either with the 'honour all men' of ver. 17 (Alford, de Wette, etc.), with the general injunction of vers. 11, 12, or, most naturally, with the 'submit yourselves' of ver. 13. The slave's duty is thus given as an integral section of the great law of subjection to 'every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake.' The word used for 'masters' conveys the idea of absolute power. It is used in the present application elsewhere only in the Pastoral Epistles (see refs.). It repeatedly occurs as a Divine title, 'Lord' (Luke ii. 29; Acts iv. 24; 2 Pet. ii. 1; Jude 4; Rev. vi. 10).—In all fear. Statement of the spirit or temper in which the subjection is to be made good. Is the 'fear' which is here intended fear towards God or towards man? On the ground that Peter afterwards (iii. 6, 14) warns against the fear of man, that Paul (Col. iii. 22) appendes the definition 'fearing the Lord' to similar counsels to servants, and that the term occurs at times without any explanatory addition in the sense of religious fear (i. 17), some good interpreters (Weiss, Dr. John Brown, etc.) take the idea here to be 'give this submission in a pious spirit, in reverential awe of God.' But the next clause seems to define the fear here under the other aspect, as the feeling proper to the position of subjection, even under trying circumstances. It means, therefore, careful solicitude to
THE FIRST EPISODE GENERAL OF PETER. [CHAP. II. 18-25.

give faithful service, 'shrinking from transgressing the master's will' (Huther). This is confirmed by the use of the stronger phrase, 'with fear and trembling,' in the Pauline parallel (2 Cor. vii. 1), which (as also in 1 Cor. ii. 1; 2 Cor. viii. 15, and even Phil. ii. 15) appears to express the broad idea of watchful, nervous anxiety to do what is right,— not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. The 'fear' has been put absolutely, 'all fear,' as extending to everything which can make demands upon the servant's loyalty and patience. The same is now required in reference to cases where it is subjected to the most painful strain. It is not to be affected by the harshness of the yoke, but is due equally to two very different types of master. The one type is described by two adjectives, which are represented fairly well by the 'good and gentle' of the A. V. The second of these, however, means more than simply 'gentle.' Adjective and noun are of somewhat limited occurrence in the N. T., and are variously rendered by our A. V., e.g., 'bountiful, meekness, gentleness, humility, and in 2 Cor. x. 1; Tit. iii. 2; Jas. iii. 17; clemency, Acts xxiv. 4; moderation, Phil. iv. 5; patience, 1 Tim. iii. 3. It expresses the disposition which lets equity temper justice, is careful not to press rights of law to the extreme of moral wrong, and shrinks from rigidly exacting under all circumstances its legal due. It might be rendered 'considerate,' or 'forbearing.' Wycliffe gives mild, Tyndale, Cranmer, and the Genevan, courteous; the Rhemish, meelt. The other type is described by an adjective, which means literally crooked, twisting (in which sense it is applied, e.g., to the river Mæander in Apoll. Rhad. 4, 1541), and then ethically what is not straightforward. But this does not agree with the present passage; it occurs only twice in the N. T.—in Luke iii. 5; Phil. ii. 15 (in which cases the A. V. gives crooked); and Acts ii. 40 (where the A. V. has unwise). So here it means not exactly capricious (as Luther puts it) or wayward (the Rhemish), or even froward (as both the A. V. and the R. V. give it after Tyndale, Cranmer, and the Genevan), but 'harsh' or 'perverse,' the disposition that lacks the reasonable discernment, and makes a tortuous use of the law. In ecclesiastical Greek it is used to denote the Evil One.

Ver. 19. For this is acceptable. The 'this' refers to the case immediately to be stated. The Greek for 'acceptable' here is the usual word for 'grace.' Hence some take the sense to be: it is a work of grace, or a gift of grace (Steiger, Schott); others, it is a sign of grace, a proof that you are Christians indeed (Wiesinger); others, it conciliates or wins grace for you; Roman Catholic theologians using it in support of their theory of works of supererogation. In the present passage, however, it is evidently used in the non-theological sense. We have to choose, therefore, between three ideas, that of gracious or attractive (as in Luke iv. 22; Col. iv. 6), that of favour, i.e., securing favour with one (so Huther), or that of thankworthy, as the A. V. puts it, or better, 'acceptable,' as the R. V. gives it in harmony with the repetition of the word in the end of ver. 20. Though the second of these can plead the analogy of the O. T. phrase, 'find favour, or grace with one' (Gen. vi. 8, xviii. 3, xxii. 27, etc.), and its N. T. application (Luke i. 30, ii. 32; Acts i. 47), the third is on the whole the best, as most accordant with both the idea and the terms of Christ's own declaration in Luke vi. 32, which Peter seems here to have in mind. For the present, too, the statement is given generally, such endurance being presented as a thing acceptable in itself, and the person (whether God or the master) being left unnamed,—if on account of (his) consciousness of God one endureth pains while suffering wrongfully. Endurance, therefore, is not of itself a 'thankworthy thing.' In the case of any one, slave or other, it is so only if it is endurance of wrong, and only if it is animated by one's sense of his relation to God, not if it is due to prudent considerations or of the nature of a sullen, stoical accommodation to the inevitable. The motive which gives nobility to endurance is put in the foreground. By this 'consciousness of God' is meant neither exactly the 'conscience toward God' of the A. V. and R. V., nor 'conscien
tiousness before God,' far less the consciousness which God has of us (as some strangely put it), but that consciousness which at once inspires the sense of duty and elevates the idea of duty. Though the Greek word is always translated 'conscience' in the A. V., it cannot be said ever to have in the Bible precisely the sense which is attached to it in modern philosophical systems. Neither can it be said to convey even in the Pauline writings quite the same idea as in the language of the Stoics, although it is possible that Paul may have been familiar with the ethical phrasing of that school (see Lightfoot's Essay on St. Paul and Seneca in his Comm. on Philippians). Not unfrequently, however, it covers much the same conception as the 'consciences' of our current popular speech. The idea at its root is knowledge,—knowledge specially of the moral quality of our own acts. It is the 'understanding applied to the distinction of good and evil, as reason is the same applied to the distinction of truth and falsehood' (see Godet on Rom. ii. 15). Though it occurs often in the writings of Paul, repeatedly in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and thrice in Peter (here and iii. 16, 21), it is never found in the Gospels, except in the discourse of Judas, John viii. 9. The Old Testament expresses a similar idea by a different term, namely the 'heart.' Hence this word occurs only once in the LXX., viz. in Eccles. x. 20, and there it has a sense only approximating that of the moral consciousness, namely, that of the 'quiet inner region of one's thoughts.' As this is put emphatically first, another quality of acceptable endurance is equally emphasized by the 'wrongfully' (the only instance of the adverb in the N. T.) which closes the sentence. The 'grief' of the A. V. should be griefs, grievances, or pains. It carries us back to the 'pained' of I. 6, and points to objective external inflictions. It is the phrase used in Isa. iii. 4. The verb 'endure' here (which occurs only twice again in the N. T., I Cor. x. 13; 2 Tim. iii. 11) means to bear up against, and expresses perhaps the effort required to withstand the natural impulse to rise against injustice.

Ver. 20. For what glory is it (or, what kind of glory is it). This particular term for 'glory,' with the general sense of credit, though of very frequent use in the Classics, occurs only once in the N. T.—if, when ye do wrong and are buffeted, ye shall take it patiently. Peter has
more in view here than the criminal's stolid endurance of a punishment which he cannot escape (so de Wette). He means that even patient endurance, if it is the endurance of what is deserved, can bring no credit to one. It is the simple discharge of a duty that is matter of course (Matt. v. 47). The 'ye shall take it patiently,' therefore, of the A. V. and R. V. correctly conveys the idea. The two phrases, 'do wrong' and 'are buffeted,' express things in the relation of cause and effect. The in the slave's breast, to the N. T. and ecclesiastical Greek. It is not found even in the LXX. It is peculiarly apt here, where the treatment of slaves is in question. It refers literally to blows with the hand, the punishment, and a prompt one, inflicted upon slaves (Bengel).—But if, when ye do well and suffer, ye shall take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. The A. V., along with various other versions, erroneously drops the future, 'shall take it' here. The 'well-doing' intended here seems to be the patient, dutiful behaviour of the slave, although the verb properly expresses the doing of good to one, or benefiting one. Some editors insert 'for' before 'this is acceptable,' in which case we should have to fill up the statement thus: 'This is truly a credit to you, for this is acceptable in God's sight.'—As the ruthless system of slavery reacted upon ancient society in forms so terrible that it became a proverb with the Romans, 'As many slaves, so many enemies,' so the risk of a fatal breach between Christianized slaves and heathen masters was one of the gravest perils which had to be faced. The new faith exacted questions in the slave's breast, questions as to his personal rights and dignity, the extent to which he was called to be a sufferer of wrong, the possibility of serving such masters with a pure conscience, questions fitted to excite the revolting spirit, that is the case was the case in which it was at once least easy and most necessary to plant deep the conviction of the paramount Christian obligation of submission for the Lord's sake. Peter does not yet quit this matter, but will carry it up to still higher reasons, to those found in the idea of the Christian calling and in Christ's own example. He gives no hint that the slave should break with his bondage. Rather does he give him over to political impotence or social helplessness. He sets before him principles on which he is to quit himself like a Christian, abiding in his calling, principles which also were to work like solvents on the system itself, and gradually to secure its extinction without revolution. Nothing indeed marks the Divine character of the Gospel more than its perfect freedom from any appeal to the spirit of political revolution. The Founder of Christianity and His apostles were surrounded by everything which could tempt human reformers to enter on revolutionary courses. Nevertheless our Lord and His apostles said not a word against the powers and institutions of that evil world. Their attitude towards them was all that of deep spiritual hostility, and of entire political submission (see Goldwin Smith, Does the Bible sanction American Slavery, p. 55;—a brief but invaluable discussion).

Ver. 21. For unto this were ye called. Patient endurance of undeserved suffering should be deemed no strange thing (cf. iv. 12). Painful as it was, it was involved in their Christian vocation. In being called by God to the grace of Christ, they were called to take up His cross (Matt. x. 38, xvi. 24, etc.). The fact appeals with special force to slaves; for He Himself 'took upon Him the form of a servant' (Phil. ii. 7). For the turn of expression here, cf. Col. iii. 15; 2 Thess. iii. 3; 2 Thess. ii. 14. The A. V. needlessly inserts even, as Tyndale, Cranmer, and the Bishops' Bible introduce a very which is not in the text. —because Christ also suffered for you. The best authorities give the second preposition here instead of the 'for us' of the Received Text. The phrase means here, too, not 'in your stead,' but 'in your behalf,' or 'for your good.' The idea is that the servant cannot expect to be greater than the Master. They do not stand alone in suffering. They are only called to endure as Christ endured. He suffered, and that, too, not on His own account, but in their cause and for their benefit— to your leaving behind 'the things you cannot have as example. The pronoun (which again should be 'you,' not 'us') is put with a strange prominence first, taking up the immediately preceding 'for you,' and applying the fact most emphatically to these bond-servants. The 'leaving behind' is expressed by a verb which is found nowhere else in the N. T., but which occurs in reference to death in the apocryphal Book of Judith (vi. 7). The idea of an example is conveyed by a term, implying that it became a proverb with the Romans, which denotes properly the sketch given to students of art to copy, or trace over and fill in, or the head-lines containing the letters of the alphabet, which were set for children who were learning writing. The idea was expressed by different terms in John xiii. 15 (where it = sign, or pattern), and 2 Thess. iii. 9 (where it = type; cf. also 1 Cor. x. 11). The object of this bequest is next stated,—in order that ye might follow; or, follow Christ, as the verb strictly means, which occurs again in Mark xvi. 20; 1 Tim. v. 10, 24 (in this last verse pointing to the closeness with which some men's sins pursue them to judgment).—Foot prints. Compare also Rom. iv. 12, 2 Cor. xii. 18, the only other occurrences in the N. T. The change of figure from a teacher setting a copy to be imitated, to a guide making a track to be intently kept by those coming after him, is to be noticed. Luther calls attention to the fact that, except in 1 John ii. 6 (where the idea is more general), it has particular reference to 'His self-abasement in suffering and death' that the N. T. presents Christ as an example, e.g. John xiii. 15, xv. 12; Phil. ii. 5; Heb. xii. 2; 1 John iii. 16.

Ver. 22. who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. Of all the apostles, Peter, with the single exception of John, had known the Christ of history most intimately, and had seen Him in the circumstances, both public and private, most certain to betray the sinfulness of common human nature, had been more latent in Him. Peter had felt, not less strongly than others, how the type of holiness which Christ taught conflicted with his own traditional Jewish notion of a holiness bound up with the rigid observance of Sabbath laws and ceremonial rules of life. But with what quiet strength of fixed conviction does he proclaim Christ's blamelessness! Nor can Peter's confession of that sinlessness, as he lingers over it in this section, be said to come behind either Paul's
who knew no sin' (2 Cor. vi. 21), or John's 'in Him is no sin' (1 John iii. 5). It is the affirmation of a freedom not only from open but also from hidden sin, a sinlessness not in deed only, but also in word, and indeed (as the 'guile' implies, on which see also at ii. 1) in thought. The language, as Bengel suggests, is peculiarly pertinent to the case of slaves with their strong temptations to practise deception. The choice of the verb 'was found' or 'was discovered' (see also on l. 7) is in harmony with the idea of a sinlessness which had stood the test of suspicious sifting and scrutiny. The statement is given, too, with the impossible and imperative force of a simple historical tense, which may imply (as Alford puts it) that in no instance did He ever do the wrong deed, or say the guileful word. All this, however, is in the form not of words of Peter's own, but of a reproduction (taken exactly from the LXX., only that 'sin' appears here, while 'iniquity' or 'lawlessness' appears there) of the great prophetic picture of Jehovah's servant in Isaiah (lxxii. 9).

Ver. 23, who, when reviled, reviled not again; when smitten, reviling, the slandered one. Peter continues to speak partly under the influence of Isaiah's description (lxxii. 7) seems clearly in his mind, although he no longer reproduces the very words, and partly under that of personal recollection of what he had suffered in Christ. The tenses change now from the simple historical past to imperfects expressive of sustained action. Most interpreters notice the climax from the reviling, or more properly, the mistreatment, to the more positive suffering, and from the abstinence from returning reviling in kind (the verb 'reviled not again' is another word peculiar to Peter) to abstinence even from threats of retaliation where actual retaliation was impossible. The sentence, therefore, exhibits Christ's example in suffering in its quality of silence and patience, as the former verse dealt with the quality of innocence—but left it to him that judgeth righteously. The Rhenish Version, following the singular reading of the Vulgate, renders 'to him that judgeth him unjustly,' as if Pilate were the judge in view. Here, as in l. 17, God the Father's prerogative of judgment is introduced. There the impartial righteousness of His judgment was a reason for a walk in godly fear. Here it is the ground of assurance for the innocent sufferer. What is it, however, that Christ is said to have committed to this Righteous Judge? Many interpreters (e.g. Winer, de Wette, etc.) and Versions (including Wycliffe, the Rhenish, and both the A. V. and the R. V. in the text) supply himself as the object of the committal. This, however, is to give the active verb a reflexive force; of which there is no example in the case of this verb, Mark iv. 24, which is appealed to, not being really in point. Hence others make it committed his judgment, or his cause (so Gerhard, Calvin, Bets, the Synopsis, Tyndale, and the margin of both the A. V. and the R. V.), or his punishment (the Genevan), or his vengeance (Cranmer). The unnamed object, however, should naturally be supplied from the things dealt with in the immediate context. These are clearly the wrongs patiently endured by Christ. With Luther, therefore, etc., we may best render it indefinitely left it, understanding the 'it' to refer to the subject to reviling and suffering just mentioned. This is better than (with Alford) to make it = committed His revilers and injurers; although we might thus secure an allusion to Christ's prayer in behalf of His enemies (Luke xxii. 34). Ver. 24, who himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, or, as in margin of the R. V., carried up...to the tree. From Christ's fellowship with us in suffering, and from His innocence and patience as a Sufferer, we are now led up to the crowning glory of the example which He has left of an endurance not for wrong-doing, but for well-doing. What He endured was not only without personal cause or personal demerit on His own side, but in the cause and for the sake of others. The vicarious sufferings add to His example a power and grandeur higher still than it receives from the qualities already instanced in it. So far, therefore, as vicarious suffering is a possibility to us, this new statement applies to the example which we are to study in Christ. It is clear, however, that in taking up here the idea of suffering 'is your behalf' with which he had started, and showing what that involved, Peter speedily carries us beyond the idea of example, into a region in which Christ stands alone as a Sufferer. He places us now before the Cross itself, and in words each of which is of utmost value, touches upon the great mystery of the relation in which Christ's sufferings stand as our sins. The phrase 'to the tree' points us at once to the climax of His vicarious suffering, His death upon the Cross. In designating the Cross 'the tree,' Peter is supposed by (e.g. Roblee) to have selected a term which would appurtenant to peculiar force to slaves, their class being familiar with punishment by the tree in various forms, the cross, the fork, etc. Peter, however, uses the same term in Acts vi. 39, x. 39, where there is no such reference to slaves. So here he adopts it simply as it had been suggested by such Old Testament passages as Deut. xxii. 22. It is probable, too, that he has in view those ideas of criminality and shame, and the position of the one under the curse of the law, with which the word is associated in the Old Testament passage. The same great Passional of Isaiah (especially lxxii. 4, 11, 12) is also manifestly in Peter's mind, some of its characteristic terms, as re-applied to the LXX., reappearing here. No interpretation, therefore, can be just which fails to be in harmony with the prophetic basis of the statement. Now, then, is the central phrase 'bare our sins' to be understood? The verb occurs indeed in the New Testament (see also on ver. 7) in the simple sense of carrying up, or bringing up, as e.g. of Christ bringing Peter and James and John up to the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. xvi. 1), of Christ being carried up into heaven (Luke xxiv. 51), etc. It has also the sense, frequent enough in the Classics, of sustaining. Here, however, its accessories shut us up to a choice between two technical meanings, namely, that of offering up, and that of bearing punishment. Hence some (including the great name of Luther) take the sense to be made an offering of our sins on the tree, or 'brought our sins as an offering to the tree.' In favour of this, it may be urged that the same verb has already been used in this sense in ii. 5 (as it is again in Heb. vii. 27, xiii. 15; cf. also Jas. ii. 21), and that there is a distinct analogy in the Old Testament formula used of the priest offering on, or bringing offerings to, the
altar (Lev. xiv. 20; 2 Chron. xxiv. 16). But there are fatal objections to this view, as e.g. the unexampled conception of the sins being themselves the offering ; the equally unexampled description of the Cross as an altar (notwithstanding Heb. vii. 1, 2); the fact that it was not even but before the altar that sacrificial victims under the Old Testament were put to death; and the difference thus created between Peter's use and Isaiah's use of the same terms. The other sense, viz. that of bearing the consequences, or paying the penalty, of sin, is supported by the weightiest considerations, as e.g. the fact that the verb in question is one of those by which the Greek Version represents the Hebrew verb, which (where it has a 'sin' or 'iniquity' as its object) means to bear punishment for sin (whether one's own or that of others) in numerous passages both of the Pentateuch and the prophets (e.g. Lev. xix. 17; xx. 19, xxiv. 15; Num. v. 31, xiv. 24; Ezek. iv. 5, xiv. 10, xxiv. 33; the New Testament analogy in Heb. ix. 28); the harmony with what is said of the Servant of Jehovah in Isa. liii. The addition in *His body* brings out the fact that this endurance of the punishment of our sins was done by Him, not remotely as was the case with the Israelite under the Law who brought a victim distinct from himself, but directly in His own person. The phrase to *bear* (or, as our E.V. puts it, 'His own self'), which is set both emphatically first and in antithetical relation to 'our sins.' It can scarcely mean less than what Witsch recognizes as the sense of 'sacrifice': 'It is plain, therefore, that in consequence of Isa. liii., Peter regards this sin-bearing of Christ in behalf of sinners as the means whereby sin has been removed from them, and by which, therefore, the stain of guilt has been effaced' (*Bib. Theol.* i. p. 233, Eng. Trans.). It gives no theory, however, of how this sin-bearing carried such efficacy with it.—In order that we, having died unto sin, might live unto righteousness. The ransom, from the necessity of ourselves bearing the consequences, or legal liabilities of our sins, however, is not an end to itself. It is done with a view to the killing of the practical power of sin in us, and to our leading a new life. A death unto the sins which He bore is given here as the position into which we were brought once for all by Christ's great act of sin-bearing. Hence the sense of 'dying unto sin' is to be understood as, having died.' The idea of this death, though it is expressed by a term not found elsewhere in the New Testament (which some wrongly render 'being removed away from'), is the same as the Pauline idea (Rom. vi. 2, 11). And through this death comes the new life which is dedicated to the service of righteousness; which term has here, of course, not the theological sense of justification or a justified state, which some still give it, but the ethical sense which it has, e.g. in Rom. vi. 16, 18, 19, etc.—by whose bruises ye were healed. The word rendered both by the A.V. and by the R.V. 'stripes,' occurs only this once in the New Testament. In the original it is a collective singular, and means properly a swale, the bruise left by blows or by the scourge. Hence it is thought that Peter uses it with reference to the slave's punishment. He takes it, however, simply from Isa. liii. 5, adopting what applies properly only to the effects of one kind of punishment as a vivid figure of Christ's sufferings as a whole, and passing at the same time naturally from the 'we' and 'our' to the direct personal address 'ye,' which so distinguishes the Epistle. Bengel calls this a paradoxical expression of the apostle.' It gives the double paradox of grace—*healed with a stripe,* and healed with what is laid upon another than the patient himself. The moral sickness of sin is translated into the health of righteousness by the pain of the Sinless. Ver. 25. For ye were going astray as sheep. Continuing Isaiah's strain, Peter adds a reason for what he has just said of a restoration to righteousness, or soundness of life. The figure passes from that of sickness into that of error. As the better-sustained reading gives the participle in the masculine (not in the neuter, as if qualifying the 'sheep'), it is necessary to put the first reading of the comparison otherwise than it is given in the A.V. The readers are compared simply to sheep, not to wandering sheep. That is to say, they are said themselves to have been once wanderers, and in that state of estrangement from God to have been like sheep,—helpless and heedless. Thus the figure stands in Isa. liii. 6, and so here it connects itself at once with the subsequent idea of *returning to a Head.* The use of the sheep as a figure of man in his natural alienation from God is one of the commonest in the Old Testament (e.g. Num. xxxvii. 17; 1 Kings xxii. 17; Ps. cxxxix. 176; Ezek. xxxiv. 5, 11). So in the New Testament (Matt. xviii. 12, 13; Luke xv. 4, etc.) although it is used also as a figure of sloth (John x. 4, 5, etc.).—But ye turned yourselves now. On the ground of such instances as Matt. ix. 22, x. 13, Mark v. 39, vii. 53, John xii. 40, xxi. 20, it seems necessary to give the verb the middle sense here, although it might seem more in harmony with the context to render it 'are returned,' so as to bring out more clearly what had been done for them. It is in the past, too, as referring to the definite act of turning, once accomplished. He to whom they turned is Christ (not God here), who is designated both the Shepherd of their souls and the Overseer of their souls. The title 'Shepherd,' indeed, is used of God in the Old Testament (Ps. xxiii. 1; Isa. xl. 11; Ezek. xxxiv. 11, 12, 16). But it is also applied to Messiah there (Ezek. xxxiv. 24), while in the New Testament it is not only claimed for Himself by Christ (John x. 11), but is given to Him again by Peter (v. 4). The use of the title 'Bishop,' or, as it simply means 'Overseer' or 'Guardian,' may be due to the fact that, like 'Shepherd,' it was a name given to the 'presidents of the churches, who were, so to speak, the representatives of the One Shepherd and Bishop, the Head of the whole Church' (*Huther*), or, as others suggest, it may have risen from such Old Testament usages as the ascription to the Lord
Chapter III. 1-7.

The Law of Christian Order in the Household, as applied to the Relation of Marriage.

1 Likewise, ye wives, be in "subjection" to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they may "without the word be "won "by the "conversation of the wives; while they "behold "your "chaste conversation "coupled with fear; whose adorning, let it not be that "outward adorning of "plaiting the "hair, and of wearing of "gold, or of "putting on of apparel; but let it be the "hidden man of the "heart, in that which is "not corruptible, even the ornament of a "meek and "quiet "spirit, which is in the "sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time as Sarah "obeied "Abraham, calling him "Lord." whose "daughters ye are "as long as ye "do well, and are not "afraid with any "amazement. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to "knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker "vessel," and as being "heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not "hindered.

When Paul defines the duties of bond-servants, he balances his statement by a corresponding exposition of the duties of masters (Eph. vi. 9; Col. iv. 1). Peter, dealing here specially with the application of the general Christian law of "order and "submission, passes at once to the position...
III. 1-7] THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. PETER.

We are not to infer from this difference in Peter's mode of handling the relative that there were few Christian wives in the territories addressed by the Apostle. Peter's counsels, while applying generally, seem to be particularly directed as married to heathen husbands. In 1 Cor. 7:15 Paul states the general principle that a wife was not to leave an unbelieving husband, although, if the bond was broken by separation, she might 'let him depart;' and need not the separation. Peter here sets forth her duty under the larger aspect of such an adjustment of herself to her position as the best persuasive with the husband. She was much to provoke the Christian wife to draw off the heathen husband's yoke. To the Christian wife something more than the usual must less than the husband's help, to his dependant. In the social system of the ancient world, the husband's power over the wife was, like the father's power over his children, absolute, checked by no restrictions, and so inherent that neither could, of free act nor insanity could dissolve it. Legal point of view, the family was absolutely preserved by the single, all-powerful 'father of the household' (Job 42:18). In relation to him all in the household owed absolute fidelity. The husband was the head of the household,' says Dean Merivale, 'are filled the domestic struggles occasioned by the spirit which political restrictions were imposed upon the most sensitive of the social acts. The Roman cense, says the Roman wife had begun to scheme for her liberation, and a quarrel of the sexes set in which produced bitter fruit in the days of the Roman Empire. The latter is the larger aspect of such a union as the Roman social system. Among such outlying populations, too, as are addressed by Peter, the wife's lot might contain a sense of bitterness peculiar apt to provoke the Christian doctrines of equality and love. Peter points to the position of abject subserviency, against the laws of the heathen husband's rule, against the relation itself which heathenism sanctioned. There the danger of the social disaster and the danger to the Christian name which repudiation of the ties of social life would entail, Peter enjoins on wives to regard the duties of their station, and submission for Christ's sake to its inconveniences.

1. In like manner, ye wives, submit yourselves. Literally, it is 'submitting your- selfs,' this conjugal duty being represented as a same plane with the former, and simply addication of the general law stated in Eph. 5:1 to your own husbands. Here, as also in the two other passages where the same charge is given, viz. Eph. 5:22, Tit. ii. 5 (in Eph. 5:22 Col. iii. 18), the reading of the Received Text is insufficiently supported), the strong pro-sal adjective which usually means 'own, proper' is inserted before 'husbands.' There was no such contrast intended, as some commentators (Steiger, etc.) imagine, between those men these women were united in marriage and others. The fact that in the decadence of the language the adjective lost much of its original force, makes it doubtful how much emphasis can be allowed it here. It may point, however, to the nature of the marriage relation, the legal claims, the peculiar and exclusive union which it involved, as furnishing a reason for submission (see Ellicott on Eph. v. 22).—In order that even if any are disobedient to the word. By the word is meant, as at ii. 8, the sum of Revelation, or the Gospel. The verb rendered 'are disobedient' denotes, as at ii. 7, 8, the disposition that stands out positively against the truth. The case supposed is expressed as an exceptional and trying one,—they shall without word be gained by the behaviour of the wives. It would be natural to take the 'word' to mean here exactly what it meant in the prior clause, namely, the Gospel. In that case, however, we should have to put upon the term 'gained' the restricted sense (adopted by Schott) of won over to conjugal affection, to adherence to the wedded relation; whereas what Peter seems to have in view is the possibility of Christian wives winning over their heathen husbands to the Christian faith, and that under unfavourable circumstances. As it would be strange indeed (in view of Rom. x. 14-17) to find an apostle contemplating the possibility of a conversion to Christ without the instrumentality of the Gospel, it is necessary to suppose that there is a kind of play upon the words here, the same term being used (by a figure of speech known to grammarians as antanasce) with different meanings. So Bengel briefly explains the term word as meaning 'in the first instance the Gospel, in the second, talk.' The Syriac version here renders it 'without trouble.' Wycliffe rightly gives 'without word.' Tyndale, Cranmer, the Genevan, and the Rheims all have 'without the word.' Notice, also, how the old English sense of 'converse' (as = conduct) appears in the A. V. here, and how the verb which our old English versions agree in translating 'won' here is the one which is used by our Lord in Matt. xvii. 15 ('thou hast gained thy brother'), and by Paul in 1 Cor. ix. 19, 20, 21 ('that I might gain the more,' etc.). Leighten speaks of a soul thus created to Jesus Christ as 'gained to His treasury, who thought not His own precious blood too dear to lay out for this gain.' The idea, therefore, is that, even in those most unpromising cases where the heathen husband steeld himself against the power of God's own Word, the Christian wife might haply win him to Christianity by the silent persuasion of a blameless life, without word of hers. Where the preached Word failed, the voiceless eloquence of pure and consistent wifely behaviour might prevail, without labour of spoken argument or appeal. And the possibility of such victories of patience should encourage the wife to a wife, submission which might be hard to natural inclination. Compare Shakespeare's 'The silence often of pure innocence Persuades, when speaking fails.'—Winter's Tale, ii. 9.

Ver. 2. having beheld your chaste behaviourCoupled with fear. On the force of the 'beheld,' as implying close observation, see on ii. 12, where the same term occurs. The behaviour is styled chaste, not in the limited sense of the English adjective, but as covering purity, modesty, and
whatever makes wisely conduct not only correct but winsome. It is further defined by a couple of words which mean literally 'in fear,' but are happily parted by our A. v., i.e., 'with fear,' after Tyndale, Cranmer, and the Genevan. What is meant is not exactly 'the fear of God,' but rather a sensitive respect for the husband and the married relation. The chastity or purity of behaviour is exhibited as associated necessarily with the dutiful spirit that recoils from everything inconsistent with the woman's and the wife's position. Nothing could better express what is meant by this 'fear,' therefore, than Leighton's well-known description of it as a delicate and timorous grace, afraid of the least air or shadow of anything that hath but a re-emblance of wronging it, in courage, or speech, or apparel.' Ver. 3. whose adorning let it be the outward adorning of plaiting of the hair and of wearing of ornaments of gold, or of putting on of apparel. The sentence opens with the relative 'whose' without any noun. It admits, therefore, of being construed in more than one way. The 'whose' may be taken in the possessive sense, and so = whose be not the outward adorning, etc.; or = whose distinction let it be not, etc.; or = whose business let it be not, etc. (Huther, etc.). Or the relative may have supplied to it the subsequent noun, and so = whose adorning let it be not, etc. (so both A. V. and R. V. with Wiesinger, Schott, Hofmann, etc.). As the 'adorning' means properly not the art of adorning but the adornment or ornament itself, the latter construction is preferable. The statement, then, is that the adornment which wives are to value is not that which is effected by the particular acts of plaiting or braiding the hair, wearing of gold (i.e., the 'gold of which our own ornaments consist'), putting on of apparel (literally, dresses). The terms expressing these acts, 'plaiting,' 'wearing' (literally, putting round one), and 'putting the occur nowhere else in the New Testament. They denote two distinct kinds of female adornment, namely, what the person itself presents, and what is put upon it. Hence we have first the plaiting of the natural ornament of the hair, and then other two modes which are given as branches (so the 'or' indicates) of one species of artificial ornamentation. The arts themselves had gone to unheard-of excess, as we learn from literature, coins, and sculpture, among the heathen ladies of the Empire. Pliny the elder speaks of having seen Nero's mother dressed in a robe of gold tissue, and Lolli Paulina in apparel covered with pearls and emeralds costing fifty millions of sesterces, which would be something like £43,000 [Hist. Nat. xxxiii. 19, ix. 35, 36]. From other writers, such as Ovid (de Art. Am. iii. 136), Juvenal (Satir. vi. 502), and Suetonius (Claud. 40), we learn what extravagance of time, pains, and expense was lavished upon the dressing of the hair, how great ladies had slaves carefully instructed for that one service and specially assigned to it, how by rows of false curls, curious braiding, and strings of jewels, the hair was built up high above the head. (See Smith's Dict. of Antig. under Coma, and Farrar's Early Years of Christianity, i. p. 5.) How much reason Peter had to dread the infection of Christian women with the same disease of luxury, we may gather from what appears later in the writings of such leaders of the Church as Cyprian, Jerome, and Clement of Alexandria. The last named, in his Pastoral or Instructio, devotes much space to the detailed discussion of what is permissible and the censure of what is wrong in regard to dress, ear-rings, finger-rings, the binding of the hair, etc. It may be inferred, perhaps, from Peter's statement (and the inference is borne out by what we know from other sources) not only that many of the first Christian converts were women, but that not a few were women of means and position. He does not, however, speak of ornaments and tasteful attire as things unfit for a Christian woman, but lists them as qualities of attention to such things as if they made the wife's real attractions. In this, as in other things, the Gospel is a law of liberty, which declines to be bound to one rigid line of application in all circumstances. Compare the important parallel in 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10. Ver. 4. but the hidden mean of the heart. This phrase is taken by some to be practically equivalent to what is elsewhere called the 'inner man' (Col. iii. 10), or the 'new creature' (2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15), i.e. the regenerate life itself on its inward side, the new nature that is formed by the Spirit of God 'in the secret workshop of the heart,' the new way of thinking, feeling (Frommuller, so also Alford, Wiesinger, Beza, etc.). It is analogous, however, rather to the other Pauline expressions, the 'inner man' (Eph. iii. 16), or the 'inward man' (Rom. vii. 22; 2 Cor. iv. 16). Of itself it is not the regenerate life specifically, but simply the inner life, the true self within, the contrast here being between those external accessories of ornamentation on which it is vain to depend for power of attraction or persuasion, and those internal qualities of character which are the secret of all permanent, personal influence (so substantially Calvin, Bengel, Huther, Hofmann, Schott, Weiss, etc.). The term 'man' is used much as we use the I, the self, the personality. It is described as 'hidden,' in antithesis to those exterior, material adornments which are meant to catch the eye. And it is defined as 'of the heart,' as 'found in the heart, or identified with it. Clement, in the treatise already referred to (Past. iii. 1), defines the 'inner man' as the 'rational nature which rules the outer man.'—in the imperishableness of the meek and quiet spirit. The inner personality of moral beauty which makes the wife's true adorning, which belongs to the heart and cannot be seen by the outer eye, is further defined in respect of what it consists in. That is, as the phrase literally runs, 'in the imperishable of the meek and quiet spirit;' the adjective meaning not 'without stain,' or 'uncorrupted,' as Grothus, Luther, Erasmus, take it, but in accordance with i. 7, simply 'permanent' in opposition to the transitory and decaying. This is construed, therefore, in several ways; either as = in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit (so A. V., but with a certain strain upon the Greek); or = in the imperishable apparel of a meek and quiet spirit (so R. V., with Hofmann, Alford, etc.); or = in the imperishableness of a meek and quiet spirit,—i.e. in what cannot perish, namely, a meek and quiet spirit. This last is most in harmony with the previous contrast (in i. 7) between proved faith which is to be found unto praise at Christ's
III. 1-7] THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE GENERAL OF PETER.

and gold that perisheth. So the sh gives 'in the incorruptibility of a quiet modest spirit.' The other old Englih as are in confusion, e.g. Wycliffe's 'in gainst and of mild spirit,' Tyndale's 'in quiet and a quiet spirit' (so also mowen), and Cranmer's 'without all corrm so that the spirit be at rest and quiet.'

The quality of mildness implies more than calmness. In the old Greek ethics it amounts to meekness, in the sense of the opposite of anger and violence (Plato, Rep. 558a, etc.), but the subsidence of anger (Herod. ii. 1). It is defined by Aristotle as the mean in passion and temper and the neutral which is incapable of heated feeling, inclining to the weakness of the latter (Eth. iv. 5).

In the New Testament it is the same, but the grace of a self which holds disputations alien to it, and the tendency not to passion, xcx, and resentment (cf. also Matt. v. 15, and, above all, Christ's application of it to himself, xi. 29).

The quality of meekness is a tranquillity of temper which the same as the 'peaceable' of I Tim. only other New Testament occurrence) has its deep source within. Together, the two epithets may describe the of the spirit which, as Bengel suggests, at times from giving trouble by the assertion s's rights, and bears in calmness the of which come from others.— which is in God's sight of.

The same epithet is used to describe as costly (I Tim. ii. 9), and the stately as very precious (Mark xiv. 3). It is xxi. 1, with a similar sense, which occurs in used to describe the pearl (Matt. x. one of great price,' and Mary's spikenard costly' (John xii. 3).

Peter's statement of the wife's true adorning, ve above all the picture of the virtuous in Prov. xxxi. (specially ver. 25); and classical parallels as this from Plutarch's Precepts—that adorns a woman which her more becoming; and this is not done by gold, or emerald, or purple, but by things which give her the appearance of orderliness, modesty.

5. For thus in old time also did the women who hoped in God adorn them, submitting themselves to their own husbands. The example of the women whose are recorded in the ancient history of God's furnishes another incentive to the culti- of the kind of attraction just explained, were accustomed to seek in the beauty of character their best adornment, and one evi- dence of their being women of this we respect and subordination which they ated in relation to their husbands. These are called 'holy' here (as the prophets so designated, 2 Pet. i. 21; Luke i. 70; Eph. iii. 5) not merely in regard to personal character, but in a semi-official as 'women of blessed memory' (Fron-
whose children ye became. The statement is not that these women are (as the R. V., the Vulgate, etc., render it) Sarah's children, far less that they shall be such, as some paraphrase it, but that they became or were made such. The phrase points not to a change from being Sarah's children after the flesh to being her children after the spirit, but rather to a change which made those who were in no sense descendants of Sarah children of hers in the true sense. It applies quite naturally to Gentile readers, Gentile women now christianized being styled children of Sarah, just as Gentile believers generally are called children of Abraham (Gal. iii. 7, etc.). — Doing well. Does this qualify the 'ye' in the previous 'became,' and so express either a condition or an evidence of the spiritual kinship in which the women whom Peter addresses stood to Sarah? Or does it qualify the 'holy women' of chap. i, and so express certain characteristics of their wifely example? The difficulty of establishing a very clear connection between these participles and the past verb 'ye became,' has induced some to prefer the former view, and to treat the first part of ver. 6 as a parenthesis. Thus, according to Bengel (Westcott and Hort appear also to recognise it as possible), the construction would run: 'obeying their own husbands (as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord; whose children ye became), doing good, and not fearing, etc.' The latter connection, however, approves itself as more natural to the vast majority of interpreters. There remains, at the same time, much division of opinion as to the precise effect to which this participle and the following qualify the Christian women whom Peter has in view. Some take them to express the requirement on which their spiritual relation to Sarah is suspended. So the A. V. renders 'as long as ye do well,' the R. V. 'if ye do well,' and Beza, Alford, and many others agree with this. Others (Harless, Wiesinger, etc.) think they denote rather the sign of the spiritual kinship, as if whose children ye became, is as proved by the fact that ye do well, etc. Others (Hofmann, etc.) regard them as expressing the way in which the kinship was established, as if whose children ye became, and that just as (or, in such wise that) ye did good. There is the further question as to what is specially referred to in the clause. The 'doing well' does not refer here to a life of beneficence, but either to the good act of turning to Christ, the act of conversion (for which very definite sense appeal is made to the use of the verb in ii. 20), or, as is most probable, to the good doing exhibited in the loyal discharge of all worldly duty,—the good which Milton thus commends:

'Nothing lowlier can be found
In woman, than to study household good,
And good works in her husband to promote.'

—Paradise Lost, ix. 332.

—and not fearing any terror (or, scare). The noun used here for fear is one which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, although the cognate verb is found twice, with the sense of terrify according to our A. V. (Luke xxii. 9, xxiv. 37). It means any passionate emotion, any scare or nervous excitement, and may have either a subjective sense or an objective. The former is favoured by Luther, our own A. V., etc. The latter, however, is undoubtedly the sense here, as is shown by the grammar of the clause and by the fact that Prov. iii. 15 (where the objective use is evident) appears to be in Peter's mind. So the older English Version take it, e.g. Wycliffe gives 'not dreading any perturbation;' Tyndale, 'not afraid of every shadow;' Cranmer, 'not afraid for any terror;' the Geneva, 'not being afraid of any terror;' the Rheinish, 'not fearing any perturbation.' The idea expressed by the clause, therefore, is not merely that they were to do all this willingly, and not out of fear (Hottinger) show that what is doing all this they were yet not to allow their submission to carry them the length of being afraid to act on the principle of obeying God rather than man, when driven to a choice between the two; but that they were to do good, specially in the realm of wifely duty, in spite of what may have to fear from hostile surroundings and heathen husbands. In this superiority to the weakness of timidity, in this courageous adherence to all that is dutiful, even under distressing circumstances, they were also to show themselves true daughters of their great ancestress in the kingdom of faith.

Ver. 7. Ye husbands, in like manner, dwell with your wives. The brief counsels to husbands which are now appended to the ample exposition of the duties of wives are neither a mere parenthesis in the Epistle (Canôn Cook), nor simply a corollary to the foregoing exhortation (Canôn Mason). Far less can they be said to be out of place, as not in harmony with the general idea of subjection (so Weiss). Both the formula 'in like manner' and the participial turn of the sentence (literally = dwelling together) show that what is now said is given still as an integral portion of the general injunction of ii. 13, and that it deals with another type of submission. There is a submission which husbands, notwithstanding that the man is the head of the woman, have to yield, not less than wives, to the idea and object of the married state as one form of the every ordinance of man. This implies on the side of the husbands that they are to dwell with their wives. Should a Christian husband be wedded to a heathen wife, he is not to consider himself freed on that account from the claims of family and conjugal life. Their association in the home life is to be according to knowledge. This does not mean according to their knowledge of the Gospel (Grotius, etc.); neither is it exactly = according to the Christian recognition of the wife's relation to the husband (Scott, etc.). It means reasonably, intelligently, i.e., with a just recognition and wise consideration of what the ordinance itself is, and what the relative positions of husband and wife are. One cannot now prescribe rules, says Luther; 'God brings it home to every man himself that he must act toward his wife agreeably to reason, according as may be best adapted to each wife' (see also Steiger). So the poet Thomson describes the husband,

'Who, with superior dignity, with reason,
And manly tenderness, will ever love her;
Not first a kneeling slave, and then a tyrant.'

—giving honour to the woman as the weaker vessel, as also holds together of the grace of life. 'The who'e of chivalry is in these words,'
Mason. The construction of the epistle, is somewhat uncertain. The word 'the woman' is properly speaking 'the female' qualifying the noun. The 'dwell with' may have its object from the context, or it may be considered together with the noun 'vessel.' The word 'honour' also may go either with the noun, or with the 'heirs together.' The whole sentence may be rendered as 'the construction adopted (with differences) by the A. V., the R. V., and Fash Versions, etc. Or it may run thus according to knowledge with the female weaker vessel, giving honour to them either, etc. In either case it is shown that life is to be regulated so as to be to knowledge, there must be a con- ciliation of the natural weakness of the readiness to give her (the verb to know) the New Testament) the honour which is due to her as the husband's life and in grace. The term vessel is a figurative sense, in which it is applied to men as objects made by as the instruments of His purpose (Rev. ii. 7). It is used as the language of the Old Testament as in Jer. xvii. 6, xix. 11, xxii. 28, Is. xxix. 10, xlv. 9, lxiv. 8; Hos. 4. It is used as the sense of vessels of God's wrath and vessels chosen for His service; as here and in 1 Thess. iv. 4 (in which it seems to designate the wife), in the Divine institution of the natural and husband and wife, too, are both as equally the vessels or instruments God's purpose is made good in this province of life, the only difference being that one is the weaker the other the stronger. This natural establishes the wife's claim on the regard of the husband. The same a full respect and honour is made yet the fact that all natural differences in the spiritual relation which makes (cf. Rom. vii. 17; Eph. iii. 6; 1 Cor. ii.) of the grace of life. The exact force or statement will vary slightly according which is made between two somewhat balanced readings, one of which puts the other in apposition to the 'husbands,' in apposition to the wives. The point is that the husband's consciousness of being on the same platform with the wife in the inheritance of grace should enlist his honour and regard for her; in the other, it will be that honour is due to the wife not only because she is the wife, and naturally weaker than the husband, but also because she has all the dignity of having in point of fact an equal interest in grace. What they inherit together is called 'the grace of life,' by which is to be understood neither the 'gift or dowry of natural life' which is committed to husband and wife (Canon Mason), nor the life of Divine favour and blessing which the married estate is designed to be (Hofmann). As the immediate mention of prayer suggests, it means rather the grace which consists in eternal life, or which brings that life to us; or, as Alford and others take it, 'the gracious gift of eternal life'—that new life as a whole, of which the woman is participant equally with the man. It is not necessary to suppose that only Christian wives are in view. The clause deals simply with the fact that God makes no distinction between husband and wife in regard to this gift of a life which is at once a glorious present possession and an object of elevating anticipation. The idea is not merely that 'the hope of eternal glory makes men generous and mild,' as Bengel interprets it, but that the recognition of another as having the same place as ourselves in God's offer of grace, above all if that other has the sacred name of wife, should teach us to yield the honour which has been enjoined. —to the end that your prayers be not hindered. The reading varies here between two forms of the verb, one which means to be cut off, i.e. in the sense of being destroyed, or in that of being debarred from communication with the throne of grace; and another (and this is the better attested) which means to be impeded or obstructed. The prayers are taken by many interpreters (Calvin, Alford, Weiss, etc.) to be the conjugal prayers of husband and wife, social prayers, or family prayers; in which case the idea is that, where the wife is not recognised by the husband for what she is in God's sight, the two cannot pray in concert as married people. There will be nothing to call forth their common prayers, and the blessing attached (Matt. xviii. 19) to united supplication cannot visit their home. As the husbands, however, are directly dealt with in the verse, it is better to take the prayers to be their prayers; and the idea will be that the Christian husband's own prayers will be arrested on their way to the throne. The injustice done to the wife will burden their pinions, and check their rise to the Divine Ear. The possibility of so disastrous a result is another reason for giving honour to the wife.
Chapter III. 8-16.

General Counsels bearing on the Duties of all Christians toward one another, and on their Attitude to their Adversaries.

8 Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

9 let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

10 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear;

11 having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse you your good conversation in Christ.

Christ.

12 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

13 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

14 If it be possible, let us live in peace with all men, doing evil to no one.

15 But and if ye suffer, do not resist; but suffer it, as of a good will, for a while, until the judgment of the righteous judge.

16 If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in the same thing.
The First Epistle General of Peter

uncontrollable conduct by which Christians should be
shaped in their political, civil, and domestic
ways are now succeeded by a train of exhorta-
tions on the order of life, which are given in as rich
and as varied form. They are addressed to all
without distinction, and without special
to the particular orders of life which are
by the terms subjects, slaves, wives,
with the same general incalculation of
of conduct (chap. ii. 11, 12), of which
her cues were applications; and they
therefore, various broad and general ele-
the kind of life by which gain is
enced. Heathen eyes would be keen and
scrutinizers of what Christians were, not
their attitude to magistrates, their ideas
ights of property, their mode of life within
the circle of the home, but also in the
of their relations to each other and
world outside. So we have here in
the bird's-eye view of what ought to
g them, and then, in larger outline,
to what that circle of the home
be in of surrounding heathenism. The former
briefly dealt with. The latter is un-
length, and is enforced by appeal both
and to Christ's example. I
Finally, be ye all; or, to retain the
t dependence which the previous counc
g the general exhortations of ii. 11, 12, or
fully being all. It is, says an old Greek
K, who has had written, 'to
have particular directions? I say simply
like-minded. What Peter sets in the
of this summary of universal Christian
that oneness of judgment and inclination
Paul so often in his letters (Rom. xii. 16;
Cor. i. 10; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; Phil. ii. 2;
Eph. iv. 3). It is expressed by an adject
occurs nowhere else in the N. T. It
the agreement of those whose mind and
and all the objects of love (Schott). or objects
sentiment, and, therefore, in faith (Steiger,
It is not to be limited to agreement in
opinion. It is the harmony of many
ich springs from the sense of a common
common relations, and interests, and
ad hopes' (Lillie).—compassionate, or,
sympathetic. This is the solitary occur-
the adjective in the N. T., although the
verb is found twice (Heb. ix. 15, x. 34).
ness in feeling, and covers Paul's
with them that do receive, 'as well as his
with them that weep' (Rom. xii. 15).
py of mind and the unity of feeling are
again in Rom. xii. 15, 16, and Phil.
loving as brethren, or, loving the
other adjective found nowhere else
. See on ii. 23, where the noun is
it is also in 2 Pet. i. 7; Rom. xii. 10;
iv. 9; Heb. xii. 13; compassionate, or,
mered in its only other N. T. occurrence
n), tender-hearted. In classical Greek
active and the cognate noun (the former
at a physical sense or tout-heartedness. They owe to Chris-
their delicate ethical tone, and the sense
ship of man with man which softens and
them.—humble-minded. So we must
end of the very poorly-attested term of
the Textus Receptus, which our A. V. rather
happily renders 'courteous,' as if it referred to
manners, or external demeanour. Lowliness
mind in the classical Ethics ranked not as a
virtue, but as a fault or infirmity,—that of meek-
ness of spirit or faint-heartedness. The adjective
which Peter uses (which occurs only here and in
Prov. xxix. 23) has even in Plutarch's writings an
unfavourable sense. The noun for 'humble-
mindedness' occurs in no Greek writer prior to
the Christian era. In Christianity it becomes a
grace, contrasted with the heathen virtue of
'high-mindedness,' and born of the sense of un-
worthiness. It is the thinking ourselves little
because we are little. So Bernard defines it as the
virtue which teaches a man out of the trust
knowledge of himself to esteem himself lightly.
In the N. T. it denotes humility toward God
(Acts xv. 19) and toward our fellow-men (v. 5;
Phil. ii. 3). Primarily it is the former. Hence
it is opposed both to the mock-humility of morbid
feeling which has so often shown itself in the
history of Christ's Church, and to 'slavish defer-
ence to men' (see specially Neander, Planting
of Christianity, i. pp. 483-5; Bohn).—The com-
mission between these precepts is variously under-
stood. Some (e.g. Hofmann, Huther) take the
first three to be notes of what Christians should
be among themselves, and the others to be notes
of what they should be towards all without dis-
tinction of Christian and non-Christian. Their
relations are probably of a less external kind
that. The primary duty of like-mindedness or
unity in sentiment naturally carries it over to
unity of feeling which makes us enter into the
joys and sorrows of others as if they were our
own; and this oneness in mind and feeling, when
it is exhibited toward our fellow-Christians, means
nothing less than brotherly affection which takes
a living interest in all that concerns others, ex-
pressing itself in all tenderness of regard for them,
and inspiring us with that disposition to think
others better than ourselves without which love
remains less than it should be. There is a notice-
able analogy between this train of precepts and
the briefer series given by Paul in Col. iii. 12.
In the one, as in the other, humility crowns the
list. And justly so. For it is the safeguard of all
the social graces, the virtue which makes all other
virtues, lovely in themselves, proof against assault,
and safe from exaggeration.
Ver. 9. not rendering evil for evil. The transition
from the duties of Christians toward each
other to their duties in relation to their
adversaries is made easily through the last-named
grace. An undue esteem of ourselves is incon-
sistent either with the oneness of mind and feeling
which makes genuine brotherliness, or with the
Christian law of overcoming evil with good.
Humble-mindedness is 'essential both to true
gentleness of love and to true patience under
injuries' (Alford).—or railing for railing; rather,
rendering as reviling, as in ii. 23; but contrari-
wise blessing, i.e. nay rather, on the contrary,
blessing them; for the word is a participle, not a
noun. Peter seems to have in mind here his
Lord's words in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt.
v. 44). It is not necessary, therefore, to go
beyond what is meant there, or to assert for the
term 'blessing' here the sense of expressing kind-
ness in the form of deed as well as word. The
'blessing' denoted by this verb is usually con-
the point is a still deeper one—namely, that it is God's purpose, indeed, that Christians should have good, but in order to have good, they must be good; hence He called them to be good (as it was, as well as others, of laying aside the imputed qualities of nature) in order that the blessedness which is designed for them might come to be theirs actually, and theirs as a heritage of blessing. This is in harmony, too, with the Old Testament conceptions of life and good which are next introduced.

Ver. 10. For he that desires to love life and see good days. The kind of behaviour which has been urged in vers. 8, 9 is now further recommended by considerations drawn from the doctrine of happiness on character, and from God's regardfulness of men's lives, as these are expressed in Ps. xxiv. 13-17. Whether that psalm is taken to deal (e.g. with Delitzsch and its inscription) with the crisis when David saved his life among the Philistines by acting the part of a madman, and had to take refuge in the cave of Adullam, or (with Hitzig, Husfeld, Olesaune, etc.) is referred to other times, it records the testimony borne to the true secret of a gladsome life by one who had learnt that secret in the school of adversity. It describes what makes the good of life according to the Old Testament standard. In taking up, as it were, the thread of what Peter follows the Greek Version (which is a literal rather than an adequate rendering of the Hebrew), but introduces certain changes which, while in themselves true to the spirit of the original, adapt it better to his immediate object and to the higher standard of the New Testament. The opening words, which in the original are in the form of a question, are given as a direct statement. Instead of  'what man is he that desireth life and loveth many days,' according to our A.V., or, as the Greek Version renders it, 'who is the man who desires life, loving good days,' Peter puts it thus: 'he who desires to love life, and to see good days.' The transposition of the word 'love,' along with the adoption of the 'good' for the Hebrew 'righteousness,' gives a new turn to the statement, the effect of which is to make the prominent thing not the number of the days or the length of life, but the kind of life. The phrase 'love life,' means more than 'to be fain to have life,' or 'to show love for life' (de Wette), or even 'to be in earnest as to the love of life' (Wiesinger). It is to be taken in the simple sense of loving life for its good as opposed to hating it for its emptiness and vexations (Little), in the slightly modified sense of cherishing life, or in the secondary sense (which the verb has also in the Classics) of being blessed with life. So Bengel makes it=he who wishes so to live as not to be weary of life. Tyndale, Cranmer, and the Genevan (not Wycliffe and the Rheimsian, however) go astray here, rendering it, 'if any man (or, he that doth) long after life and loveth to see good days.' The term 'see' has also the intensive force of experiencing or knowing personally, as it often has in the Old Testament, e.g. Ps. xvi. 10, xviii. 13, etc.—let him restrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile. Turning the second persons of the Hebrew and the Septuagint into third persons, Peter adopts the conditions into which the Psalmist suspends the boon of a life of such good and gladness. There is a climax in these conditions. They rise from the negative idea of making an
end of all evil-speaking, to the stronger but still negative idea of turning away from evil-doing, thence to the positive idea of doing good, and finally to the sedulous pursuit of peace. The sins of which are comprehensively denoted by the two distinct terms evil (which need not be limited to mere terms of reproach or the like) and guilt; on which latter see ii. 1. 22. He first notices what vices are to be guarded against, to wit, that we are not to be abusive and insolent, that we are not to be fraudulent and double. And then he goes on to deeds (Calvin). With this compare James on the bridling and taming of the tongue (i. 36. iii. 1-12).

Ver. 11. And let him turn from evil and do good. The best authorities introduce the connecting 'and,' or 'further,' which the A. V. omits. The 'eschew' of the A. V. (comp. Shakespeare's 'What cannot be eschewed, must be endured.' A. J. W. v. 5. 251) connected with the old French eschewer, German schuuen, English shew, means to shun and sufficiently expresses the idea, which is that of turning away from something, which comes in one's way. See specially Prov. iv. 15. To this avoidance of evil is added the duty of active goodness, as these two things are coupled elsewhere in the Psalms (xxxvi. 37) in the burden of prophetic exhortation (Isa. i. 16. 17), and in Paul (Rom. xii. 9).—let him seek peace and pursue it. This blamelessness and kindness of life, at once in word and in deed, should take the still more definite form of a determination to secure peace. This indicates that the irreproachable goodness in view is that still of those who are under peculiar temptation to the opposite. Those who suffer from slander or other kinds of wrong are not to imagine themselves exempt from these great laws of Christian duty. All the more are they called to guard against every form of evil, to resist the inclination to take their case into their own hand. They are to meet evil by doing positive good, and cultivating all that makes for peace. This last is rendered possible by the expenditure of strenuous and unflagging endeavour which the hunter devotes to the chase. The old English 'ensue,' which the A. V. adopts only in this one instance (comp. Shakespeare's 'I know repentant tears ensue the deed,' Lucrece, 302), comes from the French en- suivre, and has now almost lost this transitive force. With the view of the good of life, which Psalmist and Apostle thus proceed upon in their ethical counsels, may be compared such parallels, although they are but partial, as this from Young—

'That life is long which answers life's great end,'

and Bailey's familiar lines—

'We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths; In feelings, not in figures on a dial. We should count time by heart-beats. He most lives Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.'

Ver. 12. Because the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears unto their supplication. This blameless, patient, beneficent, and peaceable manner of life, which has been recommended as containing the secret of all gladness in one's life, and all goodness in one's days, is further urged on the ground of God's observant interest in our life. He keeps the righteous ever within the loving vision of His eye and gracious hearing of His ear. It cannot, therefore, but go well with them, however they be tried by slander or persecution. The word rendered 'prayers' in the A. V. is singular in the original, and is always given as singular by the A. V. except in this one passage. It means also rather prayer for particular benefits than prayer in general,—but the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil. Peter fails to add what the Psalmist appends here, 'to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.' The preposition, also, is the same here as in the former clause, and should be translated simply 'upon,' not 'against.' It is doubtful, too, whether any difference between the anthropomorphic terms 'face' and 'eye' can be made good, such as is supposed, e.g., by Schott, who takes the former to be a figure of favourable regard, and the latter of hostile. The different meaning which God's sleepless observance must have to the evil is left as self-understood, and obtains thereby an intense force. It is enough for the righteous to know that God's eye is upon the evil, and the knowledge of this adds to their own sense of security in the midst of temptation.

Ver. 13. And who is he that will do evil, if ye be zealous of that which is good? The counsels of vers. 8, 9 are yet again enforced by a still more pointed statement of the security of the righteous. This statement is attached to the immediately preceding thoughts, God's super-vision of the evil as well as of the good being the guarantee that no real harm can be inflicted by the former on the latter. Its interrogative form adds also to its confidence. Compare the great succession of interrogatives in Rom. viii. 31—35, but such prophetic parallels as Isa. i. 9, which latter may perhaps be in Peter's mind here. The verb rendered 'harm' is interpreted by some (e.g., Schott) in the more specific sense of making one out to be an evil-doer. The point then would be that, however calumniated among men, they could not be made evil-doers in God's sight. The verb, however, usually means to do evil to one (Acts vii. 6. 19. xii. 17. 18. and nearly everywhere) and therefore, in the strong sense of harm, injurious treatment; and the idea, therefore, is that, however ungenerously dealt with, they shall yet sustain no real hurt; they shall still be in God's safe keeping, and the blessedness of the new life within them will make them superior to the malice and enmity of men. Instead of the 'followers' (or, as it should rather be, 'imitators') of the A. V., the best authorities read 'zealots,' i.e. 'zealous, or "envious.' Some render it 'followers of Him who is good,' but this is less likely.

Ver. 14. But even if ye should have to suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed are ye. The old formula 'but and if,' which the A. V. took over here from the Vulgate and the Rheinisch Version (it is not found here in Wycliffe, Tyndale, Cranmer, or the Genevan), is needlessly retained by the Revised Version in this passage, and in 1 Cor. vii. 28, although it is dropped in Matt. xxiv. 48. In Shakespeare we find both the phrases 'an if' and 'and if.' The word 'and' or 'an' seems to have been used in middle English, both as the copulative conjunction and as the conditional if. A distinction then was made between them by the limitation of 'an' to the latter sense, and when this 'an' ceased to carry its meaning on its face, the word 'if' was added for the sake of clearness.
Thus arose the double form 'an if' or 'and if,' which is really equivalent to 'if-if.' Here it may be rendered even if, or, if notwithstanding. It introduces a case which is supposed to be possible, but which at the same time is represented as of small moment in comparison with what has been just stated. The case supposed is also differently expressed. It is not that of having evil done to one, but simply that of having to suffer; and, therefore, it is nothing inconsistent with the fact asserted so confidently in the previous interrogation. They may have their afflictions, but they will be safe against real hurt or evil. Their blessedness will not be affected by the former, but it will make them contribute that sanctified life within, where blessedness finds its shrine. Matt. v. 10 is probably in Peter’s mind. — but fear not their fear. These words and the following are taken freely from Isa. viii. 12, 13.

They may mean, 'be not afraid of the fear which they cause,' which might be equivalent either to 'be not afraid of them,' or to 'be not afraid of what they threaten or inflict' (comp. Ps. xcv. 5).

Most interpreters prefer this sense; and it is understood by various of the Versions. Tyndale and the Genevan, e.g., give ‘fear not though they seem terrible unto;’ Cranmer, ‘be not afraid for any terror of them.’ This implies, indeed, a departure from Isaiah’s meaning, but it fits in excellently with Peter’s present subject. In the prophet, however, the words are intended to check the godly from being carried away by the terrors which troubled their unbelieving fellow-countrymen, and so to keep the original sense of the verb to remain, to be retained, they must be taken here, too, to mean ‘fear not what they fear,’ ‘give way to no such terrors as agitate them.’ The contrast then will be between the alarms and disquietudes which are to be endured by these who have faith in God, and the perfect peace in which those should be kept ‘whose mind is stayed on God.’— neither be troubled: the strong term expressive of agitation is used here, which describes Herod’s trouble, Matt. ii. 3; the trouble of the disciples on the sea, xiv. 26; the trouble of Christ’s own spirit at the grave of Lazarus, John xi. 33, etc. At times the fear of man had been Peter’s deadliest snare, and bitterest misery. It is not strange that he should bear this witness to the inconsistency of such fear with the life of gladness and goodness.

Ver. 13. But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. The A. V., following Tyndale, Cranmer, and the Genevan, adopts the reading of the Textus Receptus, viz. ‘the Lord God.’ The Vulgate, Wycliffe, and the Rhemish have ‘the Lord Christ,’ and this reading must be accepted as having by far the weightiest evidence on its side. The Revised Version rightly accepts it, giving it at the same time greater point by making the term ‘Lord’ not a mere name of Christ, but a predicate. The Greek, though not absolutely conclusive, is on the whole in favour of this rendering. Isaiah’s words, therefore, are continued, but with two significant modifications. Christ takes the place of the Jehovah of hosts, who is represented in the prophecy as the object of sanctification, and the words, and the words ‘in your hearts’ are added in order to express the fact that this sanctification is not to be of a formal or external order, but to rest in the deepest seat of feeling. The term ‘sanctify’ here meant to regard and honour as holy; and, as appears from the explanatory terms, ‘let Him be your fear’ and ‘let Him be your dread’ (viii. 13), it amounts to much the same as ‘fear.’ The fear of man is to be displaced by the fear of Christ, and of Him as our true Lord (comp. Luke xii. 4, 5). Thus the Apostle places before us Christ to be our Lord, and to be set up in our hearts as the object of reverence and godly fear, in words which the prophet of the Old Testament uses with, regard to the Lord Jehovah’ (Humphrey, Comm. on the Revised Version, p. 442). — ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you.

The ‘and’ with which the A. V. introduces this sentence is not found in the best manuscripts. This makes it more probable that what now follows is not to be taken as a distinct counsel, ‘be ready,’ etc., but as in intimate converse with the preceding statement. One way in which this sanctifying of Christ as Lord will express itself is in meeting fairly and frankly the difficulties and questionings of others. The inward homage which we pay to Him does not absolve from responsibility to others, or justify disregard of their inquiries. What it implies is neither on the one hand the reticence which fear or indifference may prompt, nor on the other the propensity to dispute about our hope, but a readiness to give an account of it wherever it may be necessary or helpful to do so. The phrase means literally ‘ready for an apology,’ the noun being that which is variously rendered in our A. V. as “answer” (Acts xxv. 16; 1 Cor. ix. 3; 2 Tim. iv. 16) and here (Acts xxii. 1; Phil. i. 7, 16) and ‘clearing of oneself’ (2 Cor. vii. 11). It has been supposed to refer here to official examination, or to legal processes such as Christians were subjected to under the Emperor Trajan. The general notion, however, in which the inquirers are described make it clear that what is in view is not readiness to face judicial investigation, but readiness to give at all fit times to all fit persons a reasonable defence or explanation of the Christian hope. The term ‘apology’ is used not in the popular sense of an excuse, but in that of an apologetical vindication. It was afterwards applied to the early treatises written in defence of the Christian faith by the so-called Apologists, Tertullian, Theophilus, Athenagoras, etc. The times are defined by the ‘always,’ which covers all fit occasions, small or great, pleasant or the reverse. The fit persons are defined as embracing not indeed all and sundry, but all who ask ‘an account’ (a phrase occurring only here) of this hope, all who demand to know what can be said on the subject of a hope in One risen from the dead, which so manifestly makes new men of those whom it inspires. These are to be considerably met, and, if possible, satisfied. — but (or, yet) with meekness and fear. A qualification of the kind of satisfaction that is to be attempted, — a constraint against an over-readiness, which, instead of conciliating, prejudices and hurts. The spirit of truth, says Leighton, is itself the spirit of meekness — the dove that rested on that great champion of truth, who is truth itself. This ‘meekness’ (on which see also ver. 4) is another of those virtues which have been so elevated and enriched by the Gospel as to be made practically new things. In the old Greek system of morals it had, indeed, a better place assigned it than was allowed.
make of the facts of redemption. In the New Testament it is by a light within the man (Matt. vi. 33; Luke xi. 34-36), or by this inner witness, termed conscience in the Epistles, by which is meant primarily a 'consciousness which the man has of himself in his relation to God, manifesting itself in the form of a self-testimony; the result of the action of the Spirit in the heart' (Cremer). It may be weak (1 Cor. viii. 7, 12), evil (Heb. x. 22), defiled (Tit. i. 15), reared (1 Tim. iv. 2). But on the other hand it may be pure (2 Tim. i. 3), void of offence (Acts xxiv. 16), or good (here and at ver. 21; as also Acts xxiii. 1; 1 Tim. i. 5, 19; Heb. xiii. 18). In the last-named passage its goodness is expressed by an epithet meaning honourable or fair to see. Here it is described by an epithet which refers to intrinsic moral quality.

There is an awkwardness, however, in attributing moral qualities to the conscience itself (we can scarcely speak, e.g., of a holy conscience), in this connexion the adjective may perhaps have the sense of unimpaired, unimpaired (see Chrys. in Biblio-thal. Lex. to the N. T.). The readiness to 'give an answer' receives thus another important qualification. It is essential that it be given not only in meekness and fear, but in the calm, clear strength of a mind conscious of nothing in the walk to give the lie to the apology. In vindicating to others the hope that is in ourselves, we must be able to point to the witness of the life in confirmation of the words:

'Our acts our angels are, or good or ill.
Our fatal shadows that walk by us still.' —Fletcher.

In order that in the matter wherein ye are spoken against they may be put to shame who abuse your good behaviour (or, manner of life) in Christ. The construction and the sense are similar to what we have had already in ii. 12, which see. The words 'as evil-doers,' which are inserted here by the A. V., and some weighty manuscripts and Versions, are omitted by the Revised Version and some of the best critics. There is a similar division of opinion among textual experts as to whether we should read in the first clause, 'ye are spoken against' (which is preferred by the Revised Version), or 'they speak evil of you,' as in the A. V. The verb, which the A. V. translates 'falsely accuse,' occurs only twice again in the Received Text of the N. T., viz. in Matt. y. 44 (where, however, it is rejected by the best critics as insufficiently attested), and Luke vi. 25, where it is rendered 'despicably use.' As in classical Greek it has the sense of insulting, acting insolently to one, abusively threatening one, it is best rendered here 'abuse,' or (with R. V.) 'revile,' and the reference will therefore be to coarse and insolent misrepresentation of the way in which Christians live in the face of heathenism, rather than to 'accusations' in the stricter sense. 'Thus, without stirring,' says Leighten, 'the integrity of a Christian conquers; as a rock, unremoved, breaks the waters that are dashing against it.'... And without this good conscience and conversation we cut ourselves short of other apologies for religion, whatever we may say for it. One unchristian action will disgrace it more than we can repair by the largest and best framed speeches on its behalf,'
III. 17-22.

Christian Endurance of Wrong enforced by Christ's constant Graciousness to the worst of Wrong-Doers, above all to those of Noah's time.

17 For it is "better" if the "will of God be so," that ye suffer for "well-doing," than for "evil-doing." For Christ also hath "once suffered" for "sins," the "just" for the "unjust," that he might "bring us to God, being" put to death in the "flesh," but "quickened by the "Spirit" by which also he went and "preached unto the "spirits in" prison; which sometime were "disobedient," when once the "long-suffering" of God "waited" in the "days" of Noah, while the "ark" was "a-preparing," wherein few, "that is, eight" souls, were saved by "water." The like "figure whereunto" even "baptism" doth also now "save us," (not the "putting away of the" "filth of the flesh, but"

21 "answer" of a good "conscience"
toward God,) by "the" resurrection of Jesus Christ: who is "gone into "heaven," and is on the "right hand of God;" angels and "authorities and" powers being "made" subject unto him.

We are now brought face to face with one of the unsolved, if not insoluble, problems of New Testament interpretation. The remarkable paragraph about a preaching to the spirits in prison has been regarded by many eminent theologians as the primary proof text for the article of faith which is embodied in the creeds in the terms *He descended into hell*, on which so many different meanings have been put. It is one of three Petrine passages (Acts ii. 25-31; 1 Pet. iv. 6), which seem to many to be closely related. It is also one of a larger class, including Matt. xii. 40, Luke xxi. 43, Rom. x. 6-8, Eph. iv. 8-10, Ps. xvi. 9-11, Acts xiii. 34-37, etc., which have been supposed to bear more or less directly upon a dogma for which an important place is claimed both in the system of Christian doctrine and in preaching—the dogma of a descent of Christ to
. III. 17–22.] THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER. 211

It has been drawn into the
dispute of a singular variety of theological
views as those of a liberation and elevation
saints of pre-Christian times, a purgatorial
and purification, a penal endurance of
preparation of the victorious Redeemer
punishment, and the advent of the
immediate of God's wrath by man's Surety, a
mission of the victorious Redeemer
imminent death, and the opportunity of
care and a continuous ministry of grace in
her world. The interpretations put upon
these have been too numerous to admit of
discussion, and to spare the reader from
all notice only those of deepest interest.

It is of special and one advantage that no exposition
in removing all the difficulties of
difficulties, as is common in the passage itself.

see are few indeed. Many of the greatest
misconceptions have held a very un-
position on the subject, or have confused
true with a 'dark speech,' and inclined to very
what is its meaning at different periods
its meaning at different periods.

It is at best a question of the
of perishable. We shall, therefore,
clarify the meaning of the disputed
aged and application of each of the disputed
are carefully determined, it should be possible
ide, to what side the balance of proba-
imbalance. The great problems are these
the section refer to a ministry of grace, a
of judgment, or a mere manifestation of

Is the ministry, if such is referred to,
at the point of the Incarnation,
section, or after

Are the men of Noah's genera-
introduced in their proper historical position,
y as examples of a general class? In con-
these problems, two things are too often
forward. It is forgotten how precarious it is
t upon one or two of the obscurities of
ure a great system of doctrine, which is not
harmony with the general view of
which clearly pervades the Bible. It is
true that they are not to be set up as a
direct demonstration, but must be
a light of the writer's immediate object.
object is the Christian duty of enduring
'suffering for righteousness' sake, and the advantage
for well-doing rather than for ill-doing,
with the view of confirming what he has said
that Peter appeals to Christ's own example,
section consequently is, what exposition is
sustained by the detailed exegesis of the
stems, does most justice to the plainer
rays in the paragraph, such as the historical
see to Noah and the building of the ark, etc.,
in clearest harmony with the writer's design,
y, to arm believers smiting under the sense
suffering with Christ-like endurance?

17. For it is better to suffer, if the will
should will it, doing well than doing

This statement resembles that in chap.
It is also true of the Christian character, as was the case
by an appeal to Christ's own case. The two
itions, however, have distinct points of
one. The present is introduced in im-
connection with the criterion of that
attaining a particular kind of conduct, but with what is
of the keeping of a good conscience under
use of wrong, and to the possibility of giving

a right account of the Christian hope to inquirers
or revilers. There Christ's own case is dealt
with specially as an example of endurance which
befits Christians. Here it is expounded mainly
with a view to what His sufferings ultimately
brought Him, in the form of a life quenched,
exalted, and having now in its service angels
and principalities and powers. The word ren-
dered 'better' here is one which does not mean
exactly what is of better moral quality, but rather
what is of greater power or importance, and so
what is preferable or of greater advantage. The

looking still at the pressing question of what
Christian duty is under the burden of suffering
for righteousness' sake, and how a blameless
behaviour should at all hazards be studied in such
circumstances, Peter meets the feeling which rises
against unmerited suffering by reminding the
sufferers of two considerations. These are, first,
that nothing can befal them but by God's will;
and secondly, that if it is God's will that they be
subjected to painful things, their sufferings, instead
of being embittered, should be softened and
relieved by the consciousness that they are
undeserved, and by the assurance that they will
work together for their good. This last idea,
namely, the gain which such sufferings will
bring to the sufferers, is what is specially taken up
and illustrated at length in the following paragraph.

Ver. 18. Because also Christ died once for
sins, a righteous one for unrighteous ones,
in order that he might bring us to God.
There are two varieties of reading to notice here.
Documentary evidence is pretty evenly balanced
between the verb 'suffered' and the verb 'died.'
Although the Revised Version retains the former,
the latter is preferred by the majority of textual
experts (Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles,
Westcott and Hort, Gebhardt). Instead of
'bring us to God' (which is accepted by the
Revised Version and most critics), 'bring you to
God' is adopted by Westcott and Hort.

Christ's suffering or dying is represented to have taken
place on account of sin, in the matter of sin, or in
respect of sin; for the preposition used here has this
general sense. It is so used as to have taken place also
'once,' once for all and no more (cp. Rom. vi. 10;
Heb. vii. 27, ix. 28). This may possibly embody
the idea that this suffering or dying superseded the
necessity of all further suffering or dying of the
same kind, either on the part of Christ Himself
or on that of Christians (so Schott). It is rather
introduced, however, to suggest the difference
between the suffering or death, however bitter
that was, as finished shortly and once for all, and the
continuous power and blessedness of the life
which was its issue. Still greater force is given
to this by the use of the simple historical tense
'died,' which throws all that was painful in
Christ's instance completely into the past. But
Christ's suffering or dying is also described as that of
'a righteous One for unrighteous ones.' A
different preposition is now used for the 'for,'—
one meaning in behalf of, or, to the advantage of.
It is possible that in the present connection,
where the righteous and the unrighteous are set
so decisively over against each other, this idea of
suffering in behalf of others may pass over into,
or imply, that of suffering in the place of others.
Weiss, e.g. (so also Huther), recognises the idea
of substitution at the basis of the statement, in so
far as 'the contrast, which is made so prominent
between the righteous and the unrighteous, necessarily produces the idea that the suffering which was endured by the righteous themselves (Bib. Theol. of the New Testament, i. p. 234, Clark’s Trans.). The more general idea, however, is the one distinctly in view here, and thus there is nothing mingled with the encouragement which is conveyed by Christ’s case as Peter here presents it. If it is right to speak, as Besser does, of the little word ‘once’ as letting ‘a beam of comfort’ fall on the sufferings of Christians, this clause reminds them of the necessity of making sure that their sufferings be not of the kind which their own fault induces, but rather of the kind righteously borne with a view to the good of others. The particular good which Christ set before Him as the object of His suffering or dying was the bringing us to God; by which is meant introducing us to God, giving us admission, or the right of direct access, to God. This is the main sense which the singular noun has in the few passages in which it is found, viz., Rom. v. 2, Eph. ii. 18, iii. 12; and here, too, the idea is neither that of presenting us an offering to God (so the Vulgate, Luther, etc.), nor that of simply calling or summoning us to God, but (as it is rightly understood by Huther, etc.) that of introducing us to actual fellowship with God. This verse, therefore, establishes a certain analogy between Christ and Christians, in so far as He was made subject to suffering not less than they, and was made so not for His own fault but for that of others. This analogy is used, however, in support of the previous statement as to its being a lesser evil that falls on the Christian suffering Christ as an example to suffering Christians. He touches on more than one thing which gave Christ’s sufferings a value all their own. They were of the unique order which (as the ‘once’ implies) was not required for admitted repetition. And the gain which they secured, by which also they pre-eminently illustrate the good which suffering for righteousness’ sake yields, and how preferable it is to suffer, if suffer we must, for well-doing rather than ill-doing, was the otherwise unattainable boon of a direct approach for sinners to God, a free intercourse with God.—put to death indeed in flesh, but quickened in spirit. Two things are here affirmed to have taken effect on Christ, when He suffered or died in order to bring us into this fellowship with God. These, however, are so balanced that the one appears simply as the preliminary to the other, and the attention is concentrated on the latter. The one is rightly given as a ‘being put to death,’ for ‘the term does not mean, as some suppose, merely being condemned to death (compare its use, e.g., in Matt. xxvi. 59, xxvii. 1; Rom. viii. 31; 2 Cor. vi. 9, etc.). The other is correctly interpreted not as a ‘being kept alive’ (which idea is expressed in the New Testament by different terms), but as a ‘being quickened’ or ‘made alive,’ the word being that which is elsewhere (John vi. 21; Rom. iv. 17; 1 Cor. xv. 22, etc.) applied to the raising of the dead to life. To the two things are added definitions of two distinct spheres in which they severally took effect. These are conveyed each by a single noun, which has almost an adverbial force here, viz., ‘in flesh,’ i.e. fleshly-wise, or, as regards the natural, earthly order of life; and ‘in spirit,’ i.e. spirit-wise, or, as regards the higher spiritual order of life. These two terms are analogous to some other antithetical phrases which are applied to Christ, such as ‘according to the flesh’ and ‘according to the spirit of holiness’ (Rom. viii. 14, manifest ‘in the flesh,’ and judged ‘in the spirit’ (1 Tim. iii. 16). They point to two different forms of existence, a natural, mortal form of existence associated with flesh, and a supernatural, immortal form of existence associated with spirit,—in other words, a perishable, corporeal life, and an imperishable, spiritual or incorporeal life. As regards the one, He ceased to live it by being put to death. As regards the other, He continued to live it, and to live it with new power, by being quickened. The A.V., therefore, is entirely at fault in rendering the second noun as the word ‘quickening’ or ‘in spirit,’ as if the reference were to the Holy Spirit and to Him as the Agent in Christ’s resurrection. In this, too, it has deserted the versions of Wycliffe, Tyndale, Cranmer, Geneva, and Rheims, which all give ‘in spirit’ or ‘in spirit’ (1 Cor. xv. 19) in which also He went and preached to the spirits in prison. Here, again, the A.V., following the Genevan alone among these earlier English Versions, is wrong; a rendering which is also adopted by the N. B. Here the sense is, ‘in which,’ i.e. in the spiritual form of life which has just been noticed. The verb ‘preached’ is used absolutely here. It is not to be taken, however, in the vague sense of making proclamation, showing Himself, or to two different persons to Himself (Schott, etc.), but less in the sense of preaching judgment, but in the sense which it elsewhere has in the New Testament, where it occurs, both with the object expressed (e.g. the gospel, the kingdom of God, Christ, etc.), and with the object unexpressed (e.g. Matt. xi. 1; Mark I. 38, etc.), of Christ’s earthly ministry of preaching, which was a message of grace. The word ‘spirits’ is used here, as in Heb. xi. 35, in the sense of disembodied spirits. Elsewhere (e.g. Rev. vi. 9, xx. 4) the term ‘souls’ is used to designate the departed. On the ground of the statement in 2 Pet. ii. 4, and the application of the word ‘spirit’ in such passages as Luke ix. 39, Acts xvi. 18, etc., some have strangely supposed a reference here to the angels who sinned,—which is entirely inconsistent with the historical notice which follows. The phrase ‘in prison’ has the definite force which it has in 2 Pet. ii. 4, Jude 6, Rev. xx. 7, and is not to be explained away as merely equivalent to ‘in safe-keeping,’ or ‘in the world of the dead’ generally.

Ver. 20. aforetime disobedient. The ‘disobedient’ means here again, as in ii. 7, 8, iii. 1, disbelieving, refusing belief and withholding truth. The clause may describe the ‘spirits’ according to the conduct which made them spirits ‘in prison.’ So it is understood by some. It may, however, also indicate the date of the disobedience. The latter view is more in harmony with the specification of time which immediately follows, the ‘when’ giving a more exact definition of the ‘aforetime.’ We should thus translate it: ‘when of old they were disobedient, to wit, at the time when the long-suffering of God,’ etc., rather than (with the R.V., etc.),
which at some time were disobedient,' etc.—when the long-suffering of God was waiting. The 'once' which is inserted by the A. V. has very little documentary evidence, and is supposed to have been due to a conjecture of Erasmus. The 'waiting' is given in the imperfect tense to bring out its lengthened continuance. It is expressed, too, by a verb for which Paul has a particular fondness, and which conveys the idea of the 

intensity or patience' of the waiting. It is applied to the 'earns' expectation' of the creation (Rom. viii. 19), the 'waiting' of those who have the first-fruits of the Spirit (Rom. viii. 23, 25), the waiting for 'the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Cor. i. 7), or for 'the hope of righteousness;' (Gal. v. 5); the looking for 'the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ' (Phil. iii. 20). Outside Paul it occurs only here and in Heb. ix. 28.—in the days of Noah while the ark was prepared. Both the date and the duration at once of the Divine waiting and of the men's disobedience are thus more clearly defined, the date being identified with the times immediately prior to the Flood, and the duration with the whole period of waiting afforded by the construction of the Ark, which is indicated to have extended to 120 years (Gen. vi. 3.—in which few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. Literally it is 'into which,' i.e. by entering into which, or to which. By 'souls' are meant here individuals or persons. The word 'soul,' meaning life or the principle of life, comes to mean life embodied, or the living individual. Occasionally, however (see above on 'spirits'), it is observed in the same sense as on the former case the idea will be either that those few were saved by passing through the water, or that they were brought safely through water into the ark. This latter seems favoured in the margin of the Revised Version, which gives 'into which few, that is, eight souls, were brought safely through water.' In favour of this local sense (which is preferred by Bengel, de Wette, etc.) we have the analogous phrase 'saved, yet so as by (or, through) fire' (1 Cor. iii. 15). But we are left thus without any obvious connection between this mention of water and the following notice of a salvation by water. Most interpreters, therefore, accept the instrumental sense, taking the thought to be that water was the means by which these few were saved. As Huther rightly observes, however, there is nothing to suggest that Peter meant that the same water which was the means of destruction to the mass was the means of safety to the few. All that he has in view is (as the indefinite 'water,' not 'the water,' indicates) that it was by means of water that the few entering the ark which floated them were preserved. And this relation of water to the preservation of the righteous at the time of the Flood is introduced in view of what is to be said of the relation of water, namely that of Baptism, to the salvation of Christian believers now.

Ver. 21. which also in the antitype now saves you, namely baptism. The rendering of the A. V., 'the like figure werecause,' follows a reading which is now given up. The best authorities also substitute 'you' for 'us.' Some interpreters regard both the Ark and the 'few' as having a typical force here. Consequently they seek for an antitype to the Ark in the Church into whose name we are baptized, and without whom baptism can as little save us as the water of the Flood could save without the Ark. They also find an antitype for the 'few' in a material, as if the idea were that the proportion of those saved by baptism to the unbelieving is but small' (so even Huther). But the only things which Peter sets distinctly in the relation of type and antitype are water as preserving life in Noah's generation, and water as saving souls in Peter's own generation. The comparison, therefore, is not between the Flood and Baptism, but simply between water in one service and water in another. What antitypical water is intended, is at once made clear by the appended definition, 'baptism.' Thus, as further explained, the comparison comes to be not between the saving efficacy of water in which the Ark floated and the saving efficacy of Baptism itself now. The latter, like the former, has in a certain sense a relation to a saved state.—not the putting away of the filth of the flesh. This is thrown in to guard against any mistake which the comparison might provoke as to the kind of relation intended. The saving efficacy is parallel in its work and kind like that exerted by water in the case of the Ark and its eight. For the baptism meant is something different from any merely physical cleansing, or any of those ceremonial washings with which both Jew and Gentile were familiar. These two terms, 'putting off' and 'filth' are peculiar to Peter. The former occurs again in 2 Pet. i. 14. What is meant is generally understood to be the putting off of the filth which belongs to the flesh. The peculiar order of the words in the original, however, gives not a little plausibility to another rendering which is adopted by Bengel, Huther, etc.—'the flesh's putting off of uncleanness, i.e. the laying aside of its own uncleanness by the flesh itself.'—but the inquiry of a good conscience toward God. This sentence has greatly perplexed the commentators. The difficulty lies mainly in the use of the word rendered 'answer' by the A. V. This term occurs nowhere else in the N. T. The A. V. stands alone among the old English Versions in translating it 'answer.' Wycliffe gives 'the asking of a good conscience in God;' Tyndale and Cranmer have 'in that a good conscience consenteth to God;' the Genevan has 'in that a good conscience maketh request to God;' the Rhemish renders it 'the examination of a good conscience toward God.' The only meanings of the word which can be verified are these two, viz. (1) an interrogation or question, which is the classical sense (e.g. Herod. vi. 67; Thucyd. iii. 53, 68), and (2) a petition, demand, or the thing asked by petition, in which sense it occurs once in one of the old Greek Versions of Daniel (iv. 14, i.e. iv. 17 of the English Bible). The question, therefore, is—What results from this for the sentence as a whole? Among other renderings which
have been proposed are these: (1) the request (i.e. for salvation or grace) addressed to God by a good conscience; (2) the questioning, or examination, to which a good conscience is subjected before God; (3) the request made to God for a good conscience; (4) the inquiry made by a good conscience after God, or, conversely, the act of a good conscience in seeking after God; (5) the promise, or pledge, to keep a good conscience toward God; (6) the contract, or relation, entered into with God by a good conscience.

This interpretation finds favor with many of the best expositors (Grotius, de Wette, Huther, Plumptre, etc.), and are supported more or less by some of the old versions. The Syriac, e.g., takes the sense to be "when ye confess God with a pure conscience." The form mentioned last of all has the undoubted advantage of giving a clear and pertinent idea, viz., that the person baptized, by the reception of baptism, enters into a relation—as it were of contract—with God, in which he submits in faith to God's promise of salvation" (so Huther, who now prefers this view). It does not make the phrase a "good conscience" a synonym here for a "reconciled conscience," but retains for it the simpler sense which is more in harmony with similar cases, as in Rom. ii. 18; Acts xxii. 1; 1 Tim. i. 5, 10; iii. 9; 1 Pet. iii. 16, viz., that this is done with a "pure intention." It also founds upon the primitive practice of addressing questions to the applicant for baptism and obtaining certain replies from him, such, e.g., as these: "Dost thou renounce Satan?—I do renounce him. Dost thou believe in Christ?—I do believe in Him. So Neander (Ch. Hist., vol. i. pp. 424, 427, Bohn)."

Ver. 22. who is on the right hand of God. A familiar phrase expressing "the regal and judicial power" to which Christ is exalted. Compare such passages as Rom. viii. 34; Eph. i. 20; Col. iii. 1; Phil. iii. 20; Heb. i. 3; and the fundamental O. T. passage, Ps. cx. 1—"having gone into heaven." The verb is the same as the "went" in ver. 19—with the important difference, however, that here the going is not said to have been "in spirit" or "spirit-wise." The phrase is important, as it presupposes, if it does not expressly state, Peter's affirmation of Christ's Ascension—angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to him. These terms, and others of a similar kind, are often used, especially by Paul, as designations of the various powers of the heavenly world (cf. Rom. viii. 38; Eph. i. 21, 22; Col. i. 16, ii. 10; 1 Cor. xv. 27; Heb. ii. 8). Whether they describe these simply according to their several relations
to God and to the world, or according to their several ranks and orders, is not easy to determine. In favour of the latter view, however, appeal is made to Christ's own words in Matt. xviii. 10, which are taken by many (e.g., Meyer) to assume differences of rank or class among the angels. The application of these two terms, authorities and powers, to the angels is peculiar to Paul, the present being the only non-Pauline instance. The three names are used here not with the view of expressing any particular relation in which they stand to one another, but simply as names covering generally all the heavenly powers over which Christ is supreme. It has been supposed that the various clauses of this verse came from some doxology, or from some form of faith professed by candidates for baptism. This, however, is uncertain. The point of the verse is to bring out the heightened power which resulted to Christ from His suffering and death, and thus to crown the train of statement by which the blessing of suffering for righteousness’ sake is enforced. The particular phrase in the verse is lost to the English reader through the inversion of the order of the Greek in the A. V. The order is not, “who is gone into heaven and is on the right hand of God,” etc., but, as in the K. V., “who is on the right hand of God, having gone in to heaven,” etc. That is to say, Peter first states the fact that He who died in the cause of others is now exalted to the highest place of honour next to God Himself, then explains that He came to this place by passing into heaven itself, and finally adds that being elevated to the place of the heavenly powers He now has all these powers subject to Him and in His service. In the light of this examination of the train of thought and the usage of the disputable terms which occur in this verse, what verdict may now be ventured on the leading solutions of this enigma of the New Testament? Several of these are at once and entirely discredited by the plainest dicta of the exegesis. This is the case (1) with the idea, which has commenced itself to interpreters like Grotius, Dr. John Brown, and (to some extent) Leighton, that the preaching affirmed is simply that adopted by the Apostles to men of their own time, who were in bondage to the law or in captivity to sin. This overlooks the fact that Christ Himself, and not Christ through the Apostles, is represented as the preacher. It puts a gloss upon the phrase ‘spirits in prison.’ It also takes the disobedient of Noah’s time simply as types of the disobedient of apostolic times. The same holds good (2) of the view advocated by many distinguished Lutherans, that Christ went and proclaimed judgment, or made a judicial manifestation of Himself, to the impenitent in the world of the dead (of whom those of Noah’s time are mentioned as exemplary of all, or as the worst of all), and that this was done not by the soul of the dead Christ, but by the revivified Christ during the interval between His quickening and His actual resurrection. This interpretation, which was that of the old Lutheran theologians, is inconsistent with the usage of the word ‘preached,’ which denotes not a message of judgment or condemnation, but a message of grace. It is adhered to, in so far as regards the assertion of a descent and message to the world of the dead by Christ after His restoration to life and before His resurrection to earth, by many exeges who otherwise differ from each other as to the object of the Descent (e.g., Schott, de Wette, Wiesinger, Huther, etc.). But in all forms it substitutes the Restored Christ, or Christ in His spiritual body, for Christ in a spiritual mode of activity (which is what Peter affirms) as the Preacher who goes with the message. Not less inadmissible is (3) the Patristic view, that in the period between His death and His resurrection Christ went and preached to the righteous dead of Old Testament times in their place of intermediate detention, with the view of perfecting their salvation. This interpretation has been connected by Roman Catholic theologians both with their doctrine of a Limbus Patrum, and with that of Purgatory. It has been adopted in part by some Protestants of note, including both Zwingli and Calvin; the latter of whom takes the ‘spirits in prison’ to mean the spirits ‘on the watch-tower, in expectation of Christ.’ But this view does violence to the sense of the word rightly rendered prison. A different position must be allowed (4) to another line of interpretation which has seldom wanted advocates, and which secures the adhesion of many of the best expositors of our own time, namely, that which discovers here a ministry of grace, in the proper sense of the word, on the part of the disembodied Christ in the world of the dead. This is held in a variety of forms. Some think the passage points to a second grade of probation open to all, righteous and unrighteous, in the intermediate state (Heard, Lange, etc.). Others regard it as meaning that after His death Christ descended to Hades as the herald of grace to the men of Noah’s generation, but only to those who had repented at the crisis of their death in the Deluge (Bengel, Birkas, etc.). There are those again who see in it a more general reference to the men of the Flood, as men to whom some compensation was made through Christ in the other world for the shortening of their opportunities in the present. Bishop Wordsley, e.g., believes it to be one of several passages in which we may observe ‘an anxiety, if the expression may be allowed, of the sacred writers to convey distinct intimations that the antediluvian race is not uninterested in the redemption and retribution.’ Yet another class of interpreters recognizes in it a bona fide proclamation of the Gospel in Hades, either in the form of an offer of grace to those who had it not in this world, or in that of a renewed offer of grace with renewed opportunities of repentance to all. It is supposed, therefore, to furnish some warrant for cherishing the ‘larger hope.’ At present it is expounded by not a few eminent exeges in the interest of ‘wider and happier thoughts as to the state of the dead,’ and in support of the belief that beyond the grave ‘the love which does not will that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, proclaims evermore to the spirits in prison, during the hours of the Descent into Hades, the glad tidings of reconciliation’ (Plumptre). There are serious difficulties, however, in the way of this interpretation. Besides the fact that it crosses the analogy of the faith, running athwart the clear and consistent doctrine of Scripture, that the present life is the theatre of human destinies and the scene of prolation and grace, it is exegetically faulty at various points. It gives the passage little more than the value of a digression. It introduces into the important phrase ‘in which'
(ver. 19) a different meaning from its antecedent, making it equivalent to 'in which spirit,' or 'in which spiritual mode of being,' but to 'in which disembodied, or quickened, spirit,' and thus representing the Preacher not as Christ in a particular form of life and activity (which is Peter's statement), but as the disembodied or quickened Christ. It fails to give any adequate reason for the exact specification of the time of the disobedience, and for the mention of the men of Noah's day only. It reduces to something like mere descriptive accessories the details about the building of the Ark, the Divine waiting, and the salvation of eight souls. The preaching which it affirms is one the results of which are in no way indicated, and the introduction of which at this point is in no obvious connection with Peter's exhortation. What motive to a life of well-doing and of patience under injury in this world lies in the statement that, in the other world, the disobedient and injurious have the Gospel preached to them through Christ's descent to Hades? There is, however, (5) another method of interpretation, which has been followed more or less since Augustine gave it the sanction of his great name. It has secured the general assent of men like Aquinas, Hugo of St. Victor, Bede, Beza, Gerhard, Turretin, and, more recently, of Bezaer, Hofmann, Schweitzer, etc. It takes the preaching to have happened not in Hades but upon the earth, not during the period between Christ's death and resurrection but in Noah's time. In one point of importance, however, this interpretation required, and has recently received, a precision which it had not in the hands of its older advocates. The Preacher must be understood to be 'Christ himself, preaching to Noah or to Noah's people, as in the Ark.' What is affirmed, therefore, is a gracious activity on the part of the pre-incarnate Christ, a preaching in the form of the Divine warnings of the time, the spectacle of the building of the Ark, etc. This we believe to be the exposition which best satisfies the condition of the exegesis. The two main objections urged against it are, that the phrase 'spirits in prison' becomes equivalent to 'spirits worn in prison,' and that the word 'went,' which implies local motion, is improperly used. But the answer to the latter lies in the Old Testament method of speaking of Jehovah as coming, going, ascending, and in the analogous use of the verb 'came' in Eph. ii. 17. And as to the former objection, if in this view there is a difference of time supposed between the preaching and the state of imprisonment, in the other views there is a difference of time supposed between the preaching and the disobedience. On the other hand, the arguments in favour of this interpretation are numerous and weighty. It retains the natural sense for all the capital terms—spirit, quickened, preached, prison, etc. It preserves the same Subject all through, namely Christ as the Subject put to death, Christ as the Subject quickened, Christ (not the quickened Christ or the disembodied Christ) as the Subject preaching, Christ as the Subject exalted. It accounts for the definite statement of the time of the disobedience. It starts not with what is obscure in the section, viz. the phrase 'spirits in prison,' but with what is clear and unambiguous, viz. the historical reference to the Flood, and lays that direct the exposition. It seeks to cure the problem of the passage in Peter's own writings, particularly in what he says of an activity of the pre-incarnate Christ, or the Spirit of Christ, in the O. T. prophets (1 Petr. i. 11). It gives an intelligible reason for the details about Noah's time, the building of the Ark being instanced as one of the means by which Christ preached to the men of that generation. It helps us to understand why Peter goes on to notice Christ's present position of power and honour at God's right hand. It bears most directly on the injunction to a Christ-like behaviour under wrong, in relation to which the whole section is brought in. For it points the reader to the graciousness which has always been seen in the case of their Lord, and which He has never failed to exhibit towards even the worst of wrong-doers. The strain of the paragraph, therefore, amounts to this: Be content to suffer. It is a means to be used so, provided ye suffer for well-doing, not for ill-doing. Look to Christ's example—how He did good to the most unworthy and died for the unjust. Think, too, what the issue of suffering was to Him—how, if He suffered death as regards the mortal side of existence, He was raised thereby as regards the spiritual to a life of heightened power. Look back, also, on the distant past; ere He had yet submitted to the limitations of the flesh, and when He had that supernatural order of being into which He has risen again. Reflect how then too He was true to this gracious character, how He went and preached to that guiltiest generation of the Flood, making known to those gossest of wrong-doers, by the spectacle of the Ark a-building, the agency of His Servant Noah, and the varied warnings of the time, His will to save them. And consider that He has the same graciousness still, of which baptism is the figure—that He can still save oppressed righteous ones as He saved the believing souls of Noah's house, that all the more indeed can He now save such, seeing that in His exalted life He has all the powers of heaven made subject to Him.
Further Exhortations based upon the facts of Christ's Sufferings and Death, and directed specially to the Renunciation of all Gentile Impurity.

1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us, in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable and idolatries: wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. For, for this cause was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

This paragraph brings to an end the series of counsels which began with chap. ii. 11, and have dealt with what is essential to a becoming conversation among the Gentiles. Christian duty in relation to the impurities of heathen associates is now enforced in the strongest terms and with a gleam of gravest irony. Christ's example in suffering is still the key-note. That example, having been already used at length to point the blessedness of suffering for righteousness' sake, is now made the ground for enforcing absolute separation from the vices of paganism,—a separation as absolute as if one were dead to them. The terms in which Peter expresses this resemblance, more than anything else in his writings, Paul's method of speaking of the believer as dead, dead with Christ, dead to the law, dead to sin, freed from the law by death as the woman is loosed from the husband's law by the husband's death, freed from sin by becoming dead. The section is not a mere resumption of a statement (that, namely, in ii. 18), which has been lost sight of for a time in another train of reflection. It is the natural continuation of a train of exhortation which has not been broken, but has turned, and still turns, on the necessity of seeing that, if we suffer, it be only for well-doing, not for evil-doing. It contains one great difficulty, the declaration (in ver. 6) about a preaching of the Gospel to them that are dead. That passage has seemed to some interpreters so intractable as they must have given it up in despair. Luther imagined that some corruption had crept into its text. Others have been driven to regard it as the gloss of some copyist or annotator. It is undoubtedly akin, however, to the former paragraph in iii. 19, 20, and the results
reached on the one hand throw some light on the other.

VER. 1. Christ then having suffered as regards the flesh. The words 'for us,' which the A. V. inserts, have the support of some good authorities. They are wanting, however, in the oldest of all our manuscripts as well as in some important Versions, and are rightly omitted by the R. V. and the best critics. The 'suffered' is a general expression, signifying His death as well as what He endured previous to that. That His death is in view appears from the definition of the 'suffered' by the 'being put to death' in iii. 18. What Peter says here, too, is not exactly 'in the flesh,' but 'as to the flesh' or 'fleshly-wise.' The term used is precisely the same as in iii. 18. It is introduced twice in this verse, perhaps with this touch of comfort in it, that, as in Christ's case, so in the case of Christians, it is only the permissible side of being that suffering can hurt. The 'then' does not indicate a return from a digression. It carries out to further issues a fact which has formed the ruling idea in all that has been advanced since iii. 7. —do ye also arm yourselves. A strong appeal to them in their sins, declaring in effect that Christ did on His. The course which they have to take is one of conflict. They must have an equipment for their warfare, if they are to wage it worthily, and the armour or equipment which will make them ready is that which their Captain Himself faced his curriculum of suffering. The idea of a spiritual armour, which appears repeatedly in the Pauline Epistles (Rom. xiii. 12; 2 Thess. iii. 10-17; 1 Thess. v. 8), and meets us also in the Old Testament (e.g. Is. lix. 17), is taken up this once and in briefest possible form in Peter's writings. The verb 'arm yourselves' occurs nowhere again in the New Testament, although it is common enough in Classical Greek, both in the literal sense and in the figurative. —with the same mind, because he who has suffered as regards the flesh, has ceased from sin. Although the several parts of this sentence seem intelligibly enough, the exact sense of the whole, specially in view of what is immediately connected with it in the next verses, is extremely difficult to determine. Some excellent exegesis have felt a hesitancy in regarding it, which has tempted them to doubt its genuineness. The problem, however, is not to be disposed of in that fashion. The only uncertainties of reading are these: Are we to read 'in the flesh,' or have we here exactly the same phrase as before, viz. 'as regards the flesh'? And a 'e we to read 'from sin,' as in the A. V. and the text of the R. V., or, as in the margin of the R. V., 'unto sins'? In both cases the balance of evidence seems on the side of the latter supposition. The first question is as to the sense of the word which is rendered 'mind' here. It occurs only once again in the New Testament, and there in the plural, viz. Heb. iv. 12, where it is translated 'intent' in the A. V. and R. V. Its best understood meaning (according to some, indeed, its only meaning) is thought, consideration, conception. If this is adhered to, the idea which results may be variously construed. Some take it to be = arm yourselves with the same thought, that is to say, with the thought of having to suffer according to the flesh as Christ suffered, and do so because he who has so suffered has ceased from sin (so Huther, etc.). Others (including Calvin, the Genevan, Witseney, Mason, etc.) understand the latter words to express the contents of the thought, and put it either in the general form = arm yourselves with the same thought, namely, the thought that he who has suffered according to the flesh has ceased from sin; or in the more definite form = arm yourselves with the same thought, or conception, of what suffering is, which Christ Himself had when He suffered, namely, that he who has suffered has ceased from sin. But this distorts the connection with the opening clause, which speaks not of what Christ or others thought about suffering, but simply of the fact that He suffered. In some of its forms, too, it seems to deal with the very definite phrase 'the same thought,' as if it were 'this thought,' or 'this very thought.' The noun in question, however, has another meaning, namely, dispassion, intention, or purpose. This is a rare use. But it seems capable of being made out as an occasional occurrence, both in the Classics (e.g. Xen. Anab. iii. 1, 13; Plato, Legg. 769 E.; Eurip. Hec. 1026, etc.) and in the Septuagint (Prov. iii. 21, v. 2). Here it gives the clear and conscious idea, that in Christ's case the Christians were to arm themselves with the same purpose with which their Lord Himself endured suffering. What that purpose in His case was, appears from the previous section. It was to do good to wrong-doers, by bringing them to God—because he who has suffered according to the flesh has ceased from sin. This is added to establish and enforce the counsel. But how it does that is greatly disputed. Some suppose that he who suffers is to be the subject of the sentence, and take it to mean that by suffering in the flesh He put an end to sin itself, and brought in an everlasting righteousness; or that He thus made an end of sin-offering. But this introduces dogmatic ideas, which the context does not suggest; while violence is also done to some of the terms. Others suppose it means that Christ, having once suffered, is now done with sin, and is fortified against its assaults. The expression, however, seems to a general principle of stating a principle which is not to be limited to the single case of Christ. Others give the 'suffered' an ethical sense, or a metaphorical, supposing that it refers either to the crucifying of the old man (Calvin, etc.), or to the ideal dying of the believer with Christ in baptism (Schott, etc.). But this is inconsistent with the sense of the same term 'suffered' in the first clause. Some of the best interpreters retain the reading of the Received Text (which admits of being rendered either 'has ceased from sin,' or 'has been made to cease from sin'), and hold that this must be taken in the active sense of a ceasing from sinning. So some construe it as = he who suffers on account of his opposition to sin, has broken with sin and shows that its power over him is gone (Weiss). And others, in various ways, understand it to refer to the influence of suffering in subduing sinful inclination and ripening moral character. Even this, however, appears to come short of the almost axiomatic force of the sentence. For it is by no means a general truth that suffering effects cessation from sin. The difficulty will be lightened, however, if we adopt the other reading, 'unto sins.' This gives us a phrase, 'is done with sins,' or 'has been brought to an end as regards sins,' which may fairly express the cessation of a certain relation to sin, and prevent
el to the Pauline formula, 'be that is dead from sin' (Rom. vi. 7). We have then a proposition, which holds good of both subjects referred to in the verse, Christ and Christian, each occurring to his peculiar object. And, taking the 'suffered' to be here, as in iii. 18, the article of death we make the import of the whole this—suffered and died, with the purpose of good; confront your sufferings with the purpose of good; confront your suffering
only New Testament instance. It means social drinking-bouts or revelings, rather than merely banqueting,' as the A. V. makes it,—and lawless idolatries. Here, as so often elsewhere, idolatry and immorality are associated as going hand in hand with each other. The 'abominable' of the A. V. and R. V. dearly conveys the point of the adjective. It describes the idolatries as unlawful, outside the pale of Divine law. In the only other passage of the New Testament in which it occurs (Acts x. 28) it expresses the idea that fellowship between a Jew and a man of another nation was contrary to Jewish law. This mention of 'idolatries' as the last and worst of the things after which the 'desire of the Gentiles' ran, clearly indicates the Gentile extraction of Peter's readers. From the time of the captivity idolatry was the sin which the Jew specially foreswore. It could not with any semblance of justice be spoken of as a characteristic Jewish vice in Peter's day. The passage in Rom. ii. 23, which is often cited in support of the widely held view, deals with an entirely different matter,—the inconsistency on the part of one who professes to hate idolatry and yet commits sacrilege.

Ver. 4, on which account they think it strange that ye run not with them in the same effusion (or, slough) of proflicity, speaking evil of you. The 'wherein' of the A. V. (which the R. V. also retains) is so far misleading, as it naturally means to the English reader 'in which vice.' The sense, however, is not = they think it strange that ye run not with them in their vices in the same slough, etc. The construction of the sentence, which is somewhat dubious, may be = they think it strange that ye are astonished, namely, the matter of your not running with them,' etc.; or thus,—'at which state of affairs they are astonished, seeing that you do not run with them,' etc.; or best, perhaps, thus,—'on which account (i.e. on account of the fact that ye did once walk in these excesses) they are astonished when ye do not now run with them,' etc. The several terms are remarkable for their force and vividness. The first verb, which occurs repeatedly in the N. T., with its primary sense of 'receive a stranger,' lodge,' etc. (Acts x. 23, xxviii. 7; Heb. xii. 2), has here the secondary sense of 'counting strange' or 'being astonished,' which it has also in ver. 12, and in Acts xxvii. 20. The second (comp. also Mark vi. 33; Acts iii. 11) conveys the idea of eager companionship in running. The noun rendered 'excess' by the A. V., and the text of R. V., is not found elsewhere in the N. T. In the Classics, where also it is of very rare occurrence, it seems to mean primarily effusion or protruding, and secondarily an outcry. Different senses are proposed for it here, some preferring the local sense of 'sink,' 'slough,' 'puddle' (Alford, Frommeller, etc.); others that of 'stream' (Schott, etc.), or 'flood' (margin of R. V.); others the more general sense of 'overflowing' (Huther, Hofmann); others again the sense of 'softness' (Graevius). But the most adequate exposition is that of de Wette. The old Greek lexicographers explain it as 'slackness,' 'looseness,' etc. The other noun, rendered 'riot' by the A. V. and R. V., means rather dissoluteness or looseness. In Greek ethics it denotes the prodigal squandering of one's means, and then a prodigal, dissolute mode of life, the two ideas of wasteful expenditure and expenditure on one's appetites being near skin.

It occurs again in Eph. v. 18 (A. V. 'excess'), and in Tit. 1. 6 (A. V. 'riot'). The adverb is found once, viz. Luke xvi. 13, in the phrase 'of riotous living.'—speaking evil of you, i.e. slandering, reviling you. It is the term which, when used of God, is rendered blaspheme. With what power do these few bold strokes dash the mass of the heathen over all barriers that stand in the way of vicious indulgence, and their haste to drag others with them on to the same goal of a life of appetite! Wordsworth thinks the point of the comparison is the idea of 'two storms flowing together into one and the same sink;' a metaphor which he considers peculiarly expressive 'in countries where after violent rains the gutters are suddenly swollen, and pour their contents together with violence into a common sewer.' With this N. T. picture of the banded troops of the Gentiles rushing together in a foaming confluence for reckless indulgence and effusion in sin,' compare such pictures in the poetic literature of the heathen as that which Ovid delineates of the Bacchic orgies (Met. iii. 529, etc.; see also Dr. John Brown, in loc.).

Ver. 5. Who shall give account; the same phrase as in Heb. xiii. 19, Acts x. 38, and found on Christ's own lips, e.g. Matt. xii. 35; Luke xvi. 2.—to him that is ready to judge. The formula 'ready to' (which is used again only in Acts xxi. 13; 2 Cor. xii. 14), along with the tense in which the 'to judge' is cast, points to the last judgment as certain and near, and to the Judge as prepared to judge once for all. This Judge, too, we may infer from the general conclusion to which chap. iii. 17-22 led up, is Christ,—the Christ who is reviled, who is reviled, who is reviled, the Christ who, in the time of His own suffering, committed His case to Him that judgeth Righteously.—the quick and the dead; or, simply, quick and dead. Here, as in a good many passages of Scripture (e.g. Lev. xi. 10; Num. xvi. 30; Ps. lv. 15, cxliv. 3; Acts xvi. 37; 2 Tim. iv. 1; Heb. iv. 12), the adjective 'quick' has its ancient sense of 'living,' which is now for the most part lost. Compare Shakespeare's

'Merry wives, iii. 4, 90.

and the still current 'cut to the quick,' 'quickset,' 'quicksilver,' etc. The universality and impartiality of the judgment are thus expressed. For the phrase 'quick and dead' is not to be limited either to the heathen slanderers, or (with Schott) to the Christians who are to get their rights, whether alive or dead, at Christ's coming. It is for the comfort of suffering believers to know that there is a judgment in waiting for their revilers, and that this judgment is in the hands of Him who will impartially give their rights to all, whether alive or dead, whether heathen or Christian.

Ver. 6. For to this end was the gospel preached also to the dead, in order that they might be judged indeed according to man as regards the flesh, but live according to God as regards the spirit. There is much difference of opinion as to the sense of individual terms in this obscure passage. The main points in dispute, however, are the time, scene, and subject of this preaching. The preaching itself can be understood only as an offer of grace. It is expressed by the well-known verb which always means to bring good news, to publish the Gospel, etc.
Does the passage, then, speak of an offer of grace made to men after they have entered the world of the dead? Many of the most influential interpreters of the present day hold strongly that it does. Not a few affirm that only d gmatic possession can account for the contrary opinion. It must be admitted that the prevalent view fairly meets some of the pressing requirements of the exegesis, and that it establishes an easy connection with the preceding verse. For the whole surface of the text is calculated to take this form:—Christ is ready to judge quick and dead; and with justice shall the dead, no less than the living, be judged by Him; for His Gospel is preached to all,—in the other world, if not in this. This interpretation, nevertheless, is connected with very serious difficulties. Either this preaching in Hades is identified with the preaching mentioned in i. 19; in which case it is open to the objections already taken to the theory of a presentation of the Gospel, by the disembodied or quickened Redeemer, to the souls of the disobedient of Noah's time in Hades. Or it is supposed that Peter now states the general truth, of which that was only a particular illustration, namely, that, through Christ's visit to Hades, the Gospel is preached to all, and that upon this basis Christ can righteous judge all, whether dead or living. But there are various considerations which tell against this use of the verse. It does me injustice, for example, to the time to which the preaching is referred. It exposes of the historical tense 'was preached' as if it were 'is preached,' or 'shall be preached,' and of a Gospel ministry which is distinctly described as past, as if it were a continuous process. It involves the assumptions that the term 'dead' must mean all the dead, and that what is given as the statement of an already accomplished fact is the statement of a general principle. But it overlooks the circumstances that the act of being judged according to men is represented as subsequent to the preaching. It introduces an irrelevant idea, when it introduces the idea of its being a righteous thing that all men should be judged by Christ because, in the other world, if not in this, the Gospel shall have been preached to all. For Peter is not dealing with any such question as to how it shall stand with those who have not heard the Gospel in this world, but with a plain case where the Gospel is known,—the case where Christians are slandered by their heathen neighbours for their fidelity to the Gospel. It is difficult, too, to see how the idea in question bears upon the exhortation which Peter is pointing. How should the mention of a Gospel preached to the dead in the under world bear upon the position of living Christians who are misrepresented by living detractors in the upper world? What encouragement to patient endurance of heathen slander should Christians find in the information that their heathen persecutors are assured of a new period of favour in the other world? Or how should the mention of Christ's graciousness towards the unrighteous dead incite the righteous living to a persevering separation from heathen impurity? These considerations, and others of like kind, render this popular view of the passage very doubtful indeed. On the other hand, it must be frankly confessed that it is far from easy to make out an entirely satisfactory interpretation. All would run smoothly, indeed, if we could follow Augustine in taking the 'dead' here in the sense of the spiritually dead. But, in spite of the twofold use of the term by our Lord Himself in the saying, 'Let the dead bury their dead' (Matt. viii. 23), it is impossible to give it a different meaning in ver. 6 from what it has in ver. 5. The use of the word 'judge' in the one clause, is also the natural key to its use in the other. This makes it unlikely that Peter's 'judged according to men' is parallel in sense to Paul's 'delivering men to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus' (1 Cor. v. 5), and 'when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord that we should not be condemned with the world' (1 Cor. xii. 32). It is generally agreed, therefore, that the judgment spoken of must mean more than either the mortification of the flesh, or the chastening of God, and that what is referred to is physical death as the penalty of sin, the judgment from which none, not even the saved, are exempt. Subjecttion to this judgment, however, merely qualifies the proper object of the preaching. The two things have something like this relation to each other,—in order that, the soul once judged indeed, as other men are, as regards the flesh, they might, as regards the spirit, have an enduring life such as God lives.' The terms 'in the flesh,' 'in the spirit,' are used here as in i. 19. Taking all this together we have to choose between two interpretations, of which the one regards the heathen, the other the Christians, as the parties first in view. On the former interpretation the argument becomes this:—Be not disturbed or led astray by your revilers; they have their account to give to Christ Himself, all of them, whether they be dead or living when He comes; for the object with which the Gospel was preached to those now departed, as it is preached to you now, was to lead them to the life of God; and if they frustrate this object, it will only make their condemnation sure. On the latter it amounts to this,—'Have done for ever with the vile, pagan life; the heathen will persecute you, and justify their persecutions by reviling your character; be not moved by that. Christ is Judge, and the cause of all is safe with Him, of those who die, not less than of those who survive. Your brethren who have died have their case, nevertheless, secure with Him; for the very object with which the Gospel was preached to them was that, though in their bodies they met the doom of death which is common to men, yet in their spirits they should have a life like God's; and, should you have to suffer even unto death, it will be with you as it is with them.' This latter interpretation is on the whole to be preferred. It fits in with the idea of the previous verse and the counsels of the whole section. It does justice to the prominence given to this life according to God in the spirit, as the great aim of the Gospel. It also points to feelings which (as we gather from Rom. viii. 10; 1 Thess. iv. 13-18, etc.) were apt to disquiet the first converts, kindling as they did with the prospect of Christ's speedy return,—namely, the perplexity caused by the idea of exemption of Christians from death, the wages of sin,' and the fear that those who died before Christ's coming should somehow suffer loss.
CHAPTER IV.  7-11.

Personal and relative Duties of Christians in view of the End.

7 BUT the 'end of all things' is 'at hand': be ye therefore 'sober,' and 'watch' 'unto prayer.' And, 'above all things,' have 'fervent charity among yourselves:' for 'charity' shall 'cover' the 'multitude of sins.' Use 'hospitality' one to another without 'grudging.' As every man hath received 'the 'gilt,' 'even so' 'minister' the same one to another, as 'good' stewards of the 'manifold grace of God.' If any man 'speak, let him speak as the 'oracles of God';' if any man 'minister, let him do it as of the 'ability which God 'giveth:' 'That God in all things may be 'glorified' through Jesus Christ; to whom be 'praise and 'dominion' for ever and ever.' Amen.

1 or, sound-minded 9 rather, as the R. V., puts it, sober 2 literally, prayers 4 omit And 5 before all things 6 because 7 love 8 rather simply, hospitable 9 or, murmuring 10 11 or, if any man speaketh, as oracles of God 12 or, if any man ministereth, as of the strength which God supplies 13 that in all things God may be glorified 14 to whom is the glory and the might 15 unto the ages of the ages

The thought of Christ's readiness to judge both quick and dead leads naturally to that of the close of the world. Peter passes thus to a new series of counsels bearing on what befits men who see the Judge approaching and the end at hand. While the former exhortations dealt mainly with the external relations of believers, these are occupied with the life within the Church itself. They fall into three series, all more or less influenced by the idea of the trials which the present order of things brings with it to Christians. In the first series certain personal and social duties are stated, which affect the inner life of the Church, and become urgent in view of the rapidly advancing end.

Ver. 7. 'But the end of all things is at hand.' This indicates another turning-point in the Epistle. The subjects which are now introduced, however, are not connected with the previous section. The 'end' is the new viewpoint from which they are addressed, but the grace themselves are such as relate specially to what Christians should be in face of temptations to heathen vice and under the burden of heathen persecution. In speaking of the 'end,' Peter refers neither to the mere destruction of Jerusalem, nor to the end of the lives of individuals, but to the termination which awaits the present system of things as a whole when Christ returns. The death of the individual believer has a very secondary place in apostolic teaching. The event with which the New Testament is accustomed to fill the Christian's vision of the future, and which it proposes as a supreme motive to a circumspect walk, is an event of universal, not of merely personal, importance—that Second Coming of Christ which is to put an end to the present world itself. This 'end,' too, is 'at hand'—a rendering which occurs again in Rom. xiii. 12, Phil. iv. 5, and better conveys the impending imminence of the event than the 'draweth near' or 'draweth nigh,' which appears elsewhere (Luke xxi. 8; Jas. v. 8). The same expressive term is applied to the advent of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. ii. 2, iv. 17, x. 7; Mark i. 15; Luke x. 4), to the approach of the traitor and the 'hour' of the Son of man (Matt. xxvi. 45, 46), to the entrance of the 'day' (Rom. xii. 12), etc. This vivid realization of the nearness of the end, which appears in all the apostolic writings, is specially characteristic of Peter. To all the New Testament writers, but perhaps specially to him, and his comrade John, their own time was the 'last time,' the dispensation beyond which there was to be no other, and the
THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

which was so near that nothing seemed to twain them and it. Yet the chronology end, as Christ Himself had taught them 7), was not disclosed to them, and there things which they knew must intervene that time (2 Thess. ii. 3). 'This is to be lost fast,' says Calvin, 'that if Christ first appeared, nothing is left to but with minds in suspense to be always His Second Advent. be therefore stead. The word here rendered 'sober' A. V., after Cranmer, the former, though it means 'prudent,' 'Tindall 'discreet,' 'shrewd 'wise'), means literally 'sound' and is so used in the description of the emonia as in his right mind (Mark i. 14). Then it comes to mean sed, discreet, self-controlled. It points Jeremy Taylor calls 'reason's girdle and yoke, the healthy self-restraint which curbs an appetite, extravagance, and amatory feel, and as such is most exclusively in the Pastoral Epistles. itself is found only thrice in the New St., in Acts xxvi. 25 (of Paul's 'words of life'), 1 Tim. ii. 9, where 'shame' and 'soberly' are coupled, the former; the innate shrinking from anything that the latter the well-balanced state resulting from habitual self-control has been made to stand for, where it is the of charity and holiness. In the Classical it was opposed to licentiousness and was defined by Socrates as the sign of manly virtue, and sober. This n. to two out of the six stament occurrences of the verb does the apart from the rendering 'sober' (here Tim. iv. 13). The primary sense is that omm from drunkenness. The secondary that of wariness, and thus the stament it comes to have a much larger than that of gross. It is more than doubtful, however, it ever means vigilance in the sense of 9). See also on 1. 13. unto prayers. reading here is neither 'prayer,' nor the the (as if the social prayers of the Church insively in view), but 'unto prayers.' all kinds, therefore, whether private or personal or social, seems to be in view. the end to which the cultivation of the graces should look, the great interest should advance. Soundness of mind is essential to the prayerful frame, sially so where the believer suffers from region of vicious surroundings and the of trial. Tindall's rendering, therefore, the point most possibly, 'Be ye, discreet and sober, that ye may be apt is. The prayerfulness which sustained under trials, and brings the life of the Church itself, must be fed lifted above the agitations of passion This circumspect walk, too, in which er under control and prayer ever in view, natural excitement or retreat from duty should be fostered by the thought of the ce of the end. Before all things having your love one to another intense. The 'and' of the A. V. is cancelled by the R. V. and the best authorities. This exhortation and the following are put in the participial form, as being immediately connected with the broad counsels of ver. 7. The preference which is given to brotherly love is not given as if it were superior to prayer, and the other virtues, or as if these were to be subordinated to the interests of that, but because without it nothing else can make the inner life of the Church what it should be. Neither is it brotherly love in itself that is enjoined (for that is taken for granted), but the duty of giving it fullest scope. It is to be cultivated with 'persevering intensity' (Huther), as the disposition to which the soul without risk can surrender itself entirely, and which, more it is cherished, adds new grace to sobriety and the other virtues, and deepens the life of the Church. On the 'fervent' of the A. V. see i. 22. because love covers a multitude of sins. A reason for the pre-eminence assigned to unreserved brotherly love. The reason is found in what love does, now and naturally, within the Church. The better reading is the present 'coveteth,' not the future 'shall cover.' The sentence recalls the similar statement in Prov. x. 12. Although Peter's version varies somewhat from it (e.g. in introducing a 'multitude' for 'all,' using a different term for 'sin,' etc.), it is plain that he has the Old Testament statement in his mind, whether it is quoting directly from the Book of Proverbs or using what had come to be a current saying. The parallelism in which it is set with 'hated' makes its point quite clear. It is that love works for concord, throwing a covering over sins, forgiving them, executing them as little of them as possible, while the genius of hatred is the opposite. 'Hatred stirr strife, aggravates and makes the worst of all, but love covers a multitude of sins; it delights not in undue discoursing of brethren's failings, doth not eye them rigidly, nor expose them willingly to the eyes of others' (Leighton). This also is Peter's idea. What he has in view is the influence of love upon the life of the Church. He speaks of it, therefore, as being of the nature to act as Paul describes it in his great hymn of charity, when he says it 'bear all things, believe all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things' (1 Cor. xiii. 7). Thus the sins referred to are our neighbours' sins, and the covering meant is the veil of charity. The passage says nothing of the effect of love on ourselves. Far less does it lend any countenance to the Roman Catholic notion of a justification on the ground of a faith informed and animated by love. Neither is Peter's meaning quite the same as that of James. The latter, also, makes use of this proverb (v. 20), in illustration of what love is in relation to the sins of others. But the case which he has in view is that of the erring brother, and the covering of sins is that which love effects when it seeks and secures the brother's reclamation.
families were broken up, friends divided, and homeless wanderings made a necessity. Taking it for granted, however, that the laws of hospitality are honoured, and that believers who have the power will be ready to open the door to every needy brother, Peter deals here with the spirit in which all should be done. It should be "without grudging," or rather (as the Rheims Version and the Revised render it; while the A. V. has the support of Wycliffe, Tyndale, Cranmer, and the Genevan), "without murmuring," that is, without giving vent to hard or selfish thoughts about the cost and trouble. The word (which is strange to Classical Greek) occurs again in John vii. 12, Acts vi. 1, Phil. ii. 14, in all which cases the A. V. renders it murmuring. Only when hospitality is offered in this spirit does it answer to the high strain of love which should prevail among Christian brethren.

Ver. 11. Even as each man received a gift, ministering the same one to another. The possession of gifts being taken for granted, the love which pleads all to open-hearted hospitality, pleads each also to use his gift for the good of others. The "gift" is to be understood generally,—not of official gifts merely, but (as in Rom. xii. 6; 1 Cor. xiv. 4, 28) of spiritual gifts of all kinds. The receipt of the gift is represented as having taken place at a definite period in the past—"received," not "hath received," 'as the R. V. puts it. It is not explained, however, whether the period referred to is the time of one's first entrance into the truth, or the time of baptism, or that of the laying on of hands, in connection with which the special spiritual gifts of the Apostolic Age seem usually to have been communicated (comp. Acts iii. 28, vii. 18-20, xix. 5, 6; 1 Tim. iv. 14).

The law of love is to be fulfilled by "ministering" (viz. "practising") on which word 1 Cor. xiv. 12 what is so received. The gift is not to be "rendered unfruitful through neglect, or perverted to the purposes of a selfish ostentation" (Lillie), but is to be used as a store at the service of the Church's need. And even as it was received, so is it to be ministered. This "even as" is understood by some to refer to the spirit of the ministering; in which case it would mean that as the gift was freely bestowed, so it should be freely and ungrudgingly used. Others think it implies that the gift was to be used according to the intention of its bestowal. The point, however, seems to be that the recipient's spiritual gifts should serve the Church each according to the measure of what he had received, or (and this seems more consistent with such parallel statements as Rom. xii. 3-8; Eph. iv. 7) each according to the kind of gift received—as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. The character belonging to believers as the possessors of gifts is hereby added. They are stewards, not owners, of what they have, and are to use it as "good," that is, "honourable," stewards, against whom there shall be no reproach. What is virtuously entrusted to their keeping is the 'grace' of God itself, from which all their particular 'gifts' are derived. In reference to the variety of gifts that grace is fitly termed "manifold"—on which see chap. i. 6. It is possible that Peter's mind goes back here upon his Lord's parables of the Talents and the Unjust Steward (Matt. xxvi. 21; Luke xvi. 9).

Ver. 11. If any man speaketh, as oracles of God. The words cover all the various gifts of speech,—prophecying, teaching, exhorting, etc., which were known in the Church, whether official or non-official. They are enumerated in Rom. xii. 6-8, and 1 Cor. xii. 8, 28. Such gifts are a part of the stewardship. They who speak in the Church are to do so, therefore, as 'oracles of God.' The term 'oracles,' which in the Classics means oracular responses, is used in the New Testament to designate Divine utterances or revelations, specially those of the Old Testament (Acts vii. 56; Rom. iii. 11). Once it is applied to those of the New Testament itself, viz. in Heb. v. 12, where it seems to denote the Divine testimony to Christ, or Christian doctrine as derived from revelation. It is not meant here, however, merely that those who speak as if they were oracles of God, utterers not of thoughts of their own, but of thoughts which they owe to Him,—if any such ministereith. This gift, too, is not to be limited to the official ministry of the deacon. It includes all those kinds of service, in relation to the poor, the sick, strangers, etc., which are associated with the gifts of teaching in such passages as Rom. xii. 8; 1 Cor. xii. 28. Nothing more distinguished the primitive Church than its self-denying, enthusiastic attention to such interests. Tertullian of Carthage (A.D. 160-240) speaks of it as one of the chief felicities of married life. It is, that the wife was free to care for the sick and distribute her charities without hindrance, and as one of the greatest disadvantages of mixed marriages that the Christian wife was not allowed by the heathen husband to visit the house of the stranger, the bower of the poor, the dungeon of the prisoner. (See Neander, Ch. Hist. i. 354, Bohn.) Such gifts, however, were to be used "in the strength which God prospers," that is, with the faithfulness of stewards, and with the humility befitting men who were conscious that they drew not from stores of their own, but from what God Himself furnished. The term, which the A. V. renders 'giver,' the one used in Classical Greek expressed the munificent act of the citizen who undertook to bear the heavy expense of supplying the chorus for one of the great dramatic representations. It then came to be applied, as here, to other kinds of liberality, ministering or furnishing.—In order that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. The object is finally added which the possessors of gifts are to set before them, and with a view to which they are to use these various gifts in the spirit already enjoined. It is that not they, but God Himself, may have the glory. God will be honoured 'in all things,' i.e. specially in all the gifts and ministries within the Church, just as Christian stewards recognise that all these things come to the Church from God through Christ, and are therefore to be rendered to God again through Christ in the form of service to His Church—to whom is the glory and the dominion to all the ages of the ages. Amen. The form of this sentence, and the addition of the 'Amen,' lead some to suppose that Peter repeats here some familiar liturgical formula, perhaps one of those in use in the Jewish services. Whether that is the case or not, we have the same doxology in Rev. i. 6, and there it is applied to Christ. Here, however, most interpreters rightly recognise God, who is the principal subject of the whole sentence.
as also the subject of the doxology. The 'glory' of the R. V. is a better rendering than the 'praise' of the A. V., as the term answers to the former 'glorified.' The idea of the everlasting is expressed according to the Hebrew conception of eternity as the measureless succession of cycles of time. If the whole is taken in the form 'whose is' or 'to whom is,' rather than 'to whom be,' the sentence is introduced not as a mere ascription of praise, but as giving the reason why the glorifying of God should be the great object of the exercise of gifts. God is to be glorified in all things, because the glory in all belongs to Him, and it is the Church's honour to realise this.

Chapter IV. 12-19.

Renewed Counsels on the Endurance of Suffering, specially in view of the End.

12 "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to 'try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as an evil-doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf:

17 "ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf:" For the time is come that "judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous "scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

In this second series of exhortations to Christian duty as that is affected by the prospect of the end, Peter takes up again the case of persecution which he has touched on more than once already. The present statement, however, is neither a simple reiteration of former statements, nor a mere interlude. It gathers into a focus various things which have been previously said on the subject of suffering, particularly at the hand of the slanderous and persecuting heathen (i. 6, 7, ii. 19-21, iii. 16, 17, iv. 1-4). It offers at the same time a still deeper insight into what tribulation endured for
Christ’s sake means, and gives additional reasons for regarding it neither as a perplexity nor as loss, but as a discipline which is both intelligible and honourable now, and which will yield a priceless return when Christ reappears. The truths, therefore, now brought under the eye of those threatened Christians are such as these—that the trials of the righteous come only by God’s will, that their object is the probation of faith, that they bring with them the honour of fellowship with the suffering Lord, and that they are the earnest and measure of a glory yet to be revealed to. But if the purpose and promise of such blessedness, is, as Peter urges again in the most pointed terms, only if indeed they are not induced by our own fault, but borne simply for righteousness’ sake.

Ver. 12. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial. So far the translation of the A. V. is a very happy one. The same verb is used here as in ver. 4 (which see) and with the same sense. The adjective, ‘Beloved,’ which has been used already at a serious turning-point in the Epistle, is repeated here in token of the writer’s sympathy with the readers, and to conciliate their attention to what he has to say on a painful subject. What he says first of all is to deprecate their looking on their trials as things beyond understanding or expectation. The heathen thought it strange that Christians adopted a manner of life so different from that prevalent. And they were wrong in so thinking. Christians themselves were equally wrong in yielding to the sense of mere wearisomeness at their persecutions, however strange it might seem at first that they, who were taught to be the salt of the earth, should be made to appear as if we were still as our enemies. The trial itself is expressed by a term which is well represented by the ‘fiery trial’ of the A. V. In the Classics it means a burning, or a firing, and is used of the material processes of cooking, roasting, etc., but also at times metaphorically of burning desire, proving by fire, etc. In Prov. xxvii. 21 it is rendered ‘burning’ and the cognate verb is used of the trial of character as being like the smelling of metals (cf. Ps. lxv. 12; Zech. xiii. 9). The only other passages of the N. T. in which the noun occurs are Rev. xviii. 9, 18, where it is rendered ‘burning.’ This ‘burning’ is said to be among you,—a clause which is overlooked by the A. V., and which represents the fiery process as not remote but already at work in their midst. —which comes upon you with a view to probation (or, as the R. V. paraphrases it, to prove you). The ‘which is to try you’ of the A. V. makes that future which Peter gives as present. The trial was then taking place, as the terms imply, and that with the object of proving and so purifying them. The idea, therefore, is so far the same as in chap. i. 7.—as though a strange thing were befalling you. The ‘some’ of the A. V. is uncalled for. Tyndale’s rendering of the verse clearly notice ‘Dear beloved, be not troubled in this heat which is now come among you to try you, as though some strange thing had happened unto you.’ The picture is that of sufferings already in operation or immediately impending. As to the apparent strange-ness of such a lot Jeremy Taylor says:—‘Jesus made for us a covenant of suffering. His doctrines were such as, expressly and by consequent, enjoined and suppose sufferings and a state of affliction; His very promises were sufferings; His Beatitudes were sufferings; His rewards, and His arguments to invite men to follow Him, were only taken from sufferings in this life and the reward of sufferings hereafter.’ Ver. 13. But in as far as ye partake in the sufferings of the Christ, rejoice. The article the ‘is prefixed to ‘Christ’ here, as if Peter had now in view His official character, or wished to call special attention to Christ as the only sufferings of interest in the present context. So, it is the simple ‘Christ’ in the previous notices of His sufferings (chap. i. 11, 15, ii. 21, iii. 18, iv. 1). In any case it is not the sufferings of the mystical Christ, but those of the personal Christ that are meant. The fellowship intended is fellowship with Christ in the things which He Himself suffered. Peter is not referring apparently to the deep mystery of a fellowship of life between Christ and believers in all things (the theme which Paul expounds (Gal. ii. 20; Phil. iii. 10, etc.), but to the simple fact that the world hates Christians because it hates Christ in them, and they, therefore, have to endure the same contradiction of sinners which He had to endure. In this sense they share in His sufferings, and because this is the case their trials may well be a cause of joy to them, and not of amazement. ‘The point goes higher,’ says Leighton. ‘Though we think not the sufferings strange, we do not well think that rule somewhat strange, to rejoice in them? No, it will be found as reasonable as the other, being duly considered; and it rests upon the same ground, which is well able to bear both. . . . But add we this, if we thus suffer, it completes the reason of this way in our saddest sufferings, that in them we are partakers of the sufferings of Christ.’ The term rendered ‘inasmuch as’ by the A. V. means in a Cor. viii. 18, however, in proportion as; and in Rom. viii. 17 it seems to have the same sense (= we know not what we should pray for, in proportion to the need, to the propriety of the case). Here, therefore, the idea is probably that we are in our trials not merely because we are participants in what Christ suffered, but in so far as that is the case with us. The only sufferings which can bring us joy are those which we share with Him, sufferings like His. And the measure of the participation is the measure of the joy.—In order that also in the revelation of His glory ye may rejoice exultant. The particular expression, ‘the revelation of His glory,’ is peculiar to this passage. The same idea, and in part the same phrase, have met us, however, already in chap. i. 8. Peter had listened no doubt to His Lord’s own prophecies of the time when ‘the Son of man shall come in His glory’ (Matt. xxv. 31, etc.). He speaks here, therefore, of two joys which are open to the Christian. He distinguishes between them, and at the same time indicates the relation in which the one stands to the other. There is a present joy, a ‘righteousness for the stranger, yet not for the upright in heart’ (Ps. xxvii. 14), which suffering, instead of quenching it, should kindle. And there is the joy which was the unveiling of the glory of the once suffering Christ shall bring with it,—a joy ‘exultant’ (so far as the sun may surpassing this life’s measure. When the former is enjoined in the ‘rejoice’ of the first half of the
verse, it is expressed in the present tense; what is meant being a disposition of joy which has to be maintained all through the burdened present. When the latter is presented in the 'rejoice' (unfortunately changed by the A. V. into 'be glad,' as if there had been a change in the term) of the second half it is given in a different tense, which points to a joy destined to enter once for all in connection with one great event, the revelation of Christ's glory. And the former is in order to the latter. The capacity for finding a softened, holy joy in the sufferings of the present, in so far as these are connected with Christ, is the condition of the capacity for entering into the radiant joy of the future glory.

Ver. 14. If ye are reproached in the name of Christ, blessed are ye. A reassertion, but with a more definite promise of future sufferings for Christ's sake, of the blessedness already affirmed in chap. iii. 14. The sentence is another echo of Matt. v. 11. The phrase 'in the name of Christ,' which is paraphrased by both the A. V. and the R. V., as 'for the name of Christ,' is best interpreted, as is done by most, in the light of Christ's own explanation in Mark ix. 41—in my name, because ye belong to Christ. It covers, therefore, all kinds of reproach endured on account of being identified with Him. The word is used here with an explanatory force, going back generally upon the ruling idea of the preceding verse. It is as if it had run thus—'It is reproach in the name of Christ, and of that only, that I speak; for let no one suppose that we suffer with just cause as an evil-doer, and yet have the blessedness that I affirm.' The 'as,' therefore, here has again the sense of 'in the character of.' Four different forms of evil are named, of which these first three go together as of one kind. The first two terms denote well-known specific forms of sin which deserve all the reproach that they entail. The third (on which see chap. ii. 12) is a general term covering other like offences, which would give just occasion for the reviling of heathen neighbours— or as a busy-body in other men's matters. The fourth form of evil is marked off, by the repetition of the 'as,' from the former three as of a different kind and gravity. The word is one which is found nowhere else in the New Testament. There seems, indeed, to be no other independent occurrence of it in the whole range of Greek literature, except once in the late writings of the so-called Dionysius, the traveller, where it is applied to the man who rashly intrudes into a strange office. Some suppose it, therefore, to have been constructed by Peter himself for his present purpose. The Vulgate, and some eminent interpreters, including Calvin, take the sense to be 'one who covets what belongs to others.' So Wycliffe gives 'desirer of other men's goods,' and the Rhemish Version 'coveter of other men's things.' Others take it to denote an 'informer' (Helgenfeld). These meanings, however, are scarcely consistent with the elements of which the word is composed. Etymologically it may mean 'one who assumes oversight of matters not within his province,' or 'one who intrudes into other men's matters.' The R. V. rightly adopts the less official of these two senses—a meddler in other men's matters.' Tyndale, Cranmer, and the Genevan agree with this, all translating 'busy-body in other men's matters.' The term points, therefore, to an offence, which came as
close to the peculiar temptations of Christians, as the other three forms of evil (although these may have been once all too familiar to some of the early converts from heathenism) seemed to lie at a distance from them. It is that of obvious interference in the affairs of their Gentile neighbours, in excess of zeal to conform them to the Christian standard. How this might be a temptation to some Christians may be seen from the appeal made to Christ Himself by one who heard Him—'Mast, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me' (Luke xii. 13). That these busy-bodies were already troubling some of the churches, at least in the form of triflers bustling about what was not their own, may be gathered from what Paul had to say to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. iv. 11; 2 Thess. iii. 11)."

Ver. 16. But if (any man suffer) as a Christian; that is, in the character of a Christian, or on account of his being a Christian. The verse is of great interest as one of three passages (Acts xi. 26; xvi. 25; and this one) in which the occurrence of the name Christian in the New Testament is limited, and the only passage of the kind in the Epistles. The history of the name is of great importance. It has been held by some to have originated with the Roman authorities (Ewald). It has also been supposed to have been at first a term of ridicule (de Wette, etc.).

The generally accepted account of it, however, is that it originated with the Gentiles at Antioch, that it was formed on the model of the names of the gods, or of the goddesses, of which a number were known in the East. That it may have been so is inferred from such facts as these, that in the New Testament itself other names, such as 'disciples,' 'brethren,' 'saints,' 'those of the way,' appear in use within the Church; that even Luke, who tells us where the disciples 'were called Christians first' (Acts xi. 26), does not himself apply it to believers; and that in at least two of the three New Testament instances (Acts xxvi. 28, and the present verse) it appears to be a term used by those outside. As it is in the highest degree unlikely that the Jews (to whom the new religion was a novelty, etc., Acts xxiv. 5) should have coined a word out of the well-known Greek form of the name of the God whose Messiah in order to designate those whom they so bitterly opposed, it is necessary to suppose the Gentiles have been the authors of the term. There are certain reasons, too, why it should have emerged first in Antioch, and there at the particular juncture noticed in the Acts. The Gentile element in the Church of Antioch seems to have been large enough to prevent the Church of Christ (for the first time, too, as far as can be gathered) from being easily identified with any Jewish sect, and to make it necessary for the Gentiles to find a distinctive name for it. And the time at which the Book of Acts states this to have happened—the year when Paul and Barnabas devoted a whole year to work in Antioch, and when, consequently, the growing Christian community there could scarcely fail to draw public attention to itself. The name which was thus made for the Church by those outside it, was soon adopted by Christians themselves, and glorified in as their most proper title, while it as soon became a term of obloquy with others. By the time of the great Apologists, and probably before the close of the second century, a play upon the name had become common, 'Christian' being pronounced 'Christians,' i.e. followers of the God, or Kind, One; which form appears occasionally in the manuscripts,—let him not be ashamed; or, think it a shame (cf. specially Rom. i. 16; 2 Tim. i. 8, 12).—but glorify God in this name. The reading 'in this name' is better supported than the one which the A.V. renders 'on this behalf,' and which means simply 'in this matter' (it occurs again in the 'in this respect' of 2 Cor. iii. 10, and the 'in this behalf' of 2 Cor. ix. 3). The phrase 'in this name' goes back either upon the term 'Christian', or upon the 'in the name of Christ' in ver. 15. Those were called to suffer for being Christians who were to regard that not as a shameful thing; but as a honourable, and they were to suffer not in the spirit which took honour to themselves, but in that which gave all the glory to God which counted them worthy of such a vocation. How soon in the history of the Church was martyrdom courted for its own sake in the spirit of the sublimest glorification of self?

Ver. 17. Because it is the season for the judgment to begin with the house of God. A reason why, under persecution and in all circumstances, they should so conduct themselves as to glorify God. The reason lies in the thought that the judgment by which God will be avenged is already on the wing. The judgment is conceived of as a process which makes the house of God its starting-point, which is even now commencing there in the Church's baptism of suffering, and which cannot be there. The language is scarcely consistent with the idea that the destruction of Jerusalem was already an accomplished fact. To a Jew like Peter that event would be too great a catastrophe to make it likely that he should speak of it as a beginning only of judgment. The phrase 'house of God' has the same sense here as the 'spiritual house' of chap. ii. 5, and is immediately identified with the living members of the Church in the next clause—if it first begin at us. To the 'house of God' itself this judgment was a process of sifting and separation, a judgment like that referred to by Paul (1 Cor. xi. 31), which had for its object that those tried by it should not be condemned with the world. But if so, what must it be to that outer, heathen world?—but if first with us, what (shall be) the end of them that disobey the gospel of God? The term translated 'disobey' has the same strong, positive sense here as in chap. ii. 7, 8 (which see), and in chap. iii. 1, 20. The 'end' is meant in the literal sense of the conclusion which shall come to them, or the goal they shall be brought to, not in the metaphorical sense of the recompense. Peter seems to have in his mind the sense, if not the very terms, of the solemn declarations of the prophets, e.g. Jer. xxv. 15, 29, xlix. 12; Ezek. iii. 16; Amos iii. 3. The judgment of God works its searching course out of the Church into the world of heathenism. And if it visits even the household of faith as a refining fire, what end can it portend for those who withstand the Gospel of Him whose prerogative judgment it is? The question is like Christ's in Luke xxii. 31. The answer, most eloquent of all, to the question
[V. 12-19.] THE FIRST EPISODE GENERAL OF PETER.

‘end’ is the answer left untold. ‘There
making or it: a curtain is drawn; silent
expresses it best, telling it cannot be
how then shall it be endured?’

5. And if the righteous with difficulty
the ungodly (ix. 26) and, sinner, shall
words are taken from the
translation of Prov. xi. 31. As they stand
Hebrew text, their sense is somewhat
According to some, they mean simply
the righteous man has his reward on
much more shall the unrighteous man have
punishment.’ According to others, they
at ‘if the righteous man is recompensed
for his sins, much more shall the
man be required for his sins.’ It is
one idea that appears in the free translation
aptus agin, and it is this that Peter follows.
‘In the earth’ show that in Proverbs
ual in view is that which comes in the
temporal blessings and chastisements.
words are omitted in the Greek Version as
were. The word rendered ‘scarcely’ by
the R. V., and most of the old English
has the sense of hardly, not quite, in the
alludes to the difficulty with which
the word renders ‘with toil.’ In the New Testament it
to mean ‘with difficulty’ (Acts xiv. 18,
8; perhaps even Rom. v. 7), as also in
ix. of Wisdom (ix. 16), where it corresponds
a labour.’ Here, therefore, it does not
any uncertainty or incompleteness in the
salvation, but indicates with what
and at what cost even the man who is in
relation with God, is made secure in the
And if that is so, how shall it be with
who, as being both careless of God and
a sinner, is in a wrong relation to the
The utmost emphasis is given to the
of the person, by putting the words
godly and sinner’ before the interrogative
Again the question is left to suggest its
an answer,—an answer which is given
5. It is observed that the term ‘sinner’
not a synonym for ‘Gentile’—‘one outside
of God’s people. Interrogations like
hard indeed to square with the idea
Peter’s view the end of the despisers of
is to be restoration.
9. Wherefore let them also that suffer
unto the will of God commit their
a faithful Creator in well-doing. The
‘wherefore’ introduces this advice as an inference
from what has been said about suffering, the
relation of suffering Christians to their persecuters,
the feelings of Christians in reference to their
sufferings, and especially the hastening judgment
of God which already begins in the trials of His
House. In view of all this, the advice with
which the train of thought is brought to a close
worthy of it, is to fearless faith and earnest well-
doing. The word ‘also,’ which the A. V.
wrongly omits, is taken by some (Huther, etc.)
to qualify the ‘wherefore,’ as if the sense were—
‘For this reason, too,’ etc. But the analogous
statement in iii. 14, and the fact that throughout
the present paragraph the strangeness which
Christians are tempted to discover in their own
subjection to suffering, indicate rather that the
‘also’ qualifies the persons. The sense, therefore,
is, ‘let those also who have to suffer, strange as it
may seem to them that they should have to suffer,
commit their souls,’ etc. The ‘according to
the will of God’ does not refer to the submissive
spirit in which the sufferers endure, but to the
animating consideration that their sufferings come
only by God’s purpose. Their souls are regarded
as a deposit which they should be willing to leave
confidently in God’s hands, the term rendered
‘commit’ (which the A. V. renders ‘commit
the keeping of’) being used of entrusting persons
or objects of value to one’s care (Luke xii. 48; Acts
xv. 23, xx. 32; 1 Tim. i. 18; 2 Tim. i. 12, 14,
ii. 2). It is the word which Christ Himself used
upon the Cross—‘Father, into Thy hands I com-
mend (or, commit) my spirit’ (Luke xxiii. 46).
The God who is to be confidently trusted with so
precious a deposit is designated a faithful Creator
(the ‘as’ of the A. V. must be omitted on the
ground of documentary evidence); Creator (which
particular term is used only this once in the New
Testament, and is to be taken in the literal sense,
and not as if = possessor, or as if = Creator anew),
and, therefore, One who has an interest in the
work of His own hands; and faithful Creator,
One whom we have every reason to regard as
absolutely—certainly well-doing. The neces-
sary accompaniment and evidence of a true trust
in God, here put emphatically last as a caution
against all indolent or immoral presuming on our
special relationship to God. This is the single
‘To do well and to suffer well should be the only
care of those who are called upon to suffer; God
Himself will take care of all else’ (Bengel).
CHAPTER V. 1-5.

Exhortations on the subject of the Relations between Office-bearers and others in the Church.

1 The "Elders which are among you" I exhort, who am also an Elder, and a "witness of the sufferings of Christ," and also a "partaker of the glory" that shall be revealed. "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof," not by constraint, but "willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a "ready mind; neither of being lords over God's "heritage, but being "examples to the flock: and when the "chief Shepherd shall "appear," ye shall receive a "crown of glory that fadeth not away." Likewise, "ye younger, "submit yourselves unto the elder: "yea, all of you be subject one to another," and "be clothed with "humble grace to the "humble.

1 Cor. x. 18; 3 Cor. i. 7; 2 Pet. i. 4, etc. / Ch. iv. 13. g Rom. viii. 18; Gal. ii. 23; also refs. at ch. l. 2. Mat. ii. 6; Jo. xxi. 16; Acts xx. 2, etc.; also 1 Kin. xxviii. 16; Las. xx. 21, etc. / Ver. 3; Las. xxviii. 16; Acts xx. 48; also Zech. x. 1, etc. h Heb. v. 6. / Ch. Tit. i. 7, 11. m = Chrez. xxii. 34. = Mat. xxii. 45; Mk. ii. 49. Acts xix. 15; also Num. xxi. 24, etc. / Ch. lix. 29; Jas. iii. 17. Ct. also Mat. xxi. 33; Mk. ii. 49; Las. xxiv. 31; Las. xxvii. 33; Phil. iii. 17; Jas. i. 7; 2 Thes. iii. 5; 1 Tim. iv. 8; Jo. xxix. 24; Acts i. 17, 20, xxii. 17, xxvi. 12. Col. i. 12. / See refs. at ch. i. 8. = Ch. lx. 5; 2 Tim. iv. 5. = Jas. i. 12; Rev. ii. 10; Prov. iv. 9. = Acts v. 6; 2 Tim. v. 1, 11, 15; Tit. ii. 6. w See refs. at ch. ii. 13. = Prov. xvii. 19; Eph. iv. 2; Phil. ii. 3; Col. ii. 18, 23, 12. Ct. also ch. iii. 5. y Prov. iii. 34; Jas. iv. 5. = Acts xix. 6; Rom. xiii. 2; Jas. iv. 6; 2 Kin. xii. 34; Rom. ii. 6. a Lu. i. 27; Rom. i. 9; 2 Tim. iii. 1; Jas. iv. 6. b Ex. iii. 21; Eph. iv. 29; Jas. iv. 6. c Ps. xxxi. 18; Matt. xx. 27; Jas. xii. 5; Jas. x. 4; 6; Rom. xii. 6; 2 Cor. vii. 6, x. 1.

1 read rather, Elders therefore among you I exhort. 2 literally, the fellow-elder and witness 3 or, of the Christ 4 literally, the partaker also of the glory 5 or, destined to be revealed 6 rather, tend 7 omit, taking the oversight thereof 8 as lording it over the congregations 9 becoming 10 is manifested 11 the 12 or, amaranthine 13 or, of, 14 In like manner 15 or, elders 16 yea, all one to another 17 omit, and 18 gird yourselves 19 because 20 but

We come now upon a brief series of injunctions, dealing with the spirit in which the members of Christ's Church should occupy their respective positions, and bear themselves toward each other. These counsels are remarkable for their point and precision. They are not less remarkable for their tenderness. They are offered as the recommendation of one who, though entitled to speak in some respects of superior privilege, meekly identifies himself with the persons to whom they are addressed. These persons are in the first instance those who are charged with office and special ecclesiastical duty, and in the second instance the whole membership of the Church. What concerns the soundness of the inner life of the Church is still in view. The exhortations are given in immediate connection with the preceding statements about the end, the judgment already begun, the judgment of the God of power, and the necessity of earnest well-doing in all things. The watchword of submission which ran through so large a space of the second and third chapters, is heard again here.

Ver. 1. Elders, therefore, among you I exhort. Instead of 'the elders,' which the A. V. and R. V. both (though probably for different reasons) adopt, the better supported reading is simply 'elders.' The omission of the article perhaps generalizes the statement, as if Peter had said, 'Such as are elders among you I exhort.' The best authorities also insert 'therefore,' which the A. V. omits. This implies that what is to be said of the duties of elders is to be urged especially on the ground of the considerations with which the previous chapter has closed, and as involved in that 'well-doing' which is to accompany fearless trust in God under the pressure of fiery trial. The next verse makes it clear that the term 'elders, or (to reproduce the Greek word itself) presbyters,' is used in the official sense. The New Testament gives no account of the rise of this office in the Christian Church. When it first
mentions Christian elders, it simply refers to them as the recognised persons in the Church of Jerusalem to whom the contributions of the Church of Antioch for the relief of 'the brethren which dwell in Judea,' were sent by the hands of Barnabas and Saul (Acts xii. 30). When it next mentions them, it is to state that Paul and Barnabas 'ordained elders in every church' in the course of the first missionary journey in Asia (Acts xiv. 23). It has been a question, therefore, whether the Apostles proceeded from the first on the definite plan of organizing the Christian Church on the model of existing institutions, and at once took up this office and others from the synagogue, or whether, without setting out with any definite plan, they simply adopted the various offices as circumstances and experience from time to time made it wise or necessary to do so (on which see Neander, Hist. of the Planting of Christianity, vol. i. p. 30, etc., Bohn). On the term 'exhort'—a term with a fulness of meaning (covering persuasion, entreaty, admonition, consolation, etc.) which no single English word can reproduce—see your fellow-shepherd: or, co-presbyter. This compound word occurs only here. So John calls himself simply 'the elder' (2 John 1: 3 John 1). Any claim to primacy is far enough removed from Peter's meek assumption of himself with the men of these scattered Asiatic churches as simply an elder like themselves. Even apostolic authority is waived for the time.—and witness of the sufferings of the Church. One distinction, and only one, is alluded to. It is that of having seen what Christ suffered. Among all these fellow-elders he was the one who had witnessed that. The distinction did not give him lordship over them, but it did give him the right to speak to Christians who were to suffer, and who were tempted to think their trial a strange thing. This word 'witness' is used in the N.T. not only in the simple sense of 'spectator' (e.g. Acts x. 46, etc.), in the extended sense of 'a witness of what he has been' (e.g. Acts i. 8, etc.), and in the forensic sense of one who gives evidence at law (e.g. Matt. xxvi. 65), but also in the ethical sense of 'one who seals his faith in Christ by suffering,' or 'suffering' (Acts xii. 11, etc.). Hence some think that in designating himself a witness of the sufferings of the Christ, Peter means here that he was a sharer in Christ's sufferings. But the expression is to be understood rather in the light of what the Apostles were declared to be to the Church—eye-witnesses of what they preached. It is the nearest approach, therefore, which Peter allows himself to make at present to an appeal to his apostolic authority. —he the partaker also of the glory destined to be revealed. The 'glory' is presented here in the same large and inclusive sense as in Rom. viii. 18; Col. i. 9; 1 John ii. 2. Peter speaks of himself as he does of that. But in so doing he also suggests that those associated with him in faith have the like honour. If for a moment, therefore, he distinguished himself from them, he at once places himself again on common ground with them. Neither here, nor in what follows, is there any allusion even to the distinction so solemnly given him by his Lord (Matt. xvi. 18, 19). Having engaged the interest and sympathy of the elders by the threefold designation of himself, he now deals freely and emphatically of their duties and dangers.

Ver. 2. Tend the flock of God. The 'feed' of the A. V. is too limited a rendering. In the memorable scene by the sea of Galilee (John xxi. 15-17), which is probably in Peter's mind here, Christ gave three commissions to the restored Apostle. Of these the first and third dealt with the duty of feeding in the strict sense of the word (the verb used in vers. 15 and 17 being one which conveys that idea only); but the second (in ver. 16) referred to a wider range of ministry than that, and was expressed by a different verb. It is this latter term that is taken up by Peter here. The idea is that of acting all the shepherd's part, including protection, rule, guidance, etc., as well as the providing of pasture. The charge reminds us also of Paul's counsel to the Ephesian elders (Acts xx. 28). In the oldest of the classical writers the relations of ruler to people are familiarly described as the relations of shepherd to flock. The same figure occurs frequently both in the Old Testament and in the New. In the former it is used of Jehovah, of Messiah, and of the political heads of the theocratic people (Ps. cxlvii. 7; Jer. iii. 15; Ezek. xxxiv. 2). In the latter it is used of Christ, and of those in office in the Church. The designation 'the flock of God' expresses both the unity of the Church and the fact that it is God's possession, not that of the elders—which is in you. It has been felt singular that the flock should be described as among or (as the word literally means) in the elders. Hence it has been proposed to render the phrase rather 'a flock which is in you' (so the margin of the A. V., also Calvin, etc.). Others explain the form of the expression as due to the wish to bring out the peculiar intimacy of union between the elders and the members, as the same proposition is used in the analogous charge in Acts xx. 28—take heed . . . to all the flock over (literally in) the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers. The ordinary local sense, however, is quite in point, whether it be taken as =which is in your districts; or as =which is within your reach (Luther, etc.), or as =which is under your care (Hofmann, Huther, etc.). The idea is that this church of God, which is the flock, is to be tended by these particular elders, so far as it exists, and they themselves are settled and have it thus put under their charge.—taking the oversight thereof. It is doubtful whether this clause belongs to the text, The R. V. retains it in the form 'exercising the oversight.' It is omitted, however, by the two oldest manuscripts, and by the most recent editors. If it is retained, it states one direction which the tending is to take, namely, that of overseeing the flock. The verb is the one with which the word bishop (i.e. overseer) is connected. We find it only once again in the N. T., viz. in Heb. xii. 15, where it is rendered 'looking diligently.' If it is omitted here, the tending is defined directly by the three adverbial and participial clauses which follow. Each of these, too, consists of two parts, the thing to be avoided being in each case first set solemnly over against the thing positively enjoined. Greater force is thus given to the statement of the spirit in which the tending is to be discharged.—not constrainedly; or, as the R. V. gives it, not of constraint. The adverb occurs nowhere else in the N. T. It is of the rarest possible occurrence in Classical Greek.—but willingly; a term found only once again in the N. T., viz. in Heb. x. 26,
there is rendered "willfully." The R. V. adds here the words "accordant with God," on the genuineness of which the divided state of the documentary evidence makes it difficult to pronounce a decided opinion. This first definition describes the elder's duty as one which is not to be taken up like an unwelcome burden imposed on one, or a task from which one cannot retire. In such circumstances there will be, as Calvin suggests, a dull and frigid discharge of the work. We have a similar antithesis in 1 Cor. ix. 17, and Phil. vi. 14.—nor yet for filthy lucre. The negative is more than the simple "not" of the A. V. It has the force of a climax—"nor yet." The adverb "for filthy lucre," which denotes the corrupt motive here, has a very strong sense. It means in corded greed of gain. This is its only occurrence in the N. T. Its idea is otherwise expressed in 1 Tim. iii. 8; Tit. i. 7, 11. The support which those are entitled to receive who preach the Gospel, or otherwise devote themselves to the service of Christ's Church (Luke x. 7; 2 Cor. ix. 14), becomes base gain, if it is made the motive of the service.—but of a ready mind. This again is an adverb found nowhere else in the N. T. The adjective describes Paul as ready to preach the Gospel (Rom. i. 15), and is used by Christ when He says to Peter himself and his drowsy comrades in the garden, "the spirit indeed is willing," (Matt. xxvi. 41), or, "the spirit truly is ready." (Mark xiv. 38). It is the word expresses the prompt alacrity which marks the service which is undertaken for the love of the work—"a mind forward of itself, not measuring its efforts by the prospect of external advantage, but quickened and impelled by its own inward and Divine principles." (Lillie).

Ver. 3. nor yet as lording it; or, in the character of those who lord it. The expression is again a very strong one. An uncommon compound form of the verb "to rule" is chosen, which conveys the idea of high-handed rule, or a rule which is detrimental to the interests of the flock. Bengel notices how, as the elders in course of time assumed lordship, the Latin word Senior, elder, became the Italian Signore, Lord, Sir. Rule and office are recognised in the N. T. Church, and those who guide its affairs receive a variety of names (comp. Luke xxii. 26; Rom. xii. 8; 1 Thess. v. 12, etc.). But they are never described as being lords over the flock (Luke xxii. 25). If lordship, therefore, is nowhere recognised, much more is oppressive rule, or "overruling" as the margin of the A. V. gives it, repudiated.—over the congregations. The Greek noun used here is that (cleros) from which our English word clergy comes. It means a list, then what is appointment by lot, and so anything, such as an office, a heritage, or a possession, which is assigned to one. Strange meanings have been given it here, e.g. church property, the possessions of worldly rulers, the province of the Roman proconsul, etc. Some eminent Roman Catholic writers have held it to the clergy; and both Wycliffe and the Rhenish Version actually render it "the clergy," apparently making a simple transference of the term used in the Vulgate. It has been also taken to mean estate, as if the idea were, "do not rule haughtily as men do who exercise rule over estates belonging to themselves" (Hofmann). But while the word has that sense in Classical Greek, it does not seem to have it in Biblical Greek. In the Old Testament, it is one of the terms by which Israel is described in God's heritage or inheritance (Deut. ix. 29, et. al.). Hence it is supposed that the term is chosen here, in order to express the fact that the Church of Christ is now that heritage of God which Israel originally was designed to be. So following the Genevan, translates it "God's heritage." The plural form is then explained as due to the circumstance that the one flock or Church of Christ is conceived as distributed among the various churches in which these elders are laboured. And the point of the phrase lies in the idea that these churches were God's possession, and not at the disposal of the elders. So most natural, however, to interpret the word 'praises.' The word 'charge' has come to mean a congregation in ecclesiastical phraseology. Tyndale and Cranmer are not far astray in rendering it 'parishes.' The R. V. comes short only in translating the plural noun as a singular—over the charge allotted to you. The use of the term is due perhaps to the pastoral imagery which underlies the whole paragraph, the one flock or pastoral wealth of a great proprietor would make one flock, over which there would be a Chief Shepherd. But the flock would be broken up into various contingents, pasturing in different localities. Each of these would be a parish, or a herd, over which would be a shepherd. I am responsible to the Chief Shepherd (see Dr. John Brown in loc.)—but becoming examples of the flock. Peter uses three different terms for the idea of a model or pattern. In chap. ii. 11 the word is one which means literally a writing-copy. In the Second Epistle, chap. ii. 6, we have another (occurring also in John xiii. 15; Heb. iv. 11, viii. 5, ix. 23; Jas. v. 10) which is used particularly of the sculptor or painter's model. In the present passage the word (the same as in i Cor. x. 6; Phil. iii. 7; 1 Thess. i. 7; 2 Thess. iii. 9; 1 Tim. iv. 12; Tit. ii. 7; Heb. viii. 5) is the term type, which has a wide range of meaning, from a mere mark or foot-print up to the living likeness of the father which appears in the child. It is the word which Thomas uses when he speaks of the 'print' of the nails (John xvi. 25). The elders, therefore, were themselves to be what those under their charge should be. The secret of their rule was to lie not in a lordly spirit, but in the persuasion of a consistent life. The things which they are cautioned against in these two verses are the three vices which, as Calvin observes, and as Church history too plainly shows, are wont to be most injurious to the Church.

Ver. 4. And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested. The title 'Chief Shepherd' is nowhere else given to Christ. It is appropriate here, where the duties and rewards of those are dealt with who are called to act the Shepherd's part of tending Christ's flock for Him on earth. In chap. ii. 35 He is called simply 'the Shepherd' (John xxi. 15). He is called simply 'the Shepherd' in John xxi. 11, etc., He names Himself 'the good Shepherd.' The word 'manifested' is the same as in chap. i. 20, as also in John xi. 27; Col. iii. 4; 1 John ii. 28, iii. 2, etc.—see on this see on chap. i. 9.—the amaranthine crown of glory. In this passage, as also in Rev. vi. 10, the A. V. overlooks the article, and gives 'a
1-5.] THE FIRST EPISTLE

Peter speaks of 'the crown'—the one in Christian hope. He calls it 'the glory,' meaning by that not merely that rises one, but that it consists of glory, self, and nothing less than that, will the heads of the elders as their reward for discharge of their vocation. Isaiah's 'crown of beauty' (Isa. 3). Paul of 'a righteousness' (2 Tim. iv. 8). James the apostle (2 Pet. ii. 10) of 'the crown of righteousness' which the victors in the games were crowned, from the diadem of kings, or from the wreath Jews themselves made use of on festive occasions. It is less likely in the case of Peter that Paul, that the imagery should be the heathen spectacles. For these were to the Palestinian Jews. The term 'crown,' though different from the term for a diadem, appears to have that sense (e.g. Rev. iv. 10), and it is therefore, that here, as also perhaps in the idea of kingship. It is probable on the whole that Peter's term is from familiar Jewish practice, and that of the crown points more generally to honor and joy into which Christ's faithful shall enter when He returns. This is further described by an adjective feebler but slightly from the one already in the 'inheritance' in chap. i. 4. It is translated, therefore, simply unworthy. But in the phrase engaged in immortalities, which change in nature, can only be described by the flower amaranth. We should translate the sons of light hasten. Compare also the description of the fruit of paradise. And to the ground solemnly down they cast a crown interwoven with amaranth and gold; eternal amaranth, a flower which once willed, fast by the tree of life, to bloom.

In like manner, ye younger, submit to the elders. The exhortation clearly cherishing of a spirit of deference on the part to another. But the question is, in what classes introduced here in respect of ye, or in respect of office? Seeing that in verse the term elders is used in the case, it is natural to suppose it to have this sense here. It is not less natural to take the term younger to have a second sense. And this is supported by the connection that in connection with the narrative of the laying of the foundation on the rock of our Saviour and the priests (Acts v. 10) we see 'young men' if a distinct person engaged with certain manual services to the who accordingly rose up at once and performed the duty which had to be done in this case. This exhortation would bear relations of the junior and subordinate office-bearers (not necessarily identical with the deacons), or the recognized servants of the Church, to the presbyters or elders. It is alleged on the other hand, however, that there is no historical notice of the institution of any such lower order of church officers, and that the passage in Acts v. 10 does not necessarily imply the existence of a distinct class known officially as the 'young men' or the 'younger men.' Hence the phrase ye younger is taken by some (Weissinger, Alford, etc.) to mean the general membership of the Church, its members distinguished from its office-bearers. Others (Huther, etc.) understand the official sense to be otherwise, and mean the elders and the younger to be designations of age only. Others (de Wette, etc.) suppose the elders to mean the office-bearers proper, and the younger to denote neither a junior order nor the entire non-official membership, but only those members who were young in years and consequently under stronger temptation to show themselves insubordinate to their ecclesiastical rulers. The term 'elder' in the Hebrew Church was first a title of age and then a title of office. As those who were elders by age were in ordinary circumstances chosen as elders by office, the word combined both ideas, and with these it probably passed into the Christian Church. And even before there was any direct creation or recognition of distinct offices, the young men would naturally be looked for to the discharge of such duties in the Christian Church as they had probably been accustomed to in the Synagogue, and this would have a quasi-official position. Yes, all one to another. The 'be subject,' which the A. V. inserts after yes, all of you, must be omitted on the authority of the best documents. This leaves it open to connect the clause either with what precedes or with what follows. In the latter case (which is adopted by the text of the R. V., and by Alford, etc.) the idea is—yes, all of you, in reference one to another, gird yourselves, etc. In the former case (which is the more grammatical construction) the clause extends to the whole body of Christian people, without distinction of office or age, the same exhortation to mutual deference and submission which has already been addressed to a particular class,—gird yourselves with humility. The and of the A. V. does not belong to the text. As to the grace of humility see chap. iii. 8. The verb translated be clothed with by the A. V. occurs nowhere else in the N. T. The precise idea which it conveys has, therefore, been variously understood. Some give it the sense of adorn yourselves (Calvin, etc.), and so the Genevan Version renders 'decke yourselves inwardly with.' Others think that it is formed from a noun meaning the frock or apron of a slave, and would render it tie yourselves up with humility as with the slave's cape. To put on such a cape was to prepare for discharging the duties of a servant. The word would thus be chosen in order to indicate the menial service which they were to render one to another; in the same way as our Lord showed it in His own example and person when He girded Himself with a towel and washed the disciples' feet (Humphrey, Comm. on the Rev. Vers., p. 445). The Vulgate and the Rhenish Versions, again, translate it 'insinuate humility.' The word seems to be derived, however, rather from a simpler noun denoting a band. It thus means to fasten,
not merely to put on, but to gird tightly on; the grace of humility being not the girdle that fastens other things, but the thing which is girt firmly about one. It is therefore a stronger form of Paul's 'Put on ... humbleness of mind' (Col. iii. 12). Bengel paraphrases it admirably thus: 'Induce and wrap yourselves about with it, so that it may be impossible for the covering of humility to be torn from you by any force.' Tyndale's rendering is, 'Knit yourselves together in lowliness of mind.'—because God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.' The 'resisteth' indicates a strong and deliberate opposition. Its idea is that of setting oneself in array against one. The importance of the duty of humility is enforced by a sentence taken (with the substitution of God for the Lord) from the Greek text of Prov. iii. 34. This sentence is introduced in a similar connection in Jas. iv. 6. It states a principle on which God acts. It is the principle which is recognized in the Magnificat (Luke i. 51-53), and of which a figure has been seen by many in the actions of rain or dew on hill and valley. Leightean, 85, says—'His sweet dews and showers of grace off the mountains of pride, and fall on the low valleys of humble hearts, and make them pleasant and fertile.' But in this he is anticipated by Augustine, who speaks of grace descending like humble souls as 'the water flows together toward the lowliness of the valley, and flows down from the swelling hill.' Compare also J. D. Bums' rendering of the same principle:—

1 The dew that never were the hilly mountain
Falls in the valleys free;
Bright verdure fringes the small desert-founts,
But barren stands the sea.'

CHAPTER V. 6-11.

General Exhortations and Encouragements on the subject of the Chastenings of God and the Temptations of the Devil.

6 "HUMBLE yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us into his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Col iv. 1; 1 Thes. v. 6; Rev. iii. 3, etc.  
Mat v. 55; Lu. xii. 48, xviii. 3; 1 Kin. ii. 10.  
1 Pet. iv. 12.  
Mat. xii. 40; Acts xii. 5; Gal. i. 10.  
Mat. xxvii. 24; 2 Cor. xv. 54; Heb. 9, xiv.  
Rom. xvi. 23; 2 Cor. xiv. 5.  
Rom. xvi. 23; 2 Cor. xvii. 5.  
Ch. ii. 17.  
Ch. i. 12.  
1 Cor. xii. 21; Heb. xii. 21.  
1 Cor. ii. 12; 1 Thes. iv. 13.

1 anxiety  2 because  3 omit because  4 omit hath  
5 you  6 unto  7 in Christ  8 a little while  
9 will Himself make  10 omit settle  

11 read simply, to whom be the dominion unto the ages

The grace of humility closed the foregoing series of counsels. It appeared there as the safeguard against a lordly spirit on the side of those in office in the Church, and a spirit of insubordination on the side of the members and servants of the Church. It is reintroduced as the first of another brief succession of counsels addressed to all. It is enjoined now as a grace to be cherished toward God Himself, to be studied in especial under His afflictive dispensations, and to be valued as the condition upon which He suspends the honour which comes through suffering. It opens the way to other kindred duties,—sobriety, vigilance, steadfastness in faith. The exhortations are then crowned by a devout assurance of the graciousness of God's intention in all the trials of the time.

Ver. 6. 'Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God. Once more is the question of affliction touched, and the duty of
[Page 235]

GENERAL OF PETER.

... urged. This time, however, the
pressed in connection with the statement
principle on which God acts in
ace to the humble. The phrase 'mighty'
occurs nowhere else in the N. T.
'power in affliction or punishing.' Neither
limited here. The Hand that lays low
the irresistible power. Hand is exerted in chastening is that it
reasonably exerted in exalting. In order
may exalt you in due time. God has
use in laying His Hand heavily upon it
purpose can be given effect to only on
that we be to Him what He is to us.
tation will frustrate His purpose. But if
we ourselves as He humbles us, we shall
interest of tears' and be glorified
in God has His own time, never,
for fulfilling the purpose of His chasten-
that time, whether it come late or early,
our own hour, for which, like Mary at the
in Cana, we are so apt impatiently to be
'the day of your visitation.'
Casting all your anxiety upon Him,
he careth for you. While the A. V.
be one term 'care' in both clauses, the
has two distinct terms, the former mean-
tious care.' Compare also Ps. 62. 4.
The fact that God retains a loving
is for us is our reason for rolling the burden
anxieties upon Him. We do this by
and He shows His care for us by helping
row off the weight, or by sustaining us
liability of mind is a chief protection
anxiety. Where there is the disposition
ourselves beneath God's hand, there
position to trust Him will also appear.
est is described here as a burden ( = 'your
the' which is to be cast as one whole
id—'not every anxiety as it arises; for
arise, if this transference has been effec-
ted' (Alford). In the present instance
is not the affliction itself, but those
carking thoughts about affliction which
pain. Compare Shakespeare's
re is no cure, but rather a corrosive,
thing that are not to be remedied.'

remarkable words of the Stoic slave,
(Dissert. ii. 15), 'From thyself, from
ghs, cast away grief, fear, desire, envy,
aoce, avarice, effeminacy, intemperance,
or possible, cast away these things, and
way than by fixing our eyes upon God
turning our affections on Him only, by
escrated to His orders' (Ramage's ren-

Be sober; see on chap. i. 13, where
noticed as a condition to the highest
Christian hope. In chap. iv. 7 it appears
aration for prayer. In this third recom-
mendation, it is enjoined as a protection against
Satan—'be watchful.' The verb rendered 'vigil-
' here, and in 1 Thess. v. 10 'wake,' is else-
where (in some twenty-one occurrences) always
rendered 'watch' by the A. V. Its use here per-
haps indicates painful, personal recollection on
the writer's part. It is the word which Jesu
addressed to Peter and his comrades in the
garden—'What, could ye not watch with me one
hour?' (Matt. xxvi. 40)—your adversary the
devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking
whom to devour. The 'because' which is pre-
fixed by the A. V., is not found in the best manu-
scripts. Its omission gives a nervous force to the
whole statement. The word 'adversary' means
primarily an opponent in a lawsuit, and then an
opponent generally. It is much the same as the
O. T. term Satan. This is the only N. T. pas-
sage in which it is a name for man's great spiritual
enemy, who is immediately designated also the
'devil, or accuser.' While this adversary is else-
where described as a 'serpent' in respect of his
 Cunning, he is here appropriately compared to a
'roaring lion,' where threatenings and persecu-
tions are in view. The Hebrews had several
terms for the terrible roar of the lion. They had
one (used also of thunder) which expressed in
particular the roar of the hungry creature in quest
of its prey. It is that one which seems to be rep-
resented by Peter's word here. There is great
force also in the other descriptions—'walking
about' (cf. Job i. 7, ii. 2) As if the wide earth
were his range, and 'seeking whom he may
devour,' or, as it literally is, 'swallow, or gulp
down,' in his famished rage. The fury and ven-
ice of this enemy, the dread means which he
employs and the end to which he applies them,
make sobriety and watchfulness imperative on our
side. The writer who penned these words, so
bluntly expressive of his own belief in the exist-
ence of a personal spirit of evil, is the disciple to
whom Jesus specially addressed the mingled
warmings and assurances which Luke records
(xxiv. 31, 32)—'Simon, Simon, Satan hath de-
sired to have you, that he may sift you as
wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.'

Ver. 9. Whom resist, stedfast in the faith.
The 'stedfast' means stable or firm. It is
translated 'sure' in 2 Tim. ii. 19, and 'strong'
in Heb. v. 12, 14 (its only other New Testament
occurrences), while its verb is rendered 'establish
' in Acts xvi. 5, and 'receive strength,' 'make
strong,' in Acts iii. 7, 16. By 'the faith' here
is meant not the objects believed, but the sub-
jective conviction, the power or principle of faith
(cf. 1 John v. 4, 5). The spiritual adversary
is neither to be fled from nor to be supinely
d isot but to be withstood. He will be faced,
however, to little purpose where he is met by
weak and wavering conviction. Only he who is
strong in the faith which makes him a Christian,
is strong enough to vanquish this foe in the
assaults which he makes with the engine of per-
secution. Compare Isa. iv. 7, and above all, Paul's
view of the shield of faith and its efficiency in
Eph. vi. 16.—knowing that the same sufferings
are being accomplished in your brotherhood
who are in the world. The phrase 'the same
sufferings' means, literally, 'the same things
of the sufferings,' or 'the identities of the sufferings.'
The construction of the sentence is also otherwise
peculiar. Hence it is variously rendered, e.g.,
as = considering that the same sufferings are accomplishing themselves in your brotherhood, etc. (Huther); or as = knowing that ye are accomplishing the same sufferings with your brotherhood, etc.; or as = considering how to pay the same tribute of suffering as your brethren in the world; or simply as = knowing that the same sufferings are being inflicted on your brotherhood, etc. (Wilke). The idea in any case is sufficiently plain. Their courage in withstanding, with a firm faith, the devil’s attempts to seduce them through their sufferings, should be helped by the consideration that they occupied no singular position (cf. 1 Cor. x. 13). They suffered only as the whole Christian brotherhood suffered. The same dispensation of tribulation was fulfilling itself in them and in the brotherhood, the same tribute of suffering was being paid by them and by the brotherhood, and for the same reason. They were both ‘in the world.’ On the phrase ‘the brotherhood’ see on chap. ii. 17. Compare Gray’s lines:

‘To each his sufferings, all are men,
Condemned alike to groan;
The tender for another’s pain,
The unfeeling for his own.’

Ver. 10. But the God of all grace, who called you unto his eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while, will himself perfect, establish, strengthen you. Several changes must be made upon the A. V. here, which have been rightly recognised by the R. V., Weight of documentary evidence dictates ‘us by you,’ turns the tenses into futures, inserts ‘himself’ before these verbs, and excludes the final ‘settle.’ It is also probable that we should read ‘in Christ’ or ‘in the Christ,’ instead of ‘in Christ Jesus.’ The verse, therefore, is an assurance, not a prayer. It thus conveys far greater encouragement to those who have to face persecution, and resist the devil’s roarings and seductions. This assurance is introduced as a contrast with, or qualification of, what has been said of the burdens of believers. Hence the opening ‘but,’ or ‘moreover’ (not ‘and’). Such things they must expect from the adversary, but what may they not expect from God? They are themselves appointed to the trying duty of strenuous resistance; but, if so, God also will act with them in the perilous situation. As it is God’s part that Peter is now urging for the final comfort of his readers, that name is set emphatically first, and the solemn ‘Himself’ (which is missed by Tyndale, Cranmer, and the A. V., but caught by Wycliffe and the Versions of Geneva and Rheims) is brought in before the verbs which state the things which He is certain to do (cf. 1 Thess. iii. 11, v. 23). The designation of God as the ‘God of all grace,’ the God who is so rich in grace that all grace comes from Him, is the strength of the assurance. The title is itself a consolation. Still higher, if possible, might these drooping saints be lifted into the vast atmosphere of a gracious confidence, by the thought of what God had done for them in the divine change which first gave them Christian life. He had called them in His Son (by uniting them with Him), and that with the very object of bringing them to the end to His eternal glory. So great an act of grace was the pledge of further gifts of grace. Unless so great an object is to be frustrated, it must be that God will carry them through their sufferings, and make these the means of perfecting, establishing, and strengthening them with a view to that glory. The glory, indeed, into which they were called is to be theirs only after suffering. Yet the space of suffering will be brief. The ‘a while’ of the A. V. does not fairly represent the original. Tyndale is better—‘after ye have suffered a little affliction.’ What Peter has in mind is not the need of suffering at least for a time, but the shortness of the suffering. The idea conveyed by the ‘perfect’ is that of preparing completely, refining, bringing into faultless order, so that nothing shall be wanting. It is the term which is used for ‘perfect’ in such passages as Luke vi. 10, 1 Cor. i. 10, 1 Thess. iii. 10, Heb. xii. 21; and it is applied to the mending of broken sets (Matt. iv. 21), and the restoring of one in fault (Gal. vi. 1), etc. The ‘establish’ means to plant firmly, to make fast, so that there shall be no tossing or overturning. The ‘strengthen’ recalls Christ’s commission to Peter himself, the commission which he was discharging by this very writing. ‘When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren’ (Luke xxii. 32). Some have supposed the terms in which Peter, with a confidence touched with emotion, rapidly unfolds what God may be trusted to do, to be all figures drawn from the one conception of the Church as a building, the ‘house’ already noticed in chap. ii. 5. Bengel speaks of them as ‘language worthy of Peter (a rock),’ and gives the points briefly thus—perfect—so that no defect can remain in you; establish—so that nothing shall shake you; strengthen—so that ye may overcome every opposing force.

Ver. 11. To him be (or, is) the dominion unto the ages. Amen. A doxology similar to that in chap. iv. 11, but briefer. The longer version of the A. V. is not sustained by sufficient evidence.
CHAPTER V. 12-14.

Closing Explanations and Salutations.

Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, (as I suppose,) I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that the true grace of God wherein ye stand. The Church at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you. And Marcus my son. Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Amen.

11 Amen.

Rom. vii. 1; 2 Tim. iv. 4; Phil. iii. 13; Col. iv. 16; 1 Cor. xvi. 20; 2 Cor. xiii. 20; Eph. iii. 19; 1 Thes. v. 20.

\textsuperscript{9} omit unto you; \textsuperscript{9} as I account him; \textsuperscript{9} read rather, the true grace of God; which stand ye by; She that is in Babylon, co-elect, saluteth you; \textsuperscript{9} Mark or love; \textsuperscript{10} read simply, in Christ; omit also the Amen.

...
exhorting: on the force of this verb see on chap. ii. 11. — and testifying: the verb used here is a compound form of the usual verb. This is its only occurrence in the N.T. Some hold that it should be rendered 'giving additional testimony,' as if Peter meant that what he had done was simply to add his own testimony to what the readers had already been instructed in by Paul and Silas. The compound verb, however, gives the same idea, only with greater strength, as the simple verb. The two participles are not to be taken as (as they are understood by de Wette, etc.) to separate portions of the Epistle. We cannot say that so much of it is exhortation, and so much of it testimony. It is throughout an Epistle of the twofold character expressed by these terms, its exhortations rise upon the solid basis of its testimony to the grace of God, and its testimony is determined with a view to the practical statement of duty.—that this is the true grace of God. The grace of God here means much the same as 'this grace' in Rom. v. 1. What is in view therefore, is not the 'state of grace,' as contrasted with the state of nature. Neither is it the pure preaching of the gospel as contrasted with a false gospel or erroneous doctrinal teaching. It is the gift of grace whereof God had made them the possessors through the preaching of the Gospel. Peter affirms, therefore, that what they had come to know and enjoy through the Gospel was no imaginary or suppositional thing, but real grace, God's own grace, which neither the persecutors nor the apostate in spite of all their sufferings, and by which they ought firmly to abide. He regards the readers as already in that grace. But by whose means they had first been introduced to it he does not specify. So far, however, as they had been introduced by Paul into 'this grace' of which Peter had been writing, Peter sets the seal of his own testimony to that form of the Gospel which Paul had made known to them, and by which they had become what they now were.—in which stand; or, as the R.V. amplifies it, stand ye fast therein. Thus we must read, on the authority of the best documents and editors, instead of the that which stand of the A.V. The charge, too, is of the form (literally = into which stand ye) which recognizes the entrance into the grace, and enjoins its sedulous retention. It is therefore a short and earnest exhortation, containing in it in fact the whole of the advice has been said by way of exhortation in the whole Epistle' (Alford).

Ver. 13. The church in Babylon, co-elect, saluteth you. The original runs simply 'the co-elect one in Babylon saluteth you,' or, as the R.V. renders it, 'she that is in Babylon, elect together with you, saluteth you.' Hence some good expositors, including Bengel and Alford, are of opinion that Peter names in this way his own wife, (to whom there is also supposed to be a reference in 1 Cor. ix. 5), as uniting with him in these greetings. Others think that some notable Christian woman belonging to the Babylonian church itself, is in view. The grounds on which this interpretation is urged are such as these: the likelihood of the whole Christian community, designated as it is with so strange an indefiniteness, being united in these parting salutations with a single individual, who is distinctly described by his name Mark; the probability that in an Epistle addressed to 'elect strangers' individually, and not to churches named as such, the 'co-elect one' should also be an individual; the necessity of supplying a term, viz. church, which nowhere occurs in the Epistle itself. The great majority of interpreters, however, including Luther, Calvin, and most of those of our own day, prefer the other view; and then it is an obvious fitness in giving the greetings of the Christian community, within whose bounds Peter was at present resident, as the greetings of a church which, though widely separated geographically, was 'co-elect' with those elsewhere in other countries to whom he was writing. One of our two oldest manuscripts, the Sinaitic, indeed, inserts the word 'church,' as does also the Vulgate. Wycliffe gives 'the church that is gathered,' etc.; Tyndale, 'the company of your election,' etc.; Cranmer, 'the congregation of them which at Babylon are companions of your election.' The A.V. follows the Genera and the Rehemiš. But what is to be understood by Babylon here? Some few, including Lachmann, Vouga, and our own Pearson, have supposed the place in view to be an Egyptian Babylon, a military station mentioned by Strabo. Others have imagined it to be a mystical name for Jerusalem, or for the house in which the apostles met from the day of Pentecost. Passing over these eccentric opinions, however, we have to choose between two views, namely, that which takes the term literally and as designating the well-known Babylon on the Euphrates, and that which supposes that, as in designating Rome. The latter is undoubtedly a very ancient opinion. It was held, for example, by Jerome, Clement of Alexandria, indeed by the historian Eusebius to Papias of Hierapolis in the second century. It has been the prevalent Roman Catholic interpretation, but has also won the adhesion of Reformers like Luther, and of not a few eminent protestant exeges belonging to our own time, e.g. Hofmann, Ewald, Schott, etc. In favour of this allegorical interpretation it is urged that there are other occurrences of Babylon in the N.T. as a mystical name for Rome (Rev. xiv. 8, xvi. 18, etc.) and that Peter should have made the Assyro-Babylon his residence or missionary centre, especially in view of a statement by Josephus indicating that the Emperor Claudius had expelled the Jews from the city and neighbourhood; and that tradition connects Peter with Rome, but not with Babylon. The fact, however, that the word is mystically used in a mystical book like the Apocalypse,—a book, too, which is steeped in the spirit and terminology of the Old Testament, is no argument for the mystical use of the word in writings of a different type. The allegorical interpretation becomes still less likely when it is observed that other geographical designations in this Epistle (chap. i. 1) have undoubtedly the literal meaning. The tradition itself, too, is uncertain. The statement in Josephus does not bear all that it is made to bear. There is no reason to believe that at the time when this Epistle was written, the city of Rome was currently known among Christians as Babylon. On the contrary, wherever it is mentioned in the N.T., with the single exception of the Apocalypse (and even there it is distinguished as 'Babylon the great'), it gets its usual
name, Rome. So far, too, from the Assyrian Babylon being practically in a deserted state at this date, there is very good ground for believing that the Jewish population (not to speak of the heathen) of the city and vicinity was very considerable. For these and other reasons a succession of distinguished interpreters and historians, from Erasmus and Calvin on to Neander, Weiss, Reuss, Huther, etc., have rightly held by the literal sense.—and so doth Mark my son. Bengel and a few others think that this Mark was Peter’s own son according to the flesh. But in all probability he is affectionately designated in this way because he was Peter’s spiritual son in the faith. The Mark referred to, therefore, appears to be the well-known John Mark, the writer of the Second Gospel, of whom we read in Acts xii. 12, 25, xiii. 5, 13, xv. 37, 39, Col. iv. 10, Philem. 24, 2 Tim. iv. 11, and who has been connected by tradition with Peter as his companion and interpreter. It was to the house of Mary, the mother of this Mark, that Peter repaired on his deliverance from prison (Acts xii. 12). The old friendship, therefore, is found still alive after a long and changeful interval. It was this Mark who was the occasion of the sharp contention between Paul and Barnabas which is noticed in Acts xv. When these two set out on their second missionary tour, Barnabas desired to take his kinsman (Col. iv. 10) Mark along with him, as had been the case on their first missionary journey. Paul resolutely refused, however, to accede to this in consequence of Mark’s having left them during the former tour (it may be under the influence of Peter’s vacillation, Gal. ii. 13) at the Pamphylian Perge (Acts xiii. 13), and gone back to his mother’s house at Jerusalem. The result was that Paul and Barnabas separated, the latter taking Mark with him and proceeding again to Cyprus, the former associating Silas with him and journeying through Syria and Cilicia (Acts xv. 39-41). Here, however, in Babylon, the scene of so much decayed greatness, Silvanus and Mark are found together once more, acting along with Peter, the friend of Paul. Near the end of his career Paul bears witness to Timothy that Mark was “profitable to him for the ministry” (2 Tim. iv. 11). ‘Peter here,’ says Wordsworth, ‘joins Mark with Silas, who had once been preferred in his room. So may all wounds be healed, and all differences cease in the Church of Christ. So may all falterers be recovered, and Christian charity prevail, and God’s glory be magnified in all persons and in all things, through Jesus Christ.’

Ver. 14. Salute one another with (or, by means of) a kiss of love. What Peter speaks of here as the ‘kiss of love’ is always spoken of by Paul as the ‘holy kiss’ (Rom. xvi. 16; 1 Cor. xvi. 20; 2 Cor. xiii. 12; 1 Thess. v. 26). The Christian Fathers, too, speak of it as the ‘kiss of peace,’ or the ‘kiss in the Lord.’ The practice of saluting with a kiss was as common in the ancient East, and especially among the Jews, as is the custom of saluting with hand-shaking in the modern West. This gave rise to the Christian practice, which was a token of brotherly love, and had ‘the specific character of Christian consecration’ (see Meyer on 1 Cor. xvi. 20). These remarks of Richard Hooker on apostolic practices which are not to be held binding, are worth notice:—

‘Whereas it is the error of the common multitude to consider only what hath been of old, and if the same were well, to see whether it still continue; if not, to condemn that presently which is, and never to search upon what ground or consideration the change might grow; such rudeness cannot be in you so well borne with, whom learning and judgment hath enabled more soundly to discern how far the times of the Church and the orders thereof may alter without offence. True it is, the ancients, the better ceremonies of religion are; howbeit, not without exception; but true only so far forth as those different ages do agree in the state of those things, for which at the first those rites, orders, and ceremonies were instituted. In the Apostles’ times that was harmless, which being now revived would be scandalous; as their oculus sancta. Those feasts of charity, which being instituted by the Apostles, were retained in the Church long after, are not now thought anywhere needful’ (Eccles. Polity, Preface, iv. 4).—Peace to you all that are in Christ. The closing words ‘in Christ’ (which reading must be accepted instead of the ‘in Christ Jesus’ of the A. V.) are peculiarly Pauline in tone, Paul himself, however, is not in the habit of defining the subjects of his benedictions by that phrase, although it is elsewhere in frequent use by him. The benediction itself somewhat resembles that in Eph. vi. 24. Elsewhere Paul usually gives ‘grace’ where Peter has ‘peace’ here. The ‘Amen’ of the A. V. is insufficiently supported.
THE SECOND EPISODE GENERAL OF

P E T E R.

CHAPTER I. 1, 2.

Address and Salutation.

1 SIMON Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith through the righteousness of our Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.

Rom. i. 11; Phil. i. 1; Tit. i. 1; 1 Pet. i. 2; Jude v; Acts i. 17; 2 Cor. i. 10; Heb. vi. 14.

2 or perhaps, Symeon. 3 bond-servant. 4 omits have in of our God and the Saviour Jesus Christ, or, according to the R.V., of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

There is a marked difference between the opening of this Second Epistle and that of the First. The one inscription, indeed, is not less remarkable than the other for wealth of thought and tenderness of feeling. The benediction, too, with which the readers of this Epistle are greeted, has the same peculiarity of expression as the former. But there is more of the personal now in the description of the writer, and more of the Catholic in the description of the readers. The writer’s name is given with greater familiarity. His official title is given with greater fulness, and more in the Pauline form. The local designation of the readers is omitted, and they are described simply in respect of what they are by grace. This may be due to the fact that the former letter and the oral communications of its bearer, Silvanus, had brought the author into closer relations with the recipients. In contents and in phraseology the Introduction has also a character of its own. It points to Gentile Christians as the persons immediately addressed. It starts, too, with at least two ideas which bulk largely in the body of the Epistle, namely, that of spiritual knowledge as opposed to what is taught by seductive pretenders, and the lordship of Christ as opposed to the licence which despises government and speaks evil of dignities.

Ver. 1. Simon Peter. In the First Epistle the writer designates himself simply by the new name of grace, Peter, which he received from Christ.
is difficult to say which is to be preferred. The form \textit{Simon} is used both by Christ (Mat. xvii. 25) and by Peter’s fellow-believers (Luke xxiv. 34). Occasionally it seems as if Jesus fell back upon that name as the old name of nature, which excited humbling thoughts of the past in the mind of the Apostle (cf. Mark xiv. 37; Luke xxi. 31; John xxi. 15, 16, 17). \textit{Simeon} is the distinctively Hebrew or Aramaic form, the one probably in familiar use among the Jews themselves. To Peter himself it is given only once elsewhere, viz. by James, the spokesman of the Jerusalem Convention (Acts xv. 14). In the N. T. it is the form used in the case of the aged saint who received the infant Jesus into his arms in the temple (Luke ii. 25, 34), in that of the son of Juda (Luke iii. 30), in that of Niger (Acts xiii. 1), and in that of the Israelite tribe (Rev. vii. 7). In the Greek translation of the O. T. it is regularly employed as the name of the patriarch Simeon.—\textit{bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ}. The official designation. It differs from its parallel in the former Epistle in setting the general title, which covers all kinds of office or service, before the definite title which marks the particular dignity of office held by Peter. The combined designation, in this form, is peculiar to the present Epistle. It most resembles that adopted by Paul in Rom. i. 1 and Tit. i. 1. In his other Epistles Paul styles himself either simply \textit{servant} (Phil. i. 1), or simply \textit{apostle} (1 Cor. i. 1; 2 Cor. i. 1; Gal. i. 1; Eph. i. 1; Col. i. 1; 1 Tim. i. 1; 2 Tim. i. 1); and in the Epistles of James and Peter, the 

the sum of the things believed. So it is taken by not a few excellent interpreters (Huther, Alford, Wiesinger, etc.), who suppose it borne out by the objective use of the term ‘truth’ in ver. 12, and the similar use of the term ‘faith’ in Jude 5. The subjective sense, however, seems more in accordance with the statement on the subject of the faith of the Gentiles made by Peter himself before the convention at Jerusalem (Acts xv. 9). It is the more in place here, where the writer proceeds at once to deal with the experience of the reader and their duty to grow in grace. It is therefore of the grace of faith in Christ that Peter speaks. And of this he affirms first that it came to them as a gift of God. This verb ‘obtained’ is one which occurs again only thrice in the N. T. (Luke i. 9; John xix. 24; Acts i. 17), in which last passage Peter himself is the speaker. It means properly to have by \textit{lot or assignment}. It is put in the simple past (‘obtained,’ rather than ‘have obtained’), the gift of grace which brought it this new belief being regarded as a thing definitely bestowed at a former crisis in their life. The faith in possession of which they were partakers, neither by their own power nor of their own right, is affirmed secondly to be for that reason ‘equally precious,’ or ‘of like worth,’ with that of others like the writer himself. This compound adjective, ‘like-precious,’ occurs only here. It may be compared, however, with the repeated appearance of the idea of \textit{preciousness} in the former Epistle (1 Pet. i. 7, 19, ii. 4, 6, 7). The A. V. follows the felicitous rendering of Tyndale, Cranmer, and the Geneva. Wycliffe gives the same translation. The Rheims not less unhappily translates it ‘equal faith.’ But what is asserted is not the possession of the same measure of faith, but the possession of a faith which, by whomsoever enjoyed, has the same value in the sight of Him from whom it comes as a gift of grace. The persons referred to in the phrase ‘with us’ are not the \textit{apostles} as such, but the class of Christians, Jewish-Christians to wit, to whom the writer himself belonged. There is nothing in the New Testament to indicate the existence of ideas which made it necessary to assert that with God the faith of ordinary believers was not inferior in worth to that of apostles. But were this placed, how alien it was to primitive Christian thought to regard Gentile Christians as occupying in grace the self-same platform with Christians gathered out of the ancient Church of God.—In the right hand. The ‘through’ of the A. V. is an inexact rendering. The preposition used points to that (the sphere, \textit{e.g.}, or the spirit) in which a thing is done. The term ‘rightness’ is not to be diluted into ‘goodness,’ or transformed into ‘faithfulness.’ Neither has it here the theological sense of \textit{justifying righteousness}, the gift of righteousness (Luther, etc.), or imputed righteousness. That is a Pauline rather than a Petrine use. It is inconsistent, too, with the ascription of this righteousness both to God and to Christ. Nor, again, can the term be taken as equivalent to the \textit{state of justification} (Schott, etc.). For this would represent the faith as coming by righteousness, instead of the righteousness as coming by faith. Other glosses upon the word, \textit{e.g.} the righteousness of conformity to God’s will (Briickeimer), the \textit{kingdom} of righteousness (Dietzeim), are still less in place. The only sense that will suit the
the equality of Jew and Gentile (in view) is the broad sense of righteous impartiality, of God's love. So, too, is an idea entirely Compare his statement of persons with God as the object of the same admission of the phrase, therefore, the 'faith' as if it expressed the righteousness of precious, as if Peter the Gentile Christians had the fact that of Jewish Christians in the world of a justified state or righteous life. It immediately with obtained, and expresses the fact that this faith became theirs by the love of Him with whom there is no favouritism, no setting of arbitrary distinctions between class and a.—of our God and the Saviour Jesus Christ. is a question whether Jesus Christ is simply unanswerable here with God, or is identified as both and Saviour. The old English Versions to the A. V. adopted the latter idea, adhering not 'God and our Saviour,' but 'our God and Saviour.' The R. V. adheres to this in the text, but prudently inserts the rendering of the A. V. in its margin. The decision turns upon the application of a nice principle in the use of the Greek article, namely, that when two nouns of the same case, and under the rule of the same article prefixed to the former, are united by and, they describe one and the same object. Instances of this are seen in the designations of Christ in ver. 11 and chap. iii. 18. Grammatically this principle might seem to apply very distinctly to the present case, and so it has been understood by many interpreters, including Schott, Hofmann, Dietlein, Wordsworth, etc. The last-named expositor argues further, that a declaration of Christ's Divinity was very pertinent here, because the Epistle was designed to repel the errors of those who separated Jesus from Christ, and denied the Lord that bought them, and rejected the doctrine of His Divinity. The rule is subject, however, to certain checks which make its application here, as also in Tit. ii. 13, somewhat doubtful. Peter does not elsewhere call Christ directly God, although he repeatedly names Him Lord. The term God is nowhere attached immediately to Christ, or Jesus Christ, as in the case with Lord in the phrase 'the Lord Christ,' 'the Lord Jesus Christ,' 'our Lord Jesus Christ.' In the very next sentence, too, Peter distinguishes the two subjects, God and Jesus our Lord. It is precarious, therefore, to insist upon the grammatical principle here, and so the larger number of interpreters (Calvin, Huther, Alford, Frommuller, Wiesinger, Lumby, Mason, etc.) hold that two subjects are in view here, God the Father and Jesus Christ the Saviour, although Peter speaks of a righteousness of action which belongs to both.

Ver. 2. Grace to you and peace be multiplied. So far the opening benediction is exactly the same as in 1 Pet. i. 2; see note there.—In the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. This addition to the formula adopted in the previous Epistle is in admirable harmony with the scope of the letter. It defines the conditions on which this increase of grace and peace is suspended. These blessings will abound in the readers only as they themselves abide and advance in Divine knowledge. The strong, compound term for 'knowledge' is used here, which meets us so often in Paul's Epistles, particularly in the Pastoral Epistles and those of the Captivity. How characteristic of Paul the use of this word is, appears from these occurrences—Rom. i. 28, iii. 20, x. 2; Eph. i. 17, iv. 13; Phil. i. 9; Col. i. 9, 10, ii. 2, iv. 10; 1 Tim. ii. 4; 2 Tim. ii. 25, iii. 7; Tit. i. 1; 2 Thess. ii. 6. It is almost equally characteristic, however, of the present Epistle (chap. i. 2, 3, 8, ii. 20). Elsewhere it occurs only in Hebrews (chap. x. 26). It means more than simple acknowledgment. It denotes an intenser, more complete and intimate knowledge than is expressed by the simple noun. At times it gives the idea of the intimate recognition which love takes of its object. 'It is bringing me,' says Coleridge, 'better acquainted with a thing I knew before; a more exact viewing of an object that I saw before afar off' (see Trench, sub nse). This intimate 'knowledge' is also defined as the knowledge not only of God, but of Jesus our Lord; because, as Calvin suggests, as only by knowing the latter that we can rightly know the former; cf. John xvii. 3. The phrase 'Jesus our Lord' occurs only here and in Rom. iv. 24. This spiritual knowledge, therefore, which brings us into loving acquaintance with God Himself through Jesus our Lord is exhibited as the secret of grace and peace, and is at once opposed here, at the outset of the Epistle, to that unsullied, pretenuous teaching which seems to have given itself out as the perfect knowledge within the circles addressed by Peter. It is possible that the Apostle of the Circumcision had now to cope with the same boastful, vain, and impractical speculations which Paul contends with in his Epistles to the Colossians and Timothy.
CHAPTER I. 3-11.

Growth in Spiritual Character recommended on the ground of the Endowment of Grace, and as the Security against Falling.

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if you do these things, ye shall never fall. For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

1 rather, Seeing that, as in R. V. 2 or, hath gifted us with
3 rather, that called us
4 through glory and virtue, or, by his own glory and virtue
5 rather, he has given 6 or, the precious and very great promises
6 rather, become
7 rather, And for this very cause then, or, as the R. V. gives it, Yea, and for this very cause
8 applying on your part, or, applying besides
9 rather, furnish in your faith virtue
10 in the knowledge, self-control in the self-control, patient endurance
11 in the patient endurance
12 or, brotherly Love
13 literally, These things subsisting in you, and multiplying, make you neither idle nor yet unfruitful in relation to
14 For 15 short-sighted, or, as the R. V. puts it, seeing only what is near
16 having forgotten the cleansing
17 Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence
18 rather, for thus shall be richly furnished you the entrance
The writer starts at once, and in a somewhat abrupt and nervous fashion, with the great theme of advance in the spiritual life. He regards this as essential. He takes it for granted that it can be made good only from the standpoint of faith. He exhibits in detail the process of such an advance, and urges it by considerations drawn both from the advantage which it carries with it and the peril and loss involved in its neglect. We can better understand why he should insist with such rugged force upon the necessity of a constant increase in gracious attainment, and that especially in relation to the knowledge of God, if we are right in supposing that he had in view a spurious kind of knowledge, or gnostics, which developed in the next century into the heresy of the so-called Gnostics or 'knowing ones.' For that party pretended to reach a religious height from which they looked down in proud pity upon the ordinary life of faith, and the ordinary requirements of a growth in grace. Peter uses words as lofty as the loftiest language of that party. He speaks of the destiny of the Christian as nothing short of participation in the Divine nature. He describes in the strongest terms the grandeur and luster of the gifts conferred by Christ. But he makes both the magnitude and the intention of these gracious endowments the ground of his exhortation to aim at spiritual advance, and the reason why believers should practise all diligence. Though the style seems involved and the grammar irregular, the paragraph is distinguished by the rich elevation of its style, its dignified march, and the orderly progress of its argument.

The opening phrase of the second Epistle to the Corinthians, 1:1, 'the grace of God which is given us,' is one of the most significant in the whole of scripture. It is a verse which has been much debated, but which is not a mere technical expression. The word 'grace' is used either of the Divine power, and the basis of the entire scheme of salvation, or of the grace which has been given to the church. The former is the correct interpretation.

The first part of the verse is a clear statement of the Christian's position. The second part is a reference to the New Testament. The third part is a reference to the Old Testament. The fourth part is a reference to the whole of the Christian's life. The fifth part is a reference to the Christian's daily experience. The sixth part is a reference to the Christian's future life. The seventh part is a reference to the Christian's spiritual life. The eighth part is a reference to the Christian's moral life.

The use of the word 'grace' in the verse is a reference to the grace of God, which is given to the church. The word 'grace' is used in the New Testament to denote the free gift of God, which is given to the church. The word 'grace' is used in the Old Testament to denote the favor of God, which is given to the people of Israel. The word 'grace' is used in the New Testament to denote the favor of God, which is given to the church.

The verse is a reference to the Church, which is the body of Christ. The Church is the body of Christ, which is the body of the Son of God. The Church is the body of Christ, which is the body of the Son of God. The Church is the body of Christ, which is the body of the Son of God.

The verse is a reference to the death of Christ. The death of Christ is the sacrifice of Christ. The death of Christ is the sacrifice of Christ. The death of Christ is the sacrifice of Christ.

The verse is a reference to the resurrection of Christ. The resurrection of Christ is the life of Christ. The resurrection of Christ is the life of Christ. The resurrection of Christ is the life of Christ.

The verse is a reference to the glory of Christ. The glory of Christ is the power of Christ. The glory of Christ is the power of Christ. The glory of Christ is the power of Christ.

The verse is a reference to the glory of God. The glory of God is the power of God. The glory of God is the power of God. The glory of God is the power of God.
The second Epistle general of Peter. [Chap. I. 3-11.

Appropriated and used by the recipient of it, as well as a thing communicated by grace. It is with the latter that Peter deals at present. Taking it for granted that the gift of life is there, he will have it understood that this is not to lie dormant, because the Divine power of Christ has furnished with the new life itself, all that is serviceable to our living it out for ourselves, and giving effect to it in a type of conduct ruled by the fear of God — through the knowledge of him who called us through glory and virtue. The same intense term for 'knowledge' is used here as in ver. 2. The calling is given as belonging entirely to the past ('called', not 'hath called'), the first definite introduction into Christ's kingdom being in view. The Person who 'called us' is in all probability God; although some (e.g. Schott) take Christ to be intended in the present instance, holding that at least occasionally, as in Rom. i. 6, the usual N.T. practice of ascribing the 'call' to God the Father is departed from. The A.V. is entirely in error in rendering the last clause 'to glory and virtue.' In this it has followed the 'unto' of the Genevan; Tyndale, Cranmer, and the Rheims give 'by.' Otherwise, the wording varies between two forms which have much the same sense, viz. 'through glory and virtue,' and 'by his own glory and virtue.' By the 'glory' we may understand the sum of God's revealed perfections. As to the 'virtue,' see on 1 Pet. ii. 9, where it is used to express the excellencies of God. It occurs again in ver. 5 of this chapter, and in the N.T. it is confined to the writings of Peter, with the single exception of iv. 8. In the Classics it denotes excellence, whether physical or mental. In the Greek version of the O.T. it represents the Hebrew term for the majesty (Hab. iii. 3; Zech. vi. 13, etc.) and the praise (Isa. xlii. 8) of God. Here it is used to describe the Divine perfections both as revealed and as efficient. What is meant, therefore, is that this grant of 'all things serviceable for life and godliness,' which Christ's Divine power has secured for us, becomes actually ours only as we know the God whom Christ has declared, and who called us out of darkness by revealing His own gracious perfections and making them efficient in our case. There is a measure of resemblance to 1 Pet. i. 21, where it is said to be by Christ that we believe in God.

Ver. 4. Whereby he has gifted us. The verb is to be put thus, as already in ver. 3, rather than in the passive form, 'are given,' as the A.V. renders it. The 'whereby' may refer either to the 'all things' or to the 'glory and virtue,' more probably to the latter. The Person said here to 'gift us' is, according to some, the Christ whose Divine power has been already described as giving; according to others (and this is on the whole more likely), it is the God who called us. '—with the precious and exceedingly great promises. What are we to understand by these? Some say the promises recorded in the O.T. Others say the promises uttered by Christ Himself, or more generally those promises about His Second Advent and the end of the world which are given in the N.T., and to which also reference is supposed to be made in chap. iii. 13. The term 'promise,' however, means at times not the verbal promise itself, but its fulfilment (comp. Luke xxiv. 49; Heb. ix. 15, x. 36, xi. 13, 39). This sense is supported here, too, by the particular word used (occurring only once again in the whole N.T., viz. in chap. iii. 13), which differs from the ordinary term in being of a more concrete form. The 'promises' in view, therefore, may be especially the two all inclusive fulfillments of God's engagements, namely, the Advent of Messiah (comp. Luke i. 67-75), and the gift of the Spirit (which is described as 'the promise of the Father,' Acts i. 4). And these are defined as 'exceeding great and precious,' or rather, in accordance with what is on the whole the better supported reading, as 'precious and exceeding (or very) great.' These two epithets combined exhibit the objects as at once indisputably real, and of the highest possible magnitude. The 'precious' (an epithet which meets us in more than one form also in the First Epistle, i. 7, 19, ii. 7) seems here to point to the fact that these 'promises' are more than pleasing words, and have been found indeed to be things tangible and of the most substantial worth. The clause as a whole, therefore, bears that by means of those same revealed and efficient perfections by which He called us, God has put us in actual possession of those inestimable benefits of grace which are identified with the Coming of Christ and the gift of the Spirit. —In order that through these ye might become partakers of the divine nature. Some take the 'through these' to refer to the 'all things pertaining to life and godliness;' others connect it immediately with the 'glory and virtue.' It is most naturally referred, however, to the immediately preceding promises. The sentence, therefore, states the object which God has had in view in association with the endowments of grace which are bound up with the Coming of the promised Christ, and the outpouring of the promised Spirit. His object was that through these (for only through these was it possible) the appearance of the firstborn might have a new life and a new destiny. The verb is so put ('might become,' rather than either 'might be,' as in A.V., or 'may become,' as in R.V.) as to imply that the participation in view is not a thing merely of the future, but realized so far in the present. The expression given to the life and destiny themselves is as singular as it is profound — 'partakers of the (or perhaps a) Divine nature.' This phrase 'Divine nature' is peculiar to the present passage. It is not to be regarded as a mere synonym for 'justification,' 'regeneration,' or the 'mystical union.' On the other hand, it is not quite the same as the phrase 'the being of God.' As the phrase the 'nature of beast' (comp. Jas. iii. 7) denotes the sum of all the qualities characteristic of the brute creation, strength, fierceness, etc.; and the phrase 'human nature' denotes the sum of the qualities distinctive of man, so the 'Divine nature' denotes the sum of the qualities, holiness, etc., which belong to God. What is meant, therefore, is a Divine order of moral nature, an inward life of a God-like constitution, participation in qualities which are in God, and which may be in us so far as His Spirit is in us. Not that the believer is deified, as some of the Fathers ventured to say and Mystics have at times vainly dreamt, nor that there is any essential identity between the human nature and the Divine; but that God, who created us at first in His own image, designs through the Incarnation of His Son to make us like Himself, as children may be like a father, putting on us
'the new man, which after God is created in
righteousness and true holiness' (Eph. iv. 24; 
comp. also John i. 12).—having escaped the
corruption that is in the world in lust. Luther,
while some others, translates this 'if ye escape,' as
if it expressed a condition on which particular
freedom in the Divine nature depended. It rather states,
however, simply the other side of the Divine
intention, and might be rendered 'escaping,' or,
*who escaped.' The verb translated 'escaped'
occur only here and in chap. ii. 18, 20. It
implies a complete rescue, and 'this is mentioned,' as
Bengel justly observes, 'not so much as a duty
towards, but as a blessing from, God, which
accompanied our communion with Him.' The
term 'corruption,' or 'destruction,' is one which
occurs twice again in this Epistle (chap. ii. 12, 19;
for the idea comp. also 1 Pet. i. 4, 18, 23, iii. 4).
Outside this Epistle it is used only by Paul (Rom.
vi. 21; 1 Cor. xv. 50; Gal. vi. 8; Col. ii. 22). It
denotes the destroying, blighting principle of sin; which also is said to have the
world for its seat or sphere of operation, and
lust (on which see on 2 Pet. i. 14) for the
element in which it moves, or perhaps, as the
R. V. prefers, the instrument by which it works.
Bengel notices the contrast between the escape
and the partaking, and between the corruption in
the world in lust and the Divine nature.
Ver. 5. And for this very cause. Then
the A. V. erroneously renders 'and beside this.'
The formula does not introduce something which
is to be added to the former statement, but makes the
development of the ground for what is next to
be said. The R. V. renders it well by 'yea,
and for this very cause.'—applying on your side
diligence. The idea of 'diligence' is con-
veyed by the term which means also 'zeal,' and is
said to be a sign of earnest care' in a Col. viii. 16.
Ver. 6. The verb, which is inadequately represented by
the 'giving' of the A. V., is a rare compound
form, of which this is the only New Testament
instance. It is taken by some to mean 'edging in'
or 'putting in' (Bengel); by others, 'bringing in on the other hand' (Wies-
inger, etc.). The idea, however, seems to be that of
'contributing on your side' (Huther, etc.),
'contributing what might seem to be superseded'
(Hefenstern), or 'applying besides' (Scott). In
the Classics it expresses the bringing in of some-
thing new or additional, as e.g. the introduction
of a new bill to amend an old law. Here it
introduces what the readers have to do on their
side, in response to, and in virtue of, that which
Christ has done on His side. The fact that
Christ's Divine power had so richly endowed
them, and that God had privileged them to see
the accomplished realities which had been the
subjects of His promises, was not to be made an
argument for anything else than strenuous effort
on their part. It was to be the reason and motive
for applying themselves with sedulous care to
aims and exertions which the Divine gift might
seem to have rendered unnecessary. 'Rest not
satisfied, then, with a mere negative exertion, or
with any low, fragmentary measure of accomplish-
ment, but, co-operating to the full extent of the
Divine purpose, go on unto perfection' (Lillic).—
furnish in your faith virtue. The A. V. is
entirely at fault with its rendering, 'add to your
faith virtue,' in which also it unhappily followed
Besa, and forsook the earlier English Versions,
Wycliffe and the Rhemish give 'minister ye in
your faith, virtue;' 'Tyndale and Cranmer, 'in
your faith minister virtue;' the Genevan, how-
ever, has 'join moreover virtue with your faith.'
The verb itself is a compound form of the one
rendered 'give' by the A. V. in 1 Pet. iv. 11;
which see. The sense is that of suplying or
furnishing besides. It occurs again in ver. 11,
and in 2 Cor. ix. 10; Gal. iii. 5; Col. ii. 19.
In the New Testament it has that technical
sense of the simple verb, namely, that of bearing
the expense of a chorus for the dramatic exhibi-
tions, and is used in the sense of furnishing
generally, not in the special sense of discharging
office. In harmony with its original idea of
performing an act of munificence, it is usually
applied to what God furnishes. Here it is
applied to what man has himself to furnish in
order to make his life correspond, in the free
development of the spiritual character, to the
liberal endowment of Divine grace. Followed
here, too, by the preposition 'in,' it expresses
something different from the mere addition of one
thing to another. It represents this development
of the spiritual character to which the gift of grace
ples the believer as an integral process, an
increase by growth, not by external junction or
attachment, each new grace springing out of,
attaining and perfecting, the other. The life
itself is exhibited as a unity; all its powers and
possibilities being already contained in faith.
It is a unity, however, intended to grow up out of
this root of faith, and unfold itself into all the
sevenfold breadth of the Christian character. The 'faith' itself,
therefore, is taken as already existent. They are
not charged to supply it. But having it, they are
charged to furnish along with it, and as its proper
issue, seven personal graces. The several ele-
ments in the ideal spiritual character are given
in pairs, as if each lay already implicit in its
immediate predecessor, and belonged to its life
and genius. The first thing thus enjoined is
'virtue,'—a word very sparingly used in the New
Testament. It is the same term as is applied to
God in ver. 3. It occurs also in 1 Pet. ii. 9
(which see), and outside the Epistles of Peter it is
found only once, viz. Phil. iv. 18. Here it can
scarcely have the sense of our English word
'virtue,' or moral excellence, which would take
from the precision of the statement, and reduce it
to the vague advice to add to virtue so many other
virtues. As in ver. 3 it expressed not mere
excellence of character in itself, but the efficiency
of such excellence, so here it conveys the definite
idea of might, energy, or moral courage—what
Bengel aptly terms 'a strenuous tone and vigour
of mind.' This is to be furnished in and with our
faith, or in the exercise of our faith; so that our
faith shall not be an uncertain, feeble, and
timorous thing, but a manly and powerful thing
with a touch of heroism in it, and in the
virtue knowledge. The simplest term for 'know-
ledge' is used here, not the intense, compound
form used in vers. 2, 3, and again at ver. 8. It
is the same word as is used in 1 Pet. iii. 7, and
means here, as there, not the knowledge of
discipline, but the knowledge which consists in the
recognition of what is dutiful and appropriate in
conduct. This practical knowledge is to accom-
pany the exercise of the 'virtue,' or moral heroism
of faith, lest it run into unregulated zeal, incon-
siderate obstinacy, or presumptuous daring. Peter's recollection of his own bold protestations, and of the hardy venturesomeness which failed him so sadly at the pinch in the 'high priest's palace' (Matt. xxvi. 55, 69-75), would give a special pungency to this article in his counsels. This faculty of 'practising' patience under the stress of trial, in order to win the battle of the Lord is' (Eph. v. 17), which is necessary to qualify and soften the 'virtue,' has also its own roots in the same. 'An evangelical fortitude is favourable to the enlargement of evangelical knowledge; which, in its turn, is essential to the regulation and safe exercise of fortitude' (Lillie). So it forms an essential step in the progress towards that full 'knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ' which is represented in ver. 8 as the goal of all.

Ver. 6. And in the knowledge self-control. This is the grace which appears also as the 'temperance' of which Paul reasoned before Felix (Acts xxiv. 25), and as the last thing noticed in Paul's enumeration of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. v. 23). The noun occurs only in these three cases. It denotes 'temperance' in the largest sense of self-government in all things. This virtue of self-control is so related to 'knowledge,' that the one should not be in exercise apart from the other. Extravagance is the child of ignorance. A right estimate of oneself and mastery over oneself should be fostered by the knowledge which consists in the practical recognition of duty; and this latter should be helped by the former. And in the self-control patient endurance. The grace which is rendered 'patience' both in the A. V. and in the R. V. is a of stronger and more positive character than the familiar English term, and might be more fitly translated patient (or, perseverance) endurance. It is a quality never ascribed to God Himself. When He is spoken of as the 'God of patience,' it is in the sense of the Giver of patience to others (Rom. xv. 5). In the New Testament it seems always to carry with it the idea of manliness, expressing not the mere bearing of trials, but the courageous perseverance in the way of them. The brave patience with which the Christian contends against the various hindrances, persecutions, and temptations that befall him in his conflict with the inward and outward world (see Elicott on 'Thess. i. 3). So while the A. V. generally renders it 'patience,' it grapples at times the larger sense, translating it, e.g., by 'enduring' in 2 Cor. i. 6, by 'patient waiting' in 2 Thess. iii. 5, and by 'patient continuance' in Rom. ii. 7. It occupies a great place in the New Testament. Christ Himself gives it as the grace in which the soul itself is to be won (Luke xxii. 19). James (chap. i. 3, 4) speaks of it as the grace which, when it is allowed its perfect work, makes believers themselves perfect. It is specially frequent in the Pauline Epistles and the Apocalypse; in which latter it appears and reappears at marked turning-points (Rev. i. 9, ii. 3, 4, iii. 10, xii. 10, xiv. 12). In coupling it here with self-control, Peter gives the Christian version of the Stoic summary of morality. As the latter amounted to 'bear and forbear,' the former says 'forbear and bear.' Christian self-control is to be practised in and along with the spirit of patient endurance, which saves it from harshness and stiffness, confirms it into constancy, and mellows it into tenderness and humility. Like the 'meekness' and 'temperance' which stand side by side among the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. v. 23), these two are sister graces, not to be separated, but enriching each other. And in the patient endurance godliness. The same term is used for 'godliness' here as in ver. 3; see note there. It is to be furnished in order to secure the latter from hardening into a stoical, self-centred submision, and to make it the purer constancy which draws its inspiration from reverent regard for God and things Divine.

Ver. 7. And in the godliness brotherly-love. See note on 1 Pet. i. 22. In the former Epistle the grace of brotherly-love has a still more prominent place assigned to it (1 Pet. i. 22, 23, ii. 17, iii. 18, iv. 8). Here it is the climax to 'godliness,' keeping it in living connection with what is due to our brethren, and saving our regard for God and His claims from becoming an apology for neglecting His children and their interests. And in the brotherly-love love. This is not a repetition of the exhortation to an intense degree and unfettered exercise of love to the brethren, which is given in 1 Pet. i. 22. Our love, it is meant, strongly as it should beat within the Christian householI, ought not to be confined to that, but should enlarge itself into a catholic interest in all men. So Paul charges the Thessalonians to 'abound in love toward the brethren, and toward all men' (1 Thess. iii. 13). This 'rosary and conjunction of the Christian virtues,' as it is called by Jeremy Taylor, diffuses itself in its constituents and in its arrangement from Paul's delineation of the spiritual character in Gal. v. 22, 23. The one begins where the other ends. With Paul, love stands at the head, and naturally so. For Paul is drawing a picture of what the spiritual character is in contrast with the 'works of the flesh' and in our relations to our fellow-men. Hence he begins the description of the spring of all other graces in our intercourse with our fellows, and introduces faith in the centre of the list, and in the aspect of faithfulness in our dealings with others. Here Peter is engaged with the growth of the spiritual character, and therefore begins with faith in Christ as the foundation of all. Elsewhere Paul varies the order, giving love, e.g., the first place in Rom. xii. 9-13, Phil. i. 9; and the last place in 1 Cor. xiii. 13, Col. iii. 12-14. It is more natural to fix on this than more of the particular arrangement adopted here. There is no doubt a logical order in the list, and it is probable that it is laid out, as is supposed, e.g., by Canon Cook, so that we get first those graces (with the growth of them) which 'form the Christian character viewed in itself,' and then those which 'mark the follower of Christ (1) as a servant of God, and (2) as a member of the brotherhood of the Church of Christ, and (3) as belonging to the larger brotherhood of mankind.' But it is enough to notice how these graces are made to blend into each other, each being in the other 'like adjoining colour of the rainbow, mingled with it, and exhibited along with it' (Lillie). It is also worth observing that all the graces which are presented together in living union and interdependence here, are separately expounded with more or less fulness in the First Epistle; cf. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 14, 15, 16, 22, ii. 11, 21, iii. 4, 5, 15, iv. 8.

Ver. 8. For these things subsisting for you and multiplying. The A. V. throws this into
The writer rather speaks of the graces as already in the readers, and thus gives both greater courtesy and greater force to his recommendation. The suggestion of the statement appears also in the phrase which the A. V. renders 'towards you,' and the R. V. 'are yours,' but which means rather 'subsisting for you.' The word selected there is not the simple verb 'to be,' but another which implies not only existence but continuous existence, and looks at the possession of graces as a thing characterizing the readers, not merely now, but in their original spiritual condition.

It is the phrase which is used, e.g., in Phil. ii. of Christ as 'being in the form of God;' in Acts vii. 53 of Stephen 'towards full of the Holy Ghost;' in 1 Cor. xiii. 3 of 'all my goods;' in Matt. xix. 21, 'sell all that thou hast.' In these and similar cases, it implies rightful, settled possession, and looks back from the present moment to the antecedent condition of the subjects. The A. V. also misses the point of the other participle, the idea of which is not that of abounding, but rather that of increasing or multiplying (cf. 1 Cor. x. 31). What is taken for granted, therefore, is not that these graces are in these believers in profusion, or in larger measure than in others, but that, being in them, they are steadily growing and expanding, and exhibiting all the evidence of vitality. — make you not idle nor yet unfruitful. The 'make' is here expressed by a term which means to establish or constitute. The two adjectives are dealt with by the A. V. as if they meant the same thing. The A. V. looks at the possession of graces as between them. The latter means 'unfruitful.' The former, however, means not 'barren' but (as Cranmer, Tyndale, and the Genevan render it) 'idle.' It is applied, e.g., to the 'idle word' (Matt. xix. 36); to the idle in the marketplace (Matt. xx. 3, 6, — a parable which may have been in Peter's mind when he penned the passage); to the younger widows who are described as 'idle, wandering about from house to house' (1 Tim. v. 13). The idea, therefore, is that where these graces are one's permanent inward property, at his command, and growing from strength to strength like things that live, they put him in a position, or create in him a constitution, under which it cannot be that he shall prove himself either a useless trifle doing no honest work, or an unprofitable servant effecting what is of no worth even when he gives himself to action. — unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. The A. V. is again astray in rendering 'in the knowledge.' etc. This 'knowledge' (again with the intense sense of full, mature knowledge, as in vers. 2, 3) is represented not as the thing in which they are to be 'not idle nor yet unfruitful,' but as that with a view to which all else is enjoined, — the goal toward which all else is meant to carry us. The sevenfold symmetry of the spiritual character, and the furnishing forth of all these varied graces, are recommended not as ends to themselves, but as means toward the higher end of an ever enlarging, and at last perfect, knowledge of Christ Himself. The fact that these graces minister to so blessed a result is one great reason why we should set ourselves to cultivate them with 'all diligence.' They require for their cultivation both the Divine endowment of 'all things serviceable to life and godliness,' and sedulous application on our side. But the object which is set before us is worth all the expenditure, both human and Divine. The dependence of knowledge upon holiness, or of vision upon purity, which is stated in the most absolute form in such passages as Matt. vi. 8, Heb. xii. 14, and in relation to practical obedience to God's will in John vii. 17, is presented here in connection specially with the need of completeness in the Christian character and fruitfulness in the Christian life. So, in Col. i. 10, Paul speaks of being 'fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.'

Ver. 9. For he who lacketh these things. This is one of two instances in which the A. V. strangely mistranslates the Greek causal particle 'for' as 'but.' The other is 1 Pet. iv. 15. In Rom. v. 7 it erroneously renders the same causal particle by 'yet.' In the present case it has followed Wycliffe, Tyndale, and Cranmer, who all have 'but,' rather than the Genevan and Rheims, which give 'for.' It thus entirely misconceives Peter's meaning. He is not simply setting one thing over against another, but is adding a second reason for the course which he recommends. The reasoning may be understood in more than one way. It may be taken broadly thus—these graces are to be cultivated; for, if we have them not, we become blind, and 'sink back into a want of power to press into the elementary truths of the kingdom of God' (Plumptre). Or it may be put thus, in immediate relation to the nearest idea,—these graces are to be cultivated; for, wanting them, we want the capacity for this perfect knowledge of Christ. A different expression also is given now to the idea of possession. Instead of saying, as before, 'he for whom these things do not subsist,' another phrase is used which runs literally, 'he to whom these things are not present.' Thus the idea of a possession habitual, and settled enough to warrant its being spoken of as belonging to the person's past as well as his present, gives place to that of a possession which, however it may have been with his past, at least cannot be affirmed of his present. Wherever this is the case with the man as he now is, there that state has entered which is next described,—is blind, being near-sighted. As the A. V. renders this clause 'is blind, and cannot see afar off,' the latter epithet may seem at first only to repeat, in a weaker and almost contradictory form, what is already expressed by the former. Hence it has been attempted in various ways to make a sharp distinction between the two terms. The latter (which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament) has been rendered, e.g., 'grooping' (so substantially the Vulgate, Tyndale, Erasmus, Luther, Calvin, etc.)—a sense, however, which cannot be maintained good. It has also been rendered 'shutting his eyes' (Stephens, Dietlein, etc.); and the idea has thus been supposed to be this—'he is blind, and that by his own fault, wilfully shutting his eyes.' The word, however, seems to describe not one who voluntarily shuts his eyes (although the R. V. gives 'closing his eyes' in the margin), but one who blinks, or contracts the eyelids in order to see, one who is short-sighted or dim-sighted. Thus the second epithet defines the first. He is 'blind,' not seeing when he thinks he sees, not seeing certain things as he ought to see them. And he is this not in the sense of being 'blind,'
to all things, but in the sense of being ‘near-sighted,’ seeing things in false magnitudes, having an eye for things present and at hand, but none for the distant realities of the eternal world. The rendering of the A. V., therefore (which follows the Geneva), expresses the correct idea; which the R. V. (in its text) gives more clearly as ‘seeing only what is near.’ With what is said here of blindness compare such passages as John ix. 41; Rom. iii. 11; 1 Cor. viii. 2; Rev. xvi. 17; and especially 1 John ii. 1-11.—having forgotten the purification of his sins of old. The sins referred to are the sins of the man’s own former heathen life, and the purification is that which covered the whole sin of his past once for all when he first received God’s grace in Christ. The idea of a purification occupies a prominent place in the Epistle to the Hebrews (cf. chap. i. 3, 14, 22, 23; 2, 2). There not only sins are said to be ‘purified,’ but also the conscience, the heart, the heavenly things, the copies of the heavenly things, the flesh. The purification is effected by the blood of Christ, and its result is not mere moral purity, but the removal of guilt, of or the sense and conscience of sins. So here in sins of old are said to have been purified in the sense of having had the uncleanliness belonging to them cleansed away, or their guilt removed. The phrase carries us back to the Old Testament custom of sprinkling blood on objects which had become defiled, and so relieving them of the disadvantages of their ceremonial uncleanness. The ‘having forgotten’ is expressed in a way of which we have no other instance in the New Testament, but which resembles the phrase rendered ‘call to remembrance’ in 2 Tim. i. 5. It means literally ‘having taken (or, incurred) forgetfulness.’ It gives a graver character to the condition, representative perhaps as one which is voluntarily incurred or willingly suffered, or it may be, as one which is inevitable where there is neglect to cultivate grace. The sentence is introduced as a further explanation of the blindness. The man is ‘blind,’ in the sense of having eyes only for what is near and tangible, as the consequence or penalty of his forgetting the great change effected in the past, and living as if he had never been the subject of such grace.

Ver. 10. Wherefore, brethren, be the more diligent to make your calling and election sure. The ‘wherefore’ the rather of the A. V. suggests that the course now to be recommended is one to be preferred to some other course dealt with in the context. This is a legitimate interpretation, the Greek word meaning either ‘rather’ or ‘more,’ and being used (e.g. 1 Cor. v. 2) in order to put a contrast or opposition. It is adopted, too, by not a few interpreters. Some construe the idea thus—instead of trying to reach ‘knowledge’ apart from the practice of Christian grace, rather be diligent, etc. (Dietlein). Others put it so—instead of forgetting the purification of your old sins, rather be diligent, etc. (Hofmann). Most, however, take the term in the sense of ‘more,’ connect the sentence immediately with what has been stated in vers. 8, 9, and regard it as taking up anew the exhortation of ver. 5, and urging it for these additional reasons with greater force. The meaning then is = the case being as it has been explained in vers. 8, 9, let these grave considerations of what is to be gained by the one course and what is to be lost by the other, make you all the more diligent, etc. This is the one instance of the use of the address ‘brethren’ in the Epistles of Peter. In 1 Pet. ii. 11, iv. 12, and in 2 Pet. iii. 1, 5, 14, 17, we get ‘beloved.’ But what is meant by making the ‘calling and election sure?’ Many interpreters give the theological sense to both the nouns. So the ‘calling’ as the act of grace, which takes effect in time, is distinguished from the ‘election’ as the eternal act or counsel of the Divine Mind. Or the former is defined as that by which we are called in time to the kingdom of grace, and the latter as that by which we are chosen in eternity for the kingdom of glory. Thus the sentence is understood to be an exhortation to make that sure which God has made sure on His (Besser); or, to confirm the inference as drawn especially by ourselves from the appearance to the reality, from a good life to a gracious condition (Lillie); or, to make it clear that we ‘have not been called in vain, on the contrary that we have been elected’ (Calvin). But the fact that the ‘election’ is named after the ‘calling,’ and the awkwardness of speaking of the immutable decree of God as capable of being made sure, indicate that what is in view here is not the eternal election, but the historical,—that is to say, the actual separation of the readers from their old life, and their introduction into the kingdom of Christ. So it is taken by many of the best expositors, including Grothus, Huther, Hofmann, Schott, Mason, Lumby. Those acts of God’s grace which called them through the preaching of His Son’s Gospel, and took them out of the world of heathenism, were to be made ‘sure’ (the adjective is the same as in ver. 19; Heb. iii. 6, 14), or secure, by following them up by diligent attention to all the virtues into which they had been ushered the readers.—For, hence, however, ye shall never stumble. The verb which the A. V. renders ‘fall’ is the same which it renders ‘offend’ in Jas. ii. 10, 11, 2, and ‘stumble’ in Rom. xi. 11. It is true, therefore, that it indicates a ‘step short of falling’ (Plumptre). It is so represented in Paul’s question, ‘Have they stumbled that they should fall?’ (Rom. xi. 11); and James (iii. 2) speaks of a stumbling or offending which is not hopeless. Here, however, it manifestly refers to the final issue of a forfeiture of salvation (Hofmann, Huther, etc.). By the ‘these things’ we may understand again, as in ver. 8, the graces dealt with in the original exhortation. Not a few, however, take the phrase to refer simply to the duty last mentioned, viz. the making the calling and election sure. The plural form is then explained as due to the fact that the writer regards this ‘making sure’ as a ‘many-sided act’ (Dietlein),—as ‘not a single act, but multiform’ (Mason).

Ver. 11. For so shall be richly furnished for you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Another reason, and one rising far superior to the former, for the careful cultivation of these graces. ‘A good life can never be a failure. It may be a life of many storms; but it is not possible that it should end in shipwreck’ (Lillie). The word of the former statement. ‘Nay more,’ it is now added, ‘such a life shall have a glorious ending.’ The future of which the believer is heir is here designated a ‘kingdom.’ In First Peter it is an ‘inheritance.’ Nowhere else in the N. T. is
Chapter I. 12-21.

The Writer's intention to provide for the Remembrance of these things, specially in view of the Certainty of Christ's Coming.

2 Therefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me. Moreover, I will endeavour, that you may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice.

1 rather, Wherefore I shall always be ready to put you are the truth which is with you or, But I consider it right in the way of reminder literally, knowing that quick as the putting off of my tabernacle omit hath rather, But I shall also diligently provide rather, that at all times after my decease ye may be able to call up the memory of these things did or, myths literally, For having received
to him 18 from the excellent glory. "This is my beloved Son, 14 in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, 16 when we were with him in the "holy mount. 19 We have also a more 17 sure word of prophecy, 18 whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a "light 17 that shineth in a dark 18 place, until the day dawn, and the day-star 19 arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the 20 Scripture is of 21 any private interpretation: for the prophecy came not in old time 22 by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were 23 moved by the holy Ghost. 24

15 rather, when such a voice was borne to him by the sublime Glory 14 or, my Son, my beloved 15 or, And this voice we heard borne out of heaven 16 or, And we have the word of prophecy more sure 17 lamp 18 or, as in margin of R. V., squaill 17 omit the 20 or, as in the margin of the R. V., special 21 literally, for not by the will of man was prophecy ever borne 22 or, but being borne by the Holy Spirit men spake from God. 23

The writer next expresses his resolution to use the brief portion of life now remaining to him in recalling the attention of his readers to the great truths to which he has been referring, and in making provision for the recollection of them after his own departure. He knows the deep solicitude which he feels in regard to this, and his anxiety that the gift of Divine grace, and the obligations connected with it, may not be forgotten or thought little of, when the living voice of apostolic teaching ceases to admonish and remind. He is at pains to explain why he has made such a resolution and entertains such anxiety. It is because of the certainty and gravity of that 'power and coming' of the Lord, which had been proclaimed by his brother Apostles and himself. He is desirous to have the minds of his readers filled with this above all things, and their lives coloured and directed by it, because every other Christian interest and all Christian duty are bound up with it. In words touched with the light which is shed by the solemn recollection of the past, the aged writer speaks of the witnesses to which he can appeal in behalf of the certainty of these things which had been preached with respect to the Lord's Coming, and the manner of life which befitted its anticipation. These witnesses are found in the transfiguration scene and the voice of prophecy. The verses form a paragraph complete within itself, with a character and with contents entirely its own. It comes in, however, quite appropriately as an intermediate section. It makes a natural appendix to the first division of the Epistle, which is itself a kind of summary of subjects handled at greater length, but with much the same phraseology, and in much the same spirit, in the First Epistle. It also prepares the way, particularly by the prominence given to the 'power and coming' of the Lord, for the very different paragraph which follows in the next chapter.

Ver. 12. Wherefore I shall always be ready to put you in remembrance regarding these things. The 'wherefore' represents the resolution now expressed as having its reason in what has been already said. That may be either the immediately preceding thought or the tenor of the previous section as a whole. The motive lies in the responsibilities connected with the endowment of grace received from Christ, or, more particularly, in the consideration that the eternal kingdom of Him who bestows that endowment can be 'richly furnished' only to those who do the things which have been recommended. The phrase 'these things' is taken by some to refer to what follows, namely, the statement in ver. 18 about the Lord's Advent; by others its reference is limited to one particular subject, such as the grace enumerated in vers. 5-7 (Hofmann), or the kingdom and its future (de Wette). It is best taken, however, as pointing back to the whole burden of the opening statement—the duty of Christian progress, the necessity of Christian diligence, the blessings secured by the right course, the loss entailed by the opposite. The writer professes his constant readiness (the 'always' qualifies the 'ready' rather than the 'put in remembrance') to preserve in them a loving recollection of these facts and responsibilities. Greater point, too, is given to the resolution by adopting, instead of the negative reading of the R. V. and the Received Text, 'I will not be negligent,' the positive, and far better supported, reading of the R. V. and most critical editors, 'I shall be ready,' or, as it also may be rendered, 'I shall be sure,' 'I shall proceed.' The formula occurs only once again in the N. T., viz. in Matt. xxiv. 6, where the A. V. translates it simply 'ye shall hear,'—though we know them, and are established in the truth which is with you. Again, as in ver. 8, with something like the courteous tact of Paul (comp. e.g. Rom. xv. 14, etc.) and John (1 John ii. 21), the writer speaks as if his anxiety after all were superseded. The term rendered 'established' is the one which we have already had in 1 Pet. v. 10. It is the word which Christ used in forewarning Peter (Luke xxii. 32, although the A. V. varies the translation there—'when thou art converted, strew thy brethren'). The cognate noun appears in the
...THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER...

xdered 'steadfastness' in 2 Pet. iii. 17. 'r., by adopting the literal translation of words, 'the present truth,' is apt to an erroneous idea. What is meant as *not suited the present truth which is at present under course, nor even (as Bengel puts it) the truth of O. T. promise and prophecy, truth which is present with you, which has its possession through the preaching Gospel. The idea is much the same as received by Paul in 1 Cor. xvi. 1. The text again in Col. i. 6, where the word truth of the Gospel' is spoken of as that which came to you. 3. But I consider it right, so long as I am tabernacle, to stir you up in the way. 'But' represents the sense better 'And' of the R. V. Although he gives due for knowing these truths already, and only grounded in them, he deems it, never, not to be silent or regard them as danger. Their danger, on the contrary, reduced to speak to them as long as (comp. Phil. i. 7); and this with the object of stirring them up, or rousing e verb occurs again in chap. iii. 1, and e in the N. T. only in the Gospels, and with the literal sense Mark iv. 38; l. 24; John vi. 18), and keeping them, by us reminders, awake to all that spiritually them. The body is here figuratively as a tent or 'tabernacle' by a word synonymous through the preaching gospel, and once in the literal sense, viz. in 46. It is a longer form of the term used in 2 Cor. v. 1, 4, and of which speaking elsewhere, e.g. in the record of recording at the Transfiguration (Matt. Mark ix. 5, etc.). The figure was a common one in later Classical Greek, * μία in medical writers. It conveyed the tent the body is the mere tenement of the lly taken down. In the Book of Wisdom we have the same figure, with a somewhat application— a corruptible body weighs down; and the burdens of the tent burdens thinking mind. 'The Christian Father as it thus: 'This, which is presented, is, not man, but is the tabernacle of the house of God, and figure is seen thoroughly, the form of the small vessel in which he indeed, but from his deeds and habits' amage's rendering). Here, according to the immortality of the soul, the briefness soul in a mortal body, and the ease of e in the faith, are implied.' 4. Knowing that quick is the putting up tabernacle. There is a mixture of r here. The idea of a 'putting off' or denuding, which is applicable to a takes the place of the striking or own which holds good of the 'tent' or cie. We have a similar mixture of r in 1 Pet. iv. 2, 'who covereth himself it as with a garment: who stretcheth reavens as a curtain' (i.e. the curtain of a the same occurs also in 2 Cor. iv. 1–3, suggested that it may have come naturally least, through his familiarity with the tent of Cilician haircloth, 'which might almost equally suggest the idea of a habituation and a vesture.' (See Dean Stanley's Comm. on the Epistles to the Corinthians, p. 415.) There is some doubt as to the precise point intended the 'quick.' The epithet is a rare form (in Classical Greek purely poetical, and in the N. T. found only here and in chap. ii. 1) of the ordinary adjective which means either swift or sudden. It may indicate either the speediness of the approach of death, or the speediness of the work of death. In the one case Peter's motive for stirring them up is his knowledge of the brief interval that had separated him from death. In the other it is his knowledge of the fact that he is to have a swift and sudden death, a mode of death which admonishes him to leave nothing to be done then which can be done now. The latter idea is favoured by the reference which immediately follows to what had been made known to Peter by Christ Himself. It would be superfluous for one who was already far advanced in life to adduce a declaration of Christ's as the ground of his knowledge of the nearness of his own end. It is quite in point for him, however, to cite such a declaration as the ground of his knowledge of the kind of death he was to die. And we see plainly from the narrative of the incident which in all probability was in Peter's mind,—an incident which it was left to his brother in the apostleship and companion in the scene itself to record at length and to interpret (John xxi. 18, 19), that what was communicated was his destiny to be a sharp, sudden, violent death. The latter view, therefore, is adopted by Wycliffe (alone among the old English Versions), the Vulgate, and many of the foremost interpreters (Bengel, Huther, Schott, Hofmann, Plumptre, Alford, Masius, etc.). The former, however, is preferred by Dr. Lumbly and others, as well as by the A. V., Tyndale (who gives 'the time is at hand that I must put off,' etc.), Cranmer, the Genevan, and the Rheish— even as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. Not 'hath showed me,' as the A. V. puts it, but 'showed me' (comp also 1 Pet. i. 11, where the word is rendered 'signify'), the reference being to the one memorable intimation made by the Sea of Galilee. It is entirely unnecessary to suppose, as is done by some, that Peter had received another special revelation, bearing on the time of his death. Ver. 15. But I shall also give diligence (or, diligently provide) that at all times ye may be able after my decease to call up the memory of these things. The A. V. is slightly at fault here both as to terms and as to arrangement. 'Moreover less correctly conveys the idea than 'but' or (as in the R. V.) 'yea.' For the writer is rather resuming and amplifying the statement made in ver. 12, than explaining some additional provision which he meant to make. The 'always,' which the A. V. connects with the 'have in remembrance,' rather defines the 'may be able after my decease.' The word, too, properly speaking, means 'on each occasion,' or 'at all times as they rise.' The phrase rendered 'have in remembrance' is one found nowhere else in the N. T. In Classical Greek it means to 'make mention of.' It is possible that it has that meaning here, and that the writer expresses his desire to make it possible for his readers to report these things to
others. It is generally taken, however, in the modified sense of "recalling to memory"; which has the analogy of similar modes of expression (e.g. in Rom. i. 9; Eph. ii. 16), and is in harmony with the thought of the previous verses. Various views are entertained of what is exactly referred to in this promise or resolution. It is supposed, e.g., that Peter alludes to the two Epistles as a written provision he was to leave behind him. But the form of the resolution, 'I shall give diligence,' does not easily fit in with that. It is supposed, too, that he may have in view the training and appointment of teachers to succeed him, or the transcription of copies of his Epistles for wide distribution, or the preparation of a Gospel (namely, that of Mark) under his direction. Most probably, however, he is simply expressing his intention to continue to communicate with them, as he had already been doing, on the great truths of the Gospel as long as opportunity presented itself, and thus to arm them to the utmost against the peril of forgetfulness. Not a few Roman Catholic interpreters, inclining some of the best, have construed this into a statement of Peter's permanent supervision of the Church, and even his heavenly intercession in behalf of the Church; notice that the word rendered "decease" here means literally "exodus," and is the very term used in Luke's account of the Transfiguration (ix. 31). Elsewhere it occurs only once, and that in the literal sense, viz. in Heb. xi. 23, where it is translated "departing."

Ver. 16. For we did not follow cunningly devised myths, when we were made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The writer has used throughout verses 12, 13, 14, 15, to 'we here is to be noticed. He is to speak now not of his own personal resolutions and expectations, but of what he had preached in conjunction with other apostles, and especially of one significant scene which he had witnessed in company with John and James. The 'follow' is expressed by a strong compound verb which occurs in no other book of the New Testament, and is used only twice again (chap. ii. 2, 15). It is supposed by some to convey the idea of following a false lead. But it expresses rather the closeness of the following. The phrase rendered 'fables' by the A.V. and R. V. is the term 'myths,' which is so familiar in the Classics. In the New Testament it occurs only here and in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim. i. 4; iv. 7; 2 Tim. iv. 4; Tit. i. 14). The 'myths' are defined (by the participle of a verb which is used here in the bad sense, but which has the good sense of making true, in the only other New Testament passage where it occurs, viz. 2 Tim. iii. 13) as 'cunningly devised,' or 'cleverly elaborated.' Wycliffe and the Rhemish give 'unwise,' 'unlearned,' which is an inadequate rendering. Cranmer gives 'deceitful,' Tyndale and the Geneva 'deceivable.' There has been much dispute as to the particular myths which are in view. Some have advocated the extraneous opinion that they were Christian myths—legends like those which the apocryphal Gospels, and other curious products of early Christian literature, show to have become connected, within a comparatively brief period, with the history of Christ's life and opening life. Others take them to have been fancies of the kind which afterwards took shape in the Gnostic speculations about wisdom and the sons and emblems of Deity. Others identify them with ordinary heathen myths, specially those of the descent of the gods to earth. Many regard them to be Jewish myths,—such monstrous embellishments of Old Testament history as appear in the apocryphal books. Peter, on the whole, on the side of the less, in particular if the parallel statements of Pastoral Epistles are found to suit best as against the common Judaizing tendency unspiritual, Pharisaic study of the Old Testament disputations, cleaving to the letter, an itself in useless hair-splitting and fables (Neander, Planting of Christianity, 342, Bohn). In this case we may understand, perhaps, why so much of this Epistle and that of Jude turns on the oldest portions of the Old Testament history, such as these, along with others out of the Old Testament itself, but dealing with Testament personages and events, were the subject of the rabbinical, legendary emendations. These were not made use of by the false teachers of whom Peter refers; and that, asCanon suggests, Jude and he, therefore, were giving these seducers with their own words a question to which different answers are possible. This—an example of communication is added to the statement, 'we are known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' The term 'coming,' which means literally 'to go,' does not denote, as is supposed by some interpreters, either Christ's earthly life or His Second Advent. His coming to judgment. This teaching, therefore, 'power' (or 'fulness of the might of the Lord') (I Thess. i. 7) is identified by some with that which is called 'the advent' of Christ. Peter himself in his former Epistle; it is suggested then that the novel and mysterious declaration about 'the spirits in prison' is exposed to Peter to misunderstandings which he wished to remove (so Plumptre). But the writer uses the plural 'we,' and it appears that he identifies himself with others in what he proceeds to say, it seems best to understand him generally to what he and his comrade apostleship had proclaimed on the subject, by oral communication or by written teaching, however it may have reached the parties immediately addressed here, we know to them to carry the weight of authority with it. The term 'eye-witnesses' is to the present passage. The cognate word is used in the New Testament only at 1 Pet. ii. 12, iii. 2; which see. They are technical words in Classical Greek for stage of initiation into the Eleusinian cult. The noun may carry with it the privilege of the initiated, or eye-witnesses of at the mighty power' (as is rendered) of God seen in the miracles followed the Transfiguration; and in t
writer's description of the 'magnificence' (as the same term is here translated) of Diana (Acts xix. 27). In the original the whole sentence has a turn which may be represented thus— For it was not as having followed cleverly-contrived myths that we made known to the people and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but as having become eye-witnesses of His majesty.'  

Ver. 17. For he received from God the honour and glory. In the original it is 'For having received,' etc., the sentence being broken by what is said about the voice, and the writer hurrying on to the conclusion unmindful of the fact. The title 'Father' is appropriately introduced here, as the testimony which Christ received from God was one to His own Sonship. The same conjunction of 'honour' and 'glory,' or 'praise,' occurs in Rom. ii. 7, 10. In 1 Pet. i. 7 we have the richer conjunction of 'praise and honour and glory,' or, as the better reading gives it, 'praise and glory and honour.' Certain distinctions are attempted between the two terms here, the 'honour' being supposed to refer, e.g., specially to the honourable witness borne by the voice, and the 'glory' to the truth that shone out about Christ, or broke forth from Him. Such distinctions, however, are precarious. The thing dwells in noot the splendour of Christ's own appearance on the occasion, but the tribute which came by the voice to Christ. These terms, therefore, are generally descriptive either of the magnificence of the scene, or of the majesty of that particular tribute. Compare with this the words of another eye-witness, the apostle John, 1 John i. 14, where such a voice was borne to him by the sublimage glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. The voice is called 'such a voice,' that is to say, 'such as I am now to record,' or perhaps 'a voice so wonderful in kind.' It is also described, both here and in the next verse, not as 'coming,' but as being 'borne' or 'brought' to him, the verb employed being that which is applied again to the prophets as 'moved' or 'borne' by the Holy Spirit (in ver. 20), and also to the 'rushing' (as it is there rendered) mighty wind, noticed by Luke in his narrative of the Pentecostal descent (Acts ii. 2). The next words are rendered 'from the excellent glory' by the A. V.; in which it follows Cranmer, and the Genevan. Tyndale gives 'from excellent glory;' Wycliffe, 'from the great glory;' the Rhemish, 'from the magnificent glory.' 'Excellent' is a somewhat weak representation of the adjective, which means rather 'magnificent' or 'sublime.' This is its only New Testament occurrence. The 'from' also is in reality 'by,' the preposition being the one regularly used with that sense after passive verbs. Hence many of the best recent interpreters regard the words as a designation of God, and translate them 'by the sublimage majesty.' In support of this, Matt. xxvi. 64 is referred to, where the term 'power' is taken to be a title of God. It is possible that the peculiar phrase is due to Peter mentally likening the cloud out of which the voice broke to the glory-cloud of the Shekinah, which was to Israel the visible sign of the Divine presence. The testimony uttered by the voice differs very slightly from the form in which it is reported in Matthew's Gospel. A shorter form is given in Mark (ix. 7) and Luke (ix. 35). Here the reading which is preferred by the recent editors gives it still greater intensity. It may be represented thus— My Son, My beloved One, this is,—in whom I am well pleased.' The 'well pleased' is given in the past tense (= on whom I set My good pleasure'), as expressive of the changelessness of the satisfaction once for all placed in Him.  

Ver. 18. And this voice we heard borne out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount. The character of the Divine testimony to Christ is thus yet more carefully described, in respect both of its own directness and of the credibility of the report which was given of it. It came immediately from heaven. It was reported, too, by those who were present with Christ Himself on the occasion, and were both eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses of what took place, not only seeing with their own eyes the scene, but hearing with their own ears the voice. By the 'holy mount' is to be understood not the temple-mound (as if the voice referred to were, as Grotius imagined, that recorded in John xii. 28), but the Mount of Transfiguration. Peter does not identify it with either Hermon or Tabor. He gives it, however, the same honourable title that Zion enjoyed in the Old Testament. The sacred associations now connected with it, and the fact that it had been the scene of a manifestation of Divinity, had made it 'holy' ground. So, as Calvin notices, the spot where Jehovah appeared to Moses became 'holy ground.' Peter here, therefore, is generally descriptive of the majesty of that particular tribute. Compare with this the words of another eye-witness, the apostle John, 1 John i. 14, where such a voice was borne to him by the sublime glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. The voice is called 'such a voice,' that is to say, 'such as I am now to record,' or perhaps 'a voice so wonderful in kind.' It is also described, both here and in the next verse, not as 'coming,' but as being 'borne' or 'brought' to him, the verb employed being that which is applied again to the prophets as 'moved' or 'borne' by the Holy Spirit (in ver. 20), and also to the 'rushing' (as it is there rendered) mighty wind, noticed by Luke in his narrative of the Pentecostal descent (Acts ii. 2). The next words are rendered 'from the excellent glory' by the A. V.; in which it follows Cranmer, and the Genevan. Tyndale gives 'from excellent glory;' Wycliffe, 'from the great glory;' the Rhemish, 'from the magnificent glory.' 'Excellent' is a somewhat weak representation of the adjective, which means rather 'magnificent' or 'sublime.' This is its only New Testament occurrence. The 'from' also is in reality 'by,' the preposition being the one regularly used with that sense after passive verbs. Hence many of the best recent interpreters regard the words as a designation of God, and translate them 'by the sublimage majesty.' In support of this, Matt. xxvi. 64 is referred to, where the term 'power' is taken to be a title of God. It is possible that the peculiar phrase is due to Peter mentally likening the cloud out of which the voice broke to the glory-cloud of the Shekinah, which was to Israel the visible sign of the Divine presence. The testimony uttered by the voice differs very slightly from the form in which it is reported in Matthew's Gospel. A shorter form is given in Mark (ix. 7) and Luke (ix. 35). Here the reading which is preferred by the recent editors gives it still greater intensity. It may be represented thus— My Son, My beloved One, this is,—in whom I am well pleased.' The 'well pleased' is given in the past tense (= on whom I set My good pleasure'), as expressive of the changelessness of the satisfaction once for all placed in Him.  

Ver. 19. And we have more sure the prophetic word. Such is the literal rendering of a clause the exact point of which is not a little uncertain. The context, specially what is said in vers. 20, 21, chap. ii. 1, shows that we are to understand by 'the prophetic word' here (cf. the phrase 'the Scriptures of the prophets' in Rom. xvi. 26), neither the Gospel (Luther), nor the written or spoken prophecies of the New Testament, nor these along with the Old Testament prophecies (Plumptre), but Old Testament Scripture itself as a whole, or the sum of Old Testament prophecy regarding Christ. It is clear, too, that a comparison is instituted. For the adjective, which is elsewhere used to describe the 'promise' as sure (Rom. iv. 16), the 'word spoken by angels' as stedfast (Heb. ii. 2), the anchor of the soul as 'sure and stedfast' (Heb. vi. 19), etc., is
not to be rendered 'very sure,' as some have imagined, but means 'more sure,' or 'more stedfast.' The question, therefore, is whether the prophetic word is compared with itself or with something else. There is much to be said on both sides. Some, indeed, who favour the latter view, take the comparison to lie between the prophetic word and the 'cunningly devised myths,' which have been already repudiated. 'This, however, is unlikely. With much better reason others conceive the prophetic word as it once was to be compared with the same word as it now is, the point being that in the former the testimony of the whole Christ's power and Coming' has been made surer than before by the historical accomplishment of so much of its witness to the Messiah, or (as others prefer to put it) by the confirmation lent it through the record borne to Christ in the voice and the glory of the Mount of Transfiguration. The clause might then be rendered, 'and we have the prophetic word made more sure.' So it is paraphrased by Mr. Humphry—'having been witnesses of His majesty and hearers of His voice from heaven, we have the word of prophecy made more firm (as a foundation of our faith) by the fulfilment which it has received' (Comm on the Revised Version, p. 450). Among the English Versions, the Rhemish and the Revises adopt this view. The A. V. itself is wrong. The clause, however, admits another meaning, which may be freely given thus: 'and we have a more sure word, namely the prophetic word.' Or, 'we have something surer still, namely the prophetic word.' In this case the testimony of the Old Testament is referred to as of greater certainty, or even carrying in it greater point of conviction, the testimony on the subject of Transfiguration. The comparison thus becomes one between the exceptional testimony of the heavenly voice and the familiar testimony of Israel's ancient Scriptures. The advantage is given to the latter as a ground for confidently expecting the Lord's Coming. Why this is the case the writer himself does not say. Various reasons have been suggested. Peter has been supposed to assert this greater sureness for O. T. prophecy, e. g., because it was more venerable on account of its age (Calvin, Whitby, etc.); or because it was a permanent witness and one open to all, while the witness borne through the Transfiguration was transient and seen only by a select three (Scott, etc.); or because it was a direct witness to Christ's Coming, while the Transfiguration was merely a historical scene, amounting at the best to a type or presumption of that event (Sherlock, etc.); or because it was not a single testimony and one dealing with only a part of the truth, as was the case with the voice, but a cumulative and continuous testimony, and one covering all that bore upon Messiah's sufferings and glory (Alford). Be the reasons what they may, it would be natural enough for a Jew like Peter to claim for the Jewish Scriptures a superiority over all other forms of testimony. And on this view, which is now followed by many excellent interpreters, we get a sense entirely germane to the context. The writer has expressed his wish to do all in his power to secure their perpetual regard for the truths in which his readers had been instructed. His own belief in the certainty of his Lord's Coming is at the foundation of this anxiety. He desires to see his readers equally assured in the same expectation, and with that view particularises two reasons for the belief. The one is what he himself saw on the Mount; the other is what others have as well as he, namely the prophetic testimony of the Old Testament. Each of them he puts forward as a valid witness. But he gives the preference to the one which could not be regarded as limited or exceptional—whereas ye do well giving heed. With the forms compare the similar usages in Acts x. 31; Phil. iii. 14; Heb. ii. 1; 3 John 6. It implies careful, earnest, believing attention. As unto a lamp shining in a dark place. The term 'light' by the A. V. means 'lamp' or 'torch.' It is the one used in Matt. v. 15; Mark iv. 21; Luke vii. 46; Luke viii. 16, 10; 33, 36, xv. 8; Rev. xvi. 14, xxii. 5 (in all which it is rendered 'candle' in the A. V.); and also in Matt. vi. 22; Luke xxi. 34, xxii. 31; Rev. xxi. 23; John v. 35 (in which last it describes the Baptist). With its application to the prophetic word compare Ps. cxix. 105. The epithet 'dark' (of which this is the only N. T. example) means literally dry, arid, and dreary. It perhaps combines here the two ideas of squalid (as the R. V. gives it in the margin and gloomy. This 'dark place,' the squalid gloom of which is being pierced by the prophetic word, is understood by some to refer to a lower level of spiritual knowledge and experience, which is to yield to a higher state of illumination and assurance in the case of Christians. It is best taken, however, as a figure of the world itself. Compare the prophetic description of darkness covering the earth (Isa. lx. 2, etc.)—until the day shall dawn and the day-star arise in your hearts. Two of these words are peculiar to the present passage, namely dawn and day-star. The former (which is different from the term in Matt. xxviii. 2); Luke xxii. 54) means to shine through, and is therefore peculiarly in point where the idea to be expressed is, as here, that of the morning-light as it first breaks through the darkness. The latter is to be taken in the strict sense,—not as equivalent to the sun, or generally to the light, but as referring to the day-star, the "light-bringer" (as the term literally means) which appears with the dawn. How are these figures here to be interpreted here? Many of the best commentators are of opinion that, on account of the definition 'in your hearts,' and for other reasons, a subjective application must be given to the whole sentence, and that it is to be connected immediately with the previous 'giving heed.' In this way the idea is taken by some to be, that the prophetic word must be attended to until the present imperfect measure of grace and knowledge in the believer gives place to an immediate perception and clear assurance, which will supersede the necessity for such prophetic light. The analogy of similar figures elsewhere, however (see specially Rom. xiii. 11, etc.), is in favour of the objective sense. The reference, therefore, seems to be to the day of Christ's Second Coming, in comparison with which the present state of the world is the time of night and darkness. The prophetic word to which believers are to give earnest heed is a lamp which is to go on shining until the Christ of whom it testifies appears. The fact that this is the ministry it is meant to serve is the reason why they ought to give such heed to it. And when the day of the Lord's Advent, which shall be like the rising of dawn upon the world, is about to
I. 12-21.] THE SECOND EPistle General of Peter. 257

as enter it certainly shall, its signs shall
themselves known to Christ's own flock—in
hearts shall rise a light and assurance like
star, which comes with the day and attests
salvation. Those, therefore, are right who
at the particular point of time in view is
immediately heralding the Second Advent.
The time when the sign of the Son of man
(Matt. xxiv. 30), when believers are to
their heads because their redemption
night (Luke xi. 28), when accordingly
orning-star which usher in the day shall
their hearts' (Huther).

Knowing this first, that no prophecy
came of private interpretation.
Blessed is the fact which is to be recog-
the need which should be given to the
word, or a reason why such need should
be earnestly. It is by no means easy, how-
determine what that fact or reason is.

Catholic divines in the interest of their
of the relation in which Scripture stands
Church. It has been regarded as a protest
the right of private judgment. Some
neut commentators read it as a caution
interpretating particular prophecies sep-
by themselves, instead of interpreting them
full light. The last, therefore, are right who
in it, a re-statement of what Peter has
said in the former Epistle (chap. i. 11, 12)
the inability of the prophets to understand
was in the prophecies which they uttered.
suppose it to mean that prophecy is not its
interpreter, but can be fully understood only
light of the event. Not a few (including
Erasmus, Besser, Schott, Hofmann, etc.)
less way or other, to be an assertion of
that the readers of prophecy are not ableown understanding to interpret it, but are
ent for its interpretation upon the Holy

It cannot be said, however, that any one
an affair in nature, and as a result, the con-
must be sought more in harmony with
of thought. The terms themselves, at
is time, are for the most part sufficiently
and the following verse makes the ruling
the writer's mind equally clear. The
prophecy of Scripture' means a prophecy
to Scripture, or as Dean Plumptre puts
prophecy 'authenticated as such by being
as part of Scripture.' The 'is' of the
and the R. V. does not quite fairly repre-
original, which means rather arises, comes
stance, or originates. The interpretation
the sense of the adjective 'private,'
ay mean either 'special' (as in the margin
of the R. V.), or 'one's own;' and still more
upon the sense of the noun rendered 'inter-
pretation.' This noun is found only this once in
the N. T. It is used, however, by one of the ancient
Greek Versions of the O. T. in the sense of the
'interpretation' or readings of a dream (Gen. xi. 8).
The cognate verb, too, occurs in Mark iv. 34
(where the A. V. renders it 'explained'), and in
Acts xix. 39 (where it is translated 'determined').
The verse, therefore, seems to mean that prophecy
does not originate in the prophet's own private
interpretation of things—that it is not the mere
expression of his own reading of the future. This
explanation (which Bengel suggested, and Huther,
Alford, etc., have followed) connects the verse
easily and clearly both with what precedes and
with what follows. The fact that prophecy is
something so different from man's own view of
events or forecasts of the future is to be known
'that,' that is, it is to be recognised as a fact
primary importance. It is a reason why we should
give that earnest heed to it which was enjoined
in the previous verse. And in what sense prophecy
is something more than the expression of the pro-
phet's own ideas or prognostications, is stated in
the next verse.

Ver. 21. For not by man's will was prophecy
borne at any time. The statement is more
absolute than it is made to appear in the A. V.
The phrase 'not of old time' means 'never,' or
not at any time.' The verb rendered 'came' is
the one which was used already in vers. 17, 18,
and means sent or communicated in the sense of
being borne on. It points here, therefore, not to
the utterance of prophecy, but to the prophetic
affluence, or to the prophecy as a gift imparted by
God, and in relation to which man himself was
simply a recipient—but, being borne on by the
Holy Ghost, men spake from God. Docu-
mentary evidence is in favour of this reading,
which is both shorter and more expressive than
that of the A. V. It drops the official title of the
prophets as 'holy men of God,' and, in harmony
with the emphatic denial of the agency of 'man's
will' in the prophetic message, speaks of the
bearers of prophecy simply as 'men.' It describes
them further as men who became prophets only
by receiving an impulse from the Holy Spirit
which bore them on, and as speaking, therefore,
'from God,' that is to say, as commissioners from
Him, having the point of issue for their message
not in their own will but in God's will. On the
term 'borne on' compare Acts xvii. 15, 17, where
it is used of the ship driving before the wind.
The A. V. misses the point when it renders 'as
they were moved.' The statement is, that they
spake because they were so moved.

VOL. IV. 17
Chapter II. 1-16.

Warnings against False Teachers.

1 But there were 1 false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who 2 privily shall bring in 3 damnable 4 heresies, 5 even 6 denying the Lord that 7 bought them, and 8 bring upon themselves 9 swift destruction. And many shall 9 follow their 10 pernicious ways; by reason of whom the 2 way of truth 1 shall be 1 evil spoken of. And through 9 covetousness shall they with feigned words 1 make merchandise of you: 9 whose 1 judgment now of a 2 long time 3 lingereth not, 10 and their damnation 11 slumbereth not.

2 For if God 3 spared not the 18 angels that 19 sinned, but cast them down to hell, and 6 delivered them 9 into chains of darkness, to be 16 reserved unto 1 judgment; and spared not the 18 world of the 18 ungodly, 10 and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, 19 condemned them with an 18 overthrow, 12 making them an 18 ensample unto those that after should live 17 ungodly, 10 and 6 delivered just 9 Lot, 12 vexed with the 18 filthy conversation of the 18 wicked: 11 (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and 10 hearing, 11 vexed his own righteous soul from day to day with their 18 unlawful deeds: 12)

3 The Lord 9 knoweth how to 12 deliver the 18 godly out of 18 temptations, 12 and to 6 reserve the unjust unto 1 the day of 10 judgment to be 18 punished: 12 but chiefly them that 9 walk 11 in 18 covetousness.

---

1 rather, as in the R. V., arose
2 better, with R. V., as among you also there shall be
3 or, the which
4 literally, heresies of destruction
5 literally, having brought upon themselves, omitting and
6 literally, wantonesses
7 or, of the truth
8 or, make gain of you
9 literally, for whom the sentence from of old is not idle
10 destruction
11 omit the 13 or, when they
12 omit to be
13 or, as in the R. V., with seven others
14 or, righteous
15 better, sore distressed by the walk of the lawless in wantonness
16 or literally, for by sight and hearing the righteous man dwelling among them day by day tormented his righteous soul with their lawless deeds
17 rather, as the R. V. puts it, to keep the unrighteous under punishment unto the day of judgment
after the "flesh in the "lust of uncleanness," and "desip- 86 or, self-willed darers, or, darers, self-willed 87 or, they tremble not when speaking evil of 88 literally, where 89 literally, an evil-speaking judgment 90 as irrational animals 91 or, born naturally with a view to capture and destruction 92 speaking evil in matters 93 omit and 94 even 95 receiving as they shall, or perhaps, as in the R. V., suffering wrong 96 or, reckoning revelling in the daytime pleasure 97 omit they are 98 revelling 99 in their deceits, or perhaps, as in the R. V., in their love-feasts 100 literally, of an adulteress 101 or, that cannot be made to cease 102 having a heart practised in covetousness 103 children of a curse 104 having forsaken the right way they went astray 105 transgression 106 literally, a dumb beast of burden 107 better, with R. V., stayed

The second chapter of the Epistle stands entirely by itself. It is of so peculiar a character, that some have doubted whether it belonged originally to this Epistle, or could have been written by the same hand. It abounds in uncommon or entirely exceptional phrases, and is marked by a singularly broken style. It introduces a subject, and is pervaded by a tone, which are very different from what the previous chapter presents. The subject, however, is not absolutely unconnected with what preceedes. The writer's anxiety that his readers should remain established in the truth, after his own decease, prepares the way for what he has to say about the dangers of the future. And the change in the tone is not inconsistent with the change in the theme. The colours, however, in which he gives the outline of the future are of the darkest, and the terms which he uses are of the strongest. He speaks of the rise of false teachers in the Church as a certain thing, if not indeed a thing already realized. He describes their efforts, their pretensions, their successes, their lives, their fates, in a long train of passionate utterances, which have been compared to 'blasting volleyed thunder.' The terrible picture of the working of this 'mystery of iniquity' within the Church is unrelieved, too, by any reference to the ultimate victory of the kingdom of Christ, or to the larger issues of the conflict between good and evil. The gloom of the description is mitigated only by the assurance that the Lord knows as well how to deliver the godly themselves as to bring swift and awful destruction upon their enemies and persecutors. The relation in which this chapter stands to the Epistle of Jude is also a matter of some interest. The points at which the two writings meet are too numerous and too marked not to demand explanation. Some argue, accordingly, in favour of the
priority of Peter; others with equal decision assert the priority of Jude. The question whether the peculiarities of the case are to be explained on the theory of Peter's dependence on Jude, on that of Jude's dependence on Peter, or on that of the dependence of both upon a common source, is far from being settled, if indeed it admits at all of anything like conclusive settlement. We shall find, too, that along with very striking and continuous resemblances to Jude, this chapter exhibits some remarkable variations.

Ver. 1. But there arose also false prophets among the people. Israel is obviously meant by 'the people' here (comp. Rom. xv. 11; Jude 5, etc.). As in the former Epistle, therefore, so here Peter regards the N. T. Church as the Israel of God, and finds in what took place within the O. T. Israel an image of what is to take place in the N. T. Church. The 'but' introduces contrast with what was stated at the close of the previous chapter. There were prophets in Israel who 'spake from God,' but there arose in the same Israel false prophets, and so it shall be in the N. T. Israel. The term 'false prophet' occurs in the O. T. (e.g. Jer. vi. 13), but is of much commoner occurrence in the N. T. The form of the word leaves it somewhat uncertain whether it means precisely one who prophesies false things, or one who falsely pretends to be a prophet. This latter sense is preferred by some of the best interpreters. The class of false prophets is dealt with in Deut. xiii. 1-5.—as also among you there shall be false teachers. The term 'false teachers' occurs nowhere else in the N. T. As in the case of the 'false prophet,' it is uncertain whether it has the sense of 'premised teachers,' or that of teachers of falsehood. Both amount, however, to much the same. Christ Himself foretells the rise of 'false prophets' (Matt. xxiv. 24), and Paul warned the elders of Ephesus of men who should arise within the Church 'speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them' (Acts xx. 29)—who shall privately bring in destructive heresies. The 'who' means here rather 'such as,' pointing not merely to the fact that they shall so act, but to their character as such. The verb (which occurs only here) means literally to bring in by the side. It may convey the idea of 'one for insidiousness, which both the A. V. and the R. V. represent by 'privily bring in.' Compare Paul's use of the corresponding adjective, 'false brethren unawares brought in' (Gal. ii. 4). Jude (ver. 4) uses a different term to express the same idea, and speaks of the event as already accomplished ('crept in unawares'), while Peter speaks of it as still future. The 'damnable heresies' of the A. V., is an unhappy rendering of the original, which means 'heresies of destruction,' that is, heresies which lead to destruction, or, as the R. V. gives it, 'destructive heresies.' It is doubtful whether the word 'heresies' is to be understood here in the sense now attached to it, namely, that of heterodox, self-chosen doctrines, or in the sense of party divisions. The latter is undoubtedly the regular sense of the term in the N. T., comp. Acts v. 17, xv. 5, xxiv. 5, xxvii. 5, xviii. 22 (in all which it is rendered 'sect' in the A. V.), and also Acts xxiv. 14; 1 Cor. xi. 19 (where it goes with schisms), and Gal. v. 20 (where it ranks with divisions). There is nothing to make a departure here from the stated use. For the idea of party divisions created by

false teaching suits the context well enough. Some good interpreters (Huther, etc.), however, are of opinion that the matter in view is the opinions themselves, that this is more in keeping with the phrase 'privily bring in,' and that the word, therefore, in this one instance at least, approaches the modern sense—even denying the Lord that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. The construction of these clauses is uncertain. It is possible that one or other of the participles stands instead of the finite verb, and that the whole, therefore, takes the form, and shall deny the Lord that bought them, bringing upon themselves, etc., or better, and denying the Lord shall bring upon themselves, etc. It is best, however, to retain all the participles as such, and we have then an intensification of the previous statement. In bringing in these heresies of destruction the false teachers will be enim denying the Lord, and their doing so will mean that they have brought doom upon themselves. If Peter writes this Epistle, this reference to the denial of all possible evil in faith becomes doubly significant. The name given Christ here is the term Master, which is repeatedly used to designate the head of a house in his relation of authority over, or in his rights of possession in, the members of his house (Rom. i. 7, 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2; 2 Tim. ii. 21; Tit. ii. 9; 1 Pet. ii. 18). Christ's claims upon them are further described as the claims of One who had made them His own by purchase. Jude (ver. 4) omits this notice of the purchase price, which is elsewhere stated to be His blood (1 Cor. vi. 20, vii. 23; Rev. v. 9), is left unexplained. The passage is one of several, in which Christ's death is presented in its world-wide attitude, as the means of instituting new relations between God and all mankind. 'These are balanced by others which ascribe a special effect and a particular design to His death in relation to His own, who have been given Him of His Father. Both must find a place in our doctrine of His reconciling work. As to the 'swift,' see on chap. i. 14. As there, so here it means sudden—a destruction swiftly, inevitably, 'like the lightning's stroke' (Lillie).

Ver. 2. And many shall follow their wantonly. The A. V. gives 'pernicious ways,' following a reading which is now given up. On the noun see on 1 Pet. iv. 3. The same strong term is used for following, as in chap. i. 16. It denotes completeness or closeness of pursuit. Here again the immoral life is represented as the natural result of the false belief. So too, and still more positively, in Jude 4.—by reason of whom the way of the truth shall be evil spoken of. As to the verb see on 1 Pet. iv. 4. Christianity is designated 'the way of the truth' as being a mode of life which results from, or bears the qualities of, the truth. The term 'way' in this particular application occurs with marked frequency in the Book of Acts (comp. ix. 2, xvi. 17, xviii. 25, 26, xix. 9, 23, xxii. 4, xxiv. 14). The connection leaves it ambiguous whether the persons referred to here are the false teachers themselves, or their followers, or both together. The most natural reference on the whole would be to those who have been immediately spoken of as certain to follow these teachers. In this case the point may be, as it is understood, e.g., by
that greatest injury is done to the cause of among those outside by men who, while 13 to be in the way of truth, yet favour and 14 teachers.
3. and in covetousness by feigned 15 they will make merchandise of you. 16 rendered 'make merchandise of' occurs 17 again in the N. T., viz. in Jas. iv. 13, 18 it is translated 'buy and sell.' In 19 classical Greek, and also in the Septuagint 20 Prov. iii. 14), it occurs with the sense of 21 over. Hence some interpreters think 22 it expresses the desire of the false 23 s to win adherents. The more usual sense 24 verb, however, is to make gain of an 25 teachers, known for their life of sheer 26 ness, and having greed for their great 27 will use their deluded followers for 28 of gain, employing artful speeches 29 on the subject of Christian liberty, as 30 as their weapons in the base traffic 31. The s thus uncover dark in the 32ess of their character and 33ess of their aims. This evil dis 34 appears again in vers. 14, 15. It is 35 terms not less strong by Jude (vers. 11, 16), 36 also the indignity like the indignations on a like 37 state of matters, which are made by Paul 38 vi. 5: Tit. i. 11). The epithet 'feigned' 39 diar to this passage. With these 'made 40 'craftily constructed' speeches, compare 41 good scene or state of penality. As the participle 42 to in the present tense, the appended clause should be 43 translated not 'to be reserved,' but 'being reserved' 44 or 'in reserve unto judgment.' The Vulgate and 45 all the old English Versions go astray here.—The 46 case of the angels is introduced as the first of three 47 historical events to which Peter appeals in proof 48 of the certain judgment of the false teachers. 49 has been supposed by many that Peter is pointing 50 here to the sin dimly indicated in Gen. vi. 1-7, 51 the 'sons of God' being taken there to be a 52 synonym for angels. Others regard him as 53 referring to ideas on the subject of the sins and 54 penalties of angels, which were traditional among 55 the Jews and became embodied in such books as 56 that of Enoch (vii. 1, 2). The passage itself, 57 however, deals chiefly with the punishment of the 58 angels, and simply mentions the fact of their sin, 59 without explaining its nature. Jude gives no 60 more definite account of it than that they 'kept 61 not their first estate, but left their own habitation' 62 (ver. 6). And over the whole question of angelic 63 sin Scripture offers little or nothing to satisfy 64 curiosity. With Peter's description here compare 65 Milton's:

1. Here their prison ordained
   In utter darkness, and their portion set
   As far removed from God and light of heaven,
   As from the centre thence to the utmost pole.
   —Paradise Lost, l. 72-74.

4. For if God spared not angels when 110 misled. This rendering (which is adopted 111 R. V.) comes nearer the original than that 112 A. V., as it is not merely that those of the 113 who did sin were not spared, but that even 114 as of angels as such were not spared when 115 them among them.—but casting them into 116 were 'casts them asunder' in a unite judgment. There is a little uni- 117 unity here both as to the connection and as to 118 the reading. Some good interpreters arrange the 119 clauses thus: 'having cast them down into hell (120 bound) with chains of darkness, committed them 121 in reserve unto judgment.' The preferable 122 construction, however, is the other. Ancient 123 authorities, again, vary between two slightly 124 different forms of the word which the A. V. 125 renders 'chains.' One of these means what the 126 A. V. makes it—'chains,' ropes, or cords (comp. 127 Prov. v. 22). This reading gives a sense in 128 harmony with the companion statement in Jude 129 (ver. 6), as also with another in the Book of 130 Wisdom, 'they were bound with a chain of dark- 131 ness' (xvii. 27). The best manuscripts, however, 132 support the other form, which means caves, 133 dungeons, or, as the R. V. puts it, 'pits.' The 134 term itself, in either form, occurs only this once in 135 the N. T. The word here used for 'darkness' is 136 found again only in ver. 17 and in Jude 6, 13. 137 The verb rendered 'cast them down to hell' by 138 the A. V. is also peculiar to the present passage. 139 It is the heathen term for consigning to 140 Tartarus; that is, the dark abyss, as deep beneath Hades as 141 heaven is high above earth, into which Homer 142 tells us (Ilid, viii. 13, etc.) Zeus cast Kronos and 143 the Titans. In later mythology it denoted either 144 the nether world generally, or that region of it 145 to which gross offenders were condemned. Here, 146 as the immediately following words indicate, Peter 147 has in view neither Hades, the world of the 148 departed generally, nor Gehenna, hell in the sense 149 of the place of final judgment, but the intermediate 150 state of the departed, in which the souls of the 151 dead to which the body would return before 152 the day of judgment. As Peter's account shows, 153 the souls of the dead did not go immediately 154 to heaven or hell, but abided somewhere in 155 an intermediate state, until the final judgment. 156

Ver. 5, and spared not the old world, but 160 preserved Noah, the eighth person, a preacher 161 of righteousness, when he brought a flood upon 162 the world of the ungodly. The second historical 163 instance of the penal justice of God does not 164 appear in the companion statement of Jude. On 165 the other hand, Jude introduces as his first case 166 another historical event to which Peter makes no 167 reference here, namely the Divine punishment of 168 the unbelieving Israelites who had been delivered
out of Egypt. The 'flood' is described here by the term (= cataclysms) which is used in Matt. xxiv. 38, 39, and by the Greek Version of the O. T. (Gen. v. 17). The region of the flood is termed not only 'the old (or 'ancient') world,' but also 'the world of the ungodly,' the fact that it had practically become the absolute possession of the ungodly being the reason for God's act of judgment. Noah is designated 'a preacher (or, 'herald') of righteousness,' in explanation of his exemption. He is styled 'the eighth person,' or as it may be rendered (with the R. V.), 'with seven others,' simply in reference to the historical fact. There is nothing to suggest that Peter intended the phrase to convey any mystical meaning, as if, e.g., it served as a symbol of the completeness of the saved Church. It expresses, however, the fewness of the righteous in comparison with the world-wide multitude of the ungodly.

The number of those saved from the Deluge is specified also in 1 Pet. iii. 20. Perhaps in mentioning this case, and the following, Peter had in mind his Lord's own words (Luke xvii. 26, 27). The verb rendered 'saved' by the A. V. worked at the restrainin simply to keep, or guard, and is supposed by some to refer particularly here to the words 'shut him in' in the narrative of Genesis (vii. 16).

Ver. 5. And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, having made them a type of those that should live ungodly. The term used for the 'overthrow' (= catastrophes) which constituted the punishment in this third historical instance is the one which is employed in the narrative of the event itself in Gen. xix. 29. In the N. T. it occurs only once again, and there in a figurative sense, viz. in 2 Tim. ii. 14. The brief description has preserved its force and vividness. The word 'turning into ashes,' or, 'burning to ashes' (which occurs only here), is itself a strong and graphic expression. The retribution, too, is exhibited in all its righteous severity as a condemnation to an absolute overthrow. The destruction of the cities of the plain is the regarded by the prophets (cf. Isa. i. 9, 10; Ezek. xvi. 48-56), as well as by Peter, as an illustration or typical instance of the judicial principles on which God acts. The scriptural references to these cities and their fate are uncommonly numerous.

Ver. 6. And delivered righteous Lot, sore distressed by the behaviour of the lawless in wandareness. Here again we have some unusual words. The verb which is rendered 'exacted' by the A. V., but which has the stronger sense of 'sore distressed' (as the R. V. puts it), or 'worn down,' occurs only once again, viz. in Acts vii. 24, where it is translated 'oppressed.' The adjective which the A. V. translates 'wicked,' but which has the more definite sense of 'lawless,' occurs only once again, namely in chap. iii. 17. As to the word 'conversation' or 'behaviour,' see on 1 Pet. i. 15; and as to the term 'wandering,' see above on ver. 2. Jude omits this notice of the deliverance of Lot, which in Peter serves to throw into still stronger relief the unerring penal judgment of God, but also to prepare the way for the assertion of God's knowledge of how to deliver the godly out of temptation.

Ver. 7. For by sight and hearing that righteous man, dwelling among them from day to day, tortured his righteous soul with their unlawful deeds. A parenthetical explanation of how it was that Lot was 'sore distressed.' The Vulgate, Erasmus, etc., strangely take the 'sight and hearing' as definitions of the directions in which Lot was righteous. The point, however, manifestly is, that the soreness of his distress was due to the fact that, living among these wicked men, he had the protracted pain of seeing with his own eyes and hearing with his own ears day after day things against which his soul revolted. The strong term 'tortured' or 'tormented' (cf. such occurrences of the same term as Matt. viii. 6, 29; Mark v. 7; Luke viii. 28; Rev. ix. 5, xi. 10, xiv. 10, xx. 20, etc.), and the repetition of the moral epithet in that righteous soul, exhibit the pain as the acute pain due to natural repulsion. Nothing is said here of the faults ascribed to Lot's action by the narrative of Genesis, or of the way in which he came to live among these men. Everything is done to present a telling picture of a righteous man thrown into godless society, and not suffering the edge of his righteous feeling to become blunted by lengthened familiarity with the coarse licentiousness of neighbours who mocked at the restrictions of all law, human and Divine, but undergoing daily torment from sights and sounds which he was helpless to arrest.

Ver. 8. The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unrighteous under punishment unto the day of judgment. The knowledge which is here in view is the Divine type of knowledge, which means both the perception of the way and the possession of the ability. 'Temptation' is used here in the sense which it has in 1 Pet. i. 6 (on which see Note), as including not only temptation in the limited sense, but all species of trial. The 'be punished' which the A. V. gives in this passage (the Vulgate) is an incorrect reading. The participle is present, and the idea is that the unrighteous are sustaining now a certain measure of punishment, in the state in which they are held in reserve for the final judgment of the Great Day. The sentence gives, in a somewhat free form, the conclusion which is expected for the series of conditional statements which began with ver. 4. It is as if the writer had said, 'If it has happened, as I have stated it to have happened in these several historical instances with which all are familiar, is it not plain that the Lord will act on the same principle with these false teachers? But while the previous context would lead us to look simply for a statement of the penal side of God's righteousness, Peter introduces here the other side as well. His notice of God's righteous care for the godly, however, is only for the moment. In the next verse he takes up only the punitive principle, and proceeds to make a pointed application of that to a particular class.

Ver. 9. But chiefly those who go after the flesh in the lust of pollution, and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they speak evil of dignities. The parties aimed at appear to be the false teachers. Formerly they were described as only about to arise. They are spoken of now as already existing. The change from the future to the present may be due simply to the definite realization of the future in the writer's prophetic vision. But it is to be accounted for rather by the fact that the first movements of the evil, which was afterwards to prove so great, were already discerned within the Church. Peter,
therefore, brings the general principle which he has illustrated to bear above all upon a class now under his own eye. These were the men, he means, for whom there could least be exemption from God's imminent judgments. He proceeds to complete his account of what these men are, adding stronger colours to the picture of their scorn of law, their hostility to Christ, their covetousness, their sensuality. The description of their immorality is made more general than in Jude (ver. 7) by the omission of the epithet 'strange' which qualifies the 'flesh' in the latter. The phrase 'go after' occurs in the literal sense in Mark i. 20, and in the metaphorical in Jude 7; Jer. ii. 5. The last of pollution (the latter word occurs only here) means the lust which pollutes. The term which the A. V. renders 'presumptuous,' and which occurs only in Tit. i. 7, means rather 'daring,' or 'dare.' Instead of 'presumptuous are they, self-willed' (which latter adjective occurs only here), therefore, we should translate either 'self-willed dare,' or (with R. V. 'daring, self-willed.' The difficulty is in ascertaining the sin alluded to in the two phrases 'despise lordship' and 'speaking evil of dignities,' which reappear in almost the same terms in Jude 8. Many interpreters, especially those of older date, have understood the offence to be that of contemptuous disregard of assumed authority, whether of that generally in all its forms, or of ecclesiastical rule, or of civil and political rule (Calvin, Erasmus, etc.), in particular. Recent commentators, again, have for the same sin taken other than human authorities to be intended. Some, e.g., think that good angels are referred to in both the 'lordship' and the 'dignities;' others, that evil angels are denoted by both; others, that God or Christ is meant by the former, and angels (both evil, i.e., fallen, or evil angels (Wiesinger) by the latter. In the only other N. T. occurrence of this term 'lordship' or 'dominion' (Eph. i. 21; Col. i. 16), it is used of angels. In Jude 8 (the only other instance of the word in such an application) the term 'dignities' is put, along with the whole statement, in immediate connection with what is said of Michael. The present passage, too, leads at once to direct mention of angels. These facts give probability to the view that by both terms angelic powers, in the character of God's agents in the authoritative administration of earthly things, are intended. All that is meant, however, may be a general mention of authority as such, and of the contempt of that, in all its forms, human, angelic, and Divine, as a characteristic mark of the class dealt with. In Rom. xii. 1, 2, we find the word 'power' in an equally indefinite, though perhaps less extensive, sense.

Ver. 11. Where angels, greater as they are in strength and power, bring not against them before the Lord a railing judgment. The phrase 'before the Lord' is omitted by some good authorities, and is bracketed by the most recent editors of the text. The 'railing' is expressed by an adjective connected with the verb, which is translated 'speak evil of' in ver. 2. In Acts vi. 11, Tit. i. 2 Tim. iii. 2, it is given as 'blasphemous' or 'blasphemer.' The word rendered 'accusation' by the A. V. means 'judgment,' and is so given in all the earlier English Versions. The opening relative, which the A. V. translates "whereas," means simply "where," and may be rendered 'in cases where,' or 'in matters in which.' The verse has received very different interpretations. The good angels, e.g., are supposed to be contrasted as a class with the evil angels in point of strength, and with the false teachers in respect of reverence. Or those angels who, like Michael, are supreme among all angels are understood to be referred to, and to be contrasted either with the 'dare' or with the 'dignities.' The most reasonable explanation, however, seems to be that even angels, who so far excel men, do not presume themselves to speak in terms of railing judgment against even offenders like these 'dare.' The reckless, impious audacity of the latter is to present in the darkest possible colours by being set over against the reverent regard for authority which in all circumstances characterizes the former. The statement which is given here broadly and generally, is connected with the eminent instance of Michael in Jude. Peter's words here may take their form from the description of the scene between Joshua, Satan, and the angel of Jehovah in Zechariah iii. 2. It is not improbable that for their present purpose both Peter and Jude make use of some tradition or current belief on the subject of the angels, which was familiar enough to his readers to need no explanation at the time. From the Rabbinical writings and the Apocryphal books we can gather how large a mass of popular and traditional lore grew up from an early period around many points of Old Testament doctrine.

Ver. 12. But these, as irrational animals, by nature born for capture and destruction. The string of epithets here is somewhat difficult to represent adequately. The latter phrase runs literally 'born natural,' etc., and may convey the idea either that they are not born in natural creatures, or that in point of natural constitution they are intended only for 'capture and destruction.' The rendering of the A. V., 'but these as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed,' expresses the sense sufficiently well, only that it connects the 'natural' with the 'beasts,' instead of with the 'born.' The order given by the best authorities is followed by the R. V., 'but these, as creatures without reason, born mere animals to be taken and destroyed.' These last words represent substantives in the original. Hence some take the sense to be 'to take and destroy,' the idea then being that the irrational creatures are made to get their own maintenance by capturing and killing other creatures. The passive sense, however, 'to be taken and destroyed,' is more in harmony with the context.—speaking evil in things of which they are ignorant. The 'speaking evil,' or 'railing,' refers back to the 'railing judgment' of the previous verse. The senseless and malignant reviling indulged in by these men in matters which they are incapable of understanding, and in which ignorance should command silence, shows how like they are to the irrational beasts. And as they resemble these in their mode of life, Peter goes on to say, they shall resemble them in their destiny.—shall in their destruction also be destroyed. Many good interpreters give the ethical meaning to the word 'destruction' here. In this case the sense will be, as the A. V. gives it, 'shall utterly perish in their own corruption,' or (as it is more fully put, e.g., by Alford), shall go on practising the corrupt life to which they
THE SECOND EPISODE GENERAL OF PETER. [CHAP. II. 1-16

have sold themselves with increasing appetite until they are themselves destroyed by it. The
ideas, however, is rather this: in the destruction which they bring upon others, they shall yet bring
destruction upon themselves. So Humphry (Comm. on Revised Version, p. 451) makes it:
while causing destruction to others, shall accomplish their own destruction; with which non-
ethical sense of the verb and noun he compares (with Wordsworth) 1 Cor. iii. 17: 'If any man
destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy.'

Ver. 13. Suffering wrong as the wages of wronging. The reading represented by the
'shall receive' of the A. V., is displaced by another, meaning 'suffering wrong,' which has the
support of the oldest documents, is accepted by the R. V. and the most recent critical editors, and
gives us one of those 'emphatic and vehement repetitions of words' which are recognised as
distinctive of this Epistle (see Humphry, ut sup.). It is observed that the phrase 'wages of un-
righteousness' is peculiar to Peter (here, in ver. 15, and in his speech in Acts i. 19), reckoningly
luxurious living in the day a pleasure. It is
doubtful whether the first noun here can mean altogether so much as either the 'riot' of the
A. V., or the 'revel' of the R. V. It occurs once again in the N. T., viz. in Luke vii. 25, where it
is translated 'live delicately.' The cognate verb,
too, is translated 'live in pleasure' in Jas. v. 5.
The term denotes 'luxurious or delicate living.'
The phrase 'in the day' is understood by some
(Beza, the Dutch and Italian Versions, etc.) to
mean daily. But that is erroneous. Others (the
Vulgate, Schott, Huther, Calvin, Alford, etc.)
take it to mean for a day, or the temporal, tran-
sient, so that the idea would be 'reckoning the
luxurious living which lasts but the little day of
man's life a pleasure.' The best interpretation,
however, makes the phrase equivalent to in the
daytime (Hofmann, etc.). The sentence then
exhibits these men as pressing day and night alike
into the service of luxurious delights. It is also
in harmony with Peter's own statement in Acts
ii. 15 on the scandalous profligacy which would be
implied in men becoming drunken by 'the third
hour of the day.' Compare also Paul's words in 1 Thess. v. 7.—The train of partic-
ciples, nouns, and adjectives which begins here
and goes on through the next verse may be con-
ected either with what precedes (so Huther and
the majority) or with what follows (so Hofmann,
etc.). In the former case they bring out the
shamelessness of the unrighteousness 'or wrong-
doing' for which they are to receive their wages.
In the latter case they begin a new sentence which
finds its verb in the 'have forsaken' of ver. 15,
and runs on to the end of ver. 16. They form
a 'series, or rather torrent, of short exclamatory
clauses' (Lillie), disclosing the dark elements of
the reprobate character which makes such a
judgment as has been asserted inevitable.—spota
and blemishes. The former term occurs again
only in Eph. v. 27, although another form of the
same is found in Jude 7. The verb, too, occurs
in the 'spotted' of Jude 23 and the 'defile' of
Jas. iii. 6. The latter term, which means properly
blame, and then blemish, occurs only here. Its
verb is found in 2 Cor. vi. 18. We have the negatives of these two terms in the
description of the lamb 'without blemish and
without spot' in 1 Pet. i. 19.—sporting in their
own deceits, while they feast with you. The
'sporting,' as the A. V. gives it, is expressed by
a compound verb connected with the rendered 'luxurious living' above. It may be
translated, therefore, luxuriating. There is a
remarkable variation among ancient document
between two readings, differing from each other
only by a single letter. One of these means
'deceits,' as the A. V. gives it, or 'deceivings'
as it is put in the margin of the R. V.; the other
means 'love-feasts,' as it is given in the text of
the R. V. In the latter case it is meant that
these men pertain to occupying advantage even the social meals, the apos or
loves, as they came to be called, which were the
expression of Christian brotherhood. That abus
crept into this institution at a very early period,
so simple as in all probability it was, appears for
1 Cor. xi. 2. In the former case (and the balance
on the whole is on that side) the idea is that
they luxuriate in deceits by which they seek the
base ends, for this purpose taking advantage of opportunities unsuspectedly offered them
social intercourse and entertainment with the
Christian brotherhood.

Ver. 14. Having eyes full of an adulterous. The noun rendered 'adultery' both in the A. V.
and by the R. V. means really an adulterers. The
phrase 'full of' also means, at least occasionally
in the Classics, 'engrossed by.' Thus the sense
may be either having eyes for nothing else but an
adulterer, or revealing in an adulterous object of their desire. It is possible, as
has been supposed, that Peter is recalling here
his Lord's words recorded in Matt. v. 28. There
is no reason to suppose, however, that any
particular temptress to occupying advantage an
decadence is in view. The phrase is simply a bold
method of expressing the sensual passion of the
men,—men whose eyes burned with impure fires,
whose adulterous lust gleamed in their eyes,—and
that cannot be made to cease from sin. So it
may be rendered rather than simply 'unsatisfied
with sin,' or 'that cannot cease from sin.' The
word adds the strokes of restlessness and persist-
ence to the picture of the sensual profligacy.
The N. T. more than once brings grand
and sensuality into very intimate connection
(1 Thess. iv. 6; 1 Cor. v. 11; Eph. v. 3, 5),
and hence some eminent interpreters (Calvin,
Plumptre, etc.) suppose that the sin of impiety
is meant here. But as covetousness has already
been introduced in ver. 3 as a prominent character-
istic of these men, there is no reason for departing
from the ordinary sense of the word here. Three
great vices, therefore, which go naturally together,
being only so many types of the same selfishness,
will be of itself, sensuality, avarice, are ascribed
to them here,—children of a curse; that is to
say, men who are devoted to the sin, or the
quality or character so described. On this
formula see note on 1 Pet. i. 14; comp. also
John xvii. 12; Eph. ii. 2; 2 Thess. ii. 3. The
description given in this verse as a whole does
not meet us again in Jude.

Ver. 15. Speaking the straight way they
chap. ii. 17–22.] the second epistle general of peter. 265

rest astray, having followed the way of balaam the son of boros, who loved the wages of unrighteousness (or, wrong-doing). the strong verb for a following which amounts to close union or imitation is used here again, as in mat. xvi. 24, luke ii. 2. the form boros, for the bor of the old testament, is explained as due to the peculiarity of the galilean pronunciation. peter's own galilean speech 'bewrayed' him (mat. xxvi. 73). in the phrase 'love of the wages of unrighteousness,' see on ver. 13. some good documents exhibit a different reading here, which connects his clause not with balaam, but with these men, i.e., 'following the way of balaam, the son of boros, they loved the wages of unrighteousness.' it is to be observed, too, that in acts xiii. 10 peter is represented as using the phrase 'right ways,' or 'straight ways,' in his denunciation of epymas the sorcerer. the word 'ways,' too, meets us very often in the o. t. story of balaam (num. xxii.). it is supposed by some that reference is made here to balaam's counsel in the matter of tempting israel to sensuality (num. xxxi. 16). the definition given, however, in the next clause points rather to covetousness than to the character in which balaam is brought in. the ist of gain which balaam formally denied was, as the tenor of the o. t. narrative clearly shows, a thing that shaped his action. the fact that a rev. ii. 14, 15 the Nicolaitans are mentioned a connection with balaam, leads some to the conclusion that peter also had that party in his view here. judge makes use of the cases of Cain and Corah as well as that of Balaam.

ver. 16. but he was rebuked for his transgression the phrase means literally, 'but he was rebuked for his transgression.' the word used here for 'his' may mean 'his own,' and hence some suppose that it is emphatic here, the point being that he who was a prophet to others had himself to be rebuked for a trespass of his own. it is precarious, however, to assert such force for the word in the n. t. the transgression referred to is balaam's yielding to curse israel for the sake of gain, under the proviso that god's permission should not be withheld. the dumb ass, speaking with man's voice, stayed the madness of the prophet. the ass is designated here, and again in matt. xxxi. 5, by a general term which means simply a 'beast that bears the yoke,' or a 'beast of burden.' the 'madness' charged against balaam is expressed by a term which is found only here, although the cognate verb appears in the 'as a fool' of 2 cor. xi. 23. the 'forbade' of the a. v. does not fairly represent the sense of the original. the meaning is preserved, checked, or, as the r. v. very happily gives it, 'stopped.' the offence was interdicted, but not left uncommitted. it has been held by not a few that Peter gives an incorrect report of the o. t. narrative, in so far as the latter represents the angel, and not the ass, as uttering the rebuke. Peter, however, does not affirm that the rebuke was spoken by the ass. what Peter states is simply that the prophet was rebuked, and that the dumb ass, speaking with man's voice, stayed his madness. and that the o. t. narrative represents the beast as bringing the prophet first to a stand is clear. the difficult questions about the credibility and interpretation of the story of Balaam belong, however, to the criticism and exegesis of the old testament. it is referred to by the writer of this epistle as a story well known and accepted in his time, and furnishing a parallel, which all might understand and feel, to the terrible picture which he has been sketching.

chapter ii. 17–22.

the false teachers further described.

i7 these are 'wells' without water, 'clouds' that are carried with a 'tempest,' to whom the 'mists' of darkness is reserved forever. for when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. while they promise them 'liberty,' they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he 'brought in bondage. for if after they have escaped from the wheels, the whirlwind, the blackness, literally, has been driven in, for speaking in wantonness, those who are just escaping, as in r. v.

10 rather, promising them liberty, while they themselves are bond-servants of corruption.
the "pollutions of the world, through" the "knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again "entangled therein, and "overcome," the "latter end is "worse with them than the beginning." For it had been "better for them not to have "known the "way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to "turn "from the "holy commandment "delivered unto them. But it is "happened unto them according to the "true proverb, "The dog is "turned to "his own vomit again; and the "sow that was "washed to her "wallowing in the "mire.

The description of the parties destined to spring up within the Church, which has been partially interrupted by the summary of Balaam's case, is resumed in direct terms. New points are pressed with the utmost sharpness. These are the deceitfulness of what is offered by the false teachers, and their position as apostates from the truth. It is upon this last fact that the chapter concentrates its force as it nears its close. What is meant by this state of apostasy is expressed in a few bold words which are endorsed by two familiar proverbs.

Ver. 17. Those are springs without water. The noun is the same as that used of Jacob's well (John iv. 6). It means, however, a spring well or fountain. It is possible that the figure points to the apostasy of the men "who bear the semblance of teachers, just as, for a little time, a place in Eastern lands where water has flowed will continue green, but disappoint the thirsty traveller who may be led by a little verdure to hope for water (Lamb). But it is rather in respect simply of the pretence which they make, and the deception which they practise, that they are likened to waterless springs. The force of the imagery, which has a special appropriateness in Eastern lands, will be seen by comparing those passages in which God Himself is designated a 'fountain of living waters' (Jer. ii. 13), or those in which men who turn from sin are likened to a 'spring of water, whose waters shall not fail' (Isa. lxi. 11); but best of all by comparing such passages as those in which the "mouth of the righteous" is said to be as a 'well of life,' and the 'law of the wise' is described as 'a fountain of life' (Prov. xi. 14, xiii. 14). See also the imagery used by Christ Himself in John iv. 10, 14, vii. 37.—and mist driven by a storm. The R. V. rightly follows the best critical authorities here in substituting for the 'clouds' of the A. V. a more expressive term (see elsewhere in the New Testament) meaning 'mists' or 'mist-clouds.' The noun rendered 'storm' is the one which is applied to the 'storm' on the Lake in Mark iv. 37; Luke viii. 23 (its only other New Testament occurrences). It denotes properly a whirlwind sweeping upwards. Hence the sense of the description 'driven,' not merely 'curied' as in the A. V. Wycliffe's rendering is very expressive—'mists driven with whirling wind.' It is doubtful, however, whether this second figure is intended to convey the idea that these false teachers are wanting in consistency (Hath). The point of comparison is simply the deceitfulness of what they offer. Like the drifting mist-clouds, presaging rain to refresh the earth and enrich the husbandman, which suddenly vanish and leave bitter disappointment to the expectant, when they are caught up by the tempest, so these teachers excite delusive hopes and lose present which leave nothing behind them. Compare the Old Testament figure—'whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain' (Prov. xxv. 14). See also Paul's figure in Eph. iv. 14—for whom the blackness of darkness has been reserved. The most authorities omit the 'for ever' of the A. V. The phrase is the same as in Jude 13, and should, therefore, be rendered the 'blackness,' etc., not the 'mist,' etc. It asserts the Divine certainty, the hopelessness, the perpetuity of the doom of these apostates. Compare Jeremiah's description of the false prophets, whose 'way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness' (xxii. 12). For the conception of the Divine judgment, whether of the righteous or of the unrighteous, as preserved or prepared, see also Matt. xxv. 41; 1 Pet. i. 4, etc.

Ver. 18. for speaking great swelling things of vanity. The writer proceeds now to justify what he has just said, either as to the doom of the false teachers, or as to their character as pretenders and deceivers. The verb used for 'speaking' is one which occurs in the New Testament only in Acts iv. 18, and in these two verses 16, 18 of the present chapter. It usually expresses loud utterance, e.g. the scream of the eagle, the neighing of the horse, the speech of orators, the battle-cry of warriors, the recitative of a chorus. Hence its
made a bond-servant.' The same principle is affirmed by Christ Himself (John vii. 14), and by Paul (Rom. vi. 16). It is easy to see how the gospel doctrine of a new liberty through the truth (John vii. 33), and especially the Pauline teaching on the 'liberty of the children of God' (Rom. viii. 21), the liberty which exists wherever the Spirit of the Lord is (2 Cor. iii. 17), the liberty 'wherein Christ hath made us free' (Gal. vi. 1), might be misinterpreted and turned to license. But it may be, as Dean Plumptre suggests, that the dangerous cry for liberty, and the pretentious teaching on the subject, which are referred to in the Epistles, found their peculiar occasion in the restrictions imposed by the Convention at Jerusalem (Acts xv. 29), and aimed at securing freedom not only from the things from which that Convention relieved the Gentile Christians, but also from the abstinence which was enjoined from 'meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication.'

Ver. 20. For if, having escaped the pollutions of the world in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but having been again entangled in these, they are overcome, the last things have become to them worse than the first. To whom does this description apply? Some (e.g. Bengel, Hofmann, etc.) take the persons in view to be the dupes of the false teachers. Beyond the fact, however, that the same term 'escaped' is used here as in ver. 18, there is little to favour so remarkable a change from object to subject. The false teachers themselves are still the subjects, and what is affirmed of them is a state of relapse into the 'pollutions' (the word is peculiar to this passage, although another form of it occurs in ver. 10) of heathenism from which they had once separated themselves. In terms unmistakably recalling, if not literally repeating, our Lord's own words in Matt. xii. 45, that state of relapse is declared to be worse than their original state of paganism—worse because no longer excused by 'ignorance' (cf. 1 Pet. i. 14). The expression 'entangled' is a strong and significant one, being used e.g. by Eschylus of being entangled in the net of ruinous infatuation (Prom. 1079). It is in admirable harmony, therefore, with the previous 'entice' in the lusts of the flesh (ver. 18). The 'knowledge' of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ which is attributed here to these apostates is the same kind of knowledge as has been already spoken of in chap. i. 2, 3, 8. Hence it is urged that the statement is entirely antagonistic to the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, and indeed that there is, 'perhaps, no single passage in the whole extent of New Testament teaching more crucial than this in its bearing on the Calvinistic dogma of the indefectibility of grace' (Plumptre). The bearing of the passage, however, upon that doctrine is by no means so definite and absolute. It institutes a solemn comparison between two different conditions of the same individuals. It contrasts two different stages of impure living, and pronounces the one worse than the other. But beyond that, it does not go, neither can it be regarded as of decisive importance in regard to the different views of grace advocated by different schools of theology. The whole statement is introduced simply in confirmation of what was said in the previous verse of the bondage in which those live who are overcome of sin.
Ver. 21. For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, having known it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. The 'better' here, as in 1 Pet. iii. 17 (see note there), means *more to their advantage*. The 'way of righteousness' is not quite the same as the 'Gospel,' or the 'way of salvation.' It is a term for Christianity specifically on its ethical side, as a new moral life. Other phrases, such as 'the way of truth,' describe it more definitely on its doctrinal side. The 'holy commandment' is not to be limited either to the commandment known as the 'new commandment' (John xiii. 34), or to the Sermon on the Mount. It is the ethical requirement of the Gospel as a whole, the law of life which Christ has left. Here, too, the description moves entirely within the sphere of character, and resembles the picture given by Christ Himself of two moral states, in His parable of the unclean spirit and the seven more wicked spirits (Matt. xii. 43-45).

Ver. 22. There has happened unto them that of the true proverb. Two proverbial sayings follow. As they are the same proverb, but in reverse order, they are dealt with as if they made but one. The term is the one which is applied to the Proverbs of Solomon by the Greek Version of the Old Testament. It means any kind of common saying or saw, however; and in the New Testament it occurs only here and in John's Gospel (x. 6, xvi. 25, 29, where it is translated both *parable* and *proverbi*). Instead of the simple expression 'the true proverb,' we have the paraphrase 'that of the true proverb,' or 'the master of the true proverb,' as it might be rendered; a form found also in the later Classics, as well as elsewhere in the New Testament (Matt. xxi. 21; cf. also Matt. viii. 33, xvi. 23; Rom. viii. 5). The 'but' which the A.V. introduces is not sufficiently supported. — A dog turning again to his own vomit. So the original gives the proverb in the abrupt form of a participle without a finite verb. The word 'vomit' occurs only here. In Prov. xxvi. 21 we have a saying apparently so similar to this, that it has been usual to speak of Peter as quoting it here. The actual terms in the original, however, differ so much as to make it more probable that he was simply repeating a well-known popular maxim, and *A sow having washed herself, to wallow ing in the mire*. The reading varies between two forms of the term rendered 'wallowing,' one of which would mean the washing-place, the other (which is the better attested) the act of wallowing. The term occurs only here, and the same is the case with that for 'mire.' This second proverb has no definite parallel in the Old Testament, and is taken, therefore, from the mouth of the people. Compare, however, the comparison of a 'fair woman without discretion' to a 'jewel of gold in a swine's snout' (Prov. xi. 22) and our Lord's word, 'neither cast ye your pearls before swine' (Matt. xvii. 6). Compare also Hosea: 'he would have lived a filthy dog, or a hog delighting in mire' (Epistle, Book ii. 2, line 26). The repute of the dog and the sow, not only in Judea but generally throughout the East, is well known. The former, as an unclean animal and the scavenger of Oriental towns, became a term of reproach, a name for one's enemies (Ps. xix. 16, 20), a figure of the profane or impure (Rev. xix. 15; cf. also Matt. xv. 26; Mark vii. 19). The latter was forbidden to be eaten not only among the Jews, but also among the Arabs, the Phoenicians, and other Eastern nations. To the priests of Egypt, too, swine's flesh was the most hateful of all meats. If these verses are parables, as is often the case, into the controversy on the nature of grace as indefectible or otherwise, the two proverbs would certainly favour the Calvinistic view rather than the Arminian. For their point is, that the nature of the creation was not changed, but that each, after a temporary separation, returned to the impurity which was according to its nature. So the idea is taken to amount to this—'Let us not be stumbled or disturbed. "The sure foundation of God" is established in this way. These wretched men were never what they professed to be. They had, indeed, undergone a process of external reformation; but it was external merely, their heart all the while remaining unchanged, 'like the washing of a swine, which you may make clean, but can never make cleanly'” (Lillie). But in point of fact these doctrinal questions are not fairly in view here.

Chapter III. 1-10.

Warnings against prospective Deniers of Christ's Advent.

1 This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you;1 in both which I *stir up your* pure *minds* by way of remembrance;2 that ye may be *mindful of the words* which were *spoken before by the* holy prophets, and of the *commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:*3

1 rather, as in R. V. 2 literally, in which 3 or, sincere 4 mind

1 See refs. at ch. i. 13. 2 See refs. at ch. i. 13. 3 See refs. at ch. i. 13. 4 See refs. at ch. i. 13. 5 See refs. at ch. i. 13. 6 See refs. at ch. i. 13. 7 Jude 17. 8 Gal. i. 91; 9 Acts iii. 21. 10 Acts iii. 21. 11 Acts iii. 21. 12 Acts iii. 21. 13 Acts iii. 21. 14 Acts iii. 21.
3 'knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days 6· skofflers, 9· walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: 14· whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, 9· and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up.

It has been supposed by some that the opening words of this third chapter indicate the beginning of a new Epistle. What we have, however, is only the beginning of a new division of the same Epistle. The great subject now is that 'power and Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,' of which the writer has spoken in chap. i. 16. He has already expressed his concern to see his readers firmly established in this great expectation. He has given them to understand that the last labours of his life were to be directed to this end. He now makes plain the reason which he had for his great anxiety on the subject. He knew that this truth of the Lord's Second Advent was to be assailed by the keen shafts of mockery and scorn. Wishful to see his readers armed against the scoffer, in this first half of the chapter he predicts the rise of this subtle temptation, describes the form which it will assume, and refutes the reasoning which it employs.

Ver. 1. This is now, beloved, a second epistle that I write unto you. The sentence might be rendered literally thus: 'This already second epistle, beloved, I write unto you.' The expression seems to imply that a comparatively short time had elapsed since he wrote them before. This is referred to as an evidence of his affectionate solicitude, as well as of the importance and urgency of the subject-matter' (Lillie). The First Epistle is thus incidentally claimed to be by
the same hand. The author prefaces what he has now to say about the scoffers of the last days by a personal statement, as was the case also with the solemn affirmation made in chap. i. 12–15. The Epistle also deals notably in the loving urgency of its tone, as it now approaches its conclusion. Hence the repeated appeals to the readers as 'beloved' which distinguish this chapter (vers. 1, 8, 14, 17).—In which; that is to say, 'in which things.' There is a certain naturalness in giving 'which' this singular quality. The plural relative is used, as if the First Epistle as well as the Second had been specified.—I stir up your sincere mind in reminding (or, in the way of reminder). On the formula see Note on chap. i. 13. The adjective rendered 'pace' by the A. V. occurs only once again in the N. T., viz. in Phil. i. 10, where the A. V. translates it 'sincere,' as the R. V. does here. It is derived (from a root) signifying 'a shade, blemish of sunlight;' by others from a root denoting that which is 'parcellled off by itself;' by others still from one signifying that which is purified by rolling or shaking. It seems to mean primarily 'diminished, retired.' The cognate noun is found three times in the N. T. (1 Cor. v. 8; 2 Cor. i. 12, ii. 17). The term has a definite ethical sense in the N. T., which goes beyond anything it has in Classical Greek. With a near approach to a complete account Archbishop Trench defines it as a grace which 'will exclude all double-mindedness, the divided heart (Jas. i. 8, iv. 8), the eye not single (Matt. vi. 22), all hypocries (1 Pet. ii. 1).' While the A. V. gives the plural 'minds,' the R. V. renders 'mind.' On the word itself see Note on 1 Pet. i. 13.

Ver. 2. In order that ye may remember the words spoken before by the holy prophets. The importance of the testimony of prophecy (obviously not those sections of it which spoke of the Advent of Messiah) is again pressed, as was already the case in chap. i. 19, etc. In the parallel passage of Jude, the term 'prophets' which is so characteristic of Peter, does not appear.—and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour by your apostles. Instead of the pronoun of the first person which leads to the rendering of the A. V. 'the commandment of our apostles' by the A. V., 'the commandment of the Lord and Saviour,' the best authorities give the pronoun of the second person. We thus get a sentence which is variously translated. Some, e.g., render it 'your commandment of the Lord of the apostles,' meaning by that 'the commandment given you by Him who is the Lord of the apostles.' Others put it thus: 'your commandment of the apostles of the Lord,' that is to say, 'your commandment, which the apostles, nay, the Saviour, gave.' Literally, however, it may be rendered, 'and your apostles' commandment of the Lord and Saviour,' i.e., the commandment given by the Lord and Saviour, and made known to you by your apostles. This is sufficiently in harmony with the parallel in Jude 17, and yields on the whole the most pertinent sense. The expression 'your apostles' may point to Paul and those who were united with him in the original evangelization of these parts. The 'commandment' means here neither the Gospel generally (which is a sense too broad for it); nor the particular injunction directed by Christ against false teachers in such passages as Matt. vii. 15, xxiv. 5, 11 (which is too narrow a sense); far less the preaching of the prophecies as a charge committed to the apostles (Dietlein). It has substantially the sense which it had in chap. ii. 21—24, the new evangelical law of life, or the Gospel on its ethical side. The only difference which, as the great subject now in hand is the firmness of denial of the likelihood of Christ's Return to earth, this new evangelical law of life is presented specially in its opposition to the kind of life to which such a denial served as a temptation. Ver. 3. knowing this first; the same form used, with the same force, as in chap. i. 20—that is the last of the days; so it should be rendered, in accordance with a reading which is presented by the best critical editors. The following by the A. V., though it is translated 'in the last days,' would mean literally 'at the end of the days,' and is not altogether identical with the other. Of these phrases see Note on 1 Pet. i. 13. Here the 'last of the days' mean the times immediately preceding the Second Coming of Christ, and immediately introducing the Messianic Age, otherwise described as the 'age to come.' That new Messianic Age of the Church has begun to be realized, to enter with Christ's First Coming, but was to enter finally with that Second Coming which the quick faith of the first believers realized as night hand—mockers shall come in mockery. The longer reading has documentary support which is not to be resisted. The A. V., by omitting the phrase 'in mockery,' which is quite in consonance with the Hebraic cast of much else in the Petrine Epistles, strips the statement of its most graphic stroke. When these mockers shall come in character. Both nouns are unusual in the N. T., the former occurring again only in Jude 18, the latter (although another form of the same is found in Heb. xi. 36) only here. Mocking after their own lusts is a very strong one. The 'lusts' are described as their very own, and as the one rule or aim recognised in their life. The lustful life and the scoffing voice are not associated here with a particular vice. Sensuality and faith, coarse self-indulgence and clear spiritual apprehension, cannot coexist. The mocking spirit is the sister or child of the unclean spirit. It is to be noticed that this passage is made use of in a treatise attributed to Hippolytus, 'unquestionably the most learned member of the Roman Church' in the early part of the third century.

Ver. 4. and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? The 'coming' is again expressed here by the word parousia, 'presence;' as to which see on chap. i. 16. The question, put with triumphant scorn by these mockers, repeats the cherished terms used by believers—the 'promise' in which they trusted, the 'coming' which they looked for with vivid expectancy, the very form ('His Coming,' not 'Christ's Coming,' or the 'Lord's Coming') in which they were accustomed to refer to Him who was so much the one object of their thoughts as to need no specification by name among them. 'Those who believe,' says Bengel, 'having the heart filled with the memory of the Lord, easily supply the name.' John repeatedly exhibits this style of reference to the common Lord of Christians, with the singular name, e.g., 1 John ii. 6, iii. 3, 5, 7, 16, iv. 17; 3 John 7. With the scornful incredulity expressed in the question compare such O. T. passages as Isa. v. 19, Mal. ii. 17, which record similar gibe
CHAPTER III. 1-10.

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

...against the words of the prophets in the ancient Israel. For the interrogative form, which impart the tone of mocking triumph to the denial, compare also Ps. xii. 3, lxix. 10; Jer. xxvii. 15.

—far from the day when the fathers fell asleep all things from the beginning of the creation. These words indicate how the scoffers will reason out their rejection of the promise. Their argument will be taken from the delay in the fulfilment of that blessed hope (Tit. ii. 13) of the Christian brotherhood, and from the unbroken uniformity of things. The idea seems to be that, taking it for granted that some disturbance in the system of the world will be necessarily involved in such an event as the Advent of Christ, and finding no signs of an interruption in the old order, they will deride the event itself. The precise force of the terms, however, and the exact relation in which the several parts of the sentence stand to each other, are very differently interpreted. The fathers are variously understood as the patriarchs of the human race, the patriarchs of the Jewish nation, all those to whom the promise was given, the men of the first Christian generation, or generally those who possessed and partook of that generation. Undoubtedly it would be most natural, did other things permit, to suppose that the patriarchs of Israel were meant; in which sense the phrase 'the fathers' occurs (including Schott, p. 5; Heb. i. 1). But as the writer speaks here of a state of things which belongs still to the future, and as the fact that the O. T. patriarchs died before the fullness of the promise of the Lord's Return would weaken the argument for these men as an obstacle against the Christian hope, it seems necessary to understand by 'the fathers' here those who stood in a relation to the Christian Church resembling that occupied by the Jewish patriarchs to the Church of Israel, and falling fin, see any signs of the island of Lemnos in quest of the cave of Death's half-brother, Sleep. In the literature of many nations sleep is recognised as 'death's image.' What is peculiar to the New Testament use of the natural figure (and in part also to its Old Testament use) is the new conceptions with which Revelation has filled it—the hopeful conceptions of rest, continued life, and, above all, reawakening in newness of energy. So to the Christian the grave has become the cemetery, i.e., the dormitory, i.e., the sleeping-place. 'All the bodily pains, all the wants of human sympathy and carefulness, all the suddenness of the wrench from life, in the midst of health and strength, all this shall not prevent the Christian's death from deserving no harsher name than that of sleep' (T. Arnold).

Ver. 5. For this escapes them of their own will. So may the sentence be translated literally. The rendering of the A. V., 'for this they willfully forget,' the 'this' then refers to the fact which is to be stated immediately. Some good interpreters (including Schott, p. 5; Heb. i. 1) understand that the 'this' refers to the preceding question of the scoffers, and give the sense thus: 'for, while they assert this, it escapes them that,' etc. But the sense of asserting which is thus put upon the wordrendered 'willfully' (literally 'willing'), though found in extra-Biblical Greek, seems to be strange to the N. T. . . . The 'for' by which the statement is introduced shows that it is given in explanation of the scoffers venturing to speak the Christian Church. One point then is this: they speak so, because they willfully forget such a break in the constancy of nature as that caused by the Deluge. Or it may be in refutation of their reasoning, the point then being: 'this argument from the unbroken uniformity of things is but the argument of scoffers, for, though they may choose to forget it, that uniformity has been already disturbed by one great catastrophe, and therefore may be by another,—that there were heavens from of old; that is, from the very beginning of things. The A. V. makes it 'the heavens.' But the article is wanting in the original,—and an earth not earth.' The A. V. again puts it,—'compact of out of water and through water.' The idea here is by no means clear, and the renderings consequently vary considerably. The A. V. is in error in supposing the words to refer to the position of the earth, and in making it, therefore, 'standing out of the water and in the water.' In this it has so far followed Tyndale and the Genevan, who give 'the earth that was in the water appeared up out of the water.' Wycliffe has 'the earth out of water standing by water.' The Rhemish Version comes much nearer the sense when it translates the clause, 'the earth out of water and through water consisting.' The verb means brought together, made solid, compacted (as the R. V. puts it), or consisting (as it is rendered by the A. V. in Col. i. 17, and in its marginal note in the present passage). What is in view, therefore, in the phrase 'out of water,' is not the situation
occupied by the earth, nor merely the fact that the earth was made to rise out of the waters in which it lay buried during chaos (so Hofmann, Schott, Bengel, etc.), but the material out of which an earth is made first. The second phrase is taken even by the R. V. to refer to the position of the earth, and is accordingly rendered 'amidst water.' And this may seem to be supported by such passages as Ps. xxiv. 2, cxxvi. 6. Most naturally and literally, however, the phrase means 'through' or 'by means of' water. And this sense is in sufficient accordance with what was in all probability in the writer's mind, namely, the account of creation in the Book of Genesis. That record represents water as in a certain sense both the material and the instrumentality employed in the original formation of an earth out of chaos, or at least as both the element out of which and the element by the aid of which the dry land was brought to light. It is far-fetched to suppose that the writer is speaking in terms not of the Mosaic record, but of some of the popular or philosophical cosmogonies of the time. Quite in harmony with the account in Genesis he regards the heavens and the earth in their original form as proceeding by the creative Word of God from the waters of chaos (Gen. i. 2), and this in such a way that the origin of the heavens was brought about by the separation of the waters (ver. 7), and the origin of the land by the gathering together of the waters (ver. 9, 10) (Weiss, Bib. Theol. ii. p. 224, Clark's Trans.).—by the word of God. In reference to the 'God said' of the Mosaic record, and the notion of Heb. i. 3, but not equivalent to the ultimate identification of the creative word with the personal Word or Son which we have in John (i. 3; as also in Heb. i. 2). The final explanation of the origin of the earth, therefore, to be sought not in the water, much as that had to do with it, but in the expressed Will of a Creator. From this Will the 'all things' at first received their form, and upon them the great constancy and permanence to which the scoffers would appeal. The relation in which this statement on the formation of a heaven and an earth in the beginning stands to what follows, is somewhat uncertain. The conception of thought may be that, as they owed their first construction to the Word of God, they owe their subsistence entirely to the same Word of God, and their present constancy, therefore, is no argument against their being yet broken in upon by the Lord's Advent. Or it may be that the origination of the existing heaven and earth out of the prior chaos is itself addeduce, before even the Deluge is referred to, as an instance, which ought to be well known to these scoffers, of that change in the established order of things which they will wish to deny. Or, as is supposed by many, the point may be that there was at least one vast inroad upon the apparently changeless system of the world of which these parties could not be ignorant, but by wilful purpose, namely the Deluge; and that the very element which the Word of God used in first preparing that solid earth and 'all things' was employed by the same word in destroying them.

Ver. 6. whereby the then world being flooded with water perished. The term used for 'world' here is the one (cosmos) which describes it as a system of order and beauty, and presents it (in distinction from another term aor, which deals with it under the aspect of time) under the aspect of space. It has a wide variety of application in the N. T., being equivalent, e.g., sometimes to the whole material universe (Matt. xiii. 35; John xii. 24; Acts xvii. 4; Rom. i. 20), sometimes to man's world or the system of things of which he is the centre (John xvi. 21; 1 Cor. xiv. 10; 1 John iii. 17), sometimes to the totality of men occupying that system (John i. 29, iv. 42; 2 Cor. v. 19), and sometimes to the 'world' in the ethical sense of the totality of men living without God and outside His kingdom (John i. 10; 1 Cor. i. 20, 21; Jas. iv. 4; 1 John iii. 13). Here the phrase seems not to be restricted to the idea of the world of men or of living creatures, but now them the whole order of things, with the men occupying it, which existed prior to the Deluge. As the particle which is rendered 'overflowed' by both the A. V. and the R. V., in a form cognate with Heb. w. 3, but not equivalent to the ultimate identification of the creative word with the personal Word or Son which we have in John (i. 3; as also in Heb. i. 2). The final explanation of the origin of the earth, therefore, to be sought not in the water, much as that had to do with it, but in the expressed Will of a Creator. From this Will the 'all things' at first received their form, and upon it they depended for the constancy and permanence to which the scoffers would appeal. The relation in which this statement on the formation of a heaven and an earth in the beginning stands to what follows, is somewhat uncertain. The conception of thought may be that, as they owed their first construction to the Word of God, they owe their subsistence entirely to the same Word of God, and their present constancy, therefore, is no argument against their being yet broken in upon by the Lord's Advent. Or it may be that the origination of the existing heaven and earth out of the prior chaos is itself addeduce, before even the Deluge is referred to, as an instance, which ought to be well known to these scoffers, of that change in the established order of things which they will wish to deny. Or, as is supposed by many, the point may be that there was at least one vast inroad upon the apparently changeless system of the world of which these parties could not be ignorant, but by wilful purpose, namely the Deluge; and that the very element which the Word of God used in first preparing that solid earth and 'all things' was employed by the same word in destroying them.
Ver. 7. But the heavens which now are, and the earth by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved unto the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly men. The 'which now are' is in direct antithesis to 'the heavens above,' and indicates that the world of which the writer has been speaking consists in his view of both heavens and earth. Instead of 'by the same word' there is another reading, 'by His word,' which is also weightily attested. But the sense is practically the same, namely, that the same creative Word of God which first made the old heavens and earth, and afterwards overwhelmed the order of things when it was constructed, is still the sovereign agency that maintains the present heavens and earth and prepares for them their future destiny. The 'stored up' gives the same idea as in the 'transferred up' unto thyself wrath, etc., 13 Pet. ii. 4. The idea of 'perdition,' as the A. V. puts it, or 'destruction,' as the R. V. gives it, is expressed by the noun connected with the verb 'perished' in the previous verse, and has the same sense. The subjects of this 'judgment and perdition' are described as 'the ungodly men,' the article pointing to the mockers who are in the writer's mind all through, or serving simply to mark off from men generally one particular class, namely, that of the ungodly or impious. As to the epithet see on 1 Pet. iv. 18; 2 Pet. ii. 5. — This statement on the destiny of the present system of things is the fullest and most precise of its kind in the N. T. It has parallels so far in the N. T. doctrine, in such passages as Matt. v. 18, 24, 29; 1 Cor. iii. 13; 2 Thess. i. 8; Heb. xii. 27; Rev. xxvi. 1. In speaking of fire as the agent in the second judicial destruction of the world, as water was in the first, it is in keeping with the history of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah as typical of the final judgment of the impious, and on the O. T. conception of God as accompanied by fire when He comes forth to judge (Ps. i. 3, xviii. 3; Isa. lxv. 15, 16, 24; Dan. vii. 9, 10). Other O. T. passages (e.g. Ps. cxx. 26, 27; Job xiv. 12; Isa. xxxiv. 4, li. 6, lxvi. 22) speak more generally of the passing away of the present system. And as the O. T. for the most part connects that event with the judgments of Jehovah and the day of His 'recompense,' Peter connects it with the day of Christ's Coming. The present form of the world is protected by God's word of promise (Gen. ii. 11) against any recurring flood. Yet if it, too, is to perish, there remains now only fire as the element to bring about this destruction; and as, on the ground of Old Testament representations, the wrathful judgment of God is regarded as a consuming fire, it is easy to think that the destruction of the world resulting from the day of judgment will be brought about by fire in a special sense, for which this present form of the world is 'transferred up,' reserved' (Weiss, Bib. Theol. ii. pp. 246, 247, Clark's Trans.).

Ver. 8. But let not this one thing escape you, beloved; the mode of expression which has been already used in reference to the mockers in ver. 5. The writer passes now from the idea of the supposed constancy of the order of things to that of the apparent delay in the realization of the promise. He calls the attention of his readers first to a single fact, the difference between the Divine measure of duration and the human, which would be sufficient refutation of the scornful incredulity of so many. — that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. As the writer seems to make use of the words of the 90th Psalm here, the designation 'the Lord,' both in this verse and in the next, should be taken in its Old Testament sense, and, therefore, not as = Christ, but as = God or Jehovah, without reference to the personal distinctions which belong to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. While the Psalmist (Ps. xc. 4) however, speaks simply of a thousand years as being in Jehovah's sight 'as yesterday when it is past,' Peter throws the statement into a form which presents also the converse truth that one day is as a thousand years, if a thousand years are as one day. His object is not to exhibit the brevity of human life over against the eternity of God, as in the case with the Psalmist, but to express how inapplicable to God any of the ideas of time, those estimates of long and short, of hastening and delay, by which man measures things. The O. T. view of the eternity of God, however, is nearer this comparatively abstract idea of everlasting duration, which seems to be on the surface of the Psalmist's words, but the deeper idea of changelessness of being which makes God the object of His people's fearless trust. Whilst God as Jehovah is the eternal, God's eternity is defined as the unchangeableness of His being, persisting throughout every change of time, and thus it becomes the basis of human confidence. Therefore Moses, in the midst of the dying away of his people, addresses God as the Eternal One, Ps. xc. 1; therefore, Deut. xxxii. 40, the idea that God is eternal forms the transition to the announcement that He will again save his rejected people; therefore Israel, when sighing in misery, is comforted, Isa. xi. 25; 'knowest thou not, and hast thou not heard, that Jehovah is an eternal God?' (Oehler). Hence, while Peter meets the scorners by asserting God to be superior in all His modes of action to human reckonings of time, he also exhibits the ground of His people's continued faith in Himself and His promise through postponements of their hope.

Ver. 9. The Lord is not slack concerning his promises, as some count slackness. The apparent delay in the performance of the Divine engagement is capable of a still more assuring explanation. It has a gracious purpose. Some construe the sentence thus — the Lord of the promise is not slack,' etc. But this is less satisfactory. The 'slack' here (the verb occurs only once again, in 1 Tim. iii. 15, where it is rendered 'torpid') means tardy, dilatory, late. With the idea compare Hab. ii. 3 — 'as some count slackness.' The persons referred to are supposed by some to be still the false teachers. In view of the very general nature of the statement, others, with more reason, deem them to be believers of weak spiritual perception, or doubtful faith. Simple as the word seems, the precise point of the clause is not quite clear. It may be understood in the more definite sense — as some consider it (that is, the Lord's mode of action in relation to the promise) to be slackness. Or it may be taken more generally thus — 'as
some explain slackness, or, according to the ideas which some form of slackness—"but is long-suffering to youward." The reading adopted by the R. V., "to youward," or in relation to you, is much better attested than the original "to suxward" of the A. V. It is also more in Peter's style, and gives greater force to his explanation, bringing it home immediately to his readers themselves. This conception of the Divine 'long-suffering,' which is so frequent in the Old Testament, is prominent in the Pauline writings (cf. such passages as Rom. ii. 4, ix. 22, I Tim. i. 16). It appears a second time in this same chapter (ver. 15), and also in I Pet. iii. 20.

When a human promise fails to be fulfilled according to expectation, those to whom it has been made are in the habit of attributing the delay to a slackness which betrays unwillingness or some personal end. But if the Lord seems to be slow in fulfilling His promise, that is not to be explained, Peter means, as men are tempted to explain such slowness on the part of their fellowmen, as due to forgetfulness, lack of interest, procrastination, or anything personal in the mind of the subject. Its explanation lies in something which touches our interest, and illustrates His grace.—not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. This is added to show what is meant by this long-suffering. This sentence has been dragged too generally into the controversy about the Augustinian view of predestination, and the Calvinistic doctrine of the limited extent, or rather the definite design, of the Atonement. On the one hand, theologians like Beza have interpreted it of the elect only. On the other hand, exegetes like Huther regard it as adverse to the Calvinistic theory. The passage, however, has little bearing on the question, since the subject dealt with being not the elective purpose but the long-suffering of God, and the 'willing' referred to being not 'will' in the sense of the Divine decree or determining volition, but 'will' in the wider sense of disposition, desire, or, as the R. V. puts it, 'wishing.' For the thought itself compare Paul's parallel declaration in I Tim. ii. 4, and, above all, the Old Testament statements which are in the A. V. and retained by the R. V., represents a participle which means 'burning fiercely,' or 'consumed with fierce heat.' The question of difficulty here, however, is what we are to understand by these 'elements.' Some (e.g. Bengel, Alford, Plumptre, etc.) suppose that the heave of bodes are meant, these being, as it were, the elements making up the heavens. This view is held to be supported by such considerations as these: the fact that the sun, moon, and stars are introduced into other biblical descriptions of the day of the Lord (Isa. xi. 9, 10, xxiv. 33, xxxiv. 4, etc.), and especially in Christ's own announcement of it (Matt. xxiv. 29); the relation in which this clause stands to the preceding statement about the heavens themselves; the employment of the term by early Christian writers (e.g. Justin Martyr, Apol. ii. 5. Trypho, xxxii.) in this sense; and the apparent distinction drawn here between these elements and both the heavens and the earth. Others (Bede, etc.) take the four elements of the physical universe, earth, air, water, fire, to be in view. In this case there is the awkwardness of representing the writer as speaking of the dissolution of fire by fire; hence it is proposed to
expression to three of these elements, or dr and water alone (Estius). All these however, as well as other modifications of ch. e.g. as the idea that the stars in par- 

meant), attribute to Peter a more sharply- 

meaning than was probably intended. 

at objection to the first view is that the 

was not appear to denote the heavenly 

a any other passage of Scripture. In 

Greek it seems to mean primarily the 

parts of a series, the components which 

something; whence it came to be used 

imple series of sounds which form the 

of language, the first principles or 

ory data of science, such as the points, 

x. of geometry, and, in Physics, the 

nt parts of matter, which were reduced to 

the philosophical schools. In the New 

at it occurs only seven times, viz. in the 

verse and again in ver. 12, in Gal. iv. 3 

Col. ii. 3 and 20, and Heb. v. 12. In 

passages it clearly has a physical 

the others an ethical. Here it is 

with no reference to scientific or philo-

ideas, but in a broad and popular sense, 

nts of which the heavens in particular, 

where things generally are made up. 

denote, therefore, much the same as is 

by the phrase 'the powers of the 

Matt. xxiv. 29 (so Huther), the idea 

hat these heavens shall pass away by 

their constituent parts dissolved. Or it 

in the wider sense to the whole frame-

the world, as that world was conceived 

of heavens and earth (so Wordsworth, 

and the earth; so it should be rendered, 

'the earth also.'—and the works that 

shall be burnt up. The 'works' 

to be limited either to the results of man's 

ictory (as in v Cor. iii. 13, 15), or to his 

in general. The phrase is better 

ed, as is done by most interpreters, in the 

use given by Bengel—'works of nature 

As Peter's language, however, seems 

points here to be steeped in the terms 

scient props hecipsy, it is still more likely 

is simply his equivalent for the Old 

nt phrase 'the earth and the fulness 

In that case it would point to God's 

her than to man's—'to the creations 

ch belong to the earth, as they are related 

story of creation, cf. Rev. x. 6' (Huther).

Instead of 'burnt up,' some of the very best 
documentary authorities, including the two most 

ant manuscripts, give another reading, which 

means 'shall be found.' It is supposed, however, 

that this reading is one of those in which the 

rst documents themselves have gone astray, 

and that, as the reading followed by the Received 
Text is supported by far inferior authorities, this 

one of a few passages in which the original text 

has not been preserved in any of our existing 
authorities. The reading of the oldest manus- 

cripts is supposed by the latest critical editors to 

ave arisen from a corruption of another, which 

would mean 'shall flow (or, melt) away' (see 
Westcott and Hort, vol. ii. p. 103). Those who 
retain the reading which the ordinary laws of 
evidence would lead us to adopt, get a satisfactory 

sense out of it by interpreting it 'shall be dis-
covered,' that is, found out judicially, or made to 
appear as they are. This would fit in very well 

the idea of the next verse, which is that of the 

manner of life which the thought of the judicial 
end should recommend. Some propose to hold 

by the ordinary sense of the verb, and to turn th. 

entence into an interrogation—'Shall the earth 

and the works that are therein be found (i.e. shall 

they continue) they?' There is no uncertainty 

to the sense which is meant to be conveyed. 
The uncertainty attaches only to the particular 
expression which was given to that sense. But this 
forms, in view of the singular results which are 

own by the documents, one of the most per-

plexing problems in the criticism and history of 

the text. One of the primary manuscripts has 

other reading, which means 'shall disappear.' 

Later Syriac Version inserts the negative, and 
gives 'shall not be found.' The wide variety of 

reading is a witness to the early uncertainty of the 
text here, and to the difficulty felt with the term 
which was transmitted by the oldest documents. 
It is well to know, on the testimony of those who 

ved their lives to such questions as these, 

that the passages affected by anything 

unting to substantial variation 'can hardly 

more than one-thousandth part of the entire 
text,' and that the 'books of the New Testament 
as preserved in extant documents assuredly speak 
to us in every important respect in language 
identical with that in which they spoke to those 
for whom they were originally written' (Westcott 
and Hort's New Testament in Greek, ii. pp. 2, 
284).

CHAPTER III, 11-18.

atical Appeals in view of the certain Advent of the Day of the Lord.

*EEING then* that all these things shall be *dissolved,*

what manner of persons ought ye to *be in all holy conversation and godliness,* looking for and *hasting*

*See refs. at ch. i. 6.* 

*See refs. at ch. i. 8.*

Luk. i. 99, vii. 37.

Ver. 13. 14;

Acts xx. 16.

*dil then* *insert thus* *literally, are being dissolved* 

*See refs. at ch. i. 3.* 

1 Peter 1:15.
unto...the...coming...of...the...day...of...God,...wherein...the...heavens,...being...on...fire,...shall...be...dissolved,...and...the...elements...shall
melt...with...servent...heat?...Nevertheless...we,...according...to...his...promise,...look...for...a...new...heaven...and...a...new...earth,...wherein...dwellth...righteousness. Wherefore,...beloved,...seeing...that...ye...look...for...such...things,...be...diligent...that...ye...may...be...found...of...him...in...peace,...without...spot,...and...blameless:...and...account
that...the...long-suffering...of...our...Lord...is...salvation;...even...as...our...beloved...brother...Paul...also,...according...to...the...wisdom...given...unto...him,...hath...written...unto...you;...as...also...in...all...his...epistles,
speaking...in...them...of...these...things:...in...which...are...some...things...hard...to...be...understood,...which...they...that...are...unlearned...and...unstable...wrest,...as...they...do...also...the...other...scriptures,...unto
their...own...destruction. Ye...therefore,...beloved,...seeing...ye...know...these...things...before,...beware...lest...ye...also,...being...led...away...by...the...error...of...the...wicked,...fall...from...your...own...stability:...but...grow...in...grace,...and...in...the...knowledge...of...our...Lord...and...Saviour...Jesus...Christ. To...him...be...glory...both
now...and...for...ever. Amen.

The...closing...verses...are...devoted...to...the...pressing...of...certain...practical...injunctions,...which...are...closely...connected...with...the...Christian...view...of...the...end. These...are...given...in...a...strain...as...tender...as...it...is...solemn...and...pointed. They...are...based...in...part...upon...the...consideration...of...the...catastrophe...which...comes...in...the...train...of...the...Lord's...Advent. As...they...are...appeals...directed...to...believers,...however,...they...are...based...to...a...larger...extent...upon...the...brighter...aspect...which...that...Coming...of...the...Lord...presents...to...the...Christian,...and...particularly...upon...the...new...and...holier...system...of...things...which...shall...then...take...the...place...of...the...present. The...counsels...deal...with...the...posture...of...earnest...and...expectant...waiting...as...that...which...best...befits...the...Christian,...with...the...propriety...of...labouring...so...as...to...prepare...the...way...for...the...Lord's...Coming,...with...the...duties...of...watchfulness...against...seductive...errors,...constancy...in...the...Christian...faith,...and...progress...in...the...Christian...graces. The...explanation...which...has...been...already...offered...of...the...Lord's...apparent...delay...is...repeated,...and...what...Peter...says...on...the...subject...of...the...Divine...long-suffering...is...sustained...by...affectionate...reference...to...the...teaching...of...Paul.

Ver. 11. Seeing...that...these...things...are...thus...all...dissolving. The...rendering...which...is...sustained...by...the...best...authorities...differs...from...the...Received...Text...in...omitting...the...'these'...of...the...A. inserting...'thus.'...The...verb...is...given...in...the...tense,—not...'shall...be...dissolved'...as...the...A. it,...or...even...'are...to...be...dissolved'...as...the...renders...it,...but...'are...dissolving.'...The...certainty...of...the...end...is...doubly...vivid...by...the...process...of...dissolution...represented...as...having...already...set...in...and...working...towards...its...final...realization,...manner...of...persons...ought...ye...to...be...in...a...conduct...and...godliness. The...'be'...is...exp...as...in...chap. ii. 8...and...chap. ii. 19,...by...which...conveys...the...idea...of...substance...rather...than...mere...existence. Here...it...points...to...essential...character,...or...permanent...possession...of...quality. The...qualities...themselves...are...denoted...by...nouns...meaning...literally...'holy...modes...of......and...godliness,'...in...reference...to...all...the...forms...in...which...the...holy...walk...and...godliness...are...exhibited...themselves. They...are...therefore...well...rendered...by...the...A. V. 'all...holy...character...and...godliness.'...Some...take...this...verse...to...question,...and...the...next...verse...to...give...the...meaning...more...consistent,...however,...with...N. T. (which...deals...with...the...word...rendered...manner...of...persons) as...an...exclamation;...chiefly...Mark...xiii. 1;...Luke...i. 39;...1...John...iii.
CHAP. III. 11-18.] THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

Take the two verses as forming together a single sentence, with an exclamation. To give still sharper point to the expression, some of the best interpreters connect the clause 'in all holy living,' etc., not with what precedes, but with what follows it, breaking the whole run thus: 'What manner of persons ought ye to be, looking in all holy living and godliness, for the day of God!'

Ver. 12. looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God. This is the only instance of the 'day' being designated 'the day of God.' The expression is rendered 'wait for' in Luke i. 21, viii. 40, Acts x. 24, 'expect' in Acts iii. 5, 'be in expectation' in Luke iii. 15, etc. Following the Vulgate and the older English Versions, the A. V. gives 'hastening sent'; this is certainly wrong. The question is, which of two interpretations is to be substituted, whether the simple 'hastening' (or 'hasting,' as the A. V. puts it in the margin), or 'earnestly desiring' (as the R. V. gives it in the text). The context may be helping to fulfil those instances of both meanings. But it is rather the idea of 'buying oneself earnestly about a thing' than that of merely 'expecting' it that the Classical usage illustrates, and that sense suits objects which are present rather than things which are yet prospective. The other meaning, 'hastening,' or 'urging on,' is well sustained, and has the special advantage of agreeing in a remarkable way with the appeal made by Peter (which otherwise is of an entirely exceptional kind) in his discourse in Solomon's Porch—'Repent ye, therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send remission of sins unto all them which sit under the heavens.'—(compare the passages particularly in the writer's mind may be those in Isaiah xxx. 26, lxv. 17, lvii. 22). The same hope, couched in the form of vision, meets us in John (Rev. xxi. 1), 'the holy city, new Jerusalem, bright as crystal,' sent to dwell and 'be': compare with the future heavens and earth is expressed by a term which denotes what is fresh as contrasted with what is exhausted, and deals with the conditions rather than with the age of an object,—wherein dwelleth righteousness. The righteous shall possess the earth and dwell in the broad, ethical sense of conformity with the Divine will; and this is to dwell (cf. Eph. iii. 17), to have its home there, and not to be as on earth, a wanderer and changeable guest. Compare again the prophetic visions in Isa. lv. 17-25, Rev. xxi. 2-27, and also the Pauline doctrine of the participation of nature in the restoration of man as well as in his fall (Rom. viii. 20-22).

Ver. 14. Therefore, beloved, looking for these things, give diligence to be found in peace, spotless and unblamable in the sight. The 'looking for' (again the same term as in vers. 12 and 13) may give the reason for the duty which is enjoined, as it is understood by both the A. V. and the R. V.—'seeing that ye look,' etc.; or (less probably), it may form a part of the duty, 'look for these things and give diligence.' (Huther, etc.). As to the 'give diligence' see on chap. i. 10. The 'spotless' is expressed by the adjective which is applied to Christ as the Lamb in 1 Pet. i. 19, and the 'unblamable' by another form (which occurs also in Phil. ii. 15, where it is rendered 'without rebuke') of the adjective translated 'without blemish' in the same passage. Here the epithets represent the qualities which should distinguish the faithful as directly opposed to those which mark the false teachers, who have been described as 'spots and blemishes' (chap. ii. 13). It is supposed by some (e.g. Alford) that the 'parable of the wedding garment was floating before the Apostle's mind,' especially as the statement in chap. i. 13 refers to the 'fussizy of the earth' Christians. Some good expositors (e.g. Huther) suppose that the writer deals here with what the readers were to be during their lifetime of expec-
tation. But the use of the phrase 'found' (cf. 1 Pet. i. 7) points clearly to the time of Christ's judicial return. They were to labour so to live that, when He appeared, they might be discovered or adjudged (such is the sense of the 'found' and unblamable 'in His sight,' or 'according to His judgment') (so we should render what is incorrectly given as 'found of Him' in the A. V.); and this discovery or adjudgment should be 'in peace.' Where spotlessness and unblamableness form the verdict, the Lord's controversy with His people will cease and the voice of judgment will be the voice of peace.

15. And account the long-suffering of our Lord salvation. If Christ is referred to here, the passage becomes one of great importance in relation to the doctrine of His Person, as it speaks of Him in the same terms as have been already applied to God, and indirectly claims for Him Divine prerogatives. And this is made on the whole the more probable reference both by general N. T. use, and by the phrase, 'our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,' which comes in subsequently in the same paragraph (ver. 18). On the other hand, it is argued that the application of the title 'Lord,' in vers. 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, rules its application here, and points to God in the large O. T. sense as the subject. The Divine delay is to be understood not as 'slackness' (ver. 9) or procrastination, but as long-suffering, and the long-suffering is to be interpreted and valued as 'salvation,' —as the suspension of judgment with a view to a prolonged offer of grace. See also Rom. ii. 4—
even as also our beloved brother Paul. In confirmation of what he himself writes, Peter refers to what had already been addressed to these Gentile Christians by the great Apostle of the Uncircumcision. On the difficulties raised by the disappointment of the expectation that Christ would speedily return, on the dangers likely to arise in the Church, on the attitude to be maintained in the prospect of the end, Peter was giving only a 'resumption of the Colossians, Galatians, not so much as had been given by Paul. The phrase 'beloved brother' is understood by many (Huther, etc.) as an official term rather than a personal, indicating the ministerial intimacy that subsisted between the two. It is doubtful, however, whether it is meant to describe Paul specially as a valued associate of Peter's in the Apostleship, or even as a fellow-worker. The 'our' links Peter with his readers, and gives the title 'beloved brother' rather the force of a term of personal affection. Jewish Christians like Peter and Gentile Christians like his readers had this, among other things, in common now—that they regarded Paul as a dear and trusted friend. Paul himself gives the title 'beloved brother' twice to Tychoicus (Eph. vi. 21; Col. iv. 7). The man who now speaks thus fondly of Paul is he who at an earlier period was 'wrought to the face' by Paul 'because he was to be blamed' (Gal. ii. 11)—according to the wisdom given unto him. Paul's counsel was more than his own personal opinion. As the expression of a 'wisdom' which he received (cf. 1 Cor. iii. 10; Gal. ii. 17; Eph. ii. 3, 5, 8; Col. i. 25, etc.), it is the weightier confirmation of Peter's teaching.—wrote unto you. To what Pauline writing or writings may Peter be supposed to refer? The question has been keenly debated and very variously answered. It turns upon two prior questions, those, namely, touching the effects immediately in view and the persons diately addressed. Those who think the verse deals only with the subject last mentioned namely the 'long-suffering of our Lord,' search for statements made by Paul on that theme, and identify the writing with the to the Romans which, in such passages as ix. 22, takes that strain. Those who regard Second Epistle as directed not so much to Christians as to Christians generally, or that the writing intended may be such as that to the Hebrews, especially in view of declarations in chaps. ix. 26, etc., x. 24: Others fix on First Corinthians, in which it is said on the subject of wisdom (chap. i. 7—

Others who take the mysterious subject Second Advent as the special difficulty on which Peter appeals to Paul, are of opinion that Epistles to the Thessalonians are more because their early date affords time for general circulation even among remote Chri and because they are so much engaged (1 Thess. iv. 13—18, v. 2, and the Second Epistle throughout) with the Lord's Coming. On the other hand, it is argued that the subject then is that is specified in the same verse: itself but a part of the general exhortation to 14, 15. It is most reasonable, therefore, to him as referring, in as remarkable way to Paul, to the general subject which he is engaged with—the end of the present syn things, the Lord's Coming, the duties referred from the prospect, and the seductiveness of the false teachers. The 'wrote unto you' also clearly to identify the writing or written communications made to the same circle of as Peter himself addresses, and these in the Epistle it indicates (chap. iii. 1), substantially those to whom the former Epis directed. Among the Pauline Epistles w several addressed to this Asiatic circle, Eph, Colossians, Galatians, not so much as had been given to the Laodiceans (Col. iv. 16). And of t we are entitled to identify the writing with the extant Epistles, those to the Colossians, Ephesians best suit the conditions (e.g. chap. i. 22, ii. 8) we find exhortations subject of the Christian life like those giv by Peter, and warnings like his again teachers and a pretentious type of kno In favour of the latter we have also the derations, that it was probably a kind of letter, and that there are many points of between it and the Petrine Epistles (specifi First).

Ver. 16. as also in all (his) epistles, sp in them of those things; a statement from we are not entitled to infer that the Epistles already formed a collection which be spoken of as one whole.—In which a things hard to be understood. The in refers, according to the best reading, not things' of which Paul spake, but to the themselves. The adjective 'hard to be stood' occurs only here. Some suppose reference to be particularly to Paul's do the Second Coming, as given in such pass his Epistles as 1 Cor. xv. 12—58; 1 Thess., etc. others to his doctrines of justificati Christian freedom, which engaged so a
his teaching, and were peculiarly open to perversion. It is also suggested, that the more mystical sections of his doctrine, those found, e.g., in Eph. ii. 5, etc., Col. ii. 12, may be specially viewed, as these were capable of being turned to the advantage both of the party of immoral licence, and of erring like Hymenæus and Philetas, who taught that the resurrection was past already (Hofmann)—which the ignorant and unstable worst. These three words 'ignorant,' 'unstable,' 'wrest,' are peculiar to this passage. The first, which is rendered 'unlearned' by the A. V. and 'ignorant' by the R. V., has not quite the same sense as the 'unleamed' applied to Peter and John in Acts iv. 13. Here it means unwhisked, or uninform'd in Christian truth. With the second compare chap. ii. 14. The third means primarily to twist, e.g., with a windlass, or with a screw, or upon an instrument of torture like the rack, or to wrench, as e.g. in the case of a dislocated limb. Thence it comes to mean to twist or distort the sense of words—as they do the other scriptures. Those who wrest particular statements in one section of the Scriptures are next represented as apt to make the same perverted use of Scripture generally. In the N.T. the phrase 'the Scriptures' is an expression regularly applied to the O. T. writings. The singular may be used of a particular passage or portion of Scripture, as in John xix. 37; and is once employed where the words in question cannot be identified with any in the Bible as we have it (Jaa. iv. 5). But in some fifty occurrences the plural seems never to be used but of the O. T. This is a strong reason for supposing that the O. T. Scriptures are also meant here, and that Paul's Epistles, therefore, are already ranked along with them. On the other hand, it is urged that Peter would scarcely have placed the O. T. in this unqualified manner in the same category with the Epistles of a contemporary of his own, and that it is probably other writings of the New Testament period that are referred to. Even thus it appears that there were already so many writings which were recognised as Christian Scriptures, and spoken of as such, that the ancient and venerated collection of the O. T. Scriptures, and that the Epistles of Paul were reckoned among these. The implicit testimony contained in this statement to the authority of certain writings as Scripture also deserves to be noticed. It is observed that, as Peter closes his Epistles with this testimony, so Malachi brings the O. T. to its end with a charge to remember the words spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 17); while the Apocalypse ends with the promise of blessing to those who keep, and of the opposite to those who take from or add to, the sayings of the book (Wordsworth).—to their own destruction. The words carry us back to the 'heresies of destruction' mentioned in chap. ii. 1, the emphatic 'own.' however, inverting that in this case the destruction comes upon the men not by the seductions of others, but by their own misuse of Scripture. The passage has been seized on in support of the Roman Catholic doctrine of the obscurity of Scripture, its possible injuriousness to the private student, and the danger of leaving it in the hands of the people without an authoritative interpretation. What Peter is warning against, however, is the peril of a misuse of Scripture. What he states is not that Scripture is unsafe in the hands of the people, but that there are certain things in it which are capable of being perverted by a particular class. And while he gives this caution to the 'ignorant and unstable,' he speaks of Paul as writing according to the wisdom given unto him, and earnestly enjoins upon all these Gentile Christians scattered throughout the Asiatic Churches 'to be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandments of our apostles of the Lord and Saviour' (chap. iii. 2). Ver. 17. Ye therefore, beloved, knowing these things before, beware lest, carried away with the error of the lawless, ye fall from your own steadfastness. The epithet 'lawless' (not merely 'wicked,' as both the A. V. and R. V. put it) is that which was formerly applied to the men of Sodom in chap. ii. 7. It points, therefore, to the licentious character of the errorists. The phrase 'carried away with an erring current' is a forcible one. It is the phrase which Paul applies to the action of Barnabas when he dispersed with Peter himself at Antioch (Gal. i. 13). It may suggest the picture of the picture of the powerful current sweeping what it can into its bosom, and snatching the unwary off with it from the rock of their steadfastness. In Rom. xii. 16, which is its only other occurrence, there is a different sense. This particular term 'steadfastness' occurs only here, but belongs to the same class with the previous 'unstable' (ver. 16), and the adjective used in 1 Pet. v. 10; 2 Pet. i. 12. With 'fall from' compare Gal. v. 4. Ver. 18. But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The R. V. prefers the rendering 'grow in the grace and knowledge,' etc.—a rendering which may mean 'in the grace and in the knowledge which Christ gives,' or 'in the grasp by which Christ gives and in the gift of knowing Him.' The A. V. keeps clear of this ambiguity, as well as of the special awkwardness of the second construction, by taking the grace as a thing distinct from what follows it. The great duty finally urged is thus the duty of progress, and that in two particular articles, namely, the gracious life or the Christian graces generally, and that special grace of a personal knowledge of Christ which holds so fundamental a place in the Epistle. In this way, too, the writer returns at the close of his letter to the thought with which he started. His opening salutation had been a prayer that 'grace and peace' might be multiplied to them 'in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord' (chap. i. 2). And now, 'as the conclusion of the whole matter, and as the only effectual reservation from the assaults and seductions of all forms of a science falsely so called, this same blessing of spiritual enlargement, and that through the same means, is laid on their own consciences and hearts as a most solemn obligation' (Lillie).—to him be (or, 22) the glory both now and for ever. The final Amen, which is retained by the R. V., is of very doubtful authority. The idea of eternity is expressed here by an altogether singular phrase, which means literally 'unto the
day of the zon,' and which may be chosen to
denote the beginning of the new, the eternal age,—
‘the day on which eternity, as contrasted with time,
begin’s’ (Huther). The doxology is addressed to
Christ, and is significant of Peter’s conception of
His Person. It is, as Alford suggests, like one of
those hymns which Pliny says were sung by the
Christians of his time to Christ as God. It closes
the Epistle, too, in its own simple majesty, unac-
companied and undiminished by any statement
personal to the writer, or even by any of the usual
valedictory salutations to the readers.
INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN.

THE First Epistle of St. John may be said generally to belong to that sphere of revelation in which we have 'pressed on unto perfection' (Heb. vi. 1). It takes us into the 'most holy place' of the Divine mysteries; and, as has been before observed, the reader must seek admission with the words in his ears: 'Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.' We make ourselves, indeed, in the same inmost sanctuary into which St. John's Gospel has led us; but, while in the Gospel we see the highest glory of the High Priest who came from heaven and re-entered it for us, in the Epistle we are taught what the Christian life is upon earth that most fully represents and honours the Saviour's work in heaven, and makes us partakers of His glory. Its matter is the highest and deepest mystery of Christian doctrine reduced to practice; its tone is that of the assured and tranquil confidence of Christian experience; its style is that of childlike simplicity, combined with the most matured contemplative grandeur. St. John here leaves us his final legacy; and his final legacy—confirming all that has gone before—supplements and consummates the entire revelation of God, and may be said to be the final voice of the inspiring Spirit. It may be expected, therefore, that he who would understand it must connect its teaching with all that has gone before, must carefully collate it with the Gospels and the other writings of the New Testament, and above all must yield himself up to the supreme guidance of the Spirit whose unction 'teaching all things' so specially honoured in the heart of the Epistle.

The questions which meet us at the outset, and belong to the Introduction, are few and simple. We have to consider the testimony, external and internal, to its apostolic authorship; its relation to the other writings of St. John; the readers for whom it was designed; its pre-eminence in the doctrine of the New Testament generally, as its close and consummation; the integrity of the text; and, finally, the order of thought traceable in it. These topics will be briefly considered: briefly, because many of them have been more fully discussed in the Introductions to the other Johannine writings, and, moreover, because the exposition itself will render much diffuse preliminary matter needless.

I. The Epistle, like the Gospel, does not bear the name of its author. But the early Church, with all but perfect unanimity, ascribed both to the Apostle John. The evidence of this, in relation to the Epistle with which we now have to do, is without flaw, since the few slight exceptions that may be found do, when fairly looked at, really support the argument. Every generation in the first three centuries, and almost every decade, furnishes some distinct evidence of the common sentiment. Polycarp, one of the sub-apostolic Fathers, and a disciple of St. John, quotes the very words of 1 John iv. 2, 3. We have the testimony of Eusebius that Papias, in
the first half of the second century, expressly quoted it. Justin Martyr, or the anonymous author of the Epistle to Diognetus, again and again refers to it. So do Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Cyprian, Origen, Dionysius of Alexandria, and Irenaeus; some of these giving the words of the Epistle—and those among its mos distinctive words—mentioning, too, the author by name. A list of New Testament writings, drawn up towards the close of the second century, and known as the Muratorian Canon, cites the first words as St. John's, speaks of his using his own Gospel, and refers to the two smaller Epistles as St. John's, and as 'general' or 'catholic.' About the same time the Peshito, or old Syriac Version, bears the same testimony. Eusebius placed our Epistle among the Homologoumena, or 'writing universally accepted.' Subsequent witnesses continue the uninterrupted tradition and, in fact, East and West, Europe and Asia and Africa, agree for many ages in ascribing the three Epistles, or at least the First, to the Evangelist and Apostle St. John. It has been remarked already that the exceptions only strengthen the chain of evidence. The Alogi, who, as enemies of the Logos doctrine, were said by Epiphanius to have rejected the Gospel and the Revelation, rejected the Epistle also. Marcion did not include it in his list; for some few expressions in it were deemed contradictory to his views of the Old Testament. On the whole, therefore, it may be said that no document of the New Testament is better attested in antiquity. Jerome sums up its general consent: 'Ab universis ecclesiasticis viris probatur' (De vir. ill. c. 9). Modern criticism has had nothing to plead against this catena, but has founded its objections on internal evidence alone. This leads us to our next section.

II. The relation of the Epistle to the other writings of St. John, or to the Johannine literature generally, is a very interesting one. Omitting at present the Apocalypse, it needs only a casual glance to show that there is a certain style, whether literary or theological, common to the Epistles and the Gospel: a style that is so marked and characteristic as to separate these writings from all others in the New Testament. This absolute unity of conception pervades both the documents, and moulds them throughout. It extends from the highest objects of thought, God and Christ, life and death, down to the slightest peculiarities of phrase and construction. The similarity or rather the identity, is so obvious that we may dispense with the lists of doctrina and verbal coincidence usually given, and leave the reader to mark them for himself, especially as we shall have to dwell on some of these leading ideas for another purpose. Now in ancient times, as we have seen, there was never any doubt that St. John wrote both. But the exigencies of hypothesis in modern times have required the abandonment of this notion, which is regarded by a certain class as unworthy of scientific criticism. The Apostle St. John is supposed by many to have himself written nothing, but only to have furnished an honourable name on which to hang the results of pious fraud. Others think that the Apostle wrote the Gospel, but that the Epistles were written by a certain 'John the Presbyter,' whom tradition, according to Eusebius, mentions as having lived at Ephesus at the same time with the apostle. There are some, again, who think that the First Epistle is simply a spurious document, feebly imitating the Gospel, and using the name of 'the presbyter' even as the Gospel tacitly assumed the name of the apostle.

A close examination of these writings will further show that they were written, by the same author indeed, but on very different occasions and for very different purposes. It has become almost habitual to regard the Epistle as a companion document or appendage to the Gospel: a view for which there is no justification. There is not a single sentence which, fairly interpreted, points that way. On the contrary, there is much which indicates another class of readers, a new order of
INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EPISODE OF JOHN.

circumstances, and a considerably later date. The Epistle speaks in the style of a
more advanced development concerning the 'manifestation' or 'coming' of Christ
as the 'day of judgment' and 'the last time.' It is another class of readers which
rendered appropriate the reference to the 'many antichrists;' and, generally, the
Gnostic errors obviously combated throughout the Epistle are more distinctly viewed,
if not actually much nearer, than they appear in the Gospel. There is no hint in
the latter that Docetism, or the heresy that made the Son of God a phantom
combination of human nature with an emanation descending upon the man Jesus
for a season, was directly combated. The Gospel rises sublimely above all transient
heresy. But this particular error is directly confronted in the Epistle: more directly
than any other error which the New Testament mentions. All this points to a later
date, but by no means to a different author. There is not a word about the incarnation,
the material judgment or coming of Christ, the antichrist, the person of Satan,
or any other leading doctrine in the Epistle, the germ of which is not found some-
where in the Gospel. Contrariety between them there is absolutely none. But
different and new aspects of the Logos, the Comforter, the propitiation, the nature
and penalty of sin, there doubtless are. The Logos or Word is the Word of life;
and surely this is not a lower conception of the Son of God, nor one that essentially
diverges from that of the Fourth Gospel. The Paraclete is certainly in the Epistle
Jesus Himself; but there is no opposition between this and the Gospel doctrine of
the Holy Spirit as the Paraclete: the heavenly Paraclete of the Epistle and the
internal Paraclete of the Gospel answer to each other, as they do in Romans viii.
The same may be said of the alleged absence of the Spirit's personality in the
doctrine of the Epistle as compared with that of the Gospel. In both He is the
Spirit of Christ: in both, 'the anointing from the Holy One;' and in both, the agent
and element of regenerate life. The later document—as we believe it to have been
—introduces two new terms, Sperma and Chritma, which certainly no one can prove that St. John might not have used, especially if we regard him as vindicating
those terms from Gnostic perversion. And it is not an unfair argument to plead that
whatever is said of the Holy Ghost is said to those who are supposed to have the
Lord's last discourses in their hands: no one can doubt that the writer of the Epistle
writes with those last discourses before him, and uses their language very often. The
doctrine of the atonement is different, but does not differ from the earlier statements.
It makes Christ as the High Priest Himself 'the Propitiation,' and that in a unique
expression; but this is only a strict development of the high-priestly prayer, and
certainly in harmony with all apostolic doctrine. There is nothing in the later
doctrine of sin which contradicts that of the Gospel. Its relation to Satan, its
universality in human nature, its removal by the atonement, are the very same; and if
St. John introduces the 'sin unto death,' all we can say is that he has given us a
new aspect of the same revelation given us in the Synoptics and the Epistle to the
Hebrews. The symbolism of the 'water and the blood,' rightly interpreted in both
documents, has in both the same meaning. Failing in their objections, the objectors
are reduced to such generalities as the inferiority of tone in the Epistle. But here
they render defence needless by differing among themselves. One class follow Baur,
calling it a 'weak imitation' of the Gospel; another, following Hilgenfeld, call it a
'splendid reproduction' of the Gospel. For ourselves, we feel in reading the Epistle
after the Gospel that we are listening to the same writer, but rather as 'John the
theologian' than 'John the evangelist'; that he is no longer writing, so to speak,
under the overpowering influence of his Master present in the flesh and chaining
him to the simple record of what he saw and heard, but, still in the presence of the
same Master exalted to heaven, is calmly reviewing the wonderful past, and giving
his own and his brethren's experience of its present effect, and exhorting all to the
perfection which the work of Christ has rendered possible. The current allusions to
the monotony, repetition, and illogical dogmatism of the paragraphs deserve no
comment: the soul that is formed by the Gospel will feel that the Epistle wants no
commendation or defence of man. But what we would say has been better said by
Ewald, in an oft-quoted sentence of his work on St. John's writings: 'Here, as in the
Gospel, the author retires to the background, unwilling to speak of himself, and still
less to base anything on his own name and reputation: notwithstanding that he meets
his reader, not as the calm narrator, but as writing a letter, in which he exhorts and
teaches as an apostle, and moreover the only surviving apostle. The same delicacy
and diffidence, the same lofty calmness and composure, the same truly Christian
humility, cause him to recede as an apostle, and to say so little about himself: his
only aim is to counsel and warn, reminding his readers simply of the sublime truths
they have already received. The higher he stands, the less disposed is he to deprecate
his "brethren" by the weight of his authority and commands. But he knew himself
and who he was: every word reveals plainly that none but himself could thus speak
and counsel and warn. The unique consciousness which an apostle growing old
must have, and which the "beloved" apostle must have had in a pre-eminent degree;
the tranquil superiority, clearness, and decision of all his views of Christian truth;
the rich experience of a long life, steeled in victorious struggle with every unchristian
element; the glowing language, concealed under and bursting through this calmness,
the force of which we instinctively feel when it commends love to us as the highest
attainment of Christianity,—all these are found so wonderfully united in this Epistle
that every reader of that age would, without needing any further intimation, discern at
once who the writer was. But, when the circumstances required it, the author plainly
indicates that he once stood in the nearest possible relation to Jesus (chap. i. 1-3,
v. 3-6, iv. 16), precisely as he is wont to give the same indication in the Gospel.
And all this is so artless and simple—so entirely without the faintest trace of imitation
in either case—that all must of necessity perceive the self-same apostle to be the
writer of both documents.'

Another quotation may be added: 'Let it be noted how admirably the character
of the Epistle accords with what we otherwise know of the character of the apostle.
On the one side, there is a keen severity in the severance of light from darkness,
and of the world from God's kingdom, which betrays the son of thunder; indeed,
we find such an ethical sharpness of definition as makes every sin an evidence of
the Satanic nature (comp. chap. iii. 4-11), such indeed as occurs nowhere else
throughout the compass of Scripture. But, on the other side, and concurrently
with this, we feel a breath of most pathetic and most inward affection, from a spirit
overflowing with love, and strong in peaceful rest, such as corresponds with those
traditions concerning his old age which appeal so forcibly to our hearts. . . . That
the aged disciple, who through a long life had by faith and love attained so close
a relation to his Lord, was so thoroughly pervaded by the riches of the grace that
came to him through Christ that all the hatred of the world and raging of antichrist
failed to disturb his deep repose, that he could not indeed well understand how
their influence could be felt at all, is perfectly imaginable in his case. Simon
Peter before this, in his Second Epistle, when the times were disturbed and the lie
had raised its head aloft, felt himself impelled with all the energy of his love to
transpose himself back into the days when he had his Master's society, and also
with all the energy of his hope to propel himself forward to the time of the perfected
INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EPISODE OF JOHN.

kingdom of God. So also our apostle, following his character out, and in harmony with his deep interior nature, must needs, in his old age especially, have still more abundantly felt himself impelled, while enemies raged around him, and the more they raged, to fasten his deep thought upon the glory of Him whom he had seen as He was, and whom he hoped to see as He is. Thus, in conclusion, it may be said that it is perfectly clear how St. John, with such a personality as his, was precisely so affected as the Epistle reveals him, so full of peace in a time of fiercest conflict, so much more occupied with positive construction than with defensive polemic against enemies' (Haupt, The First Epistle of St. John, p. 366, Clark's Translation).

A long list of parallel phrases might be exhibited, such as could not be drawn up from any other two books even of the same writer. More than thirty such passages are literally common to the two; more than half of them linking the Epistle with the Farewell Discourses, John xii.—xvii. As Mr. Sinclair says: 'There the tender, loving, receptive, truthful, retentive mind of the bosom-friend had been particularly necessary; at that great crisis it had been, through the Spirit of God, particularly strong; and the more faithfully St. John had listened to His master, and reproduced Him, the deeper the impression was which the words made on his own mind, and the more likely he was to dwell on them in another work instead of on his own thoughts and words. The style may be his own both in Gospels and Epistles, modified by that of our Lord; the thoughts are also the thoughts of Jesus' (Introductory to this Epistle in Bishop Ellicott's Comm.). In the Introduction to St. John's Gospel in the present work it has been said, on the general question of the relation of St. John's style and our Lord's: 'Nor, further, is the supposition with which we are now dealing needed to explain the fact that the tone of much of our Lord's teaching in this Gospel bears a striking resemblance to that of the First Epistle of John. Why should not the Gospel explain the Epistle rather than the Epistle the Gospel? Why should not John have been formed upon the model of Jesus rather than the Jesus of this Gospel be the reflected image of himself?' Surely it may be left to all candid minds to say whether, to adopt only the lowest supposition, the creative intellect of Jesus was not far more likely to mould His disciple to a conformity with itself, than the receptive spirit of the disciple to give birth by its own efforts to that conception of a Redeemer which so infinitely surpasses the loftiest image of man's own creation.' This opens up a subject of deep interest, which may be profitably pursued in that Introduction. We have another purpose here. The quotations are not simply quotations, even if they may bear that name at all. In no case are they such as an imitator or forger would have employed. They are the writings of the same man; but not of one who has his own earlier document before him. Here we may refer to Canon Westcott's Introduction to the Gospel (Speaker's Commentary), who says: 'The relation of the Gospel of St. John to his Epistles is that of a history to its accompanying comment or application. The First Epistle presupposes the Gospel either as a writing or as an oral instruction. But while there are numerous and striking resemblances both in form and thought between the Epistle and the Evangelist's record of the Lord's discourses and his own narrative, there are still characteristic differences between them. In the Epistle the doctrine of the Lord's true and perfect humanity (sarki) is predominant; in the Gospel, that of His Divine glory (doxa). The burden of the Epistle is "the Christ is Jesus;" the writer presses his argument from the Divine to the human, from the spiritual and ideal to the historical. The burden of the Gospel is "Jesus is the Christ;" the writer presses his argument from the human to the Divine, from the historical to the spiritual and ideal. The former is the natural position of the preacher, and the
latter of the historian.' Then, after mentioning some of the differences we have
dwelt upon, Dr. Westcott goes on: 'Generally, too, it will be found on a comparison
of the closest parallels, that the apostle's own words are more formal in expression
than the words of the Lord which he records. The Lord's words have been
moulded by the disciple into aphorisms in the Epistles: their historic connection
has been broken. At the same time, the language of the Epistle is, in the main,
direct, abstract, and unfigurative. The apostle's teaching, so to speak, is "plain,"
while that of the Lord was "in proverbs" (John xvi. 25). . . . Generally it will
be felt that there is a decisive difference (so to speak) in the atmosphere of the two
books. In the Epistle St. John deals freely in the truths of the Gospel in direct
conflict with the characteristic perils of his own time; in the Gospel he lives again
in the presence of Christ and of the immediate enemies of Christ, while he brings
out the universal significance of events and teaching not fully understood at the
time.' Besides being illustrative of what has been laid down, such extracts as these
are the best material for an Introduction to our Epistle.

III. But when we come more specifically to the relation between the apostle and
his readers, we are left very much to conjecture. Ancient tradition tells us that St.
John, after the death of St. Paul, 64 A.D., laboured, or rather exercised an apostolical
pastorate, in Ephesus for many years. It has been thought not improbable that during
his banishment to Patmos, and for some reason not known, he wrote this encyclical
or catholic Epistle to the churches from which he had been separated. Had that been
the case, however, there would almost certainly have been some reference to his
banishment; we must therefore assume that he wrote it from Ephesus either before
or after that exile. In the Apocalypse the seven leading churches of his apostolical
district are mentioned, but mentioned as addressed by the Lord through the Spirit;
hence it might almost seem as if the apostle reverently abstained from mentioning
by name the churches to which he wrote in person. There can be no question, how-
ever, that the communication has the character of an Epistle, though without the form
impressed upon the majority of other similar writings of the New Testament. In
this respect it is only a little more free than the Epistle to the Hebrews and that
of St. James. The absence of the epistolary form is observable only at the outset
and at the close: throughout the course of the communication we have more addresses
and more epistolary hints than in any other book of the New Testament. In fact,
it was an encyclical Epistle, the inscription of which was different for every church
to which it was sent, and has not been preserved. It may be sufficient merely to
mention the strange tradition which originated with Augustine, or to which he gave
permanence, that it was addressed ad Parthos, 'to the Parthians.' As the Greek
Church has no trace of this inscription, and it was unknown to the West before the
time of Augustine, the only concern we have with it is to account for its origin. That,
however, is not easy. It has been conjectured that the term Parthos is a corruption
of the Greek parthenous, or virgins; and that the inscription given by the
allegorizing Clement of Alexandria to the Second Epistle, 'to the virgins,' was by
degrees attached to all the Epistles. But the matter is little more than a curiosity
of early literature: suffice that all indications point not to Parthia but to Asia Minor
for the circle of readers whom St. John addressed.

There is no indication in the Epistle itself that may be relied on for the
determination of its date and circle of readers. The 'last time' has no significance
here; the absence of reference to Jerusalem only suggests that the catastrophe
had long taken place; persecutions are not referred to as present or impending;
Jewish opposition is a thing of the past, and the only distinction is between the
Church and the world; and finally the writer, addressing no particular church, writes as one far advanced in age, who had pastoral relations to his readers of long standing. All these point to a time coinciding with the banishment to Patmos. A few sentences from Haupt's able General Review, at the close of his work on the Epistle, may incline the reader to study his whole discussion. 'The churches of Asia Minor, and especially the Ephesian, to which we are directed by early tradition, had been introduced into Christendom through the long and assiduous activity of the apostle of the Gentiles, with advantages beyond most others. We at once understand, therefore, why our Epistle has no organizing character, but rather that of nurturing and establishing. Further, that the distinction between Judaism and heathenism as two defined hostile camps is so entirely absurd, is natural enough at the end of the first century, and so long after the destruction of Jerusalem; for, after that event, the power of the Jews in persecuting the Christians lay simply in their hiding themselves behind the Gentiles as the "world." . . . The enemy of these days was, in a peculiar sense, the spirit of false prophecy. We know, indeed, that even in the lifetime of the apostle heresy had been in Ephesus matured by Cerinthus; and not only so, but the very omissions of the Epistle may be perfectly understood when it is referred to the Corinthian Gnosis. All this proves that the Epistle must have been written later than the other New Testament Scriptures, and that it might well have been written by St. John. . . . If, on the ground of the tradition that the apostle was a long time in Patmos, we assume that he wrote his letter from that island, the hypothesis will lighten up the whole. . . . In it there is neither any greeting from any church, nor any greeting to one. The absence of the latter may be accounted for by the encyclical character. But how shall the absence of the former be accounted for? It was natural that the apostle should omit that, if he happened at the time to be located in no church whatever. . . . He lived in relative seclusion, separated at least from all the excited movements of the outer world. For, on this small island, he could only to a slight extent exercise any influence, or carry on any work of an external character. To him at his age it would be matter of doubt whether he could win back that larger influence, whether the time of active work was not for ever gone. Then, the great concern was to wait upon the blessed manifestation of the Lord. The more he was shut in from exterior life, the more did he retire into the depths of his own being, and draw upon that which his faith gave him for his own good, and what he, with the whole Church, was called to attain through that faith. Thus the internal and ethical characteristics of the Epistle are no less explained than the apocalyptic tendency of its strain.'

These remarks may not carry conviction as to the Patmos theory, but they corroborate what appears to be the only conclusion from a general review, that the Epistle was written after the Gospel and independently of it; that it was, although the writer might not fully know in how complete a sense, an encyclical or catholic Epistle for the Ephesian Churches and the whole Christian world; and that it was a pendant not so much to the Fourth Gospel as to all the Gospels and the whole literature of the New Testament.

IV. To whose who fully accept the overruling providence of the Holy Spirit in the construction and arrangement of the New Testament, it will appear a matter of no small importance that St. John's First Epistle is the last doctrinal treatise of Divine revelation. This being so, we may expect to find in it certain characteristics appropriate to a position of such dignity. These characteristics we certainly find. The historical disclosure of truth, continued so long in a series of wonderful dispensations, reaches its close. The faith delivered to the saints is now delivered
in its consummate form: development of doctrine comes to an end in the Bible, that development of dogma may have its beginning. Following this hint, we may glance by way of introduction at some of the dogmatic features of this final document of the Bible.

It may be said, generally, that here we have the complete theological system of St. John himself before us: condensed into a few chapters. What is sometimes called the Pauline Christianity—the Christian doctrine which St. Paul was inspired to unfold—is diffused through a great number of writings, issued at intervals during a generation, and for the most part in the midst of manifold labours. The Johannine Christianity—the Christian doctrine which St. John was inspired to unfold—was given in a few chapters and once for all. In the Gospel and in the Revelation he does not speak in his own person as a teacher; though in them, and especially in the Gospel, the essentials of his peculiar view of Christianity are to be found. The Prologue of the Gospel alone contains the writer's own theology: in all the rest he is silent and the Lord speaks. But in the Epistle we have himself as a teacher throughout; and in no part of the New Testament does the voice of personal authority sound so clearly and emphatically. There is no portion of the New Testament in which are more of the 'signs of an apostle.' The beloved disciple, and the elect apostle, has so to speak his supremacy here. He gives his own system of truth in all its completeness. Though there is a remarkable recurrence of one or two themes—so much so that the Epistle has often been charged with monotony and repetition—we perceive, if we examine it carefully, that it contains an entire compendium of the Gospel as it was poured into the mould of the last apostle's spirit. God, the Triune God, Evil in the universe and in man, the person of Christ the Redeemer, the atonement as a propitiation of God and the destroyer of sin, righteousness and sonship and sanctification, perfected and perfecting love, antichrists and the coming of the Christ for their destruction, the eternal death of the reprobate and the high privileges of the saints, are topics that run through the whole round of cardinal fundamentals, and they are all presented in their final and perfected form under the hand of the apostle. He does not say that he is giving the sum of Christian verities; still less that he is supplementing and perfecting those given by others; but he is really doing this without saying so, and the result is a body of Christian truth more complete on the whole than any other one document of the Christian faith presents. Probably any of the doctrines, taken alone, may be found more fully developed elsewhere; but nowhere else are they all combined as in this Epistle. The Beginning and the End are linked in a most emphatic manner: in a manner almost peculiar to St. John. And between them is every prominent truth of evangelical revelation in brief but distinct outline.

And it is the voice of a teacher of doctrine as the foundation of morals. It is customary to speak of St. John as 'the apostle of love,' who shows us the supreme importance of practical in opposition to theoretic religion. But this is not the right view of the matter. This Epistle enforces no ethics which are not based upon revealed doctrine. The reader will observe everywhere that the exhibition of duty has not far of, generally hard by, the foundation of revealed truth, a fact on which it rests. This Epistle is the most perfect example in the New Testament of the indissoluble connection between doctrine and duty: the doctrine always underlying the duty; doctrine and duty being exhibited together; and duty being ever the end and consummation of doctrine. Other parts of the New Testament, however, contain all this. But St. John's Epistle is pre-eminent as making Love the bond of perfection between doctrine and ethics. Love is perfected here in every sense: it has its
perfection in God, for in this Epistle alone does revelation say that ‘God is love;’ and it has its perfection in man, for ‘perfected in us’ occurs again and again. There is no grander sentence in the Bible than this, when connected with those just quoted: ‘Hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.’ The doctrine of the atonement is the foundation of the ethics of perfect self-sacrifice. The entire Epistle—with the two smaller Epistles as its appendages—perfectly illustrates St. Paul’s saying that ‘love is the fulfilling of the law.’ The perfection possible to the disciples of Christ is exhibited as the supreme triumph of the love of God in us. First, ‘Whoso keepeth His word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected:’ the Epistle makes all obedience a manifestation of love, and in all obedience only is the love of God perfected. Again, ‘If we love one another, God abideth in us, and His love is perfected in us:’ the innumerable obligations of charity are not dwelt upon, but they are all summed up as the outgoings of God’s own love, or God Himself, from the heart into the life. Finally, we read: ‘He that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in Him. Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.’ Nothing less than the entire consecration of the soul in fellowship with the indwelling Trinity is here; and such a consecration as opens to human desire and hope the most enlarged prospect of the triumph of perfect love. Let these three passages be studied in their harmony, and it will be seen that the view they give is one that is not so distinct in any other part of Scripture, and one that gives a character of its own to this final document.

V. The text of the Epistle has come down to us in good preservation. Only a few questions of textual criticism have occupied much attention. These are referred to in the commentary; but three of them may be briefly noticed here. One is the passage, chap. ii. 23, which has commonly been italicised in our translation as of doubtful genuineness. Its right to a place in the text has been abundantly vindicated. The second is the reading which changes ‘confesseth not’ in chap. iv. 3 for ‘annulleth;’ seeming to mean, as quoted by Latin Fathers, solvit, as if the error were the dissolution of the two natures in our Lord’s person. It seems hard to resist the evidence in favour of this highly theological reading. But the latest revision has put it only in the margin. The third is of course the well-known passage of ‘the three witnesses,’ hitherto John v. 7. This passage will be found still within brackets, and it is not dismissed without notice in the exposition. But it is now all but universally admitted that it is spurious.

The case, in fact, is very strong indeed against the passage. It is found in no Greek codex earlier than the eleventh century; and had it been extant in the East in any form, it would certainly have been used in the Arian controversy. Its first insertion into the Greek Testament was simultaneous with the beginning of the printed text; it was honoured with a place in the great edition printed at Complutum A.D. 1522. During the sixteenth century it crept into a few Greek codices. One of them was a copy of the Complutensian Polyglot; the others seem by internal evidence to have been translated from the Vulgate. Among these is the Codex Britannicus (preserved in Dublin), which may be said to have indirectly procured the verse its place in our modern editions. Erasmus was induced by it to give the passage a place in his edition; and his example was followed by other editors and the Textus Receptus. The Old Versions down to A.D. 600 do not contain it; the Vulgate itself in its earliest and best editions being without it. The most recent editions of the Greek Testament altogether exclude the passage.

Its origin is a problem that will probably never be solved. Possibly some Greek
INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

gloss in the margin kept its place until it was in some copies attracted into the text. There is a remarkable passage in Cyprian (de Unit. Eccles.), which may shed some light on it: 'Dicit Dominus, Ego et Pater unum sumus (John x. 30), et iterum de Patre et Filio et Spiritu Sancto scriptum est, et tres unum sunt, et quisquis credit, hanc unitatem de Divinâ firmitate venientem, sacramentis coelestibus coherentem, scindi in ecclesia posse.' In these words Cyprian might have been giving a Trinitarian explanation of 'the Spirit and the water and the blood;' but he might also have been quoting from an old Latin Version. In any case, this only gives a tint as to the way in which the reference to the Trinity might have been placed in the margin as an interpretation of the subsequent allegorical verse, and thence have crept into the text. For the rest, we may say with Ebrard: 'Granted it not to be impossible that Greek codices may be yet discovered which shall contain the clause, we must direct our critical judgment by the evidence of the documents which we have; not of those which we have not, and of the existence of which we as yet know nothing.' It is usual to lay much stress on the internal evidence which condemns the passage. But that is a precarious argument; and one that is hard to maintain against a large number of divines and commentators who have, not only in the Roman communion but among Protestants, maintained the obligation of retaining them. Here we may quote Ebrard again: 'On the internal arguments against the authenticity we do not lay any great stress. That St. John, who wrote those passages in the Gospel, chap. i. x. x. xvi. 15, could not have given expression to the thought that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are one, is no more than the unwarranted assertion of subjective hypercriticism. Again, that he who elsewhere opposes God to Word, and Father to Son, should here insert Word between Father and Spirit, involves no direct impossibility. It is indeed strange, as also is the adjective Holy, omitted from chap. iv. 1 downwards. There is nothing in the interpolation directly conflicting with the order of thought, especially if we adopt the arrangement confirmed by the oldest citations in Vigilius, Fulgentius, Cassius, and Etherius, which inverts the order of the verses. According to the right exposition of the witness which refers it, not to the demonstration that Jesus and no other is the promised Messiah, but to the testimony as to whose might it is through which the world is overcome, St. John would first mention the three factors of God's power on earth. . . . After these, he would introduce the Three-One in heaven, Who from heaven sustains the testimony of His church.' We will close with the words of Haupt (the First Epistle of St. John, Clark's Translation, p. 312): 'In spite of my private conviction of the genuineness of the reading annullet Jesus, chap. iv. 3, I could not decide to put it into the text; for our editions must keep close to the substance of the manuscripts. But to preserve chap. v. 7 cannot be justified by any means. The most acute argument that has to this hour been adduced in its favour is represented by the venerable Bengel, who asserts that here the analysis of the Epistle is summed up in one point, the Trinity being the governing principle of its arrangement. . . . As to the dogmatic shortsightedness which bewails in its loss the removal of a prop for the doctrine of the Absolute Trinity, this might be expected in lay circles, but ought not to be found among theologians. A doctrine which should depend on one such utterance, and in its absence lose its main support, would certainly be liable to suspicion. Omitting the verse, we have in this very section the doctrine of the Trinity in the form in which Scripture generally presents it: the Father, who witnesses, ver. 9; the Son, who is attested, ver. 6 seq.; the Holy Spirit, through whom the Son is witnessed by the Father, ver. 6: the passage being thus very similar to the narrative of our Lord's baptism.'

VI. Perhaps no book of the New Testament has suffered more than this Epistle
from arbitrary attempts to force upon it an order of thought and subject it to analytical arrangement. In this, however, there have been two extremes. The ancient expositors, and the earlier ones of modern times, thought too lightly of St. John's order: Augustine led the way by speaking of the Epistle as speaking many things mainly about love. To them the writer was a contemplative mystic, who followed the sacred impulse whithersoever it led him; and wrote down his meditations, partly about sound doctrine and partly about pure charity in aphoristic sentences. The commentators who have annotated the Epistle during the last hundred and fifty years have been disposed to go to the other extreme, and to find too exact and minute a distribution. Certainly the apostle has a train of thought in his mind, and writes according to a plan; but it is equally obvious as we read that he turns aside here and there from his main current, and also that he revolves round occasionally to the same ideas and words. Too much stress has been laid upon the specification at the beginning, 'These things we write that your joy may be fulfilled:' it is not necessary to regard this as indicating a plan in St. John's mind. So with the purpose mentioned at the close, 'that ye may know that ye have eternal life:' the apostle does not mean to say that it has been his one leading design to lead them to this experimental knowledge.

It is plain enough that there is an exordium; and equally plain that the concluding verses of the Epistle are a peroration, gathering up the whole into a few final sentences. Between these two the idea of the fellowship of Christians with God seems to rule the whole: first, as a fellowship in light and holiness, viewed under a variety of aspects down to the close of the second chapter. Then the fellowship is rather that of the life in and with God which the Christian sonship imparts: this governing the Epistle in the third chapter. Then follows the fellowship in faith down to the concluding paragraph. But the vindication of this order must be left to the exposition itself.
THE FIRST EPISODE GENERAL OF

J O H N.

CHAPTER I. 1-4.

The Exordium.

1 That which we have heard, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; 1 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write unto you, that your joy may be full.

1 which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life
2 And declare our fulfilled

Ver. 1. The object of the apostolical announcement may be said to be complete in the first verse: what is added afterwards in the parenthesis limits that object or more closely defines it by expanding one term which occurs in it, 'the life.' Remembering that 'we declare' rules the paragraph in the distance and is coming, we must begin with the words concerning the Word of life: the Logos who is Himself the life eternally and to the creature imparts life. In the Prologue of the Gospel there is no 'concerning,' because the Person of the Incarnate is there the immediate subject: here and throughout our Epistle it is not so much His Person as the blessedness and benefits of fellowship with Him which are the immediate subject. Again, remembering that the parenthesis is also coming with its closer explanation, we distinguish the announcement as twofold. First, concerning the eternal being of the Logos, that which was from the beginning: the 'was' is really, as in the Gospel, opposed to 'became flesh,' though this latter is here unexpressed; 'from the beginning' we shall find used in various senses, but here its meaning is determined by the first words of the
as also by ‘with the Father’ in the next it is ‘from the depths of eternity,’ as in 1’s ‘chosen from the beginning’ (2 Thess. and St. John is as it were unconsciously look- t from the moment of the incarnation. In 13 we have ‘Him that was from the be- ,’ but here the neuter ‘that which’ is used the thought of the supreme mystery combines to be one great object of contempla- Secondly, concerning His whole historical nce on earth, seen of men as well as of of which the apostles were the ordained nal witnesses, we read: ‘that which we sared, that which we have seen with our bas which we beheld, and our hands l. These clauses must be taken together, wed in their various relations. The first r to the entire manifestation as one great ent whole, in the perfect-present; the wo refer to certain express manifestations were in the apostles’ memory for ever, such special revelations of the ‘glory as of the gotten before and after the resurrection. re must: the ascension was ord from to seeing with the eyes, to contemplation eep mystery behind, and the actual conch the Incarnate One. Yet the testimony of the earth it springs from the bearing, which certainly includes the testi f others such as the Baptist, to the much seeing with the eyes and beholding as it thou the eyes, and then descends again reaching, which was limited to individuals ited generally.

1. We term this a parenthesis; but the ‘and’ suggest that it is not a parenthesis in our sense, as it includes and condenses the aspect in its completeness. And with the life testified: it is not here ‘the Word became but the life which inheres eternally in the is the fountain of existence to the universe, with into visibility as the eternal life, so distinguish it from the life simply that had unvested apart from the incarnation. The one, however, in the personal Logos, for r the eternal, is the life, the same ish was with the Father and was manu into us. The three verbs of testimony, if allotted, explain this more clearly: We an and bear witness refer to the ‘Life’ by the apostolic complete eye-witness be- official testimony to the Person of Jesus. thing, however, is not that, but the cement which follows: and declare unto a eternal life. Our Lord is never once eternal Life,’ but ‘the Life.’ ‘Even the ch was with the Father’ singles out the a the compound term, and expresses, as a human words can express it, an eternal of personality to the Father corresponding temporal relation to us. ‘With God’ in 15 becomes ‘with the Father’ here, to personality of that relation.

1. The great sentence goes on by selection. precedes is assumed and summed up as though we have seen and heard—seen first, because of the word in the previous isola we unto you also, as it was mani-

fested to us. There is no reference yet to his readers specifically. Witness, testimony, declaration, either generally by the Gospel or by writing in particular, are the order: much of the declaration is universal; and out of that rises the special Epistle. The object of the universal announcement, which these readers had already heard and rejoiced in, was in order that ye may have— not obtain or hold fast or increase in, but have generally—fellowship with us. Fellowship is union in the possession or enjoyment of something shared in common: that common element being variously viewed as God Himself, imparted through the knowledge and eternal life and hopes of the Gospel; or the external seals of communion of the Church; or even the spirit and gifts of its charity. In our Epistle we have only the first; and in this sentence it is fellowship with the apostles in their experience of the manifestation of the Son, in their enjoyment of the supernatural, true, eternal life which united them with God.

But, as if to preclude any perversion of this thought, it is added: and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. It is evident that the apostle does not linger for a moment on any fellowship that falls below the highest. ‘Our fellowship,’ still spoken generally of all Christians, is with the Father through His Son Jesus Christ, that is, His Son as Mediator, and therefore common to the Father and to us. He is the element as well as the bond of the communion; and ‘the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ’ (1 Cor. l. 9) is through His Spirit, common to Him and to us, of whom mention will be made in due course, whose common possession by believers is ‘the communion of the Holy Ghost’ (2 Cor. xiii. 14). But all this is not in the text. That simply expresses the Saviour’s prayer in another form: ‘that they may all be one, as Thou Father art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in us.’ What is common to the Father and to us, and common to the Son and to us—for the ‘and’ introduces a distinction—is not here said; but in the Lord’s Prayer we read, ‘All Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine;’ and again, ‘I in them, and Thou in Me;’ and once more, ‘That the love wherewith Thou lovedst Me may be in them, and I in them’ (John xvii. 21, 23, 26). It is observable, and the observation is our best comment, that the term ‘fellowship’ in this supreme sense occurs no more; but always reappears in the form of the mutual indwelling of the Trinity and the believer who ‘abideth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us by the Spirit which He gave us’ (chap. iii. 24). Here are all the gradations of the fellowship in God and among the saints with God.

Ver. 4. Now follows the specific design of this Epistle. And these things we write, that our joy may be fulfilled. ‘Our’ joy, our common joy, as in the same prayer: ‘that they may have My joy fulfilled in them’ (John xvii. 13). Joy is the utmost elevation of ‘eternal life’ viewed not a piety or strength, but as blessedness; and here again the best comment is the fact that the word never recurs, but we find, where that might have been expected, always ‘eternal life.’
CHAPTER I. 5–II. 28.

Fellowship with God as Holiness or Light.

5 "THIS then is the message\(^1\) which we have heard of him,\(^2\) and declare unto you,\(^3\) that \(^4\) God is light, and in him \(^5\) is no darkness at all.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him,\(^6\) and walk in \(^7\) darkness, we lie, and \(^8\) do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he \(^9\) is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, \(^{10}\) and the blood of Jesus Christ\(^8\) his Son cleanseth us \(^11\) from all sin. \(^4\) If we say that we have no sin, we deceive our-selves, and the truth is not in us. \(^1\) If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and \(^{14}\) just \(^6\) to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us \(^4\) from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, \(^{15}\) we make him a liar, and \(^{16}\) his word is not in us.

CHAP. II. 1. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that \(^{13}\) ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have \(^4\) an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ\(^8\) the righteous: And he is \(^{18}\) the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins \(^{19}\) of the whole world.

2 And hereby we do know \(^{10}\) that we know him, if we keep his commandments. \(^{19}\) He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, \(^{14}\) is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But \(^{20}\) he that keepeth his word, in him verily \(^{12}\) is the love of God perfected: \(^{19}\) hereby \(^{19}\) know \(^{19}\) we that we are in him. He that saith \(^{20}\) he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, \(^{20}\) even \(^{19}\) as he walked.

3 Brethren,\(^{11}\) I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. \(^{19}\) The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. \(^{12}\) Again, a new commandment \(\) I write unto you, \(\) of love which is true in him and in you: \(\) because the darkness \(^{19}\) is past, \(\) and the true light now \(\) shineth. \(\) He that saith \(\) he \(\) abideth in him, \(\) is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. \(\) He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, \(\) and \(\) walketh in darkness, and \(\) knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness \(\) hath \(\) blinded his eyes.

---

\(^1\) And this is the message \\
\(^2\) insert the from him \\
\(^3\) omit announce unto you \\
\(^4\) omit Christ \\
\(^5\) righteous \\
\(^6\) omit the sins of \\
\(^7\) perceive we \\
\(^8\) hath the love of God been perfected \\
\(^9\) Beloved \\
\(^{10}\) insert the \\
\(^{11}\) which ye heard \\
\(^{12}\) passing away \\
\(^{13}\) already
12 I write unto you, little children, because ye know him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One; and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father.

24 Also let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in it. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and  

17 ye know 
18 the evil one 
19 have written 
20 the vainglory 
21 hour 
22 have there arisen 
23 but this came to pass 
24 and ye have an anointing 
25 we perceive that it is the last hour 
26 that they are none of them of us 
27 the 
28 This is the antichrist, even he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also. As for you, let that 
29 omit have 
30 abide 
31 would lead you astray 
32 And as for you, the anointing which ye received 
33 his 
34 true
THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN. [CHAP. I. 5-11. 28.

28 even as it hath  

content.

little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, 

may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

omitted hath

if he shall be manifested

ye abide

shrink with shame

Contents. First the apostle announces his message that God is light and only light (ver. 5). Then follows (down to chap. ii. 2) a universal statement of the evangelical conditions of fellowship with Him in holiness. In chap. ii. 3-6 the knowledge of God is exhibited as a stimulant to perfect obedience. From ver. 7 to ver. 11 the walk in light is viewed with special reference to brotherly love. Vers. 12-14 bear emphasis and redoubled testimony to the reality and truth of the Christian life generally, and of that of his readers in particular; this being introduced because of the stern contrasts which have preceded and will follow. Then comes an exhortation against the love of the world in its darkness, vers. 15-17. From ver. 18 to ver. 27 believers are warned and protected against the doctrinal errors of the world. And, lastly, in ver. 28, the whole is wound up by a reference to the coming of Christ and the Christian confidence before Him. It may be said that in the seven sections of this first part the whole sum of the Christian estate, from the revelation of sin to full preparation for judgment, is found, with its perfect opposite. But it is governed by the idea of the holiness of the Gospel as a sphere of light; and two points in it, regeneration and faith through the Holy Ghost, are afterwards made final and essential.

The atoning provision for fellowship in the light of God, viewed generally and with specific reference to the Christian life.

Vers. 6, 7. If we say: this is a keyword throughout the section, and marks off the utterly unchristian or antichristian spirit from the pure opposite which in each case follows. Surely there is here no union of the apostle with his hearers, any more than in St. Paul's 'shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?'

'Ve' is the universal we of mankind, though it may have special allusion to the Gnostics, who said precisely, in their theory and practice, what is here alleged. They affirmed that the seed of light being in them, they might live enveloped in darkness and sensuality without losing the prerogative of their knowledge.

That we have fellowship with him, and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: we lie in the saying, and in the walking, do not the truth; the truth being the outward manifestation, 'as truth is in Jesus' (Eph. iv. 21), of the light of holiness, its revealed directory of word and deed. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, Mark the decorous emphasis on 'walk' and 'is': our walk is the fellowship with His being. We have fellowship one with another: our fellowship with God is not a lie, but a reality; we have the fellowship that it is supposed we also 'say' we have. And our walk does not impeach us; for provision is made to enable us 'to do the truth.'

And the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin. The 'and' does not mean 'for,' in the sense that the cleansing is the fellowship; nor 'and therefore,' as if the fellowship were the condition of the cleansing. The converse of that would be nearer the truth. The two clauses are simply co-ordinate; the 'and' as it were explaining and obviating objection. We have fellowship with God—we, the universal 'we,'—but how can these things be, seeing that the light of Divine holiness defects in us nothing but sin? Here then comes in the counterpart or undertone of the great message. We have fellowship with God through His Son, but through Jesus the crucified Saviour, His Son, who 'came by water and blood,' the blood,

this combination, and save to express these two he does not employ the word. Accordingly, St. John now introduces in the most full and solemn manner the whole economy of the Gospel as a remedy for sin: in an enlarged statement, and including now another idea, that of righteousness. He is faithful and righteous to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. The two attributes of God, the Administrator in Christ through the Spirit of the redeeming economy, correspond to each other and to the blessings which they guarantee. He is ‘faithful’ to His holy nature, as it is revealed in His Son, and to the covenant which in Him pledges forgiveness and renewal, and to the express promises of His word: the ‘covenant of peace’ came to St. John from the Old Testament, and is as much his as St. Paul’s, though he never introduces the idea. Hence its antithesis is the making Him a liar; and its counterpart in us is our faith, not here expressed but implied. He is ‘righteous’ also: this term regards the holiness of God under a new aspect, that of a lawgiver; and declares that His universal faithfulness is pledged in a particular way, namely, as He imparts righteousness to the faith of those who trust in Him. St. John does not adopt the Pauline language, though he implies the Pauline teaching, when he says that God is righteous in order that He may forgive our sins. We receive this release from condemnation from His righteousness; ‘for He is just, and the justifier.’

8, 9. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ‘If we say,’ strictly co-ordinate preceding; the phrases here being varia-

pont those contained in the former, but, as John’s manner, with some additional of force. What is falsely asserted by the

Christian spirit is the absence of that which an atonement necessary in order to walk

the light. Sin has been for the first time made, as that within us which answers to it, its external sphere: it is wrong, there-

to interpret it as meaning that we may per ‘walk in the darkness,’ although we remaining sin within us. The two are shown: they who say that they are without by that very token in the darkness; for of God’s holiness cannot be diffused in the soul until it has first revealed its great subtle runs parallel with the former, appropriate change of phrase. Instead of

simply, we are now self-deceivers, with emphasis on this: not without great could the perverters of the Christian have brought themselves to deny the sin of their nature. In fact, none who have been Christians could assert this; at least, Christian revelation as truth cannot have ad in them, even if it had ever entered. truth is not in us,’ nor we in it.

Our confound our sins: here we have the un-

preamble of the Gospel. This confession onsenting together of the soul and the law conviction and acknowledgment of sin. It antithesis of the ‘saying that we have no sin, as the antitheses are never strictly co-
t, this confession may include, and indeed include, more than a mere internal sen-
ter two things are to be remembered here: but the confessing of ‘sins,’ not ‘sin,’ expression used in the New Testament for repentance that precedes the acceptance of God; and, secondly, that the word is St. John only in two senses, for the ent confession of sin and need, and for demential confession of Jesus the Saviour and need. He speaks of ‘confessing and confessing Christ;’ he alone has
most natural sense, still all the sanctified avow themselves sinners who need the atonement until probation ends; they never separate between their new selves and their old in their humble confession; they still identify themselves with their sin, though this may be gone; and say 'with the sanctified Apostls Paul (2 Tim. 1:15); 'O Lord, thou art the Son of the living God, and I am a sinner.' And if we, St. John, the father of the churches of that time, directly addresses those whose character formed that antithesis; and changes the calm statement into affectionate exhortation. These things I write unto you—that is, the whole letter, resuming the 'write we' of ver. 4, but with the usual change. Before, it was the apostolic 'we,' and in the presence of the whole Church, with all its heresies around it; now St. John himself begins a more personal address. That ye sin not; before, it was the fulness of joy; now it is the utter separation from sin, the negative condition of that. The last tense that had been used was the perfect, referring to the whole life of sin as needless atonement; the aorist is now used: 'that ye sin not at all,' not as a habit, nor in any single act. The antithesis might have run on, 'If we are forgiven and cleansed, we have for ever ceased from sin.' But it does not; for the saint must ever be a sinner as touching the past, and not dealt with as such it is only through merciful non-imputation; moreover, he may sin again.

And if any man sin. The 'if' does not imply as a certain event, but it clearly implies that 'one,'—meaning 'one of us,' though here only used in the Epistle—may commit sin. Yet this will be, in the high teaching of the apostle, a peculiar case, and demands a new application of the atonement to it. We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

We have,' as the common possession of believers—not of the Church; but of every one, for his defence against sin and recovery from it—as certainly ours now as our sin can be. Advocate or Paraclete is the same word as the Comforter of the Gospel. That 'other' Comforter, the Holy Spirit, is in the midst of the Church and in the hearts of believers as a Helper and Teacher, 'making intercession within us;' this Advocate is towards the Father, with allusion to the previous words, 'to forgive us our sins.' He is in a judicial sense the pleader or intercessor of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who must be 'holy, separate from sinners,' 'the Righteous.' The apostle does not say 'the Holy One,' because the very term Advocate makes the heavenly temple as it were a judicial court, and in that court satisfaction and righteousness reign. As 'cleansing from unrighteousness' combines the two ideas, so do Advocate and Propitiation. The third leading idea of the Gospel, our sonship, is involved in 'with the Father.'

And he is the propitiation for our sins. Mark the 'and' which here once more introduces a new thought intended to obviate perversion. Though Christ is not said to be a 'righteous Advocate,' yet His advocacy must represent a righteous cause. He pleads His own atonement; that is Himself, for He is in His Divine-human Person the propitiation: the advocacy is distinct from the atonement, is based upon it, and appeals to it.

The word propitiation occurs only here and in chap. iv. throughout the New Testament: it is only the counterpart of the 'blood of Jesus His Son' in chap. i. 6, the administration of the atonement coming between them in chap. i. 9. Christ is in the New Testament 'set forth as a propitiation by His blood' (Rom. iii. 24): a propitiation, not a sacrifice, that, as on the day of atonement to which it refers, averted the wrath of God from the people. He also as High Priest made atonement or propitiation for the sins of the people (Heb. ii. 17), which is here, as in the Septuagint, propitiatum in the matter of sins 'the God of holiness.' Untiring these, He is in the present passage Himself the abstract 'propitiation' in His own glorious Person. His prayer for us, issuing from the treasure-house of atoning virtue, must be acceptable; and, uttered to the Father who 'sent Him as the propitiation' (chap. iv. 14), is one that He 'beareth always' (John xi. 42).

It is then added; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world. And why? First, because the apostle would utter his generous testimony, on this his first mention of the world to the absolute universality of the design of the mission of the 'Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world;' his last mention of it, the second time he says 'the whole world,' will be of severer character (chap. v. 19). Secondly, he intimates that the proper propitiation, as such was the reconciliation of the Divine love in respect to all sins at once and in their unity while the advocacy based upon it refers to special sins: on the one hand, no other atonement is necessary; on the other, penitence secures the advocacy of Him who offered it once for all. Lastly, as we doubt not, the apostle turns thus a discussion, the fundamental object of which was to set forth universally and in general the way in which the Gospel offers to all mankind fellowship with the light of God's holiness.

Fellowship in the knowledge of God: obedience, love, and union.

The best account that can be given of this section—more apophatic than any other—is that it lays down certain principles, and introduces certain terms, which become the keynotes of the remainder: each begins here, and returns again and again, while few are afterwards added.

Ver. 3. The word fellowship now vanishes from the Epistle. The first substitute is knowledge; a term that is not without allusion to the Gnostic watchword, but soon passes beyond the transitory reference. It is the gnosticism of the anti-christian sect, which St. Paul, not renouncing the term, exalted into epiphanies: St. John retrieves it, and stamps it with the same dignity that he impresses on the word love.

And hereby know we that we know him, if we keep his commandments. The knowing is a word which may be said to be in this Epistle sanctified entirely to God and the experience of Divine things: the knowing Him and the knowing that we know Him, or, in St. Paul's language, 'knowing the proof' of Him. We cannot better explain the word to ourselves than by closely connecting it with the fellowship that precedes. All knowledge is the communion of the mind with its object: the object as it were and the knowing subject have in common the secret nature of the object. To 'know Christ' is to enter into the
The possession of its perfect influence within us as the active power of holiness in one that has been passively delivered by it from sin. Hence, secondly, it is added, by this we know that we are in him: not by spiritual enjoyment; not by ecstatic absorption into the Divine abyss; but by the power to do His holy will in absolute self-surrender and consecration, do we know that we have union with God. It may be objected that on this view it should read: 'He is in us:' now precisely this we do read when next the perfect operation of the Divine love is referred to: 'God abideth in us, and His love is perfected in us' (chap. iv. 12). It is not our consummate love to God that assures us of our union with Him, but the blessed experience of His perfected love in us. Thirdly, this is confirmed by what follows: 'He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also to walk even as He walked. There is no stress on the 'saith,' as if the meaning were that the profession ought to be confirmed by practice. True as that is, the truth is deeper here. The profession before was, 'I know God,' now the phrase changes, 'He that saith He abideth in Him.' The stress is on the 'abiding,' which now enters the Epistle for the first time to go no more out; and as this continuous fellowship with Christ is no other than the life of the Vine producing fruit in the branches, he who has it is bound to exhibit in himself the holiness of Christ, and walk as He walked. The knowledge, the life, the love of Christ is perfected in this, that we live as He lived. In fact, there are two obligations: being abidingly in Christ, and being perfect in love and knowledge; and the last is the condition of the first, and the last absolutely involves a Divine necessity of righteous obedience; and the profession of it binds the professor to do his own part to imitate Him. If I then—ye also ought. For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you (John xiii. 14, 15). This suggests the Master's self-sacrificing love as the specific characteristic of His pattern, and leads to the next section. The new commandment, which is also old: that of brotherly love.

Ver. 7. Beloved—introducing a new view of the subject by a term appropriate,—no new commandment write I unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The apostle had spoken of 'commands' and of the one 'word,' but he had not as yet said 'commandment.' Now, our Lord had associated the latter with brotherly love as a 'new commandment' (John xiii. 34); hence he distinguishes between His Master's 'giving' and his own 'writing.' What I now write is not new, as He gave it: for the old commandment is the word which ye heard in the ever memorable saying that lived in the Church from the beginning of the Christian revelation.

and you who read what I write. It was new with reference to the old law, which the Saviour fulfilled and consummated and re-enacted in the supreme self-sacrifice rehearsed or anticipated in the feet-washing at the time when He gave it; the law of love as perfected and proclaimed anew, and with an illustration never given to it before. It is new in us, who fulfill it with a new spirit, after a new example, and with new motives, as in short a commandment which is the fulfillment and the fulness of all law or word of God. Because the darkness is passing away, and the True Light now shineth. When St. John said 'true in Him,' he referred to Christ, whose 'walk' had been spoken of, as also to the Speaker of the new commandment unnamed. He still defines Him without name as the 'True Lord,' light as opposed to the darkness of sin, and truth, as the reality of which all former revelation was the shadow and precursor. But the Person of Christ is now lost in His manifestation; the perfect revelation of law and of love in their unity is fully come; the darkness of self and sin is only in act of passing.

Ver. 9. It would require a long sentence to supply the unexplained thought here. In nothing is the newness of the evangelical teaching more evidently seen than in the diametrical opposition it establishes between loving and hating. There is no middle sphere: in the Gospel, love is taught in its purity and perfection as the light of life in the soul, which leaves no part dark, no secret occasion of sin being undiscovered and unremoved; and hate is taught as the synonym of not loving, being the secret germ of all selfishness. Hence he that walketh in darkness hath no light. He is in the darkness until now, notwithstanding the light shining around, and notwithstanding his profession, and notwithstanding his possible dwelling among Christians whom he calls brethren.

Ver. 10, 11. Here there is no 'but': we have a pair of counterparts strictly united. He that loveth his brother—his brother being every living man, in this passage as in some others—abideth in the light. It is presupposed that he is in it; but for the sake of what follows the abiding is emphasized; as indeed the 'abiding' always follows hard on the 'is': and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. Stumbling-block or offence is sometimes what makes others to fall either intentionally or innocently or inadvertently. But here it is that secret selfishness which takes manifold forms, almost all the forms of sin: the light from Christ entering through the spiritual eye makes the whole spiritual body full of light, and nothing remains undiscovered or unremoved that could cause the fuller of this law to fall. It is the high ideal of the 'new commandment,' but one that is here said to be realized in him to whom 'the love of God is perfected' or has its full effect. But—now comes in the awful antithesis, containing the whole history of the loveless spirit—he that hateth his brother—who does not love his neighbour as himself—is in the darkness, and abideth in or walketh in the darkness—it is his sphere, and he both receives and diffuses it—and knoweth not whither he goeth: 'whither,' because he is in the darkness, and it hath not yet been revealed what the end of that will be, nor how great is that darkness! 'he goeth,' because the darkness 'hath blinded,' as it were once for all, his eyes to the path on which he is.

Testimony to the reality of their religion; addressed to the church generally, and specially to two aspects.

Vers. 12, 13. I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. The apostle, in the act of writing the Epistle, now ceases to distinguish between true and false Christians; he affectionately uses the same appellation which he had used in the first verse when pointing his readers to the succession and atonement of Jesus Christ; and, taking upon again that truth, says that he wrote to them with the confidence that for the sake of his name, on the ground of his finished work on earth and presentation of his Person in heaven, they had the forgiveness of their sins. For My name's sake in the Old Testament became now for His name's sake; but it occurs only here, and is parallel with St. Paul's 'Christ's sake,' or 'in Christ hath forgiven you.' This confidence is expressed here first simply the utterance of joyful congratulation.

Continuing the same strain, St. John, to whom all were 'little children,' regards them as divided among themselves into two classes: the mature, whom he congratulates on that spiritual knowledge of which he had spoken in ver. 1. I write unto you, fathers, because ye know him that was from the beginning: that which was received and studied and continued to know. This was true concerning all; but it was the special characteristic of the more advanced. The same may be said of the next clause. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the evil one. The head of the kingdom of darkness, alluded to in ver. 8, in whom 'the whole world lieth' (chap. v. 19), elsewhere 'the Prince of this world' (John xii. 31), had been overcome by all the 'little children'; but the struggle in the case of the fathers had issued in the calm certitude of 'the full assurance of understanding' (Col. ii. 2), while in the young men it was a confident but recent victory. Let it be observed, before proceeding, that hitherto the church had been addressed as children by regeneration; in what follows they are rather children by adoption. Hitherto the Divine Son has been pre-eminent: His name, His eternal personality, His opposition to the wicked one. Communion with Him has been chiefly in the apostle's thoughts.

Vers. 13, 14. Here the apostle takes up again the strain which had been suspended, if not actually, yet in thought. The word 'I write' is changed for 'I wrote: first, because the three great principles dwelt on—redemption from sin and from the world's ruler by knowledge of God—are absolutely fundamental, and must be repeated emphatically; secondly, because the writer sees fit to regard his Epistle as now in the hands of the readers, and 'I wrote what I am now writing' becomes simple enough; thirdly, because he is about to commence two solemn exhortations for which he would doubtly prepare them. I have written unto you, children or sons of God, because ye know the Father. 'Son,' the new designation, corresponds here with the
The Father becomes now pre-eminent, worship with Him through the Son. For is connected with regeneration in the respect of the Father, it is the knowing beloved, name, and we are called the of God: 'is the order of thought this is by the knowledge of the 'name' of I write to you, fathers, because ye love that is from the beginning.' This repetition is very impressive. To the apostle has nothing to add, for to exist is to have all knowledge; through it is known, on the one hand, and the on the other. I write to men, because you are strong, and of God abideth in you, and ye have in the evil one. Re-writing what went he apostle reminds the young men both strength and of the source of it. They wax or 'valiant in fight' (Heb. xi. 34), waxed or become such contrariety; not, however, in their own power, though He that strengthened them, himself, through His word was the and abiding source of their conquest. is He that is in you than he that is in d' (chap. iv. 4): hence it is difficult to whether the personal Logos is here meant indeed, the Word through His word was the and abiding source of their conquest. not one without the other, though use of the phrase suggests that the is signified here. Note with what the last clause is repeated. He who red into fellowship with the Son has an over the enemy, and this conscious of triumph over him, not only in particular but over him, the conqueror has by 'keeping himself' so that may approach, but touch him not (18). This is not a promise only, nor station, but the present reality of the Christian life. of the world: renounced in the Fellowship the Father. This exhortation is addressed all, the tone of contrast being now again.

15. Love not the world, neither the that are in the world. If any man love id, the love of the Father is not in him. up with God, and walking in darkness, and the world: everywhere we have the same thing in this verse love,' which only in this passage is used by God and the world; elsewhere we have bip with the world' (Jas. iv. 4), mindly things' (Phil. iii. 19); but the strong we, the giving up of the whole being, and heart, and will, we have only here. the nature of things, and by the event, must be reserved for God alone; two story perfect loves cannot be in the same therefore, he who thus loves the world the love of the Father. This reason explains the exhortation. The world sed by it, just as mammon is interzy the impossibility of double service: not serve God and mammon.' The is the sphere of the unregenerate life, by another god, fallen from God, and consequently swayed by self, which is separation from God. It is not therefore the whole economy of things; which man cannot love, though he may make it his god. It is not for the same reason the earth as the abode of man. It is not the aggregate of mankind, whom we must love as 'God loved the world.' But it is the whole sum of evil which makes up the principle of opposition to the holiness of God, the which lieth in the wicked one. In distinction from this universal sphere of sin, which has the whole heart of the unconverted, 'the things that are in the world' define the particular directions which alienation from God may take, and the special objects which self may convert into objects of love.

Ver. 16. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. Now, the apostle defines the nature of the world, more particularly in its utter contrariety to the nature of God. The world is a sphere of life; it has a unity, and 'the whole that is in it,' as it is occupied by man, may be distributed into a trinity. First, 'the lust of the flesh;' in its more limited sense, the living to gratify the desires of the fleshly nature; in its deeper meaning, the gratification of the fallen nature generally in opposition to the Spirit, for St. John, like St. Paul, defines 'that which is born of the flesh' as 'flesh.' Then 'the lust of the eyes;' all the manifold desires that are awakened by the eye as its instrument, or that connect the flesh with the outer world. This also has its profounder meaning: the desire of the world's eye rests upon the sum of things, phenomenal, or the 'things that are seen;' and its sin is the universal sin of dependence on the creature, and not beholding, rejoicing in, and being satisfied with the Creator and invisible realities. Thirdly, 'the vainglory of life;' life being here the way or means of physical existence, and not the life which is the glory of this Epistle; the vainglory is the pride and pomp that exults in itself, and gives not the glory to God. This trinity is a tri-unity, making up the 'whole' that is in the world of man's estrangement from Divine things. And, with reference to this whole, the apostle says, twice repeating 'is,' that it springs not from God. It is not of that new life which is 'from God;' but it is its perfect opposite. It cannot love God, because it is not of His nature; it cannot go to God, because it came not from Him. Whence then came it originally and comes it now? The apostle does not say from sin, nor from Satan. He is thinking and about to speak of its emptiness and transitoriness: he could not therefore say that 'it cometh of evil,' or of sin, or of Satan; for these do not pass away. But he limits his words, 'it is of the world,' the emphasis being on this, that 'it is not of the Father,' the Father of that Son in whom we have eternal love and eternal life.

Ver. 17. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. The world as a system of desires contrary to the Divine will, governed by its one 'lust' that makes it what it is, is even now in the act of passing. Its sinners will remain, and the consequences of its sin; but as a complex 'world of iniquity,' ordered in its
disorder, it will pass away, it is even now passing. Then there is a change to the personal individual, who knows no lust, but only the one will: abjuring the lust of the flesh, he doeth that will which is his sanctification; renouncing the sight of his eyes, he walks before Him who is invisible; and forsaking all glorying in self, he gives glory to God supremely and alone. He shall, like God, and with God, and in God, abide for ever.

The antichrist as errors of the darkness: their mark and character, with the protection against them.

Ver. 18. Little children; the address is to all; and with reference to the several characteristics acknowledged in them, their knowledge of the Father and of Him who was from the beginning, and their victory over the evil one. While the knowledge and the victory run through this whole section, it is more immediately linked with the preceding 'passeth away.'

It is the last time. This is St. John's final and only expression for the Christian dispensation as answering to the 'last days' of Isa. ii. 2, the 'end of the days' of Deut. iv. 30, the 'afterward' of all the prophets. When our Lord introduced the 'fulness of time,' another 'afterward' was given; in His own teaching, for He spoke of 'this world' and the 'world to come' (Matt. xii. 30); and in that of His apostles. Each of them uses his own phrases for the distinction: St. Paul speaks of 'the present time' and 'the coming glory' (Rom. viii. 18), and St. Peter of 'the last days' or 'the last of the days,' and 'to be revealed in the last time' (1 Pet. i. 20). St. John's is 'the last time' here at the beginning of the section, and at the end of it 'His appearing' (ver. 28), which closes the 'time.' The passing away of the world, and the continuance of the hour or time, run on coincidently: when He shall be manifested' will end both. During the old economy, and in the rabbinical interval with its 'the present world' and 'the coming world,' the division of history was the advent of Messiah; now that He has come, the dividing point is His second coming. It is important to remember that the apostle first speaks solemnly of this 'last time' as distinguished from the passing world. Its relation to antichrists comes in afterwards, and gives a new colouring to the thought.

And as ye heard that antichrist cometh, even now have arisen many antichrists; whereby we perceive that it is the last time. Our Lord had predicted not one 'false Christ,' but 'many,' as coming, not immediately before the end of the world only, but from the time of His departure (Matt. xxiv. 4, 24). And St. John pays homage first and pre-eminent to Him His Master's word, referring, however, rather to His 'false prophets,' and calling them by a name used only of Himself 'antichrists,' not as taking the place of Christ, but as opposing Him. He includes also, of course, the many predictions of his brethren, to the effect that 'false teachers would bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord, and teaching them' (2 Pet. ii. 1). This is the pith of his argument: we discern that we are in the last revelation, because side by side go on the development of truth and error concerning the one Person who is the sum of revelation. But, in his way to this argument, St. John introduces an allusion to what they had heard from St. Paul, interpreting Daniel, concerning one antichrist, whom he mentions only to show that his predecessors are already in the world, and that he is not, like St. Paul, referring to the signs of the 'last days' in the 'last time,' but only of the last time generally, he does not dwell on the future personal antichrist. He does, however, set his seal to St. Paul's teaching that 'man of sin will be revealed,' exalting himself 'above all that is called God,' that is, as St. John interprets it, 'above all that is called Christ' who is God, denying the Father and the Son in a form of opposition which only the fulfilment of the prophecies, though he does not define his own word more fully, and its explanation must be sought in St. Paul's Epistles and the Apocalypse, he here gives a new name to St. Paul's 'man of sin,' the 'antichrist' or opponent of Christ pre-emminently, and he adds that 'he cometh,' or, in solemn Biblical language, is still 'the coming one,' as opposed to the antichrists who 'have become' such deceivers.

Ver. 19. This verse stands alone, as containing a preliminary encouragement. They went out from us, but they were not of us. They literally left us, for they were in our fellowship, and received in the Church the doctrines they perverted; but they had not the life of our doctrine, and were not of us in the sense of that fellowship of which the first chapter had spoken. For if they had been of us, in this latter sense, they would have continued with us. The consequence is a purpose: they have explained, according to the fixed purpose of God's Spirit that heresy should be purged out of the Church. It is true that by their going out they show the possibility of some being 'with us who are not of us.' But the words, which are not involved in the original as many think, do not say this. They only declare that such heresy cannot and must not continue in the Christian fellowship, but—continue, that is, as maintained by teachers: as members of the fellowship all need the subsequent exhortation to 'abide in Him,' and the warning against being 'ashamed before Him at His coming.' The reason of the necessary rejection of heresy is given in the next verse.

Ver. 20. And ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things. There is no 'but here: the verse introduces a new consolation; and that is the fact of the impartation of the Holy Ghost to all the members of the spiritual fellowship, as a Spirit of consecration generally, and particularly as a teaching guide into all truth. 'Ye have,' as the result of having 'received' (ver. 27), your part of the common Pentecostal gift. This was received from the 'Holy One,' that is, Christ, who is 'the life,' or 'the Son' as the source of our sonship, 'the Righteous' as the source of our righteousness, and 'the Holy One' as the source of our sanctification. The term 'unction,' or chrism, like that of 'seed' or sperma, refers to the Holy Ghost, whose name has not yet been mentioned. It goes back to the Old Testament, which St. John never formally quotes, though he habitually incorporates it there the 'anointing oil' or 'the oil of anoint-
ing' (Ex. xxix. 7, 21) is the symbol of the Holy Ghost, first as setting apart for God whatever was touched by it, secondly as specifically consecrating the priests and kings and prophets of the old economy. The antitype was poured out on Christ, without measure, that it might flow upon all His members, consecrating them to God, and making them representatives of His three official relations. In its first meaning, which certainly is included here, it signifies that those who receive the chrisma belong to Christ as opposed to all antichrists: this indeed suggesting the word. In its second meaning it signifies that the members of Christ's mystical body share His union as the Prophet: they have His Spirit teaching them the things and thoughts of Christ, 'all truth' as 'truth is in Jesus.' The chrisma becomes as it were a charisma: the gift of spiritual knowledge in all that pertains to the doctrine presently made prominent. St. John, as his manner is, lays down the high and sacred privilege in all its perfection: the qualifications are inserted afterwards, and indeed are suggested in every sentence.

Ver. 21. The promise of the 'Spirit of the truth' is evidently in St. John's thoughts, and these words are as a 'factum nuncupatum,' to that promise as fulfilled in the community. The Saviour laid stress on the 'truth' as one: the truth embodied in His own person. That central truth all who receive the chrisma must know, and the apostle, with the same feeling that dictated the previous words, 'I have written to you, children, because ye know the Father,' acknowledges their heavenly instruction even while he is instructing them.

I write not unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it. His purpose here is to show them that the truth is not only a revelation of the Christ, but a revelation of antichrist also. And he means by that 'truth'; he takes it for granted that they know; that is, in the form of taking it for granted, he urgently exhorts them to remember that there can be no peace between the truth and any form of the lie whatever. The same high and contrasted diametrical opposition that he establishes between regeneration and sin, the Father's love and love of the world, light and darkness, he establishes between truth and error. We often trace theological error to a perversion of lesser truth; and in many lesser matters rightly. But 'the truth' as it is explained in the next verse cannot shade off into less true, and reach the false that way. Hence the abrupt question that follows.

Vers. 22, 23. Who is the liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? If every lie comes from another source than the truth, what is that source? Our Saviour said of one: 'He is a liar, and the father of it' (John viii. 44). And this was preceded by, 'Ye are of your father the devil,' who 'abode not in truth.' Hence here we have first the great error viewed in respect to its author, the representative of the central lie: that lie being the denial that the Jesus of the Gospels was or is identical with the Christ. To this formula might be reduced most of the heresies of the age; but especially that of the Jews, and that of Gnosticism which made Christ an Eon who joined the man Jesus for a season. This last was in the apostle's mind, and he thought of the exceeding plausibility of many arguments adduced in its favour; hence the earnestness with which he changes the abstract lie into the concrete liar, and reminds the anointed Christians that they must remember the fatherhood of every form of error on this subject. Denying the Christ,—This is the antichrist: he deserves that name, though his error in this respect is only a branch of the great lie. He deserves it well, for he is really a member of the family that denieth the Father and the Son. This last is the essence of antichrist: the sum of all possible error, denying and renouncing conjointly the Godhead and the Begotten of the Godhead. It is the heaviest charge brought against the false teachers in the Epistle, and therefore the apostle solemnly explains and substantiates it.

Whoever denieth the Son, neither hath he the Father: he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also. The liar and the antichrist is now reduced and yet extended to 'whosoever.' The denial that Jesus is the Christ is identified with denying the Son in His eternal relation to the Father, in His incarnation which made Him the Christ, and in His sole supremacy as the revealer of the Godhead. He 'hath not' the Father; for 'no man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal Him' (Matt. xi. 30). He that 'confesseth' the Son, in the creed of his heart and lips and life, 'hath' in loving fellowship 'the Father also' as well as the Son. Such being the great issue at stake, and the anointing from the Holy One cannot fail to keep you from error, at least on this vital question.

Vers. 24, 25. As for you, 1st that abide in you which ye heard from the beginning: if that which ye heard from the beginning abide in you, ye shall also abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that he promised us, even life eternal. The false teachers introduced novelties: their doctrine was opposed to the seditious message or promise of the Gospel; and the apostle introduces a new element here; that is, the apostolic teaching as the standard to which every form of doctrine, good or evil, must be brought. The union of the Holy One gives spiritual discernment to every saintful believer by which he can perceive the contradiction of error. But the security is deeper even than that. The apostolic doctrine is an indwelling word which is the condition of abiding in the Father and the Son. This abiding in God is the whole substance of the truth as a promise: 'this is the promise which He promised;' and this promise is 'eternal life.'

Vers. 26, 27. The blessedness of 'eternal life' has brought this sad protest against error to an end. But the writer's heart is full, and he introduces a final exhortation and encouragement, in the same tone that has been felt throughout, that of confidence in his readers. These things have I written unto you concerning them that are seeking to lead you astray; they, rather than the anointed Christians, gave occasion for all he had said. And as for you, the anointing which ye have received abide in you, and ye need not that any one teach you. There is no side-glance here at the teachers who would intrude; but it is the old truth that the abiding of the interior Teacher in the heart is the supreme source of knowledge: however important the instruction of ministers, even of that which the apostle is himself here giving, may be, it derives all its value from the inward
demonstration of the Spirit. His unction must sanctify reading and hearing and meditation, and all the subordinate means of learning. There is danger, of course, that this may be perverted. Hence the concluding words are very strong; compressing into three clauses, not united with perfect concinnity, all that had been said. But, as his anointing—His Spirit who is the truth,—teacheth you concerning all things—in all the means He adopts, this latter being among them,—and is true, and is no lie—thus again does the apostle glory against the false teachers,—and even as it taught you, ye abide in him—thus he rejoices over his people safe from the seducers.

Ver. 28. But throughout this Epistle the human side is never forgotten, while all is referred finally to the indwelling of the Son.

And now, my little children, abide in him; that, when he shall be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed from him at his coming. This ends the whole section which began with the 'last time.' The 'coming' of the Lord is His coming to judgment; but St. John here uses, and here only, a gracious word that signifies His presence, though marking the beginning of that presence by the word that signifies its continuance, 'His coming.' No reference is made to the time of His return, or to the possibility of their living on earth till He should come. We are exhorted to 'abide in Him,' and whether we meet Him or are brought with Him, the confidence will be the same. Its opposition is the 'speechlessness' of the marriage guest, 'ashamed from Him' or His presence.

CHAPTER II. 29-III. 22.

Fellowship in Regeneration.

29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him. Chap. III. 1. Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

4 Whosoever commiteth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous,

8 even as he is righteous. He that commiteth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth
not righteousness is not of God, *neither he that loveth not his brother.

11 For this is *the message that ye heard from the beginning, *that we should love one another. Not as "Cain, who was of the wicked one,* and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? *because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. *Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

13 We know *that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. *Whosoever hateth his brother is a *murderer: and ye know *that there is no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, *because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But *whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, *and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, *how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, *let us not love in word, neither in *tongue; *but in *deed, and in *truth.

19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, *God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, *if our heart condemn us not, *then *have we confidence toward God. And *whatevsoever we ask, we receive of him, because "we keep his commandments, and *do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

18 the evil one *omitted
14 omit my
16 omit his brother
10 hereby know we love
18 his heart or compassion
21 abide in need
20 with the
21 omit in

CONTENTS. The apostle now introduces a new order of thought, governed by the idea of regeneration as the gift of life in Christ to individual man. He first (down to chap. iii. 3) dilates on its glory as a birth of God; as the design of His love; as including both the privileges and the reality of sonship; as awaiting its full dignity at the revelation of Christ; and as inspiring through hope the energy of personal sanctification. Then (to ver. 10) he dwells on the absolute incompatibility between the regenerate life and sin: as the destruction of sin is the object of Christ's atoning manifestation; as sin is inconsistent with abiding in Him; and as sin is the mark of communion with the devil. By an easy transition he passes to the essential connection between regeneration and brotherly love (down to ver. 18): showing that the great message to the regenerate was the injunction to love one another; that this involves the abiding difference between the righteous and the unrighteous, between the world and believers, as proved from Cain downwards; that brotherly love is the mark of regeneration; and, finally, that our love to each other has one supreme standard, the sacrifice of Christ for us. The apostle winds up the subject (to ver. 22) by showing the practical issue of obedience to this commandment in the confidence which it inspires towards God as the Judge of our hearts and the Hearer of our prayer.

The glory and dignity of regeneration and adoption, both here and hereafter.

Ver. 29. If ye know that he is righteous, ye perceive that every one also who doeth righteousness is begotten of him. This sentence is strictly transitional, and therefore of necessity may be interpreted with reference as well to what precedes as to what follows. Connected with the words immediately going before, the pronouns must refer to Christ, from whose righteous nature the regenerate receives his life, his righteous conduct declaring the fact of his new birth. Perhaps it is better to connect them with the whole of the preceding context. *If, after all that has been said, ye know that God is righteous with whom ye have fellowship, then mark the inference that ye who abide in Him, and are righteous also, must be begotten of Him. You cannot abide in
Him but as ye are born of Him.' What this new aspect of life in Christ means, the apostle proceeds to show. This verse looks forward to all that follows: it is in some sense the super- 
scription of the remainder of the Epistle, but especially of the chapter now approached. It may seem remarkable that St. John does not begin a new section with a special address to the 'little children,' but that address has been heard just before, and will be presently repeated. Again, it may appear strange that he should pass from God to Christ and from Christ to God with no mark of the change, using the same personal pronoun throughout. But we must remember that the apostle regards the Father and the Son as one; especially here so soon after the words, 'He that confesseth the Son hath the Father also.' There would indeed be no impropriety in referring both pronouns to Christ: He is the Righteous, and the regenerate may be said to be 'begotten of Him,' just as He Himself spoke of their being 'begotten of water and of the Spirit.' But the begetting, which is the word used by St. John alone for the infusion of a new life into the soul, is commonly referred to the Father or to God. Lastly, though the 'doing of righteousness' leads off the sentence, the emphasis is not on it, but on the 'begotten of Him.' We shall see in the next chapter that the new birth must be approved in righteous conduct; here the order is inverted, and practical righteousness infers and points to the new birth.

CHAP. III. 1. Behold! as an exclamation, and thus standing alone, occurs only here. It is the tranquil exclamation of a loving mind. What manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us: this expression also is peculiar. It is the kind of love that is meant, not its greatness, nor its unmerited goodness. The gift of love, nowhere else said to be given, should not therefore be limited in meaning to demonstration or proof or token: it is love itself which is made ours; and as this gift is hereafter bound up with the mission of the Son, being indeed jealously restrained to the atonement as its channel, we must needs think here of that, though unexpressed. 'Herein is love.'

That we should be called children of God; and such we are. 'God' indeed 'so loved the world, that whosoever believeth should not perish, but have everlasting life.' But that purpose of mercy to the world is actually reached in believers; and the design ('that' means 'in order that') in their case can hardly be distinguished from the result. Still, the design is uppermost; and the apostle would have chosen another form of expression if he had meant only the great love shown in our being called sons. Observe, however, that 'sons' is not used, but 'children.' St. Paul uses the former in the same connection, but St. John limits it to One. Note also the manifest distinction between the 'being called' and the 'being children': good authorities support the addition to the text of 'such we are,' the change of tense simply marking the emphasis of the distinction. Although in the Hebrew idiom 'to be called' and 'to be' mean one and the same thing, a careful examination will show that there is a slight difference. Even in the supreme instance, 'He shall be called the Son of God,' the Incarnate who 'is' eternally the Son is 'called' such with special reference to His relation to us. St. Paul expresses the distinction as adoption and renewal: the latter signifying the restoration of the Divine image, the former in accompanying privileges of liberty and inheritance. St. John himself illustrates his own meaning in the Gospel: 'To them gave He privilege to become the children of God, who were born not of blood but of God.' But He has done this without the other. The two unite in the Christian sonship, an estate which has a glorious expansion and development in time and in eternity: the development of regeneration being into the perfect image of the Saviour's holiness, that of adoption being into the full enjoyment of the eternal inheritance. To this the apostle now proceeds; but, before doing so, he adds a reflection in harangue with his meditative style. For God saith to the world: 'we knoweth us not, because it knew him not. So far as this is a parenthesis, it is easily explained. The apostle's mind is still occupied with the unanointed world of the last chapter; and he is about to return to it almost immediately: hence the echo of the past and the anticipation of the future. But it is not strictly a parenthesis. It is the writer's manner to think and write in contrasts: known of God, we are unknown to the world. 'For this cause' gives the more general reason: because our new birth is a mystery of Divine gift and grace, the world, not having this gift, understands it not. 'The natural man' knoweth not the things of the Spirit; and the secret of regeneration is beyond the search of the unregenerate faculty; life alone understandeth it. The second 'because' gives a profounder reason for the former reason itself. 'It knew Him not' points to the world's rejection of the Son manifested in His Son as one great act of wilful ignorance at the time of the incarnation, which is still continued. The world's ignorance of God has assumed a new character. 'Of righteous Father, the world hath not known.' Hence the sea of His final rejection. He added, 'But they have known that Thou didest send Me.' And again He said, 'If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you.' The ground of the world's negative inability to understand the children of God and positive hatred of them is its rejection of their Lord.

Ver. 2. Beloved, now are we children of God. This new address is appropriate to the sharers in common of the love of God. The affirmation that follows, repeating the solemn 'children of God,' is most emphatic: we possess this sacred privilege, though the world acknowledge it not; nor look we for anything higher; there can be no greater title in earth or heaven. But it must be remembered that the apostle has just spoken of the coming of our Lord, and of our abiding spiritually in Him till then, lest we be ashamed to see His countenance. As He had this in His mind in writing, we must not forget it in our exposition of what follows.

And it hath not yet been manifested what we shall be: we know that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him, since we shall see Him even as he is. There is no contrast between the now and the then: the thought naturally passes onward to see the end. Yet there is no aid from experience: 'it hath not been manifested;' that is, what kind of inheritance awaits us has never yet been seen, nor will it be seen until He appear. 'But'—though there is no 'but' in the terse sentence—we know by certain inference what we know not by actual fact, that,
le appears, our highest hope will be satisfied, our perfect conformity, in body and soul, to His image. This we know; for we promise of His prayer that we shall be as where He is, and be clothed with His glory. This we must be. What is our happiness, we must needs be perfectly like Him, our utmost blessedness. Although, then, St. John does not carefully distinguish between the Father and the Son, the Son who is in the Father, but the Son who is with Him, we must suppose the vision of Jesus was mean. God 'dwelleth in light unapproachable.' 'In that man hath seen, nor can bear the beatific vision of God's face to face,' the knowledge of the glory of God, face of Jesus Christ.' Of the eternal City: 'The glory of God did light it, and is the Lamp thereof.' Note that the Lamb does not rest upon the seeing, but that the 'one approach to the Lord' has to do with the sanctifying of the life; and will be found in the next verse. Lastly, the likeness here spoken of is left to arrive at, not identification. It is absorption. It is not the same word used concerning the 'sons of the resurrection; shall be 'equal to the angels;' it is not a word which is used concerning Christ's likeness to the Father with the Father; but the same word that of being the 'likeness of man.' And it profoundly touches its meaning here. He was 'like as we are,' but He is now 'more than the angels.' We shall be herafter 'like Him as Mediator and faith and hope must fill thought.'

And every one that hath this hope set his heart to purify himself, even as he is pure, a calling and the being, the privilege; the equality, the holiness, the inestimable, the children of God must in become like the Son in His purity; the gift will be consummated as a gift when it is revealed; but, it is consummated world without human co-operation. St. John calls in the energy of the world: its object is the appearing of it is set on Him; within the soul it is through the faith which worketh by love also. The meaning of the word of himself: will best be understood by it with 'doeth righteousness': the latter at least conformity with the requirements of higher, that is, not being made; it a necessity; not the one nor the renounces the idea that He became what He is pure, and that is the same as says: the Divine holiness is essentially in Him: holy, for I am holy.' That He is called holy, and not holy, is obvious, the two reasons. First, it from the idea of our purifying ourselves. It is more limited than holy, and refers to the nature as free from the stain other human nature has. It is never used but is strictly appropriate to God in-
however, he only declares that the design of the Saviour's manifestation was to take away not law, but transgression of law. The manifestation includes the whole process of Christ upon earth. In Him is no sin,' of unrighteousness as defined above, which would be prevented. His offering from being that of perfect obedience: this, however, is an undertone supplied by the Epistle to the Romans; St. John's sublime view of the atoning work does not linger upon any vindication of its perfection.

Vers. 5, 6, 7. And in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not; whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither knoweth him. My little children, let us not lead you astray: be that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. Here first enters the apostle's high testimony to the sinlessness of the estate of fellowship with Christ: a testimony which recurs again and again, and is finally made one of the three summary points of the whole Epistle. Interpretations of his testimony differ according to the doctrinal views of those who offer them; their classification is needless here, as each will appear in its place. Suffice it to say that St. John in every case explains his own meaning in the context; and we shall find that the leading methods of exposition have each its measure of truth when it is rightly expounded. In this passage the keynote is the danger of being led astray. St. John addresses his readers by the affectionate term which bespeaks the solemnity of the subject, and warns them against an error from which he regards as even in their case possible. The deceiver is no other than the worker of iniquity who thinks himself released from law, and would and might induce them to follow him. To say 'that we have no sin' is in chap. i. 8 self-deception; to say that we may know Christ and 'continue in sin' (using St. Paul's phrase) is, after being saved, to be deceived by another: in the former case the Christian life has not begun, in the latter it is endangered from without. The deception looks back to the negative assertion of ver. 6, and forward to the positive assertion of ver. 7, and might have occupied its own verse between them. With regard to the former, the argument is in that grand negative: 'in Him there is no sin,' the 'is' is the eternal present of that Son of God 'whose glory is that of the Only-begotten, full of grace and truth.' The deceiver might not challenge that: although both in ancient and in modern times a certain form of unrighteousness has been supposed to have been taken with our fallen nature which the Redeemer expelled from Himself; or it has been deemed necessary to maintain at least the possibility of sinning in the tempted Saviour. We may be sure that neither of these notions ever beclouded the apostle's apprehension of his Lord, the Son of God manifested in flesh. 'Whosoever abideth in this sinless Being himself sineth not; 'out of His fulness he receives grace upon grace,' in continuous and sufficient measure to keep him from sin: the abiding is the condition, and it is the explanation of this wonderful word. This is admitted by many, who speak of it as the ideal state of a man in Christ: an ideal it is, just as it is an ideal in Christ; but no more. The word is inappropriate, however true in itself, if it is regarded as distance from the realization. The converse follows, as usual with changed terms: 'he that sinneth,' as the characteristic of his life, and sinneth while professing to believe in Jesus, 'but not seen Him, never saw Him nor sees Him now, with that spiritual eye that 'beholds the glory of the Only-begotten, full of grace and truth.' It seems evident that St. John is thinking of his own Prologue; nor indeed has ever come to saying knowledge of Him whatever. So far from abiding in Him, he has never had any spiritual fellowship with Him: the order with St. John is to know, to see, and to abide in the Son of God, who is eternal life. With regard to the latter deception, St. John adopts the passive tone, though a negation is implied: declaring what has been the issue in his mind from the beginning of this section, that the righteousness of Christ is through regeneration imputed to the believer. What then was the delusion to which they were exposed? That, evidently, of supposing that a man might in a state of righteousness, accepted as 'righteousness,' without doing the works of righteousness. Here then the apostle identifies the works of righteousness and the character of righteousness; it is such a way as to make the deeds evident in the state. He whose practice, inward and outward, in thought and word and spirit, is conformed to the law, and only he, is in the sight of God righteous. There is some difficulty in the last words 'as He is righteous.' We cannot suppose that they are intended to obviate perversion of the Pauline doctrine of our 'being made the righteousness of God in Him,' as if the meaning were that we are as well as are accounted righteous in Jesus, that is, through seeing Him, knowing Him and abiding in Him. The simplest view is that Christ is the standard, as of our holiness as of our filial dignity, so also of our righteousness. 'Even as He is' refers to all the three, and is the most marked manner. How far we may conform to that standard is a question that must be answered with caution: 'as He is' does not refer to a participation in the Lord's perfect righteousness in the most absolute sense; but, on the other hand, the righteousness as a principle of universal obedience to the law is by the whole strain of the present argument supposed to be reflected in us. As our regenerate life is His life in us, so our purification is to be as He is pure, and our righteousness as He is righteous.

Vers. 8, 9. He that doeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. His passage is, taken altogether, unparalleled in Scripture: as deep in its mystery as it is clear in its expression. As the doing of righteousness was in chap. ii. 29 made the proof of a birth from God, so now the doing of sin, as the characteristic of the life, is made the evidence of an origination, though not a birth, from Satan. St. John here, as almost everywhere, reproduces the teaching of Christ in His own Gospel: 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do' (John viii. 44); where the same 'of' is used. The following 'begotten of God' renders it needless that he should mark the difference between the relation of the regenerate to God and the relation of sinners to the wicked one. Moreover, that difference is more than hinted at in the words ensuing. 'The devil sinneth from the beginning, which means that all sin had its origin in him, and that, as sin began with him, and came among
though his temptation, all who commit sin said to depend upon him and belong to slyly, adopted into it, as it were, though not sin or from below. Wherever there is sin n regards it as a work of the devil, using instruments: 'He sinneth always and everywhere.'

The relation to sin, and sin in its relation to the Son of God'—thus solemnly introduces the antagonist of Satan—was manifested that, is, to dissolve or do away or to neutralize the law of sinness, but to fulfill it; he came to destroy the law of sin, etc., etc. The account of both designs runs on in parallel lines: the first is accomplished in him that doeth sinness; the latter in him who ceases 'to do sin.' Nothing can be more express than the isolation of the personality of the devil; and can be plainer than that the destruction of its is strictly limited to the abolition of his over man through the redemption of the ad of his power in man through the Spirit regenerates the world of a view in every word he here writes. For it, he altogether abounds from allusion to stery of the origin of evil in Satan, as also union to the final issues in relation to him; and the words of which he must be dissolved—for Christ cannot have d in vain—and that is all that is said. In is dark subject is introduced solely to the fact that they who are in Christ are truly fact removed from the sphere and the dominion of sin.

3. Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no cause his seed to abide in him: and he who is begotten of God. This sw of the contrastivity between sin and the of regeneration somewhat changes the

The Divine Spirit comes in, here called l or principle of the Divine life in the soul. is not mentioned as yet in the Epistle; he second chapter He was the chrisma or chrisma upon believers; now, by analogy, he is mma or seed within them. The abiding word of life in Christ Jesus' within the perpetual freedom from 'the law of sin' (Rom. viii. 2). This central word eck to the former clause and forward to the He who has in him the indwelling Spirit, not sin; he abhors the remainder of it in se, he has renounced the works of Satan, sains his fellowship with Christ, and his over by righteousness. He may grieve it, and may fall into sin, as the apostle the irst, and changing in the Spirit, this will not r sinneth not, and abstinence from the act his mark and his privilege. When it is that 'he cannot sin,' we are to understand 'cannot' as referring to the moral impossibility of regenerate soul violating the principle of, instinct of his new life. The child of a sin; but the act of sinning, so far as he is irst and, as we are told in v. 16, life must be given to him again sins not unto death. The three usual s of relieving the difficulty of the passage certain measure of truth in them as applied the clauses of this verse. The first certainly be Christian ideal, that a regenerate soul 'sinneth not;' this, however, is the normal Christian state of one who lives in the Spirit, a realized ideal. The second allows us to say that the regenerate as regenerate sins not, though he may suffer sin: the possible Antinomian abuse of this truth does not invalidate it. The only sin St. John considers possible to a pure Christian is the act which he mourns over as soon as committed, which he carries to his Advocate with the Father, and which, being forgiven and washed away, is not followed by the withdrawal of the living Seed, who still preserves in him his better self. The third lays them upon the perfect tenses, 'He that has been and is in a confirmed regenerate state cannot sin.' Undoubtedly an abiding and consummated regeneration tends to make sin more and more impossible; St. John's perfect regeneration, however, is not such as improving on or perfecting itself, but as the true Divine life of the Son consummating the preliminary spiritual movements that lead to it.

Ver. 10. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither that loveth not his brother. Three things are observable here. First, this conclusion of the whole matter shows that the apostle's predominant aim has been to establish clearly the signs and tokens by which the world may be distinguished from the church. The 'manifest' is not to the eye of God alone, though to His supremely and infallibly, but to all who have eyes to see. The 'doing sin' and the 'doing righteousness' are the works of the 'children of God' by regeneration, and 'the children of the devil' by imitation. St. John knows no third class; and the fact that he speaks of the broad characters that stamp the two must throw its influence back upon the interpretation of all that precedes. Secondly, he makes it plain that his chief polemic is against the spurious Christians who strove to reconcile knowledge of Christ with relaxed morality. And, thirdly, he introduces at the close the idea of 'brotherly love,' not as strictly synonymous with righteousness, but yet as in a certain sense the pith and compendium of it. This point is now taken up in what follows.

The relation of regeneration to brotherly love.

Ver. 11. For this is the message which ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. There is deep emphasis on the word 'message,' which seems here, as in the first utterance concerning the God of light, to introduce a fundamental truth; and it will be observed that this message is in what follows dwelt upon in its contrasts and deductions just as that early message was: it is like a second and a new great announcement. The 'commandment' of chap. ii. 7 is as it were carried higher: it is the fundamental principle of religion 'from the beginning' delivered in successive proclamations. 'That we should love' must have its force: this has been the design of all.

Ver. 12. Not as Cain was of the evil one, and slew his brother. Wherefore slew he him? Because his works were evil, and his brother's righteous. The construction of the first clause should not be mended by any additional words. Cain and Abel were the first historical examples of the difference between regenerate love and unregenerate hate. But the opposite to love is alone here exhibited. The first reason that he
slew his brother is that he was 'of the evil one,' he was not 'of God.' The second is the former in another form: righteousness is the fruit and test of the new birth, Cain's evil deeds may be said to have been the reason of his murderous violence. Thirdly, in this condensed sentence is included the thought that the righteousness of the children of God evokes for ever the hatred of the unrighteous. The devil is 'the evil one,' because the evil works, following; and it must be noted that St. John here gives his authoritative interpretation of the Old Testament both as to the devil's relation to Cain and the reason of Cain's hatred.

Ver. 14. Cain becomes 'the world,' and Abel 'you,' the emphasis resting on these two words.

Ver. 14. There is no exhortation in this. Faithful to the thought of the great message, the apostle says: We know that we have passed out of death into life. Here the transition is regarded as perfect; and the evidence to ourselves is,—because we love the brethren. Not, 'We are now in the life because we love,' but, 'Because we love we are now in the life.' Love is not the cause, but the fruit and evidence of regeneration. He that loveth not abideth in death; the love is here general. But in the next verse it is made specific in two ways: first, it is whosoever hate his brother—not to love is to hate; and, secondly, he who hateth is a murderer—with allusion to Cain, and to one behind Cain who 'was a murderer from the beginning.' The remainder of the verse must be regarded as the appeal to the Christian or human instinct: Ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. The abiding is simply an echo of the former: it says nothing about his having had it and lost it, or as to his not retaining it hereafter; but is quite general, as when our Lord said, 'Ye have not My word abiding in you.' The argument is an apostrophe: No man who would destroy life can have life in himself. Mark, finally, that the last words declare eternal life 'to be the true Divine life of regeneration or fellowship with God, not life as mere continuance in being. There would be no meaning in 'hath not abiding life abiding in him.'

Ver. 15, 16, 17. Nothing in the whole Epistle is more impressive or more affecting than the point of juncture in the following words. Against the hate and the murder is set the supreme example of self-sacrificing love. But behind this there is the transition from the principle that the life of sonship must be a life of charity to the thought of that love which gave us the life in the gift of the Son. We may here resume the words, 'Behold, what manner of love!' Here we have the standard of the charity which we must set before us as our aim.

Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us. Not 'the love of God' or 'of the Father' as yet, though that will come; but love in its eternal essence and solitary manifestation, as the last expression and first source of all charity. Because He—there is only One to be thought of here—sacrificed His life for our advantage; this expression, occurring only in St. John, is chosen out of many that might have been used in order to combine His pattern in men with our imitation. Which thing is true in Him and in us. And we ought refers not merely to our duty of imitation, but to the obligation resulting from the fellowship of the love common to Him and to His people. The essence of love is the impartation of self to others; towards those who need it, it is self-sacrifice: in Christ there was the laying down or pledging of His soul as an expiry sacrifice or ransom price; but this last idea is not expressed here, because the apostle is lastening to our imitation, which must simply be the 'having laid down our individual lives' in will and intention for the brethren, the consequent act of self-devotion being left to the will of God.

Then follow two clauses, one of contrast, the other of exhortation. How abideth the love of God, thus shown in Christ, as a proof of regeneration in him who, having the world's existence, the life, shunneth his heart against his brother's soul—which he beholds sensibly appealing to him? The strength of the terms must not be overlooked. So far from giving himself, he will not give his mere earthly goods; and he closes his heart instead of opening it for the sacrifice of life. This betokens the utter absence of the ideal life. Let the exhortation be a warning to those who love not. Let us not love in word, neither in deed;—Christ loved in both, and so must we love. But more than that: the word may be a sound theory, uttered only in life language, without reality; therefore let us not love in tongue only, but in truth.

The privilege of confidence.

Vers. 19—22. Hereby: this looks back, using up the word 'truth,' according to the well-known habit of the writer in beginning new things. But he deepens the meaning of the word: as everywhere, the particle 'of' points to a source, the streams of which flow into the soul. True truth is the life of God viewed as a perfect revelation: 'the truth in us' and 'we are of the truth' are counterparts. Shall we know keep up the running thought of the chapter, the personal evidence of regeneration, but with reference to a future contingency referred to in the next verse. And shall assure our heart: shall persuade our doubting heart to give up its doubt, or our accusing heart to appeal to God against its own accusation. Before him, wherebysoever our heart condemn us. Before His face is not in His future judgment, but in His sight before whose awful presence the Christian always lives, the supreme Lord whose viceregent conscience is in the soul. The 'heart' as here used is the conscience of St. Paul and St. Peter; but with this difference, that they use a word which makes prominent the knowledge in the moral consciousness (which is conscience), while St. John emphasizes the feeling or the pang of that knowledge. Whereinsoever: a careful consideration (the detail of which cannot here be entered into) will lead to the conclusion that this is the right reading of the word translated 'For if' in our Version; and that there is no stop before it, but that 'we shall assure' runs on to the next verse. Three things must be remembered before we proceed: first, that the word is 'accuse' and not 'condemn,' for there is an appeal to a higher court; secondly, that the accusation, while more or less limited to defects in brotherly love, has a universal reference, as the last words of ver. 22 show; and, thirdly, that the whole tone of the passage is consolatory from beginning to end.
most affecting, and unique, expression of the
most
affection that God in the evangelical economy
the
Controller of conscience: it is He who
the
Controller of conscience: it is He who
ensures, and secures, the positive and higher
privilege which the children of God, approving
their regeneration by works, have in approaching
God. Their confident speech in prayer is,
however, omitted: the confidence is marked by the
result of it. Whatsoever we ask, we receive
him. In the whole Epistle prayer is mentioned
only twice. It is the privilege of sonship; and,
passing over everything intermediate (though 'if
we confess our sins' underlies all), St. John in
both cases leaps to the conclusion which our
Lord teaches: 'All things, believing, ye shall
receive.' We receive in asking, the present
asking is the present receiving: this is the
confidence, of which more hereafter. Because
we have his commandments in the spirit of
filial obedience, and do the things which are
pleasing in his sight in the spirit of filial
zeal. This is a unique combination: the latter
clause is also unique, though it is an echo of
the Lord's words, 'do always the things that
please Him.' In the light of these it is evident
that the heart's 'not condemning' may have as
its positive side such a testimony of the Father's
complacency as makes prayer very bold. Thus
we have a very high testimony to the possible
character of the communion of the soul with God.
But we must remember the 'working in us that
which is well-pleasing in His sight' (Heb.
xiii. 21). The next verse, beginning a new
section, will show that this high obedience includes
faith in the Lord Jesus, and therefore is not itself
the meritorious ground of our acceptance as
petitioners. The same is taught by the mystical
union that follows, Christ abiding in us, and we
in Him: 'Apart from Me ye can do nothing.'
But, after all, St. John teaches that the Heart of
prayer has a special complacency in His children's
reverent obedience and endeavour to please Him.
Wrought in Christ, our works are rewarded by
His approval: we give our Lord what He is pleased
to seek, and He gives us what we ask.

CHAPTER III. 23-V. 17

Fellowship in Faith.

3 'And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another.'

4 'As he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments doth dwell in him, and he in him: and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.'

3 A BRIEFLY. IV. 1. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not 1 abideth 2 gave us 3 prove
that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this
is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should
come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because the greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world; therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. 10 No man hath seen God at any time. 11 If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. 12 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. 13 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. 14 God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. 15 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. 16 We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? 17 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also. 18 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of God.
when "we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and he that cometheth the world, "even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

6 "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us. And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we ask according to his will. If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall pray for him, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. "There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

32 do not in the water only, but in the water and in the blood 36 omit from in heaven to in earth 38 omit within him 39 because he hath not believed in the witness that God hath borne concerning 38 And the witness is this: he that believeth on the name of the Son of God is not unto you that boldness toward him have asked God not of that do I say that he should make request
in the second chapter. The remainder of chap. iv. is occupied with the relation between the love of God manifested in the atonement and its perfect reflection in those who received the evangelical witness of that love: the confession of the Son of God being still the leading principle. Down to chap. v. 5 we have the victory of faith in Jesus as the only source of that love to God in the strength of which we can love our brethren and overcome the world: these two being strictly interwoven. From ver. 6 to ver. 13, the apostle gives his full and final teaching as to the Spirit's witness to the manifested Christ, and the nature of that witness. The remainder, from ver. 14 to ver. 17, is occupied with the confidence in prayer inspired by this faith.

**Transition.**

Ver. 23. **And this is his commandment:** the one commandment which, as it contains all others, is especially the unity of faith and love. In this Epistle the sum of faith is in the name of Jesus, and the sum of duty is love. It is the Father's will that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ: the name stands here for the whole person and work of Christ, not without reference to the confession that follows; and the peculiarity of the phrase here, 'believe the name' with the dative, connotes strongly the ethical feeling of trust. And love one another even as he, Christ, gave us commandment. One of the Father's commandments is to believe on the name of Jesus and love one another. The single loving command is the basis of thisTEE, and the second the source of its growth. This foundation of love must be remembered throughout the Epistle.

Ver. 24. **Be that keepeth his commandments—**the commandments are plural again, and the obedience is individual—abideth in him, and he in him. The mutual indwelling is here and in chap. iv. 12 introduced: in the earlier portion it was 'we in him' chiefly, as it will be again at the close. But in these two passages—one individual and the other collective, one said of Christ and the other of God—in the heart of the Epistle are the perfect expression of its keynot. And hereby we know that he abideth in us by the Spirit which he hath given us; 'hereby' refers to the obedience; according to the Lord's own word, who promised, John xiv. 20-24, to manifest Himself to him, and dwell with him, who has His commandments and keepeth them. Having that passage in mind, the apostle singles out the indwelling of Christ and makes that supreme. But there is higher testimony than the works, that of the Holy Ghost whose direct assurance is added. He who 'gave' the commandment 'gave' the Spirit of obedience, whose indwelling presence is the indwelling of Christ and the perfect assurance of it.

**Episode on the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error; the test to be applied; and the sure application of it.**

**Chap. iv. 1. Beloved** introduces an affectionate interlude, in which the apostle passes from the personal assurance of fellowship with God given by the Holy Ghost, to the assurance given by the same Spirit concerning the doctrine on the belief of which that assurance is based. Believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits whether they be of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. The 'spirits' and the 'false prophets' are one. They are 'antichrists' in chap. ii.; but the predominant reference to the Holy Ghost in this section gives occasion for the use of these two terms 'spirits' as professing to be His organs, and 'false prophets' as professing to be moved by Him. As teachers they are not to be believed until tested: hence we are not to speak here of the gift of 'discerning spirits' (1 Cor. xii. 10), but of the universal duty incumbent on every Christian, of trying the doctrine brought concerning the Son of God. Many men professing to be inspired had gone out—not as in chap. ii., from the church—from the invisible realm, and from the one spirit of the lie into the world: not from the church into the world, but from the word into the church.

Vers. 2, 3. **Hereby ye know the Spirits of God;** that is, the voice of the one Holy Ghost in the various 'spirits,' proclaiming a confession. The personal faith must have its outward avowal; every teacher or 'spirit' must teach on the basis of a confession of Jesus. In chap. ii. the test of antichrist was the refusal to believe that 'Jesus was the Christ,' or 'the Father and the Son': the divinity and Messiahship of our Lord. Here the true faith is that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh: not into the world simply, not simply into the flesh, which might connote its fallen conditions, but 'in flesh,' that is, in a true humanity He appeared who existed before as the Son of God, and so 'came' that it may be said as of an abiding presence. He is come. This foundation of the antithesis, every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God, is most forcible in its simplicity: the name of Jesus is enough, for the confession of a man as come from God means nothing. With the next words, this is that of antichrist, that 'matter' or that 'spirit' of antichrist refers back to chap. ii.; though we have heard indicates a well-known doctrine. A remarkable reading of the Vulgate, 'qui annullat' or 'dissolveth Jesus,' points to the severance of Jesus from the Christ, a Gnostic notion, or the separation of Jesus into two persons, a Nestorian error; but this reading is not confirmed. It can hardly be denied, however, that this confession alluded to the Docetic heresy which denied the reality of the Lord's human nature; though that was only a temporary form of opposition to an eternal truth, the sum and standard of all truth.

Vers. 4, 5, 6. The apostle makes some strong assertions which have for their object to link a sound confession with a true religion. First, with reference to his Christian hearers, he connects their personal victory over the world, through the strength of Him who is greater than he that is in the world,—that is, its prince, the spirit that sent the antichrists,—with their sound faith. The indwelling God of chapter iii. 24 had given them the victory over all seducers, though they needed still to be warned. Taking up the term 'world,' he goes on to show that the same antiChristian error which had come into the world is reality of the world: doctrines from below which take their fashion from the earthly kingdom of darkness, breathe the spirit of falscly
reasoning, and taught by men whom the world heareth, because it loves its own. The unregenerate have no sympathy with the truth; they only love the things of God who can know Him, and understand the things concerning Him. But he that is of God heareth us; the apostles and teachers of the faith are chiefly meant; but the same is true of all who witness a good confession. By this we know, or distinguish, the Spirit of truth, and the spirit of error, or the deceiving spirit. At the outset St. John spoke of the test of the confession of Jesus; now at the close the test is the religious and irreligious character of the teaching. He conjoins himself with his readers. Finally, we here have the answer to every argument against the universality of the testing privilege and duty: every Christian can discern between the true and the false confession of the incarnate Son; and every Christian has the internal qualification of the indwelling Spirit that separates from the world.

The love which this Faith embraces and knows: in its origin; its supreme manifestation; its perfect reflection in us; the whole section being begun, continued, and ended in this.

Vers. 7, 8. Two sentences which exhibit the 'commandment,' in a stronger light than hitherto shed upon it. The former is positive. Love is of God; love absolutely and in itself, in its own nature and apart from any object, is from the very being of God. This 'out of' is said of nothing but love and regeneration, here the loving in the present is evidence of a birth in the past that still continues; and the present knowledge of God is the same love discerning and delighting in its source. The latter is negative, and, as usual, strengthens the thought. All love in man, all love everywhere, is from God; but, more than that, God is love: a word that had never before been spoken since revelation began. It closes and consummates the Biblical testimony concerning God as knowable to man: it must be remembered that it is connected with the statement 'that loveth not knoweth not'—literally, 'never has come to the knowledge of'—God. Observe that 'God' and 'love' are these words, and it was said 'light is God.' God is light in His revealing and diffusive holiness; God is love in His diffusive self-impartation: both, however, in His relation to His creatures. His eternal essence is unchangeable, both behind both. Love is the bond of His perfections as revealed to the created universe. It is also the bond of the intercommunication of the Three Persons in the adorable Trinity; and in this sense His absolute nature; but this goes beyond our exposition here.

Vers. 9, 10, 11. God is love; and in this was the love of God manifested in us: it had its one supreme expression 'in our case,' in us as its sphere. This explains what follows, in the perfect. That God hath sent as the permanent token of His love His only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. Here only is the 'Only-begotten' in the Epistle. He is sent as the eternal Son, the mystery of whose filial relation is expressed by this word: introduced here partly to indicate the greatness of the love by the measure of the gift, partly to connect our verse with the latter. In the Gospel the Only begotten is given as a proof of love to the world; but the life is given to those only who believe. Here the emphasis is on 'in us;' but the life must here include, on account of the next verse, deliverance from condemnation as well as the eternal life itself; hence not 'in Him,' but 'through Him.' The apostle then goes back from the manifestation to the love itself. Herein is love; its origin is not in or through the mission, but in God Himself. Our response is in his thought throughout; but it is only as response: 'love is OF GOD.' Not that we love God, but that he loved us, and sent—going back again to the past—His Son as the propitiation for our sins; thus impressively does St. John show what he meant by 'not that we loved,' He provided and sent what not our love but our sins required. Not 'to be' a propitiation; but 'He sent His Son,' whose mission dating from heaven was atonement. Beloved—always 'beloved' in this connection—since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another: not 'so to love,' as if the example prescribed the kind of love; but we are bound by the nature of the love common to Him and to us: it has been manifested 'in us' to that end.

Vers. 12. This verse contains three clauses, which are severally dilated on, though in a rather different order, in the seven verses which follow: the invisibility of God as the object of love: His indwelling nevertheless; and the perfect operation of His love in our hearts as the representative of His invisible self.

Vers. 13-16. Remembering that this whole section has to do with faith in Jesus as the root of brotherly love, we need not be surprised that the apostle goes back to the introductory words of it. Those words, however, are amplified, as usual; the gift of the Spirit is the seal and assurance that we abide in Him and abide in us: our being in Him and His being in us are, so to speak, convertible terms: the Holy Ghost being the common term, common to Him and us. God the invisible is seen and known only by the Spirit's indwelling. But He abides in us as the seal of a great truth confessed. Hence the apostle, before proceeding, pays his homage again to that truth, His own and his fellow-apostle's: And we beheld—in His Son the Invisible whom no man hath beheld at any time,—bear witness that the Father hath sent the Son, the Saviour of the world: the apostolic beholding is followed by their special witness; and this, again, by the confession of the whole Church. Here St. John returns back to the Father and the Son of the earlier chapters, and adds what occurs only here as a confession of faith that Jesus is the Saviour of the world; as in chap. ii. 3, so here it is remarkable as introduced in the midst of a special reference to the benefit of believers.

Whosoever has confessed that Jesus is the Son of God—this shows that the leading theme of ver. 2 is still in the mind of the apostle;—God abideth in him, and he in God: the indwelling is individual as well as mutual, and answers to the 'no man hath seen' and every man who keepeth His commandments abideth in Him and He in him' (chap. iii. 24); the commandments were written in Jesus or confession of Him and love; the former is in this verse connected with the abiding, in the next verse the latter. But, instead of proceeding immediately to the love of God or obedience of St. John once more—as if never weary of it—pays his tribute to the love of redemption.
And we have known and believed: this of all believers, answering to 'And we have beheld and bear witness' of the apostles. At the basis of the apostolical and ecclesiastical believing and bearing testimony: at the basis of the Church's confession—for the apostle joins the Church in confessing what he had witnessed to the Church—are knowing and believing, which in its proper order is, according to John vi. 69, believing and knowing: abiding faith confirmed in abiding experience. Once more God is love: the sublimity of this repetition is inexpressible; and the clause that follows is answerable. In the former case, believers received 'out of' His fulness love; now the believer that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him. The triple repetition of 'abideth' speaks for itself: the love which God hath in us must have its full meaning; and the sentence as it stands carries the privilege of fellowship with God to its highest point; there is nothing beyond it, scarcely anything equal to it, in all revelation. It leads at once to the word permission.

Vers. 17–19. Here enters the second point of ver. 12: 'His love is perfected in us.' The 'HIs' is omitted; herein is love made perfect with us, that is, in all that concerns our estate. Love is not an absolute and without object specified. 'Herein,' in our living and moving and having our being permanently in love, and in God, is our love 'made perfect': before we had 'perfect,' now 'made perfect,' afterwards 'perfect.' This is the design of the indwelling Spirit, in order that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: the same 'in order that' and the same 'confidence' as in chap. ii. 29, but 'His appearing' is now 'the day of judgment.' Because as he is, even so are we in this world: this also goes back to chap. ii. 29, and its sequel: from the last day the apostle returns to our life in this world, not without emphasis on the wonder that we should be made through faith in Him working by love pure 'as He is,' and righteous 'as He is,' even in the midst of this present evil world. The next words are doubly linked with the preceding: first, they are the negative perfection of which being like Christ is the positive; and secondly, they refer to the great essential for confidence in the final day.

There is no fear in love: this is true of the nature of love generally. But—admitting that 'the heart may accuse,' even lovers of God—perfect love casteth out fear. This is the only instance of 'perfect love,' without any qualification or abatement. And the apostle's condensed argument shows that he is speaking of its present triumph in the economy of grace. Because fear hath punishment: that pain of which it is said that 'these shall go away into everlasting punishment:' is already inherent in fear; and he that feareth hath not been made perfect in love: then he may 'in this world' be 'as He is' in holiness, and therefore without the least lingering vestige of fear to meet Him. Observe the change of phrase: as He is perfected in love. The Holy Ghost, 'working by love,' brings the believer—we have known and believed, chap. iv. 16—to that permanent abode in heaven. The apostle's announcement is believing and bearing from which fear is excluded because sin, the cause of fear, is excluded. Going back to 'in this world,' and remembering that 'boldness in the day of judgment' means confidence in the expectation of His appearing (chap. ii. 29), and further that it is not said of the heavenly city, 'there shall be no more sin,' as if only there sin is absent, we are bound to understand St. John's last testimony on this subject—for he uses the word no more—in its highest meaning.

Ver. 19. We love because he first loved us. Looking back, this sublimely shows the possibility that our love—here once more absolute or without object, our 'perfect love'—may become supreme: the argument of 'because' is almost equal to 'even as,' which is, however, not said. But the words look forward to the next verse, and that again looks back to the first of the three points in ver. 12, which has been in suspense during the interim.

Ver. 20. If a man say, I love God, and hate his brother, he is a liar. All the words here point, as we have seen before, to an utterly spurious Christianity, which knows nothing of the revelation of the unseen God in His Son: the first phrase and the last are used only of the theurgical pillar. The 'hating' of chap. ii. 9 became 'not loving' in chap. iii. 10; they are united as synonymous in this passage alone.

For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen. There are two condensed arguments here. First, recalling ver. 10, that the invisible God perfects His love in us by the Spirit through our brotherly love, it is simply a strong repetition: the invisible Fountain of love abides in us, and has its perfect operation in our love to its visible objects, embracing all our fellow-regenerate (chap. v. 1). But we have always noted that St. John's repetitions include something more, and here something is added which the former passage did not contain; that is, the inverted argument from the easier demonstration of love to objects before our eyes. Some copies read, 'How can he love whom he hath not seen.' The apostle's repeated argument shows that he is speaking of its present triumph in the economy of grace. Because fear hath punishment: that pain of which it is said that 'these shall go away into everlasting punishment;' is already inherent in fear; and he that feareth hath not been made perfect in love: then he may 'in this world' be 'as He is' in holiness, and therefore without the least lingering vestige of fear to meet Him. Observe the change of phrase: as He is perfected in love. The Holy Ghost, 'working by love,' brings the believer—we have known and believed, chap. iv. 16—to that permanent abode in heaven. The apostle's announcement is believing and bearing from which fear is excluded because sin, the cause of fear, is excluded. Going back to 'in this world,' and remembering that 'boldness in the day of judgment' means confidence in the expectation of His appearing (chap. ii. 29), and further that it is not said of the heavenly city, 'there shall be no more sin,' as if only there sin is absent, we are bound to understand St. John's last testimony on this subject—for he uses the word no more—in its highest meaning.

The victory of Faith in Jesus as the victorious of Love.

Ver. 21. And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God loveth his brother also. The three points of chap. iii. 12 having been discussed, a new subject begins. That is the precept of love given by 'Him, that is, Christ, whose name needs not to be mentioned, as the second part of the thought of chap. iii. 23: 'And thy neighbour as thyself' is the primitive commandment; but the next verse answers the question, 'Who is my neighbour?' as our Lord does, by inverting the question.

Chap. v. 1. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God, and whosoever loveth him that begat loveth him also that is
begotten of him. Faith in Jesus as the Christ has here the only meaning that St. John ever gives it: that divinely wrought trust in the work as well as the person of Jesus which the Spirit produces, though He does not say, and which the Spirit seals, which He does say (ch. iii. 35). The exact link between faith and regeneration is untouched. In both members of the sentence our brother is meant. The argument is, like that of chap. iv. 20, derived from the general nature of the case; but it is carried to the highest region, and here has its emphasis. It may be true generally, but it must be true here.

Ver. 2. This is the converse of chap. iv. 20, and as such stands here alone: we know that we love God by the token that we love the brethren; but we also know that we love God’s children by the very fact of our loving Him. The two cannot be separated. Still, remembering that the commandment is now uppermost, we must closely unite when we love God and do his commandments. The last words introduce the customary enlargement upon ver. 1, which is otherwise only repeated. We love all that are begotten of Him because we love Him; the consciousness of loving God is guarantee that we have in us all that brotherly love means; especially as that love feels in itself the energy of all obedience.

Ver. 3. For, the love of God is this—it is in us for this end—that we should keep his commandments. Here, as constantly, some truths are suppressed. The apostle had seemed to assert that the love of brethren seen was easier than the love of God unseen. But there are some who might and who did pervert that principle: having a speculative, transcendent, emotional love of God, they might and they did undervalue the security, the depth, the universality of the self-renouncing devotion to others that brotherly love as the commandment of Christ includes. But he whose love of God is a love of universal obedience, knows that such brotherly love, as the ‘fulfilment of the law,’ is in itself difficult; it is indeed the ‘hard part of the love of God. And his commandments are not grievous is the reply to every suggestion of the falling heart: this is an assurance of the grace, standing here alone, of deep importance and boundless application. The laws of God are reasonable, and in harmony with the purest ethical principles of reason, even the severest of them. But apart from what follows, they are intolerable.

Ver. 4, 5. For whosoever is begotten of God—a new form of words, the ‘we’ of the previous verse with ‘that which is born of the Spirit’ (John iii. 6)—overcometh the world: is victorious over the kingdom of evil generally, and particularly that sphere of the natural man and of self in the atmosphere of which the commandment of brotherly love weighs heavily. And this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith. Not love here, for faith is the leading thought: faith is the victory, its strength for that habitual overcoming of every obstacle to obedience which was in it an original germ, and of the final attainment of which it is the pledge. The past and the present and the future are really here; but the stress is on the present. How it conquers, not in an ideal but a present and perfect victory, then follows in a sentence which takes a negative form but includes the positive reason. And who is he that overcometh the world, but—for no other can,
Christians knew well the relation of John's baptism to the baptism of Jesus (Acts xix.). 'Not in the water only, but in the water and in the blood.' This 'blood' now becomes 'in,' to mark more impressively the essential connexion between the Messiahship of Jesus and that which the water and the blood signified.

Now let us turn to the other interpretation. We mark that the two elements are separated, and each has the article: noting not merely the sacredness of the well-known symbols, but their distinction and relations. No intelligent reader could fail to think of what the writer had certainly had in his thoughts, the mysterious and miraculous effusion of blood and water when the Saviour's side was pierced. That signified, not the fact of the real humanity or real death of the Redeemer, but that the fountain was now opened for the removal of guilt by the blood, and of death by the Spirit, of the crucified; baptism and the Lord's Supper being the abiding emblems and pledges of these gifts. But St. John leaves these reflections to his readers to infer to us. He simply declares that Jesus came 'not by water only,' but 'in the water and in the blood:' 'not only was there one stream of life flowing from His death for us, but life under two essential aspects. Eternal life is the removal of the death of condemnation; that is symbolized by the 'blood;' for it is the blood of Christ that cleanseth from all sin. Eternal life is also the 'well of water springing up within the soul,' the everlasting life; of which the Saviour spoke to the Samaritan woman (John iv.): in other words, it is the life of Christ Himself imparted, and of that the water is the symbol. It is usual to say that the 'water' symbolizes the washing from sin, and the 'blood' the sprinkling from guilt. But since the death of Christ the only washing both from sin and from guilt is by blood. The water signifieth here the very well-spring of eternal life itself in Christ opened up within the soul.

The advocates of the other interpretation thus expound 'not by water only.' John the Baptist bore witness to himself as baptizing 'only with water,' and to Christ as 'the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.' The Redeemer was not only authenticated in His baptism as the Son of God, the revealer of the Father and His will, but as the Lamb of God who should die for mankind: not the one without the other. He came at the Jordan that He might go on to Calvary. The apostle silently protests against those in his own day who united the Christ to Jesus in His baptism, but separated them at the cross; and He openly protests against all who limit our own baptism into Christ to mere discipleship of obedience, and forget that He is our master only because as an atonement 'He died and revived that He might be Lord of the dead and the living.'

'And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth.' Hence the water and the blood have not been termed witnesses: they were facts themselves witnessed by men. But the Supreme Witness of Jesus is the Holy Ghost, to whom the Saviour Himself bore witness as 'the Spirit of the truth.' St. John singles out His testimony as the chief and abiding one, with express reference to the Lord's words: 'not we, the Baptist, the apostles, but the Spirit.' And the tense is changed: the Son of God 'came' once in the great ministry of which water and blood were the symbols; but in the Gospel, and in the preached word, and in the sacraments, the Holy Ghost gives abiding testimony.

Ver. 7. 'For there are three who bear witness; in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.' And there are three that bear witnesses on earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and there are three that agree in one. The bracketed words, if genuine, would, in their present position, be unconnected with the context, making a sudden ascent to the testimony borne by the Three Persons of the Trinity in heaven or from heaven to the Incarnate Son: by the Father generally and at the great crisis of the history of the Redeemer, by the Son to Himself in His exalted estate, and by the Holy Spirit in the administration of redemption. These heavenly Witnesses are but one; and to Them 'the testimony of God' in ver. 9 refers. Then the three witnesses on earth must be supposed to be, in relation to that other testimony, the witness of men. The perfected Gospel of the ascended Lord under the influence of the Spirit, to the baptism of our Lord and our baptism, to the finished atonement and the sacramental commemoration of it. This introduces a very violent approximation to the spiritual strain. Without these words the sense runs smoothly on. The Spirit now takes precedence as being still the one and only witness, who bears the testimony throughout revelation and to the end of the Christian Church. But He bears His witness to Christ now and continuously through the records which gather round His baptism 'in water' and His baptism 'in blood;' and through the effects of the faith in His name as the dispenser of pardon and renewal. 'And these three agree in one;' they had been made three, and two of them personified as witnesses, because of the supreme importance of the anointing of the human nature of Christ by the Holy Ghost and of the pouring out of His blood. If there is any allusion to the 'two or three witnesses' by which truth must be established, that allusion is very faint. 'The apostle hastens to say that the threefold witness converges to one truth, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, faith in whom overcomes the world.'

Ver. 9. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God, that he hath borne witness concerning His Son. The 'three witnesses' suggested the perfection of merely human testimony. The apostle supposes as a general truth that we receive the testimony of credible witnesses. But he does not set the Divine witness over against the human: the human and the Divine concur, the divine being 'greater' as accompanying and rendering infallible the human witness to the Saviour's Messiahship and salvation. For, the entire series of attestations borne is the Old Testament and in the New by evangelists and apostles is no other than one grand attestation of God Himself, who witnesses one thing only, that all His witness by man's agency is concerning His Son. But the Divine testimony is given through the Spirit: 'we are witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost.' Concerning His Son 'is sublime and pervasive. What the witness is we find afterwards: here it is declared that all the objective testimony of revela-
tion has but one object, the establishment of the claim of the Son of God to human faith.

Ver. 10. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself. The testimony has become subjective: the 'three agree in one within the believer's consciousness.' He has—for what he most anticipates was not eternal life within him: the gift of the Spirit of life received by Christ for us at His baptism, the forgiveness of sin or release from the condemnation of death through His blood, and the Holy Ghost effecting and assuring both. Faith is followed by full assurance; but the assurance is here the possession of life itself.

But he that believeth not God hath made him a liar: because he hath not believed the witness that God hath borne concerning His Son. He is not only without the internal testimony, but he has also rejected the external testimony, which has been given to one who hears the Gospel record so abundantly that he is without excuse. Once before St. John had spoken of making God a liar: he who denies that he has sinned is a liar himself, and contradicts the express testimonies of God. Similarly, he who believes not the witness given by God concerning His Son rejects the utmost possible evidence that God, knowing man's necessity, could give him. It is supposed that he has the evidence before him, and that in the form of spoken or written evidence; it is further supposed that he deliberately rejects the testimony, knowing it to be Divine. There is nothing stronger, scarcely anything so strong, in all the Scriptures, concerning the moral willfulness of unbelief. It is not said that he who refuses to accept the testimony to the divinity and incarnation of the Son loses the benefit; nor simply that he blinds his own mind; but that he hears the voice of God and makes Him a liar. Nor are the last words, as has been thought by some, mere vehement repetition. God is made a liar by the man who rejects the eternal life which has been once for all given. The witness rejected is not this or that aspect of revelation, but the whole strain of proof brought by the Christian revelation that both light and life are come into the world as the heritage of every man who does not wilfully reject it.

Ver. 11, 12. And the witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. These closing words concerning that testimony of which the beginning of the Epistle spoke, go beyond anything yet said. They declare that the witness of the apostles concerning 'the eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us' is the witness of God Himself, and moreover that it is the one supreme testimony, the sum and substance of all testimonies. Here we have the close of the whole section; and this last saying must throw its light back upon all. The witness of the water and the blood was simply this, that One had come who was the gift of eternal life to man: His baptism with the Spirit was His reception of the Spirit of life for us; His baptism of blood was our deliverance from death. The witness of the blood and water which flowed from His side was simply the testimony of heaven that deliverance from death and the impartation of new life were the one gift of His atoning passion: the one mingled stream for ever flowing from His Person lifted up. He who rejects this, resists the drawing of the Son of man, and makes the Lord who gave the seals a liar. The next words really end the Epistle by an emphatic apoplectic saying that repeats the words concerning the subjective witness, the presence and absence of which is the final test of truth for all profession of Christianity. St. John knows no 'believing in God' which is not 'trusting in the witness;' and he knows of no trusting in the witness which is not followed by 'the witness in himself;' and the internal witness is not to have the knowledge of forgiveness, or the assurance of sonship, as in St. Paul, but these as contained in the possession of 'the life;' and, finally, the life is with him nothing less than the Son Himself possessed. The Son of God hath life in Himself eternally; He is the source of redeemed life; and He is the author or Prince of that life in every believer. The closing testimony of the Bible—for there is nothing after these words—is that he that hath the Son hath the life: the life which is fellowship with God, which sin forfeited, is given back to him in union with Jesus. It can by no other means be restored than by union with the Divine life which has been given to man 'bodily' in Christ: the disbeliever or unbeliever, who rejects the witness of God concerning His Son, is in this testimony said to abide in death, or rather to be without the life. He that hath not the Son hath not the life. There are many terrors threatened elsewhere against the desier of God and the rejecter of Christ; but here in the final witness, the sad issue of all is stated in its awful negation, 'the life he has not.'

Ver. 13. St. John returns now to his one great design, the fulfilling of the joy of those who believe. These things have I written to you—the whole Epistle, that is,—that ye may know that ye have eternal life, unto you that believe in the name of the Son of God. It was not his purpose to establish their assurance, and on that to superinduce a challenge to faith, or to a higher faith, as the reading of our present translation might suggest: Assurance is the final point, and the blessedness that assurance brings. This ye may know: this is one of the watchwords of the Epistle; and it is here finally introduced in such a way as to show that, while it is the gift of God's Spirit, it is the bounden duty and privilege of every Christian to live in the enjoyment of it.

The confidence in prayer which this faith in Jesus inspires; with its one exception.

Ver. 14, 15. A second time the apostle dwells on the boldness of prayer: this closed the second part as the confidence of obedient love; it closes here the third part as the confidence in the Son of God, which was there introduced as the transition to the third part, and is now resumed.

And this is the boldness, the more specific characterization of the confidence before referred to, that we have toward him, toward God, whose children we are in virtue of the eternal life, the life of regeneration. Throughout the New Testament, confidence towards the Father in prayer is represented as the first privilege of the adoption: we have received 'the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father!' (Rom. viii. 15). St. Paul says of that Spirit that He 'helpest our infirmity; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts
knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.' This, and our Lord's word, 'All things are possible to him that believeth, ye shall receive' (Matt. xxi. 22), furnish the best commentary on our passage. As Jesus, the Intercessor in heaven, presents with confidence for the prayers which the Spirit, the Intercessor in the heart corresponding with Him, teaches us according to the will of God, we may be assured that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us; He in fact heareth the voice of His own Spirit within us, and we do not really pray when we ask not according to His mind. This is the sublime perfection of the only prayer which St. John knows; and it is in harmony with the tenor of the whole Epistle, always and in everything making real the highest ideal.

And, if we know that He heareth us whatsoever we ask, all forbidden and doubtful petitions being left out of consideration, as being suppressed before they are uttered, we know—for the hearing means hearing with acceptance—that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. These last words are very emphatic. We have in the very asking; there is a blessed sense in which the highest prayer is the very experience of the thing prayed for; such asking for forgiveness and peace and holiness is the enjoyment of holiness and peace and pardon. Moreover, 'we have,' and not, as before, 'we receive;' for the Christian life is no other than the constant inheritance of multiplied prayers 'that we have asked' from the beginning, that have been the sum of past supplications. Observe here, without being reminded by the apostle, that the fellowship with the Father and the Son, the main subject of the Epistle, reaches here its highest consummation, so far as the present life and its privileges are concerned.

Vers. 16, 17. The transition from prayer in general to intercessory prayer seems to be abrupt; but it must be remembered that brotherly love is made identical with Christian life, and its offices with doing the will of God. Passing by innumerable other objects of intercession on behalf of a fellow-Christian, the apostle at once rises to its highest function, prayer for his sinning soul. Two phrases just used are still in his thoughts: 'whatever we ask' and 'eternal life,' which the regenerate has in himself, and may obtain by prayer for others.

If any man see his brother sin a sin not unto death: already the exception is stated, the solemnity of which requires enlargement upon it afterwards. The sin not unto death is supposed to be seen in a brother, as an act and a state in which he is continuing. He shall ask: this is the imperative future, and implies more than is expressed, the admonition and penitence of the offender and the joining him in prayer; these are omitted because the great point is here, as with St. James, the power of one in close fellowship with God, who is supposed in this wonderful sentence to be the very administrator of the Divine will. And shall give—the same he in union with God shall give—Him life: according to the high doctrine of the Epistle, he who sins at all is by the sin himself what the apostle calls 'dead,' as it were, suspended. The words that follow, for them that sin not unto death, do not simply repeat and generalize the former words, but at the same time qualify the 'life' given and prepare for it. The 'him' is changed into 'thee,' and the commonness of the fault and the univer- sals intercession.

There is a sin unto death; which is suspended life, but the actual rejection of God in whom the life is, and whose has been the supreme sin aimed at through Epistle. It is not asserted that the Chris- tian knows that sin to be committed; nor was it that he knows the brother for whom he had sinned not unto death: He shall give if he have not so sinned. The fellowship in prayer does not imply fellowship with omnipotence. The sin unto death is death, as the opposite of 'eternal life,' death and eternal are never combined. A death is mentioned once in this Epistle; no apostle referring, as St. James does in his close of his Epistle, to bodily sickness and death of physical health. As there was in our Saviour an unpardonable blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which was unto death be rejected the Spirit's appeal on behalf of and in the Epistle to the Hebrews the rejection of the stoning which cuts of sarilly, all hope, so in this Epistle the same referred to in the light of its final issue, who harden themselves against the Spirit's call the Son are sinning unto death, for them is unavailing, because they have their hearts against the only power that is in them.

Not of that do I say that he shall request. With deep tenderness the apostle excludes this object of intercession, two in his expression pointing to his deep feelings changes the 'asking' into 'requesting,' the awful urgency of the case might be stronger prayer, which would be unavailing, as he simply says, 'Concerning that I do not know what I say concerning intercession.' Now the difference of sins seems to require explanation, especially after what the apostle said in chap. iii. 4, 'Sin is transgression, and Sion was manifested to take away sin.' He is faithful and just, to cleanse us from unrighteousness.' Hence St. John quotes, inverting the phrase, and says here, 'righteousness is sin, substituting the word 'unrighteousness' for 'lawlessness,' the slightest deviation from law and the perfect principles of right is sin, whether believer or in the unbeliever; and whereas possessor of eternal life must never think of it, but must abhor it as contrary to the I in him. Nevertheless there may be to death that must be cleansed away, and a sin not unto death. In the old law was 'sin unto death,' transgression was punished with loss of life (Num. xviii. 25), the Rabbis made the very distinction which John here makes. The apostle, however, into it the eternal sphere; and leaves the with a consolatory word which is itself ver- He does not say that 'all unrighteousness but that is sin not unto death,' which that such sin only as is forgiven and away is not unto death.
CHAPTER V. 18–21.

Conclusion.

18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and the wicked one toucheth him not. And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

19 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

20 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

1 begotten
2 The evil one
3 Some read he that was begotten of God keepeth him
4 guard

The Epistle winds up with three summarizing declarations, each of which repeats the watchword, "we know," taken, but in a better sense, from the Gnostic "we know," the first, ver. 18, asserts the fundamental opposition between life and sin; the second, ver. 19, the fundamental opposition between the regenerate and the world; the third, ver. 20, pays its final homage to the Son of God, in whom we are through an intelligent faith wrought of God. These three are linked, as always, one with the other; the evil one toucheth was not in the first, but in the second the world lieth in his arms, and in the third we, rescued from him, are in God and His Son. The final words close the whole, and close the Bible, with an exhortation against every false conception of God. Hence fellowship with God is the keynote into which all melts at the last individually, it is in communion with His holiness; collectively, it is perfect separation from the world; and both these go up to the Son in whom we are one with God, and safe from idols. This final "we know" is therefore an exhibition of the Christian privileges in their highest form.

Ver. 18. We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but he that was begotten of God keepeth himself, and the evil one toucheth him not. Having admitted that the children of the Divine birth may sin, both unto death and not unto death, the apostle reminds them most solemnly of what had been established before, that the regenerate life is in itself inconsistent with both kinds. The characteristic and privilege of a child of God is to live without violation of law: all sin is of death, and there is no death in the regenerate life. This a repetition of what had been said in chap. iii., but the apostle never repeats himself without some change in his thought. Here is said for the first time, that not only he who has been and is born of God, but he who has been once born of God, sinneth not. He has not been, therefore, all along speaking of the unsinning state as the fruit of a finished regeneration, however true that may be. Again, as his manner is, he gives a specific reason for the assertion. The act of regeneration sundered the Christian from the empire of Satan, and it is his privilege to keep himself, in sedulous watchfulness and dependence on the Keeper of his soul, from the approach of the tempter; not from his approach as a tempter, but from any such approach as shall touch him to his hurt. It is wrong to limit this great saying by interpolating 'sin wilfully' or 'sin unto death' or 'sin habitually;' it must stand as the declaration of a privilege which is an ideal, but an attainable ideal, that of living without that which God shall call sin.

St. John does not rise to the word which only One could say, 'He hath nothing in Me.' Concipiscence is in the Christian still, and it may conceive and bring forth sin; not, however, if the wicked one toucheth him not. And the concipiscence that the enemy has in us must die if it have not its desire in the soul—"purified as He is pure." This 'we know' to be the privilege of the Christian estate, as in the middle of the Epistle the apostle has established it. 'We know' is not without protest against all future doubt; it is like one of the "faithful sayings" with which St. Paul sealed his final doctrine. To understand 'he that is born of God' of the Only-begotten who keepeth the saint, is contrary to the analogy of New Testament diction; and to suppose that the principle of regeneration keepeth him, introduces a certain harshness without obviating any difficulty. There is indeed no difficulty to the expositor who remembers that St. John never disjoins the Divine efficiency in man from man's own co-operation.

Ver. 19. We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one. The exquisite propriety of the words must be noted here. There is no 'but,' as before; we know by infallible assurance of our regenerate life that we are of God. This is all we are assured of, and there is no emphatic 'we' opposed to the world: it is as if the apostle would avoid even the semblance of exultation against the ungodly. But the awful contrast is laid down. It is the same 'wicked one' as in the preceding verse holds the entire world, so far as the new life has not transformed it, in his power. It is not said that
322

THE FIRST EPISODE

GENERAL OF JOHN. [CHAP. V.

the world is 'of the wicked one'; if the
children of the devil' had been spoken of in a
similar connection (chap. iii. 10), that is here ex-
plained and softened. The men of the world are
'in him that is false'; but the 'in' is not used
in its bare simplicity, but 'lieth in,' a phrase
nowhere else occurring, and to be interpreted
according to the tenor of the Epistle. The
'whole world' is not, however, the men of the
world only; but its entire constitution, its entire
economy, its lusts and principles and motives, and
course and end: all that is not 'of God' lies in
the power and bondage of the wicked one. This
the apostle adds as an old truth, never so fearfully
expressed as here. The diametrical contrariety
between the regenerate who have fellowship with
God, and the unregenerate whose fellowship is
with Satan, could not be more keenly defined.

Ver. 20. And we know—moreover, we know
finally—that the Son of God is come: this word
'is come' St. John reserves for the end. He
who was sent and was manifested is here said to
'be present' with us; and His abiding presence
as it were a sun which reveals and approves itself
to all who have eyes to see. We are reminded of
the only occasion on which the word is used in
this sense, when our Lord declared to the Jews in
one sentence the mystery of His eternal Sonship,
His presence in the world by incarnation, and
His mediatorial mission: 'I proceed forth from
God—I have come—He sent me' (John
viii. 44). The children of God know with an
assurance that is above all doubt that the Son of
God is incarnate with the human race and 'dwell
among us': this is the triumphant close of the
Epistle, both as it is a testimony to the manifesta-
tion of the eternal life, and as it is a protest
against all anti-Christian error. Keeping both
these objects still in view, the apostle goes on:
and hath given us an understanding that we
may know him that is true: this new word
'understanding' signifies the inner faculty of the
Spirit which discriminates in order to know, which
is the result of the 'unction from the Holy One.'
Thus inwardly enlightened by Him who is the
Truth, through His Spirit, we know 'Him that is
ture,' that 'only true God' whom thus to know,
in His unapproachable distinction from all false
gods or objects of hope, is eternal life. In the
words of Jesus, which St. John here quotes, 'and
Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent,' is added.
But He 'is come' as the revelation of the
Father, and St. John hastens from the spiritual
knowledge to the spiritual experience of fellow-
ship with that Father, not 'and Jesus
but 'in Him.' And we are in Him that
in His Son Jesus Christ. The absence
'and,' leaving the plain assertion that w
the true God by being in His Son—thus
the true God and His Son one—is the
question to whom the next clause refers
is the true God and eternal life. This
Jesus Christ is Himself the true God, Hi
sion and presence with us; nor know
other. Those who see not God in Him
He has come, serve a god of their own
ation. When the apostle adds 'and eten
he turns from the protest against anti-
eror, which was silently involved in the
part of the clause, to the happy privilege
believing Christians. They have in the:
perfect life 'which was with the Father
manifested unto us.' Thus the end of the
revels back to the beginning. Christian
is the revelation of the true God in Christ;
Christian blessedness is life everlasting.
Father and the Son.

Ver. 21. Little children, keep youself:
idois. This brief but all-comprehensive
closes the Epistle, the entire apostolical
and probably the entire revelation of Go
cordingly it must have a large inter
It is a solemn warning, most affectionate
rigorous, against everything that may enter
supremacy of 'the true God' as revealed
Son Jesus Christ, whether in the doct
worship of the Church or in the affection
regenerate heart. External idols, as still:
in heathenism, fast passing away,
excluded from the exhortation of ours
there has been no allusion to them through
Epistle, nor did the danger of the 'little c
in that direction. Though St. John d
use the Pauline expression that Christians
temple of the Holy Ghost, the idea of t
vades his whole doctrine. He that d
love dwelleth in God and God in him: th
every thought of the mind, every feeling
heart, and every movement of the will:
faithful in all homage to Him. As add
the first readers of the Epistle, the warm
against the false theosophy of the Gnost
prophetic exhortation, it foresaw and
against all violations of the doctrine of the
torial Trinity; and, as spoken to the
soul of every regenerate Christian, it procl
one immutable principle of the Christian:
that God must be to him. All in all.
INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND AND THIRD EPISTLES OF ST. JOHN.

I.—EXTERNAL: AUTHORSHIP AND APOSTOLICITY.

It may be taken for granted that these Epistles were written by the same author. According to the almost unanimous tenor of tradition, this was the Evangelist John. For instance, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Cyprian, Dionysius, and Alexander of Alexandria expressly quote from them as his. Origen and Eusebius refer to the two Epistles as suspected by many, but apparently without sharing the doubt themselves. Jerome mentions a current opinion that they were written by a Presbyter John, of whose existence we have only the insufficient witness of Papias as quoted by Eusebius. While it is easy to understand how such a man as Papias should confuse the tradition, it is hard to believe that two writers of the same name should so closely resemble each other in style and tone and authority. Erasmus revived this idea, which had never during the Middle Ages disturbed the tradition of the apostolical origin; and in later times it has been maintained on the ground of certain phrases occurring in the two smaller documents which are absent from the larger one. But in familiar Epistles to individuals such new phrases might be expected; and, though they are striking, they are lost in the multitude of express coincidences in phraseology. The term ‘Presbyter’ applied to himself by the writer has also been pleaded against the apostolical authorship. But without reason: St. John rarely mentions himself, never his apostolical authority; and the term Presbyter might be used as St. Peter used it, or as St. Paul called himself ‘Paul the elder’ or ‘the aged.’ Granting that St. John wrote these Epistles, we may suppose that they were written after, but not long after, the First; and from the same place, Ephesus.

II.—INTERNAL: CHARACTERISTICS.

I. The Second Epistle stands alone in the New Testament as addressed to a Christian household. It is written to a Matron of note and her children, commending the piety of some members of the family whom the apostle had met, and warning them against the intrusion into their circle of false teachers. Hence it is the worthy pendant of the Third Epistle, which is written to a Christian man occupying an equally important position in his community. It was held by some in ancient times, and by many in later, that the ‘lady’ was a symbolical expression for the church, or a particular church. A preliminary objection to this is that there is no precedent for such an allegorical mode of expression, nor any obvious reason for it; and then a careful comparison of the two Epistles will suggest that individuals are addressed in both.
INTRODUCTION TO SECOND AND THIRD EPISTLES OF JOHN.

The other controversy, as to whether the term rendered 'lady' ought to be regarded as a proper name, cannot easily be settled: the balance preponderates in favour of Kyria being the name of the matron who receives the letter.

II. The Third Epistle sheds an impressive light upon the state of the Church when about to lose the light of inspiration and the apostolic presence. St. John's authority in a church probably not founded by himself, was contested even as St. Paul's had been, though for a different reason: it is possible that the extreme age and venerableness which should have secured him honour encouraged a factious and bigoted enemy of the missionary Gospel to oppose him. The immediate occasion of the resistance of Diotrephes and his company was the apostle's recommendation of certain evangelists to the hospitality and general help of this community. St. John's request might have been sent by the hands of Demetrius, whose character, as opposed to that of Diotrephes, is stamped with the most emphatic approval. The issue we do not know, nor indeed anything further about the controversy. But we have a rich side light thrown on the virtue of hospitality, on the missionary activity of the church, and on the apostle's consciousness of high authority. The term church itself, mentioned so often, is important against those who misconstrue the absence of it from the First Epistle: in both the all-essential matter is fellowship with the Father and the Son in and through the Spirit; but in both there is evidently an organized fellowship among Christians, though in the Second only is it called a Church. It is, however, the exhibition of what may be called Family Religion that gives this Epistle, by the side of the Second, so deep and lasting an interest at the close of the canonical Scripture.
THE SECOND EPISTLE OF
J O H N.

VERS. 1–13.

Invocation.—Exhortation to Love, and Warning against False Doctrine.—
Conclusion.

1 "The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom a3 Jo. 1;
3 Pet. v. 1,
I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they b Ver. 13;
Rom. xvi. 13.
d 1 Jo. iii. 18;
3 Jo. 1.
3 Jo. vii. 37.
Gal. iii. 1.
2 Tim. i. 3;
Rev. i. 4;
Jude 2.
Ephe. iv. 15.
3 Jo. 5.
4 "I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in
truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.
5 And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new
commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the
beginning, that we love one another. "And this is love, that
we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment,
That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk
in it. "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who
class confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is
1 Jo. ii. 18.
1 Jo. iv. 1.
1 Jo. iv. 2.
Gal. iii. 4.
Heb. xi. 35.
8 a deceiver and an antichrist. "Look to yourselves, that
we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that
9 we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth and
abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that
abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father
10 and the Son. If there come any unto you, and besprinkl not
11 this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God
speed; 11 For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of
12 his evil deeds. "Having many things to write unto you, I

---

1 omit the
2 adieth
3 and it shall
4 Grace, mercy, peace, shall be with us
5 omit the Lord
6 I rejoice greatly that I have found of thy children
7 omit have
8 omit a gone forth into
9 they that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh
10 they
11 ye
12 goeth in advance
13 omit of Christ
14 omit him greeting
THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN.

would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full. The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.

17 your joy may be fulfilled

I.—Address and Greeting: From the well-known Elder to a well-known Lady.

The greeting, with its invocation, fills a large space. It is framed after the manner of St. Paul, and remarkably incorporates the two points of truth and love which occupy the whole Epistle.

Vers. 1, 2. The elder—the aged Apostle John, who gives himself this title because it was the only one that combined authority with age—to the elect Kyria and her children: nothing is known about the two sisters introduced at the beginning and the end, save that they were influential persons, probably widows with large families. St. Paul speaks of Rufus as ‘elect in the Lord,’ and St. Peter of ‘elect strangers:’ no higher term could be suggested by Christian courtesy. Whom I love in truth: the ‘whom’ in the masculine emendation of the household addressed. They were elect or loved of God, and therefore elect and beloved of the apostle; according to his own axiom in 1 John v. 1. Again, according to his own axiom, he declares that his love was not in word and with the tongue, but in deed and in truth; with special reference, however, to the severe caution which he is about to administer. And not only, but also all they that have known the truth: this Christian matron and her children were well known at home and abroad, bearing the same relation in their own spheres as the Gaius of the next Epistle bore in his. It is obvious that knowing the truth is an expression that has two applications here. On the one hand, it defines religion as the experimental knowledge of the revelation brought into the world by Christ, who said ‘I am the Truth:’ a definition the force of which was more felt in early times than in later. On the other, it prepared for that distinction between believers in the truth and all false teachers on which the writer purposed to insist. For the truth’s sake which abideth in us and shall be with us for ever. Obviously the common truth is, like regeneration, regarded as the bond of love. But there is an undertone of allusion to the fact that holding fast the truth is the test of religion, and that their common fidelity endeared the faithful to each other. Hence the change to ‘us,’ and the quotation of the Lord’s words, which applies to the truth what He spoke of the Spirit of truth, ‘He abideth with you and shall be in you:’ with the change, however, that here the ‘abiding’ is ‘in us, and the ‘being’ is ‘with us.’ It is like a preliminary triumph, in prospect of the subject that is coming.

Ver. 3. Grace, mercy, peace, shall be with us from God the Father, and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. This is the old invocation, with which the other apostles have made us familiar, but in its fullest form as found in the Pastoral Epistles. It had become the sacred benediction, as including the whole compass of the Divine blessing in the Gospel: grace refers to the fountain of favour to undeserving man revealed in Christ; mercy to the individual application of that favour in the forgiveness of sins and the succour of all misery; peace to the result in the tranquillity of a soul one with God. These blessings come from the Father through the Son of the Father; but the repetition of the ‘from’ makes emphatic the distinctness and equality of the Two Persons. There is here an observable deviation from St. Paul’s formula; as also in the addition of ‘truth and love’ the two spheres or characteristics of the Christian life in which, though not on account of which, these blessings are imparted. These last words also explain the ‘shall be’ of the invocation: they express the apostle’s confidence that his friends, living in truth and charity of fellowship, will ever enjoy this benediction in common with himself.

II.—The substance of the letter follows: introduced by congratulation, it contains an earnest exhortation to practical love and warning against false teachers.

Ver. 4. I rejoiced greatly that I have found of thy children walking in truth. As St. Paul always prefaced his warnings by praise, so St. John expresses his deep joy at having found—his now present joy at having found during his past acquaintance with them—certain of her children walking in the full truth of the Christian religion. Even as we received commandment from the Father. ‘And this is His commandment, that we should believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, even as He gave us commandment’ (1 John iii. 23). This great preliminary commandment omits the name of the Son because the reception of Him is its substance; and the particular commandments are presently to be mentioned.

Ver. 5. And now—this is the purport of the letter—1 beseech thee, Kyria: the request has in it a tone of dignity as well as of courtesy; the mother is addressed, though some of her children who walked not in love are aimed at: the apostle urges his request, which is sheltered behind the evangelical law, not as though writing to those a new commandment, but that which we had from the beginning, in the first person, that we love one another. Let us all walk in love: this, as well as the whole strain, shows the same exquisite courtesy which pervades St. Paul’s letters to individuals.

Ver. 6. Here we have once more St. John’s familiar tribute to the ethical supremacy of love, the new revelation of which by Christ ‘in the beginning’ sways his thoughts with a peculiar power. The verse is remarkable for its circular argument: love is the walking in all the commandments, the strength to keep them all being their compendium; again, the one commandment heard from the beginning is ‘that ye should walk in it,’ that is, in love.

Ver. 7. There is no love which is not based on truth: the love which keeps the commandments keeps the doctrinal as well as the ethical commandments. And, as love is the strength of
obedience, so it is the guardian of the truth. Hence the 'for' that follows: for many deceivers have gone forth into the world—from the spiritual world, the sphere of the lie—they that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh. The supreme truth—as truth is in Jesus—is the incarnation. That is the deceiver and the antichrist, of whom the former Epistle spoke: the deceiver as it regards you, the antichrist as it respects Jesus.

* Cometh in the flesh' refers in the most general way to the incarnation itself: not as a past fact, *' *Tome in the flesh' (1 John v. 4); nor as the fact with its results, 'hath come' (1 John iv. 2); but in its widest universality, though without reference to the second coming.

Ver. 8. Look to yourselves: a rare expression, intimating the deep earnestness of the warning. That ye lose not the things which we have wrought: the apostles were God's labourers; but, with refined delicacy, this apostle represents the reward of apostolic work, not as to be received by themselves, but, as to be received by their flocks. But that ye receive a full reward: of our work and your own fidelity. The reward of Christian labour is a familiar idea in the New Testament; and the last chapter of the Apocalypse represents the Saviour as coming with His reward 'to render to each man according as his work is,' Rev. xxii. 12. But the labourers' reward is not dependent on the fidelity of their converts, though the converts themselves have a share in it if unfaithful. The word reward here seems to refer to the other world; but, before mentioning that, St. John deprecates their losing the benefits of apostolic labours, which listening to 'evil workers' would occasion. The original text is not the English version, as it is written, "Every one therefore who shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. x. 32). The word 'full' has no necessary reference to degrees of recompense: it is used as a most mighty stimulant, and what it means the next verse shows.

Ver. 9. Whosoever goeth onward, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. This seems beyond doubt the true reading, and the verse thus becomes one of the utmost importance and interest. To abide in the doctrine of Christ is to remain content with His teaching or what He teaches; to go beyond it is to follow an imaginary development, and affect to be wiser than the Master Himself. The penalty is an awful one: one step beyond the commandment received in the beginning leads to the loss of God. But he that abideth in the doctrine, the same hath both the Father and the Son: the change is in St. John's manner, from God generally to the Father and the Son. The Lord Himself declared that 'all things' were delivered unto Him for the instruction of men; and the 'all things' He explained as the knowledge of the Father through the Son (Matt. xi. 27). On this rests the whole 'doctrine' or doctrinal system of the Church, afterwards spoken of generally as 'the doctrine.'

Vers. 10, 11. There is no more impressive word concerning the importance of holding fast the simple truth of the Gospel than what we have just read; and its force is deepened by what follows. If there cometh—as come there does and certainly will—any unto you and bringeth not this doctrine: a professcd teacher, therefore, coming for hospitality, after the manner shown in the next Epistle. It is important to guard the interpretation of these words on both sides. In mitigation of their severity, it must be remembered that the apostle is speaking of an antichrist coming with a doctrine opposed to Christ, and such a man ought to be excluded from the house of every servant of the Lord, whether coming in person or by his writings; but it is in his teaching capacity that he is to be excluded. But, on the other hand, and in vindication of its real strictness, the prohibition of salutation, and give him no greeting, does not by any means refer to formal Christian salutation, but forbids every kind of intercourse with him that implies friendly fellowship. The reason is expressly given, and in such a way as to show that fellowship such as hospitality is meant: a courteous salutation, or any act of charity, might be bestowed on him without involving complicity with his evil. But no such friendliness is to be shown as might further him on his way in the very least. 'He that is not with Me is against Me:' there is nothing in this rigour, so often branded as bigotry, that goes beyond the ordinary teaching of the New Testament.

III.—Conclusion.

Vers. 12, 13. The apostle, writing on this subject, has more to say than he can write; hence this letter is not an accompaniment of the larger Epistle. He was writing on paper or Egyptian papyrus, the pressed coatings of the plant, with ink, a preparation of soot and burnt resin and oil: the Third Epistle omits the paper and says pen instead, the pen being a split reed. The brief Epistle was in fact the forerunner of his personal presence; the apostle hoped soon to speak all that he had to say, and to hear all he wished to hear, that their joy might be filled. This was the design of his writing the First Epistle; this short one had not that purpose, but needed the supplement of free conversation. The greeting from the children only of the elect sister seems to indicate that their mother was not alive, and that St. John was a guest in their house.
THE THIRD EPISTLE OF

J O H N.

VERS. 1–14.

Goodwill to Gaius, and Commendation of him.—The Factionness of Diotrephes, and the good Example of Demetrius.—Conclusion.

1 The elder unto * the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth. Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

2 For I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee; even as thou walkest in the truth.

3 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children * walk in truth. Beloved, thou dost faithfully whatsoever thou dost to the brethren, and to strangers; Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helper to the truth. I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, a lover of pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words; and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church. Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good.

4 He hath * good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true. I had many things to write, but I wrote unto Gaius the beloved.
THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN.

I not with ink and pen write unto thee: But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.

Address and Expression of Goodwill.

1, 2. Three men called Gaius, the Latin are mentioned by St. Paul, and one of them the same acknowledgment of his largeness; but these lived in an earlier generation. Nothing is said as to his holding any office or school. The ordinary term of a fellowship, though evidently used here to express the meaning of whom I love in truth, is not repeated in several verses. In the ordinary greeting we have an expression of goodwill: I wish, which however is really addressed to the heads of the church, peculiarly interests itself because Gaius had been sick,—and his wealth. The prosperity of the soul is the fruit of all prosperity: even as thy soul is, or makes good advancement.

11. Substance of the Letter.

The substance of the letter is, first, a tribute to the character and work of Gaius, especially his devotedness to Christ's servants, with exhortation on this fidelity; then follows the special commendation of Diotrephes, the contrast of his conduct to that of Demetrius, and an exhortation to a relation to both.

3-4. The commendation of Gaius is first: the apostle rejoices greatly to hear from a testimony to his interior religion, unto the same, as it was openly shown, even as thou in truth. The apostle has no greater joy than to hear that any child of his, a member of the Christian family specially committed to his care, is walking in the truth. Truth and life: in both these Epistles the twofold and yet complete all religion. The love with its fruits in the next verse.

5-8. Thou doest a faithful work: the love of Gaius' love is said to be faithful, as corresponding with the commandment of love and truth towards the brethren, and moreover us: not both brethren and strangers, but, as well as elsewhere, a sequel shows, brethren who came from abroad. Thou dost mark: marks that the conduct of the apostle was habitual, though a special thing had been brought before the apostle. A bare witness to thy love before the church being evangelists, they gave an account of their travels in the presence of the church: and a testimony to Gaius' other travels, they are commended to him for his support, to be set forward worthy of the Master and the Head of their cause, follows a tribute to the dignity of their office and the high claim it gave them. For the sake of the Name, the name of Christ who is with them, from the church into the world, in a very different sense from the assembly of the antichristians (1 John ii. 19), taking of the Gentiles: this is stated as the principle, to receive nothing from the Gentiles as such, before they were formed into churches; but it contains no maxim for the missionary work generally. It is introduced here for the sake of what follows. We therefore ought to support such, that we may be fellow-workers with them for the truth: an important sentence, as showing that they who provide of their substance for the maintenance of the labourers are partakers of his work.

Ver. 9. I wrote somewhat to the church: not meaning either important or unimportant, but touching the maintenance of the evangelists; this communication, probably intercepted by Diotrephes, is lost or superseded by the present Epistle. But Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, the members of the church, receives us not: we know nothing about this man but what is contained in this graphic sketch of him. The evangelists had reported to St. John that neither his authority nor his letter was honoured by Diotrephes: that he rejected both, and spoke against the apostle publicly in a church which was almost entirely under his influence, being opposed by Demetrius and his select company, and Gaius keeping aloof probably through sickness.

Ver. 10. We mark here the same tone of faithful sternness which pervades the two other Epistles: in these, however, as against those who assailed the truth, in this against one who invades the order of the church. It is more than probable that Diotrephes was of the Judaizing faction which strove to thwart the publication of the Gospel to the Gentiles; and this would account for the apostle's severity. I will bring to remembrance before the church, his works which he doeth: not merely his prating against us with malicious words, as reported by the evangelists, but his actions, of more importance to the apostle than any words spoken against himself or his works. He casteth them out who would receive the brethren: by using his influence to have them cut off from the Christian society, whether by formal excommunication or otherwise.

Ver. 11. Beloved, imitate not that which is evil, but that which is good: this is characteristic of St. John, to trace all conduct to its highest source. The spirit and acts of Diotrephes, and those like him, are not of God, not fruits of regeneration: he that doeth evil hath not seen God, hath no spiritual knowledge of Him. Writing to Gaius, and writing to all who might possibly be swayed by such influence as that of Diotrephes, he once more states a strong warning: to what extent needed by Gaius we can only conjecture.

Ver. 12. The good to be imitated has its example in Demetrius, whose report had reached St. John concurrently with that of Diotrephes: Demetrius hath the witness of all who know him, and of all my reporters: and of the truth itself: for the truth of the Gospel reflected in his character is before yourself. Yes, we also bear witness: the very strong testimony to Demetrius was doubtless of the greatest importance at this juncture, and the apostle adds his own witness to
that of men and to that of the truth itself; and thou knowest that our witness is true is an affecting appeal to his own personal authority, accepted, if not by Diotrephes, yet by Gaius. St. John probably knew Demetrius, who receives from him as high a commendation as is received by any individual in the New Testament. These men stand here as individuals, to whom the apostle gave his testimony, not only from the evidence of their works, but also from his sure discernment of their character. But they are also representatives of men like-minded who play their part in every age and in all communities. The apostle's warning, commendation, and exhortation therefore are, and were meant by the Spirit to be, for all the future. And this gives our Epistle its permanent value.

III.—Conclusion.

Vers. 13, 14. We know not the issue of this Epistle. It was evidently written amidst circumstances which allowed no delay. Though the apostle would shortly visit the church of Gaius, Diotrephes, and Demetrius, he sends this message for the present emergency.

Ver. 15. Peace be to thee; the only instance of this personal formula in the New Testament. The friends salute thee; again the only instance of the brethren being called friends. Salute the friends by name; as if their names were mentioned. The familiar character of the letter may explain these peculiarities; but it must not be forgotten that these several terms carry us back to the Lord's first use and sanctification of them. There can be no higher salutation than the peace which came up out of the Old Testament to receive its deeper meaning in the New. And the Epistles of the New Testament worthy end with Peace to the individual saint, and the salutation of the brethren who are also 'the Friends' of Jesus individually and by name.
INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE OF JUDE.

JUDE, the writer of this Epistle, calls himself the 'brother of James;' and as in the list of the apostles there is James' Judas (the same word in Greek as here), 'the son' or 'brother' being unexpressed, many commentators have concluded that the author of this Epistle was the apostle. This is the view of Jerome, Origen, and Tertullian among the ancients, and that of Calvin, Lange, Tregelles, and others among the moderns; and they naturally identify him with Jude the son of Alphæus, called also Lebbaeus and Thaddæus (Matt. x. 3; Mark iii. 18).

Whether he were the apostle or not, he is widely believed to have been 'the Lord's brother' of that name (Matt. xiii. 55), a view adopted by Jerome and Origen, and by Bengel, Olshausen, Lange, Hofmann, and Tregelles.

These views are not absolutely inconsistent; but to hold both is to hold opinions not easily reconcilable. The latter is probably true; the former is questionable. There is no real evidence that Jude the apostle was brother of the James mentioned in this Epistle. Generally, the expression 'Jude of James,' or 'James' Jude,' would mean in Scripture language 'Jude the son of James.' If Jude the writer of this Epistle were an apostle, there seems no reason why he should not have called himself apostle, or why he should have distinguished himself, as he seems to do, from the apostles (ver. 17). We are expressly told, moreover, that our Lord's brethren did not believe on him; and though after the Resurrection and Ascension they formed part of the company of believers (Acts i. 14), they could hardly have believed at the beginning of His teaching, or have been appointed as eye-witnesses of His ministry.

From this and similar considerations, it is inferred that the James who was Jude's brother is the James who is called 'the Lord's brother' (Gal. i. 19), and who after the death of James the apostle (the son of Zebedee and brother of John) became the representative of the Jewish tendency of the Christian Church (Acts xii. 17), and rose to something like apostolic dignity; being, like Barnabas, reckoned among the apostles (Acts xiv. 14; compare Rom. xvi. 7, and the Greek of Phil. ii. 25, and 2 Cor. viii. 23). In the Apostolic Council held at Jerusalem, James' judgment was accepted as final (Acts xv. 13). He is supposed to have written the Epistle of James; and of course, if Judas was brother of this James, he held the same personal relation to our Lord.

On the whole, the most probable conclusion is, though not free from difficulties, that the author of this Epistle is Jude, one of the brethren of Jesus, not the brother of James the apostle, who was the son of Alphæus, but of James the Bishop of Jerusalem, of whose influence in the Church he availed himself to introduce his Epistle to his readers.
INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE OF JUDE.

Of his life nothing is known, as nothing is certainly known of the life of Jude the apostle. Eusebius gives an interesting tradition, transmitted through Hegesippus, that two grandsons of Jude, who 'according to the flesh' was brother of our Lord (see 1 Cor. ix. 5), were seized and taken to Rome by order of Domitian, whose fears had been excited by what he had heard of the progress of Christ's kingdom. When, however, he found from their replies to his inquiries, and from the appearance of their hands, that they were plain men supporting themselves by their own labour, and that it was a spiritual kingdom they sought to set up, he dismissed them and stayed the persecution he had planned. They are said to have lived till the time of Trajan. The wife of this Jude is said (Nicephorus, i. 23) to have been Mary.

The relation of the Epistle of Jude to the Second Epistle of Peter has led to much discussion. The parallel passages of the two Epistles are Jude 3–18, and 2 Pet. i. 5, and ii. 1–18. Their resemblances both in thought and in language are close and obvious (though there are differences in every verse), and the writers must have been in communication, or one must have seen the Epistle of the other. Internal evidence is in favour of the prior authorship of Jude. The terseness of the style, the freshness and vigour of the imagery, the close coherence of the thought, the very peculiarity of the words, there being in the twenty-four verses of the Epistle some eighteen found only here in the New Testament, are against the supposition that the Epistle was borrowed; whilst, on the other hand, the parallel passage of Peter appears to differ from Peter's usual style. If this view be accepted, the probable date of the Epistle is between A.D. 64 and 66. It must have been written late, and yet prior to the date of Peter's Epistle; and that apostle died about A.D. 68. A later date, subsequent to the destruction of Jerusalem, makes it necessary to suppose that it was taken in part from 2 Peter, and adds the difficulty that no note is taken of the destruction of Jerusalem, one of the most striking instances of the punishment of the 'ungodly.' It addresses the same class as the Second of Peter—false teachers who pervert the Gospel, the advocates of that gnostic antinomianism which formed many sects and devastated the churches of Asia Minor, as it did other churches throughout the farther East. On the probable supposition that Peter wrote with a view to the Jewish Christians in Asia Minor, while Jude addressed those of Palestine and Egypt, whence indeed we have one of the earliest recognitions of the authenticity of his Epistle, we have a reason for the repetition of the same teaching in the two Epistles.

The evidence on its canonicity is as follows. It is wanting in the common Peshito-Syriac, though found in the ms. in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, and is quoted as apostolic by Ephrem the Syrian. It is found in the Muratorian Fragment (about A.D. 170). Clement of Alexandria is the first writer who speaks of its authority. Eusebius tells us that it was among the canonical books that were expounded in public, while some regarded it as spurious. Origen refers to it as the work of the Lord's brother, and quotes it several times as 'filled with vigorous words of heavenly grace.' Tertullian and Jerome quote it as the work of an apostle. And it is contained in most of the lists (Laodicaean, A.D. 363; Carthaginian, 397, etc.). The difficulties felt as to its canonicity originated in the uncertainty of its authorship and of its author's standing in the Church, the nature of the contents and their resemblance to those of 2 Peter, and the supposed quotations from apocryphal books. The preponderance of belief, however, both in ancient and in modern times, is decidedly in its favour.
INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISODE OF JUDE.

CONTENTS AND ARGUMENT.

After the usual salutation and prayer (vers. 1, 2), there comes a statement of the
lesign of the Epistle (ver. 3), with the reasons for writing (ver. 4). Then follows
Part I., giving in section (a) examples of the punitive justice of God—when dealing
with such ungodly and corrupt persons as are described—in three leading examples:
Israel (ver. 5), the fallen angels (ver. 6), and the Gentile people of Sodom and
Sodom (ver. 7); and giving in (b) a more particular account of those men and
their deeds: they defile the flesh; they despise and rail at authority; they copy the
sins of Cain, and Balaam, and Korah (vers. 8-11). Their detestable character is
further described in vers. 12, 16, and 19, with a parenthetic description of them and
of their destiny and of those like them, as foretold in the prophecy of Enoch (vers.
14, 15). Their voluptuousness, selfishness, discontent, their pride and flattery, their
fondency to create separations from the faith and purity of the Church, and their
gross carnality, are all set forth in terse and strong language.

Part II. calls upon believers (a) to show mindfulness of the words of the apostles,
who foretell the coming of such deceivers and scoffers (vers. 17, 18); (b) to con-
tinue in faith and prayer and love and hope (vers. 20, 21); (c) to exercise a kindly,
prompt, and earnest treatment of those who may be led astray by these false teachers,
according to the character of each, yet with earnest hatred of their sin (vers. 22, 23);
and concludes with the usual doxology, expressed in words which abound in con-
solation.

Dean Alford has well described the Epistle as an 'impassioned invective, in which
the writer heaps epithet on epithet, and image on image, and returns again and
again to the licentious apostates against whom he warns the Church, as though all
language were insufficient to give an adequate idea of their profligacy and of his own
horror of their perversion of the grace and doctrines of the Gospel.' It may be
added that the Gospel is still abused and perverted through the selfishness and world-
liness of professedly Christian men, and that the admonitions of this Epistle and the
coming judgment of which it speaks are well fitted to arouse men to watchfulness and
repentance. The practical comments of Perkins, Jenkyn, Bickersteth, Stier, and
others show how rich it is in lessons which apply to every age.

Note.

Other Commentaries of this Epistle may be named and characterized:
MANTON, Thomas, D.D. — A Practical Commentary, delivered in weekly lectures at Stoke-
Newington. Lond. 1658. Practical and characteristic.
1739. Written with learning and judgment.
LANGER'S Biblical Comm., vol. ix.—Translated from Frommüller, with useful additions by Dr. J. I.
Mombert, 1867.
LILLIE'S Epistle of Jude.—Translated from the Greek, with notes. New York (Amer. B. Union),
1854. An able and careful work.
GARDINER, F. — A Commentary on Jude. Designed for the general reader and exegetical student.
Boston, U.S., 1856.
THE EPISTLE OF 

J U D E.

(Not. — All passages with (*) prefixed resemble is words the parallel passages in Second Pet.)


VERSES 1—25.

1 Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.

2 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

3 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

4 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

5 Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

6 Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion,
9 and "speak evil of dignities." Yet "Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, "durst not bring against him a railing accusation, "rebuke thee. "But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but "what they know naturally, "as brute beasts, "in those things they corrupt themselves. Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and "ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished "in the gainsaying of Core.

12 These are spots in your "feasts of charity, "when they feast with you, "feeding themselves without fear: "clouds they are without water, "carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, "plucked up by the roots; "raging waves of the sea, "foaming out their own shame; "wandering stars, "to whom is reserved "the blackness of darkness for ever.

14 And Enoch also, "the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, "the Lord cometh "with ten thousands "of his saints, "to execute judgment upon all, and to convince "all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds "which they have ungodly committed, and of all their "hard speeches "which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; "and their mouth speaketh great swelling words; "having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

17 "But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of "the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that "they told you "there should be "mockers in the last time, who should walk "after their own ungodly lusts. These be "they "who separate themselves, "sensual, having not the Spirit.

20 But ye, beloved, "building up yourselves on your most holy faith, "praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some make merciful, "making a differ-
THE EPISTLE OF JUDE.

23 ence:44 and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire;45 hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling,46 and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,47 to the only wise God our Saviour,48 be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever.49 Amen.

44 while they are in doubt, or, while they dispute with you (as in ver. 9)
45 read, Others save, pulling (snatching) them out of the fire; and on others have mercy with fear
46 guard you from stumbling
47 Gr. set; make you to stand
48 insert through Jesus Christ our Lord
49 insert before all time, and read and
50 for evermore (lit. for all the ages, or, as in previous clause, times)

Ver. 1. Judas. This name is of frequent occurrence in the New Testament, and is given in the shorter form, Jude, only here in the Authorized Version, to distinguish the writer from Iscariot; but the following clause is sufficiently distinctive; and it should be noted that the name is uniform in the Greek.—and brother of James. This Greek 'and' expresses a Greek affirmative not quite equal to 'but the brother, though approaching it. If he were, as suggested in the Introduction, the brother of our Lord as well as of James, neither of whom speaks of his relation to Christ, the omission is probably owing to the fact that the human relation was temporary and entirely subordinate to the higher relation of spiritual fellowship (Matt. xii. 49). As brother, moreover, he did not at first write, and so the relation itself was at once humbling and honourable.—To them that are called. Not invited merely, but having accepted the invitation, and having therefore the 'calling' of sons. This is the uniform meaning in Scripture; not having the name, but the character (comp. 'a man's calling').—beloved in God the Father (the true reading). Our affection for Christians springs from their relation to Christ and their likeness to Him, as our love for God's children rests on the same grounds. This is the brotherly love of the Gospel as distinguished from the love of good-will. If 'sanctified' is adopted as the reading, then it may be noted as an unusual expression. Christians being said to be sanctified (freed from the guilt of sin, and made fit for God's service) in Christ. The meaning of both expressions is, that in communion with Christ through faith they have been freed from the guilt of sin, and that their faith, working as it was by love, is the beginning of personal holiness (1 Cor. 1. 2).—kept. The nearly uniform rendering of this verb is 'kept'; and the keeping, it is important to notice, is the fulfilment of the intercessory prayer of our Lord (John xviii.). The safety of all who believe is the Father's answer to the Son. God keeps us as we keep His word (Rev. iii. 3, Greek). Nor is the writer's play upon this expression throughout his epistle without its meaning. 'God keeps us for Jesus Christ;' we 'keep ourselves in the love of God' (ver. 21). Evil angels are kept for judgment, because they 'kept not their first estate' (ver. 6). And a like play upon the word is found in 2 Peter.—for Jesus Christ is the meaning, not 'in;' for He created them, and redeemed them, and renewed them; they are therefore His own possession (His 'peculiar people'), and as His, are kept for and finally presented to Him (cp. John xvii. 6, 12).

The order of the words admits of another, though a less likely interpretation:—'to those that are called, in God the Father, beloved, and kept for Jesus Christ, being called;' but the parallelism of the thought is better preserved by the rendering given above.

Ver. 2. Mercy unto you, and peace, and love. 'Mercy' is used in the salutation of the pastoral epistles only—except here. In Paul's view, those who minister in holy things specially need it, as in Jude's view do those whom he addresses. 'Mercy' is God's feeling towards them; 'peace' is their condition as the result of it; 'love' is either their feeling Godward and manward as the effect of God's grace (so it is in Eph. vi. 23), or it is God's love to them that are called, in the manifold expressions of it (so it is in ver. 21, and in 2 Cor. xiii. 14). This last view seems preferable; it is for the fulness of love he prays, as it is for abundance of mercy and peace.

Ver. 3. Whilst I was glowing, or using all diligence; either inwardly in purpose, finishing one work and postponing another; or outwardly in actually writing what was not finished (de Wette). The latter is rather favoured by the tense of 'write' (which is present, not aorist: but the former is probably the correct view. Anyhow, it was his purpose to write on the great truths of the Gospel—the common property of all who believe.—I felt constrained to write and exhort you to fight for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. A richer evangelical epistle would have been more welcome to the writer; but, like Paul, he had to meet the needs of those for whom he ministered; hence his words are full of rebuke against the teachers who were leading them astray, and of loving warning to themselves. The word to fight, or strive earnestly, means to stand over and defend to the utmost, even to agony; 'the faith,' not quite the doctrines of Scripture, still less their belief of them, but the Gospel, as believed by Christian men. Once for all delivered points to the completeness and unchangeableness of the Gospel, and to the fact that no new revelation was to be
THE EPISODE OF JUDE.

I. 25.]

4. For there are certain men; unknown, scanty, or otherwise not worth de-; but when their true character was seen, plain that they belonged to a class long described in many an Old Testament, notably in the prophecy of Enoch (ver. 1).—Crept in is probably sufficient; un- the pure leaven, suggesting that there has been neglect upon the part of the Church, as it is the stealthy movement of those who are in the reborn. They came in by a door; not that they crept in from without, but some members of the Church; but only they came in as members, and yet had imaginably existed in the same place, directly from the Christian community, and, wherefore, to have entered it at all, and not in public, is peculiarly significant. There is no predestination in the evil angels; those who kept not their dominion, their rule (or principality, as in Rom. viii. 38), a form of the same word; or their former, 'their first estate,' a meaning less in accordance with Scripture usage). They were placed over material creation as rulers under God, but they left their proper office and abode, and set up a kingdom of their own (Col. i. 13), and are therefore kept under darkness unto judgment of the great day. Who they were and how they sinned has been much questioned. The notion that they are 'the sons of God' mentioned in Gen. vi. 4, and that they fell through fleshly desires, is affirmed in the Book of Enoch; and some have thought this explanation to be the meaning of the passage in Genesis. But it is very doubtful whether Jude quotes the Book of Enoch; and if he does, he certainly differs not unfrequently from its teaching. The passage in Genesis, moreover, refers rather to the intermarriage of the descendants of Seth and of Cain. Further, this interpretation is inconsistent with what is said by our Lord of the angelic nature, and it is, besides, an anticipation of the sin mentioned in the next verse. Probably, therefore, the verse points to a sin of another kind, and to an earlier time. Milton's account is probably nearer the truth (cp. 1 Tim. iii. 6).

Ver. 7. A third example is taken from the Gentile cities of Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them, having given themselves over in like manner as the people of those cities did, or as these false teachers have done, and having gone after strange (different) flesh; practising shame, man with man, and even man with beast. How true this is of the tendency of some teaching may be seen in classic writers, and in such testimony as Ireneus gives of the practices of the Nicolaitans (i. 20).—They lie before the eyes of men (either in the region they once occupied or...
THE EPISTLE OF JUDE.

[Vers. 1-25]

in their history) an example and a proof of eternal fire, still suffering as they do the punishment [of their sin]; or it may be taken, an example and a proof [of what I am affirming], suffering as they do the punishment of an eternal fire. The argument is either analogical or positive. As Sodom and Gomorrah suffered the punishment of a fire that consumed them utterly, so that they will never be restored, so the wicked will suffer as long as they are capable of suffering. This is not analogical. Or, as Sodom and Gomorrah are really suffering the punishment of which the fiery overthrow of their cities was the symbol, so shall these men be punished. This is positive, and is favoured by all those passages in which death is used not as material death only, but as continued life—the cessation not of being but of well-being—the destruction which is not annihilation.

Ver. 8. And yet these men (ver. 4) actually do the same things as the people of Sodom and the fallen angels. In their dreams they deifie the flesh, that of others as well as their own; they live in the feelings of their own corrupted sense, and they corrupt others as well as themselves (others sharing in their sin); and they set at nought lordship, ownership, dominion (the supremacy that belongs to one who is lord), and rail at dignities (Gr. glories—the splendour that belongs to those who are exalted). The statement may be general, or it may refer to Christ and to the authority of His kingdom. In favour of the former view is the fact noted by many moralists that licentiousness is connected with a sense of lordship, and with a self-authority: no other vice, indeed, so easily demoralizes the entire nature. The second refer is more in harmony with the context. Some refer the 'dignities' here spoken of to evil angels, under whose power these teachers had fallen, and whom nevertheless they mocked as powerless, or even as imaginary beings, and they appeal in proof to the next verse. But the connection of the two verses is of another kind. We are not to rail at even Satan, nor at earthly princes or dignities, though they be his instruments: he and they are to be left in God's hands.

Ver. 9. They do against dignities what even the archangel would not do against Satan. Michael (who is like God') was regarded as the guardian angel of the nation of Israel (Dan. xii. 1; cp. x. 13, 21). In the New Testament he is mentioned only here and in Rev. xii. 7. 'Archangel' is mentioned only here and in 1 Thess. iv. 16.—about the body of Moses. The Jews had various traditions about the burial of Moses. According to Jonathan (on Deut. xxxiv. 6), the grave of Moses was given to the special care of Michael; and to this tradition most commentators ascribe the introduction of the circumstance here. Others suppose that Christ Himself, in connection with the appearance of Moses at the Transfiguration, may have sanctioned the tradition. Nothing is said of it in the Book of Enoch. . . . Origen speaks of a book extant in his day (the Assumption or Removal of Moses) as the source whence Jude derived his account; but there is no evidence that the book was in existence when Jude wrote. The most probable explanation is that there was a Jewish tradition to which Jude appeals.—when contending he disputed shows that it was verbal altercation not unlike that recorded in the case of Job (chap. i.) and in Zech. iii. 1-3. The solution that God revealed these facts to Jude is of course possible, but it is not likely. That the same should be previously known is of the essence of the argument.

Ver. 10. But those who 'defile the flesh' as they 'rail at dignities' (ver. 8), at whatever they know not—the whole range of invisibility, and heavenly things, and even the nobler sentiments of our nature—they rail at; and whatever they know naturally as brute beasts ('irritation of animals'), their instincts and propensities, even these they abuse, for they surrender themselves to them, and in these destroy (or corrupt) themselves; and so they are worse than brute beasts. 'As drunk as a beast' is, in truth, a libel on the lower creation. Drunkenness and like abuses of natural appetite are sins of man only. It is two verbs used in this verse, 'know not' and 'corrupt', are different, but it is not easy to express the distinction between them. What they know not admits some knowledge, though it denies accuracy and the completeness of it: what they know describes such knowledge as is thought to be the use of faculty may give; though from the added word 'naturally', it is clear that the knowledge largely of a sensual kind.

Ver. 11. Woe to them. This expression often used by our Lord, but never elsewhere except in Jude and in Revelation. (Paul's use 'Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel,' is different.) The words may mean, 'Woe be to them,' a description of their miserable condition. They are present or future, utter and abased (Calvin); or even 'Alas for them,' expressive of pity (Newcome); or as generally expressive of pain and indignation, a censure and a threat: in any case the word speaks of evil and woe, whether uttered in the tone of compassion which bewails it (Matt. xxiii. 15), or of the indignation that imprecates it (Matt. xi. 21). Here the context favours the idea that it is neither pity nor imprudence, for they are strongly condemned, and they are said to have been punished; but a cry of horror on taking in at one glance the whole course of their ungodliness, and its final plunge into the dark abyss (as in Rev. xviii. 16, 19).—for in the way of Cain have they walked (so vers. 16 and 18). Like him have they lived, gratifying the passions and selfish instincts of their nature, in contempt of the warnings of God and His word. (Eavy of others; murder, literal or figurative—destroying others by their teaching; godlessness, are all more or less inaccurate; it is the character of selfish immoral deceivers that is described.)—and in the error; generally a sinful moral fault—a vicious life, that leaves the way of truth (Jam. v. 20; 2 Pet. ii. 18) 'in the error,' i.e. in the direction (not by the seduction of Balaam's reward)—de Wette—nor into the sin of, but as in the previous clause, 'in the way of' the Balaam of selfish avarice, gratified even in the sin and ruin of others.—have they run greedily (the verb means to pour one's self out on, or to give one's self up to a thing).—in the gall—saying (the rebellion. See note on Heb. xii. 18).—of Korah; insurrection against the Lord under cover of right and freedom.—have they perished. The beginning, therefore, and the end of their way are illustrated in this threefold history. The
general sins of these apostates have been variously defined, 'envy, covetousness, pride; murder, seduction of others for the sake of gain, rebellion against Divine authority'—all have been used to describe their motives and sins. In all there is this predomina...t Church, and their knowledge was perverted by selfishness or covetousness or pride to results eminently immoral and disastrous.

Ver. 12. Here follows a further description of these teachings as set forth in strong figures expressly and earnestly reiterated. These are they who are sunken rocks, seen indeed, but their true nature concealed, in your feasts of charity. The word for 'rocks' is found only here in the New Testament, though in common Greek writers it is not infrequent in the sense of rocks in or by the sea. The word in 2 Pet. ii. 13, which is like the word used here, means 'spots.' Probably a rock which appears like a spot, and gathers to itself the sea wrack and dirt, explains the connection between the two words. It disturbs the quiet harbour where it is found, and risks the vessels that are near.—when they fed...to with the word for 'feeding' showing that this is the reference. —clouds without water, empty, useless, easily carried along therefore by the wind, ostentations and deceptive wherever they go.—trees as they are in autumn, in the rear and yellow leaf, 'with all their vigour gone, —not because they have borne fruit, for they are fruitless—twice dead, fruitless all along, and now their leaf withereth, and they are rooted out; in the soil of the vineyard they have no place and they are fit only to be thrown away, or to burn.

Ver. 13. They are at once rocks and waves, wild waves of the sea, which 'cannot rest,' and throw up only 'mire and dirt' (Isa. lvii. 20).—foaming out their own shame —their lusts disgraceful. —wandering stars (comets or meteors, not planets), which neither light the world nor guide the mariner, but blazing awhile drift into, 'the blackness and darkness' which is kept ('in reserve') for them, and into which they sink and sink 'for ever.' All that is mischievous, useless, disastrous in sea or land or sky becomes in turn the symbol of the character and the destiny of these bad men. . . . The 'feasts of charity' or of love (Agape) spoken of in these verses are not strictly the Lord's Supper, though it is probable that the observance of the Lord's Supper was sometimes connected with them. The historical facts, the use of the pronoun 'your feasts of love' (ver. 12), and the customs spoken of in 1 Cor. xi., all point to a wider meaning. They seem to have been social gatherings, or social days for promoting kindly feeling and helping the poor. Dr. Lightfoot notes (on 1 Cor. x. 16) that the Jews had meetings of this kind at the close of their Sabbath, and found a sanction for them in Deut. xii. 5, 7, 10, and xiv. 23. Pliny and Tertullian both speak of them, and distinguish them from the simple Eucharist. Pliny apparently (x. 97, 98), and Tertullian certainly. In the fourth century the Council of Carthage forbade the holding of them in the churches; and the transference of the Lord's Supper from the evening to the morning originated in part in the abuses to which the blending of the two led.

Ver. 14. Nor is this warning the warning of Jude only. And to these also (with respect to these also) prophesied Enoch the seventh from Adam, i.e. the seventh including Adam; a description added probably to mark his importance by the coincidence of the sacred number seven. To Adam was given the promise of the advent of our Lord as Helper and Saviour; to Enoch, the first promise of the advent of the same Lord as Judge. Jewish writers are ever noting the recurrence of this number. Moses was the seventh from Abraham, Phinehas from Jacob, etc.—The Lord cometh (Greek, came or has come; describing, as not unfrequently, an occurrence in the midst of which the prophet sees himself standing) with (surrounded by) ten thousands of his holy ones (literally His holy myriads, the 'innumerable company' of Heb. xii. 22; 'saints' restricts the meaning to saved men).

Ver. 15, to execute judgment, i.e. to pronounce the doom, and see that it is carried out. Then follows the description of these sinners. The characteristic of the antediluvians, as of those whom Jude addresses, is ungodliness: four times this quality named, first and last and midst, in the description.—to convict (an intensive form of the English verb) in their consciences and before the world. The double meaning of the Greek word is only half represented by 'convince,' and only half by 'convicit.' A thing is in the word, though the second meaning is the predominant one here.—and of all the hard things—rough, coarse; used here in its ethical sense, and especially to describe arrogant blasphemy (1 Sam. ii. 3; Mal. iii. 13).—'stout,' the outcome of a hardened heart.

The prophecy here quoted is found almost literally in the Book of Enoch, which was formerly known only in fragments preserved in some of the Fathers, but has recently been discovered in an Ethiopic translation, and became known in Europe probably at the beginning of the Christian era. Dillingham ascribes it to the first century after Christ; Dillingham, who has published it, to the century before. It is really divisible into three parts,—the original book, which includes this prophecy and several other things, and two different sets of additions by later though still early writers. The book contains many absurdities (e.g. the women with whom the angels had intercourse brought forth giants six thousand feet high, who first devoured all the produce of the earth, and then began to devour men themselves); and it differs in several particulars from Jude's statements. There is therefore no reason to suppose that Jude quotes it, though the prophecy of Enoch is found (with some important variations, however) in both. Every phrase in the prophecy has its parallel passage in the canonical Scriptures; and this fact may explain the facility and accuracy with which the tradition was transmitted. All, in fact, that is new in this prophecy is that he, Enoch, delivered it—a thing in itself highly probable. Of course the Holy Ghost might have revealed it immediately to Jude; but it may be said, as before,
that this explanation is forbidden by the form and the very purpose of the quotation itself. The writer is appealing to what is already known in support of his argument. 

Ver. 16. A further description is now given of these teachers by an enumeration of the qualities by which all may identify them. They are characterized by a chronic discontent with everything and everybody, with their own lot especially —the providence and ways of God, as we should call it; by intense self-indulgence, by proud and self-sufficient speech, and by gross flattery of the prosperous or great whenever anything is to be gained by it. Murmuring, or lv. 10. walking after their own lusts; and their mouth it speaks great swelling words, affirming their superiority to all restraints (their freedom, 2 Pet. ii. 18); while their reverence, such as they are capable of, is reserved for the possessors of wealth and influence (man's persons, the outside quality, not their true character), and those who are able, and whom they hope to make willing, to help them; and all this in the steadiness as well as in their liveliness. How different from the apostolic type is sufficiently plain (Phil. iv. 11, 12; 1 Tim. vi. 8; Heb. xii, 5).

Ver. 17. Nor has any new thing happened to you. All this was foreseen and foretold. You yourselves know it; you have only to remember the words spoken before by the apostles (as in Acts xxi. 30, 31; 1 Tim. iv. 1, where the evils are foretold, as in nearly every Epistle they are not far —the double meaning of 'spoken before'). Most, indeed, of these passages are written, not spoken; but the writing is really the putting into permanent form of what in substance had been orally delivered. The language here used, 'by the apostles,' does not necessarily imply that the writer was not an apostle; but if he had been an apostle, it is more likely he would not have used it. Compare the expression in 2 Pet. iii. 2, 'of us the apostles,' as in the Revised reading is, 'through your apostles.'

Ver. 18. how that they told you in the last time there shall be mockers; only here and in 2 Pet. iii. 3, where it is said that they show their quality in relation to the Second Coming of the Lord. —walking after the lusts of their ungodliness; each getting the other; every lust rejecting the Divine that is opposed to it, and the rejection of what is Divine ending ever in aggravated immorality (see Rom. i. 24, 28, 29). The expression here used is no doubt intended to call up the characteristic quality already described in ver. 15.

Ver. 19. Again the deceivers reappear; described not now by historical parallels (ver. 11), not by figures of speech (vers. 12, 13), not by prophetic announcements (vers. 14, 15), not even as their own offensive talk has done (ver. 16), but as they are in their inner nature, and in the influence of that nature on Church life and on themselves. —These are they that are ever causing divisions (separations), and will end sooner or later in apostatizing themselves or in oppressing the Church. The verb is intensive and continuous. The word 'themselves' goes out, but the idea is still in the verb, though not so prominent as before. Separation is caused in Christian communities by three things: by heretical doctrine, by an unloving, selfish, exacting spirit, and by proud words and an ungodly life; and all these are characteristic of these teachers. So far, therefore, as they are tolerated, they tend to divide and to break up the communities to which they belong. Everything they are and everything they have tends to disintegration, and the sooner the Church is rid of them the better. The specific illustrations of this truth in the history of the early sects, and even in the later, are very striking. —sensual, we have no English word that expresses the thought of the Greek. The word describes the man in whom the earthly natural life of the soul is supreme, the spiritual, with all its faculties being subject, and the man himself is ever doing the 'desires of the flesh and of the mind' (Eph. iv. 22; 3). 'Sensual' is too strong, and 'natural' an unqualified 'animal' too narrow. 'Soul' ( psyche ), the underlying root of the adjective here used, is the man himself in his natural state. With the soul we connected man's higher nature, the spirit, including the conscience and whatever remains of the mind may be of diviner faculties. The body is then the lower nature. He who gives himself up to the body is fleshly; he who by communion with God's Spirit gives himself up to the nobler life is spiritual. He who thinks only of his own interests, emotions, tastes, is the man whom the verse describes. It is the form of life that is described. It is the form of life that is described in itself and in its earthly likenings and preferences as its law; is sensual even when not fleshly, as were these teachers. —not having the Spirit. Their natural religious life, such as it is, is under the law of the Spirit, whereas the Christian is led by the Spirit. Therefore, means, consciences, are one; reason all subject and defined, even when the flesh is not absolutely supreme.

Vers. 20, 21. But ye (strongly emphatic) beloved, as against those dividers of the Church who are pulling it down stone by stone, are building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, awaiting the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ eternal life. Every clause is antithetic and suggestive: the overthrow of the Church and of each of its members, and Divine edification; grace turned into licentiousness, and holy character built on faith; swelling words of self-sufficiency, no Spirit; praying in the Spirit; murmuring, complaining, and denying the Lord that bought them; and keeping yourselves in the love of God, and awaiting the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ—for whom the blackness of darkness is kept for ever, and waiting for Christ's mercy unto eternal life. Our safety depends on growth in the faith, on prayer in the Spirit, and, after all is done, on receiving the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. Hereby we keep ourselves, and are kept, in the love which God bears to us, and in the love which we are to bear to Him. The love of God to us, however, is the true origin of all, though not to the exclusion of the Spirit and the Church, who have each His own part in the great work of our redemption. 'Looking for' may mislead. 'Looking for' is the word found in 2 Pet. iii. 12, 13, and in 1 Thess. i. 10, where it is translated 'waiting for,' and is applied to what after all may never come. The word here really means, espe
THE EPISODE OF JUDE.

1-25] THE EPISODE OF JUDE.

1-25. Of the false teachers the writer is a great care is needed, and the treat-
ment of those for whom he has been ex-
bited. (Jas. i. 6; Matt. xxii. 21.) Con-
scious is the meaning of the same words in this Epistle (ver. 9), but it is not appro-
riate to the conduct of the conduct that is to be observed by them, who have almost yielded to seduc-
tion from the fear lest you yourselves share their ruin.

The disease of the first class, the second, and the third are all share in the same seed, and we natural a consid-
er of prompt deliverance; the second class is the kind of fellowship, which is the previous danger; we are therefore to attend upon them with fear, hating even the garments (i.e. defiled, Jas. iii. 6) with th.

The garments are the inner and outer person, and is itself soilcd by the sin. It is a fitting symbol of whatever, by means of the deceitfulness and the evil of sin we ourselves, unconsiously, be contagion. The mere contact of the garment, of things in themselves in-

different though belonging to the habits and the outward acts of the life, may do mischief. The well-meant attempts of one to save another, and sometimes in the ruin of both.

Ver. 24, 25. Exhortations to keep themselves in the love of God are very follow a doxology which reminds them that the power and grace are from Him who alone can keep them. Now to Him that is able to guard you (not the same word as in ver. 21, but a strong military term) from stumbling (from every false step, Jas. i. 10; 2 Pet. i. 10, 'shalt not stumble'), and make you to stand without fault (Rev. xiv. 5, and like the Master Himself, 'without spot,' the same word, Heb. ix. 14) before the presence of His glory in exceeding joy (the condition in which you will be found when you stand there), to the only God our Saviour through Jesus Christ our Lord (these added words set forth God as Saviour through Jesus Christ, Tit. iii. 4-6), be (or is) glory, majesty (greatness), dominion and power (literally, 'might and right,' power and authority), before all time ('as it was in the beginning'), and now ('is now') and for evermore ('and ever shall be'). Amen (so let it be, or, so indeed it is). Glory and dominion are common in the New Testament Doxologies; 'majesty and right' (lawful power) are found only here. 'For evermore' is required in the rendering of what is a strong expression of everlastingness. 'For ever,' 'for evermore,' and 'for ever and evermore,' represent three corresponding expressions in the Greek (σε διάνεια, σε διάνεια, or σε διάνεια τοῦ αἰώνος, and σε διάνεια τοῦ αἰώνος). All are applied to God, to the blessedness of the righteous, and to the punishment of the wicked. As so applied, they do not materially differ in meaning; but it is important to mark the differences and the intensity of expression.

The whole of this Doxology, so rich and so consolatory, may be a prayer, 'be' glory, as its place at the end of the Epistle and the 'Amen' rather imply; or it may be the assertion of a fact, as in 1 Pet. iv. 11, where the 'Amen' also is used, and the verb 'is' (not 'be') is in the Greek; or we may combine the two meanings by making the Doxology an assertion of what really is, and the Amen a prayer: Be it in human hearts and throughout all creation as it is in truth! How solemn and instructive, that these ascriptions of glory to God are found in connection with judgment as well as with salvation, each, indeed, implying the other, and both illustrating the holiness and the love which we are to adore (Rev. xv. 3, xvi. 5).
INTRODUCTION TO THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

It is impossible within the limits to which this Introduction must be confined, to discuss with anything like appropriate fulness the many deeply interesting and important questions connected with the Revelation of St. John. This is the more to be regretted because, under the influence of a wiser system of interpretation than has often been applied to it, the book has been of late regaining that high position in the mind of the Church to which, from its purpose and character, it is so justly entitled. No book of the Bible has, indeed, since the rise of the recent school of historical criticism, made in this respect such marked and gratifying progress. The disposition to turn away from it as an insoluble enigma has been gradually disappearing; sneers against it are but little heard; and its interpretation has been in great measure rescued from the hands of well-meaning but mistaken theorists. It is curious to think that all this is largely owing to the efforts of those negative critics who have laboured so zealously to discredit the other books of the New Testament. That these critics have had other ends in view than that of establishing the authenticity of any sacred book; that, in particular, they have hoped, by the result of their inquiries upon the point before us, to be more successful in removing the Fourth Gospel from the Canon, is nothing to the purpose. They have at least vindicated with zeal and with acuteness the authenticity of the Apocalypse; and their conclusions regarding it, to some of which we shall immediately advert, have satisfied even the most of those who might otherwise have hesitated, that we have in it a genuine production of 'the disciple whom Jesus loved.' The effect has been in a high degree beneficial. Once satisfied of this, men have felt the importance of earnestly devoting themselves to the interpretation of a work of such marked peculiarities; and, after having made it for centuries the sport of their wildest fancies, they are now settling down to those juster views of its internal characteristics which promise, at no distant date, to produce more harmony in the understanding of its contents than is to be found in the case of any other writing of the New Testament. For these reasons we regret that nothing but a short introduction to the Apocalypse can be attempted here. Believing, as we do, in the preciousness of the inheritance which the Church possesses in it, we should have rejoiced to dwell at some length on the questions to which it has given rise. It will be at once felt, however, that that cannot be, and that we must limit ourselves to as small a space as possible. Omitting all other matter, we propose to speak only of the following points:—The authenticity of the Apocalypse; its general design and character; its structure and plan; and its interpretation.

I.—The Authenticity of the Book.

The first question that meets us is that as to the authenticity of the book. Upon this point Baur expressed his opinion that few writings of the New Testament can
INTRODUCTION TO THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

claim evidence for an apostolic origin of a kind so ancient and undoubted (Krit. Unters. über die Kanon. Evang. p. 345). Zeller followed in his master's steps, with the declaration that the Apocalypse is the real and normal writing of early Christianity; and that, among all the books of the New Testament, it is the only one which with a certain measure of right may claim to have been composed by an Apostle who had become an immediate disciple of Christ (Theol. Jahrb. 1842, p. 654). In our own country, again, Dr. Davidson thus speaks: 'Enough has been given to prove that the apostolic origin of the Apocalypse is as well attested as that of any other book of the New Testament. How can it be proved that Paul wrote the Epistle to the Galatians, for example, on the basis of external evidence, if it be denied that the Apostle John wrote the closing book of the Canon? With the limited stock of early ecclesiastical literature that survives the wreck of time, we should despair of proving the authenticity of any New Testament book by the help of ancient witnesses, if that of the Apocalypse be rejected' (Introduction, 1st ed., i. p. 318). With these testimonies before us from scholars who cannot be suspected of the slightest desire to uphold the traditional views of the Church, it may almost seem unnecessary to say more. Yet some parts of the evidence are in themselves so interesting that would not be proper wholly to omit them.

This remark may be particularly applied to the evidence of Papias, who is said Eusebius to have spoken in his book concerning the 'Oracles of the Lord' of a corporate reign of Christ upon the earth for 1000 years after the resurrection from the dead (H. E. iii. 39). It is not, indeed, stated in this passage that the opinion referred to was taken from the Apocalypse, and Papias may have adopted it from some other source. But the probability that he is speaking upon the authority of St. John is in itself a small degree confirmed by the fact that Andreas and Arethas, two bishops of Cæsarea in the second half of the fifth century, when the work of Papias, now lost, was still in circulation in the Church, distinctly state—the one, that Papias regarded the Apocalypse as worthy of trust; the other, that the same Father had the Apocalypse before him when he wrote (see the passages in Canonicity, by Dr. Charteris, pp. 338, 339). No doubt, indeed, would probably have been entertained upon the point had not Eusebius, contrary to his custom, failed to tell us that Papias had the Apocalypse in his eye, and had not raised the question whether the 'Presbyter John,' with whom Papias had conversed, might not be a different person from the Apostle. The first of these difficulties is easily removed when we remember that Eusebius, a keen anti-millenarian, and one who speaks with contempt of Papias for his millenarian proclivities, could not but be most unwilling to connect such opinions with a sacred book, and that he was himself doubtful whether the Apocalypse ought to be regarded in this light. The second difficulty again would at once disappear were it allowed, as there seems every reason to think is the case, that the Apostle and the 'presbyter' are identical. But even if this cannot be spoken of as established, it is worthy of notice that in another work Eusebius couples the names of Papias and Polycarp of Smyrna together as acknowledged hearers of the Apostle (Chron. Bipart., quoted in Speaker's Commentary on the New. Test. iv. p. 408). The conclusion is strengthened by the date of Papias's birth, not later than A.D. 70, and by the scene of his ministry, at no great distance from Ephesus. Another interesting testimony connected with these early times is that of Irenæus. No one disputes the acquaintance of this Father with the book before us, or that he distinctly ascribes it to St. John. The point of importance is that, as we learn from his beautiful letter to Florinus (Routh's Reliquia Sacra, i. p. 31), he had been a disciple of Polycarp, and that he delighted in after life to call to mind the accounts which his teacher used to give of his intercourse with the Apostle,—an intercourse so truly transmitted to his
pupils, that Irenæus in describing it speaks, with obvious artlessness, not of eye-witnesses of Jesus, but of eye-witnesses of the ‘Word of Life.’

Testimonies such as these are of the highest value, but they are followed by many others of whom, not passing beyond the first half of the third century, we name only Justin Martyr, Melito, Theophilus of Antioch, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Hippolytus, and the document known as the Muratorian Fragment. It is needless to enlarge. External evidence of a more satisfactory and convincing nature could not be desired. One additional remark, however, may be noted. There is a singularly close connection between the sources of no small portion of the evidence and the district in which the Apostle laboured. Papias was bishop of Hierapolis; Polycarp, so intimately associated with Irenæus, was bishop of Smyrna; Irenæus belonged to Asia Minor; Melito was bishop of Sardis; and Justin Martyr wrote at Ephesus.

The internal evidence confirms the conclusion drawn from the external. It is true that objections to the authenticity of the book are mainly drawn from this source, and these we must immediately consider. But, looking away from them for a moment, it is hardly possible to think that he who in the opening verses names himself ‘John’ (vera. 4, 9), and who tells us that he was ‘in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus’ (ver. 9), could be any other than the Apostle. The writer evidently felt that he was entitled to speak to the churches of Asia with an authority which none could question. Antiquity knows of but one John to whom this position can be assigned. The writer had been banished to Patmos for the cause of Christ, and again antiquity speaks only of one of his name who had experienced such a fate. In addition to this, the whole tone and spirit of the book have been justly dwelt upon as being in exact accordance with what we learn from the Gospels of the character of the beloved disciple. The attempt to show that John the presbyter may have been the writer, is now almost universally confessed to be a failure. Even allowing that such a person existed, he cannot have occupied the place in the estimation of the Church which evidently belongs to the author of the Apocalypse, or we should have known more about him. Nor is it less difficult to explain that, if he wrote the Apocalypse, there should be nowhere the slightest hint of his banishment to Patmos.

Upon the allegation that some one wrote the book who only pretended to be the Apostle and assumed his name, it is unnecessary to dwell. The supposition is as destitute of probability as of proof; and the only conclusion warranted by the whole body both of external and of internal evidence is, that no other John can be thought of as its author but he to whom the Church has so unanimously and invariably ascribed the work.

There is, indeed, one branch of internal evidence upon which great reliance has been and is still placed by many for the purpose of establishing the opposite conclusion. It is urged that those who ascribe the Fourth Gospel to the Apostle John cannot possibly believe him to be also the author of the Apocalypse. We have already in this Commentary declared and defended our belief in the Johannine origin of the one (vol. ii. Introduction to the Gospel according to John); we have now to show that this is consistent with a similar belief as to the other. The argument is that a comparison of the two books betrays such an essential difference between them, as to prove that they cannot have proceeded from the same pen. How far, we have now to ask, is this the case? The following particulars may be noted:—

(1.) In the Gospel St. John does not name himself; in the Apocalypse he does. The difference is sufficiently explained by the difference of the books—the one his
torical, intended to bring forward the Redeemer, and to keep the writer out of view; the other prophetic, and needing, after the manner of the Old Testament prophets, a distinct naming of the author as a voucher for the marvellous revelations granted him. In particular, how often do we read in the Book of Daniel, so largely used in the Apocalypse, the words 'I Daniel' (chaps. vii. 15, viii. 27, etc.); why not also in the Apocalypse: 'I John'?

(2.) The author, it is said, instead of calling himself an Apostle, only calls himself a 'servant' of Christ (chap. i. 1). But the other Apostles frequently name themselves in a similar way—St. Paul (Rom. i. 1; 2 Cor. iv. 5; Gal. i. 10; Tit. i. 1, St. James (chap. i. 1), St. Jude (ver. 1). Besides which, it may be truly said that St. John in the Apocalypse is writing less as an Apostle, whose word no one might despise, than as the 'brother' of all persecuted saints; a 'partaker with them in the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus' (chap. i. 9). He was a suffering member of Christ's body; so were they. In the furnace of affliction all had been welded into one.

(3.) Again, the writer speaks of the wall of the New Jerusalem as having 'twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb' (chap. xxi. 14); and such language, it is urged, is inconsistent with the humility which an Apostle would have displayed. But the words are no more than an exact echo of those of St. Paul when he tells us that Christians are 'built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets' (Eph. ii. 20); they express a fact borne witness to by our Lord's selection of the Twelve to be the first proclaimers of His kingdom; and no one who recalls the light in which the 'Lamb' is always set before us in the Apocalypse, can for a moment doubt that the glory of the Apostles of whom the writer speaks did not lie in anything in themselves, but in the fact that they were 'Apostles of the Lamb.'

The above objections are trifling. We turn to one or two of a more important character, drawn from the language, the spirit, and the teaching of the book.

(4.) The language and style. That these are confessedly so different from the language and style of the other Johannine writings contained in the New Testament, has constituted a difficulty from very early times. Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria in the middle of the third century, and a pupil of Origen, dwelt upon them with an acuteness which has not been surpassed by any later critic; and it can hardly be alleged that down to the present hour the difference has been satisfactorily explained. The idea of some, that it is due to a certain harshness and roughness of expression which comes with later years, is at once to be set aside as not sufficiently supported by the general experience of literary men. Equally untenable is the supposition that the difference is to be accounted for by an increased familiarity with the Greek tongue, gained during a long residence at Ephesus; for, even granting that the Apocalypse was written twenty-five years before the Gospel, its peculiarities of style are not such as spring from a writer's ignorance of the language in which he writes. More than to either of these explanations must we resort to that which would trace the difference in some cases to design, in others to imitation of the Old Testament Prophets. The student of the original will at least easily mark that those solecisms of grammatical construction which so often startle him are by no means carried through the book. In the case of the very particulars for which he is blamed, the writer shows by numerous instances that he is as well acquainted with the Greek language as his critics, and he forces on us the impression that he has adopted the anomalies complained of because, for one reason or another, he thought them adapted to his aim. They cannot, therefore, when compared with the easy sentences of his Gospel and Epistles, form a sufficient ground for denying identity of authorship.
INTRODUCTION TO THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

On the other hand, it is impossible to compare the different writings of which we speak without coming into contact at almost every step with something or other that takes us directly to the Gospel or Epistles of St. John. Many of the favourite words of the latter books, such as 'to give,' to 'witness,' to 'tabernacle,' to 'keep,' 'to overcome,' 'name' as the expression of character, 'true' in the sense of real, meet us in the Apocalypse in a way found in no other book of the New Testament, while the figurative language employed has not unfrequently its germ in such figures as those of hungering and thirsting, of the manna and the living water, of the shepherd and the sheep, which are so familiar to us in the Gospel.

(2.) Similar remarks apply to the tone and spirit of the Apocalypse, as compared with those of the Fourth Gospel. Instead of a difference here, we venture rather to assert that no two books of the New Testament more closely resemble one another in these respects than the two in question. The contrary impression has arisen from mistaking the real character of the Gospel. That that Gospel is in one of its parts—chaps. xiii.—xvii.—full of a blessed calm is undoubtedly the case; but the chapters now referred to do not constitute its most characteristic part. Its main section is that which extends from chap. v. to chap. xii. (see Introd. to the Gospel in this Commentary, ii. p. xxvii.); and this, so far from being calm, contains the most severe and sustained polemic against 'the Jews' to be found in any of the Gospels. There, if anywhere, we meet the Redeemer of the world in the very character in which He appears in the Apocalypse, the Prophet of righteousness, the unsparking Exposer of sin, the Judge of men. On the other hand, nothing can exceed the tenderness and soft and gentle beauty of many parts of the Apocalypse, such as chaps. vii. 9—17, xiv. 1—5, xix. 5—10, xxi. 10—27. The more the two books are compared with one another, the more will the groundlessness of the objection which we are now considering appear.

(3.) But if this may be said of the tone and spirit of the Apocalypse when compared with the Gospel, it may certainly be said (to at least an equal extent) of its teaching. On all the most important doctrines of the New Testament nothing could be more complete than the harmony between the two books. More especially may this be seen in their teaching regarding the Person, the Death, and the Resurrection of our Lord, or regarding the moral freedom and the final destiny of man. This resemblance, too, is the more striking when we observe that it may be traced not simply in regard to the substance of these great doctrines, but in regard to certain aspects of them which are brought out in at least a similar way in no other part of the New Testament. Thus, as to the Person of our Lord, it is in both of them that He is so distinctively set before us as the 'Word of God' and as the 'Lamb.' His death and resurrection, again, are combined in the two, as both essential parts of one thought, with a closeness hardly met with elsewhere (comp. e.g. John x. 17 with Rev. i. 18). The remarkable prominence given in the Gospel, by the use of the verb 'to will,' to the freedom and responsibility of man (chaps. v. 6, 35, 40, vi. 21, 67, vii. 17, viii. 44, ix. 27, xii. 21) meets us also in the Apocalypse (chaps. ii. 21, xi. 5, 6, xxii. 17); while at the same time there is combined with this in both the no less singular fact that they appear to speak of men as if from the first they were divided into two great classes, from the one of which there is no transition to the other. Lastly, the final destiny of man is set before us in both books in a manner that may be spoken of as peculiar to them, for in both the righteous are already judged, and have no part in the general judgment, which awaits the wicked (John v. 24; comp. Rev. xx. 4, 11—15; and on this latter passage see Commentary). Our space does not permit us to enlarge upon these topics. We must content ourselves with urging that an impartial estimate of the doctrinal teaching of the two books before us will result in the conviction not only
that they are in harmony with one another, but that they are so even when they present the truth in aspects of it found nowhere else.

These considerations show that the argument against the Johannine origin of the Apocalypse, if the Fourth Gospel be accepted as Johannine, is destitute of any real foundation. There is something on the surface to favour it; there is far more beneath the surface to discredit and disprove it.

One other point ought to be noticed. The attempt has been made by several writers, most recently by Keim ("Geschichte Jesu von Nazaret", i. p. 217, etc., Engl. trad.), to show that St. John cannot be the author of the Apocalypse, because he had never any connection either with Ephesus or with Asia Minor, and because in fact he, as well as all the other Apostles, had died before the destruction of Jerusalem. Could the premiss be established, the conclusion would almost inevitably follow. So intimately is the book associated with the churches of Asia, so directly do the early Fathers who ascribe it to the Apostle ascribe it to him in his supposed connection with that district, that if this latter opinion be a mistake the whole tradition of the early Christian Church can hardly escape being set aside as unworthy of reliance. A few words, therefore, upon this latest phase of the controversy seem to be required.

The texts supposed to prove the death of St. John before the destruction of Jerusalem are Luke ix. 49 sqq., 51 sqq., Mark iii. 17, ix. 38 sqq., to which are added, as showing that all the Apostles were dead before the Apocalypse was written, Rev. xviii. 20, xxii. 14. We can only recommend our readers to compare these texts with the conclusions drawn from them, that they may judge for themselves how firmly are the foundations upon which not a little of that modern criticism rests which is so eagerly opposed to the traditions of the Church. The argument against any connection between St. John and Ephesus is more elaborate. It depends partly upon the statement that there is no mention of such a connection in several of those early documents in which we might naturally have looked for it, and partly on the endeavour to prove that Irenæus, our chief authority upon the point, was led, under the combined influences of misunderstanding and of the necessities of the times, to confound the 'Presbyter John,' of whom we have already spoken, with the far more important John the Apostle. It was of the former, not the latter, that Irenæus had, while yet a boy, heard many memorable things from Polycarp; the former, not the latter, had been the 'Lord's disciple,' had succeeded to the sphere of St. Paul's labours in Asia Minor, had lived in Ephesus, had written the Revelation and the Gospel, and had died at a very great age in the reign of the Emperor Trajan. The first part of the argument obviously proves nothing. We have no right to fix beforehand what a writer is bound to say; and if we are to reject as false any statement of antiquity simply because, in the scanty remains of early ecclesiastical literature which have come down to us, some fragments may be discovered which do not mention it, there will be little left us to believe. The second part of the argument, relating to the supposed mistake of Irenæus, has not even a shadow of probability to recommend it. It is inconsistent with the language of that Father when, in his letter to Florinus, he dwells with pathetic force upon the distinctness with which the events of youth impress themselves upon the memory. It is not less inconsistent with the fact that this supposed mistake of Irenæus does not obtain the slightest support from any writer of the Church during the first 1700 years of her existence. It elevates into a great historical reality a presbyter of whom, if he ever existed, we know nothing but the name. And finally, it is at variance with one of the earliest, most continuous,

1 We venture to refer, for a fuller exposition of some of these points than can be attempted here, to two articles by the present writer in the Contemporary Review for August and September 1871.
and best authenticated traditions of the early Christian age. The connection of St. John with Asia and Ephesus, it is true, is not alluded to in the Acts of the Apostles or in the Epistles of St. Paul, because in all probability it did not begin until these books had been penned; but it is spoken of by a succession of ancient Christian writers, some of whom, from their official position in Ephesus itself, had the very best opportunities of being accurately informed; others of whom are our chief authorities for many of the most important facts of Christian antiquity. We refer to Apollonius, presbyter of Ephesus as early as the middle of the second century; to Irenæus, to Polycrates bishop of Ephesus, to Clement of Alexandria, to Origen, and to the historian Eusebius. There is no need to speak of others. Upon few things, not mentioned in Scripture, can we rely with greater confidence than upon this, that the Apostle John was the head of the churches of Asia Minor before his exile to Patmos, and that after his deliverance from exile he returned to Ephesus, where he died.

From all that has been said it will, we trust, be manifest to our readers that the arguments, drawn chiefly from internal considerations, against the authorship of the Apocalypse by the Apostle John, are insufficient to shake the clear and decided testimony of antiquity, that the ‘John’ who speaks in it is no other than he is acknowledged to be by nearly all critics of the New Testament, including the most eminent of modern times, even the John who ‘leaned upon the Lord’s breast at supper.’

II.—Date and Place of Writing.

The inquiry as to the date at which the Apocalypse was composed is attended with considerable difficulty. Not, indeed, that the external evidence upon the point is again either defective or ambiguous, for there is no question of New Testament criticism in regard to which we have clearer or more definite statements from a very early period. But the internal evidence appears at first sight to conflict with the external; while, at the same time, it is thought by many to be so decisive that they are able to fix not only the year, but the very month and day upon which the writer beheld, if he did not also publish, his visions. Putting aside lesser and more unimportant differences of opinion, the main question is whether we are to assign the book to an early or a late date. Was it penned before the destruction of Jerusalem, in that case about A.D. 68; or does it belong to the close of the reign of Domitian, about A.D. 95 or 96? The latter view, which was universally prevalent in the Church from the earliest down to the most recent times, is founded chiefly upon a passage of Irenæus in which that Father, in the Greek text preserved by Eusebius (H. E. v. 8), says that the Apocalypse ‘was seen by the Apostle no long time ago, but almost in our own generation, about the end of the reign of Domitian.’ It is unnecessary to consider attempts that have been made to find in this passage another subject for the verb ‘was seen’ than the Apocalypse, spoken of immediately before. The meaning of the statement is simply indisputable; and we must either accept it, or allow (what may certainly have happened) that Irenæus was mistaken. But Irenæus was not likely to be mistaken. We have already had occasion to notice his intimate relations with Polycarp, the disciple of St. John himself; and the fact of the late date mentioned by him, one which in his opinion tended to explain the mysterious nature of the allusion to the number of the beast in chap. xiii. 18 about which he was writing at the time, was a fact which he would certainly not regard with either indifference or carelessness. Not only, however, is this the case. The opinion of Irenæus was held also by Eusebius, who distinctly connects the banishment of St. John to Patmos with the time of Domitian, who even expressly mentions the fifteenth
INTRODUCTION TO THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

year of that emperor's reign as the time (H. E. iii. 18, comp. iii. 20), and who appears to depend for his authorities not on Irenæus only, but on 'the ancients' (H. E. iii. 20). The testimonies of not a few of these 'ancients,' indeed, still survive, as of Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, Victorinus bishop of Pettau in Pannonia (see them in Canonicity, by Dr. Charteris); and, although they cannot be spoken of as equally distinct with that of Irenæus, they are yet sufficient to show what was the accepted belief of the early Church in parts of the world distant from one another, and therefore likely to have received their information from independent sources.

Various considerations may be mentioned favourable to this conclusion. Thus the persecution under Domitian appears to have been much more widespread than that under Nero, by whom St. John must have been banished if the earlier date of the Apocalypse be correct. In this way it would be more likely to reach the Apostle, whom we have no means of connecting with Rome at the time, and who was in all probability far distant from that city. Again, there is evidence that under Domitian banishment was 'a usual punishment' (Speaker's Commentary on the New Test. iv. p. 431), while evidence of a similar kind is wanting in the case of Nero. And, once more, the fact that the Apocalypse is addressed to the churches of Asia Minor agrees much better with the idea that it was written late in the Apostle's life, than that it was written at a time when we have no proof whatever, but rather the reverse, that he was connected with that region of the Church. The last-mentioned consideration seems to us, indeed, worthy of more serious attention than, so far as we know, it has received. The point is this. The Apocalypse itself presupposes in its first three chapters an intimate connection between the writer and the Asiatic churches,—a connection, too, which it is hardly possible to think of in any other light than as one of affectionate authority on the side of the former, and of willing acknowledgment of such authority on the side of the latter. Besides which it is not to be forgotten that all the most important evidence for the authenticity of the book is so closely bound up with a belief in the connection spoken of, that, if this part of it be unworthy of trust, little dependence can be placed on any of its other parts. When, then, was the connection established? Certainly not before A.D. 62, for the Epistle to the Ephesians was written about that date; and, in conformity with his settled rule of action, St. Paul would neither have laboured in Ephesus, nor have written to Christians there, had St. John already established himself in that city (Rom. xv. 20). Nor could the connection have been formed between A.D. 62 and A.D. 68. The interval is too short to have produced the results belonging to it. Of the years after A.D. 68 it is unnecessary to speak. No one who rejects the late date thinks of any year immediately or shortly subsequent to the fall of Jerusalem. The force of this consideration ought surely to be more acknowledged than it has been by those who think that the Apostle did not leave the holy city till the very eve of its destruction. But critics of the negative school who maintain the authenticity of the Apocalypse ought equally to feel it. In exact proportion as they imagine St. John to have been animated by a narrow Judaic instead of a wide Christian spirit, must they allow that he could hardly, before the fall of Jerusalem, have extended his interest and his sphere of action, as he must have done before he could write the first three chapters of the Apocalypse. Nothing is more unlikely than that as early as A.D. 68 a person, animated by a spirit so exclusively Judaic as that attributed to the Apostle, should have formed such ties to churches in a Gentile land, and composed very largely at least of Gentile converts, as to lead him to select seven of them to be representatives of the one universal Church of Christ.

It has, indeed, been sometimes urged that the voice of antiquity is not so much in
INTRODUCTION TO THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

In favour of a late date for the Apocalypse as might be supposed from the above remarks. Theophylact has been quoted for the statement that St. John was an exile in Patmos thirty-two years after the Ascension, and that there and then he wrote his Gospel. Even though this statement were correct, it would not follow that the Apocalypse was written at the same time. We only learn from it that Theophylact believed the exile to have taken place under Nero. But the grounds upon which he rested his belief are not given; and, in their absence, it is sufficient to say that a writer who lived at the close of the eleventh century has no authoritative voice in an inquiry of this kind. Again, the statement that St. John wasbanished under Nero is found in the preface to one edition of the Syriac version of the New Testament; but this preface is generally supposed to belong to the sixth century, and is thus, not less than the statement of Theophylact, destitute of any peculiar weight. Finally, it is hardly necessary to allude to the statement of a treatise professing to be the production of Dorotheus bishop of Tyre, but also ascribed by later scholars to the sixth century, that the Apostle was exiled under Trajan. Apart from the date to which the statement belongs, it is in itself so chronologically improbable, as well as so much at variance with all the other evidence of antiquity upon the point, that no importance whatever can be attached to it.

In the circumstances now mentioned it is obviously unfair to speak of the 'absence of external evidence' (Davidson, _Intro._ vol. i. p. 348, 1st ed.). More definite and clear evidence of that kind it would not be easy to imagine. If any other conclusion than that which asserts the late date of the book before us is to be adopted, it must rest upon overpowering evidence supplied by its own contents.

Such evidence, it is not to be denied, is supposed by the greater number of modern inquirers to exist. Not only scholars of the negative school, but many writers of the present day, eminently distinguished both for sobriety and reverence of spirit, accept it as decisive. Some consideration therefore must be devoted to this point. The evidence relied on may be said to resolve itself into two branches, the interpretation of particular texts, and the general character of the contents and style of the book.

As to the first of these, it is urged by Hilgenfeld that passages such as chaps. vi. 9, xi. xvi. 6, xvii. 6, xviii. 24, xix. 2, refer to the persecution of the Christians by Nero ( _Einl._ p. 447); but a moment's attention to them is sufficient to show that they are equally applicable to any persecution of Christians whatsoever, and that there is absolutely nothing to connect them with Nero rather than Domitian. Chap. xi. 1, 2 is confidently referred to as showing, partly, that the temple must still have been in existence when the words were written; partly, that the Jewish war which began A.D. 66 must then have been in progress, inasmuch as the writer expects that Jerusalem and the outer court of the temple will be destroyed by the heathen. It is sufficient to reply that the inferences can be accepted only on two suppositions, both of which are certainly incorrect. First, that certain parts of the prophecy, the measuring reed and the measuring, the two olive trees, the two candlesticks, and the beast, are symbolical; but that the temple, the altar, the court, the holy city trodden under foot by the Gentiles, the 42 months and the 1260 days, are literal (Macdonald, _Life of St. John._ p. 159). We have not space to discuss these matters in detail. It is obvious that a line of distinction, thus arbitrarily drawn between what is literal and what is symbolical, leaves it in the power of an interpreter to make anything that he pleases of the prophecy. Besides which the prophecy was not upon this view fulfilled. Jerusalem was not trodden under foot of the Gentiles from the moment when 'Vespasian appears to have received his commission from Nero,' but from the moment when the city was
INTRODUCTION TO THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

taken; and it is no sufficient answer to the non-fulfilment of other parts that we have here 'an example of a prophecy which contains at the same time the only history of notice of the events by which it was fulfilled.' The measuring, too, upon the view now combated, must be understood of destruction, whereas the analogy of the Old Testament requires that we refer it to preservation. The truth is that the whole passage is symbolical, and that, as we shall endeavour to show in the Commentary, the symbolism is founded not on the thought of the Herodian temple at all, but on that of the tabernacle (see on chap. xi. 1, 19). Be the foundation of the symbolism, however, what it may, the writer has manifestly in his eye the spiritual temple, the true Church of Christ, which was to be preserved while all false professors were to be cast out.

The second unfounded supposition upon which the view that we are now combating proceeds is, that the writer, a fanatical Jewish-Christian, anticipated in the very first stage of the Jewish war the fate here spoken of for the greater portion of the temple buildings and for the holy city. He could not have done so. If uttering only his own expectations he could have entertained no idea but one,—that the Almighty would yet, as He had often done before, interfere on behalf of His ancient people, and guard the Zion which He loved. Or if, as is rendered probable by a comparison of Rev. xi. 2 with Luke xxii. 24, he was proceeding upon the prophecy of Christ, how could he shut his eyes to the fact that, at a moment when all the buildings of the temple were before Him (Matt. xxiv. 2), our Lord had said, 'the days will come, in which there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down'? (Luke xxi. 6). The words of chap. xi. 2 cannot be referred to the literal temple, without throwing the interpretation of the whole Apocalypse into confusion.

Still more importance is attached, by those who argue for an early date from individual texts, to chap. xiii. 1 compared with chap. xvii. 10, 11, the general view of these verses (though the differences of different commentators are far from slight) being that the heads of the beast spoken of are emperors of Rome, that the head which was wounded to death, but whose deadly wound was healed, is Nero, about in popular expectation to return from the grave; and that, as the head which 'is' is either Galba or Vespasian, we may conclude with unerring certainty that the Apocalypse was written in the latter half of A.D. 68, or at least not later than the spring of A.D. 69 or 70. Dösterdieck even goes so far as to fix upon Easter day of A.D. 70, pre-eminently the 'Lord's day' of the year, as that when the apocalyptic visions were beheld (Die Offenbarung, Einl. p. 53). A full answer to such conjectures can only be given after the passages referred to have been studied. It must be enough in the meantime to reply that the argument proceeds upon what we have endeavoured to show in the Commentary is a mistaken supposition, that the 'kings' spoken of are individuals, not national powers, and that the Seer expected the return of Nero from the dead to take vengeance upon Rome. Let the false exegesis involved in these conclusions be abandoned, and it will be seen that there is nothing in the passages before us inconsistent with the idea of the later date. As has been well said by Dean Alford, 'Those whose view of the prophecy extends wider, and who attach a larger meaning to the symbols of the beast and his image and his heads, will not be induced by such very uncertain speculations to set aside a primitive and, as it appears to them, a thoroughly trustworthy tradition' (Prol. to Rev. § 2, 26).

Turning now from individual texts to general contents and style, it is urged that had Jerusalem been destroyed before the Apocalypse was written, the writer could not have failed to notice that event. To what end, we may ask, should he have specifically noticed it? He is not writing history, either past or future. He is gathering the general lesson taught by all history, by all the dealings of God, alike
with His Church and her foes, both in previous ages and in his own time. The fall of Egypt or Nineveh or Babylon was equally suited to his purpose, but he makes no express mention of any of these catastrophes. He remembers them, he has them in many an incidental allusion distinctly before his eye, but he does not notice them as particular events, and he is satisfied with unfolding that principle of God's dealings which their fall expresses. A similar remark may be made in regard to the destruction of Jerusalem. Nay, more. May we not venture to say that the book rather presupposes this destruction? It describes a state of things of which judgment upon Judaism is a leading feature. Not, indeed, that judgment falls upon Judaism regarded as distinct from heathenism, but the idea underlies the whole book that a degenerate Judaism is the emblem of all opposition to the truth, and that as such it is specially doomed to the judgments of the Almighty. Now it is one of the most marked characteristics of the Apocalypse that the writer proceeds upon facts, only catching their deep general significance, and extending and spiritualising them. Whence, then, did he gain the idea of the holy city being trodden under foot of the Gentiles (chap. xi. 2); whence, still more, the idea of Babylon, the same as false Jerusalem, being burned (chap. xviii. 9)? No answer can well be given, except that it was from the destruction of Jerusalem. That terrible scene of desolation is present to his mind. He seems to 'stand afar off,' and to see 'the smoke of the city's burning.' The thought of it supplies him with some of his most terrible imagery; and, in the judgment executed upon her, he beholds the pledge and the type of that still wider judgment which shall be immediately accomplished upon all the enemies of God by Him who cometh quickly.

Once more, it is urged with no small degree of plausibility that both the style and tone of thought in the Apocalypse lead to the impression that it must belong to the earlier rather than the later period of the Apostle's life. Of the first of these two points we have already spoken, and we can now only repeat that a space of twenty-seven years spent in Ephesus, where the Greek tongue would be more used than in Jerusalem, offers no adequate explanation of the peculiar style of the book before us. Its solenisms are not such as proceed from ignorance of the Greek language, and they would not have been removed by greater familiarity with it. However we may attempt to account for them, they are obviously designed, and rather imply a more accurate knowledge of the grammatical forms from which they are intentional departures. At the same time, there are passages in the book (as, for example, chap. xviii.) which, in their unsurpassed and unsurpassable elocution exhibit a command of the Greek tongue on the part of the writer that long familiarity with it would best explain, were explanation necessary. As to the second of the two points above alluded to, there is no reason to think that the heat and fire which appear in the tone of thought belonged only to the Apostle's youth. We know, indeed, that the contrary was the case. The stories handed down to us, such as that of St. John and the young robber, connected as they are with the later period of his life, show that to its very end there burned in him the same fervour of passion which would have called down fire upon the Samaritan village; and, in the prefatory remarks to the Fourth Gospel in this Commentary, we have already called attention to the fact that that Gospel, belonging by the acknowledgment of all who receive it to St. John's closing days, reveals a tone of thought which emphatically marks its writer as a 'son of thunder' (Introduction, p. xv.). Finally, if it be said that the Jewish imagery of the Apocalypse belongs more naturally to St. John's earlier than to his later years, it ought not to be forgotten that by no writer of the New Testament does the intimate connection between Judaism and Christianity seem to have been so deeply felt.
the very last, the key-note of the whole Christian system was contained for him in the Saviour's words, 'Salvation is of the Jews' (John iv. 22). Jesus was not a new light; He was only the fulness of the light which had partially shone in prophecy (John i. 8, 9); He was not simply the Son of God, He was the King of Israel (John i. 49). Old Testament thoughts and figures appear with remarkable copiousness throughout the Fourth Gospel; and the use of them in the Apocalypse is not greater than admits of easy explanation, by thinking of the prophetic nature of the book and of the class of literature to which it belongs.

Reviewing the whole question of date, it appears to us that the internal evidence supposed to be in favour of an early date is not sufficient to overthrow the strong and clear external evidence in favour of a late one. We allow at once that were it not for the latter the book would naturally produce the impression that it belonged to the first period of St. John's life rather than its last. Yet a mere impression of this kind might, it will be allowed, be easily enough wrong; and when we are once led by any evidence to incline towards the opposite conclusion, it is not difficult to see in the book itself much that favours it. Notwithstanding, therefore, the current opinion to the contrary, we must express our conviction that the exile in Patmos and the composition of the Apocalypse belong to the reign of Domitian, not of Nero; and consequently, when the statements of Irenæus and Eusebius are taken into account, to the year A.D. 95 or 96.

Little need be said as to the place where the Apocalypse was written. On the supposition, every way probable notwithstanding the doubts of some recent critics, that St. John returned to Ephesus after his banishment, the question can only lie between this city and Patmos itself. The past tenses used in chap. i., 'gave,' 'sent,' 'was,' etc., are distinctly in favour of the former, and we conclude therefore that our book was written at Ephesus.

III.—Design and General Characteristics.

Having spoken of the authorship and date of the Apocalypse, as well as of the place where it was written, it will now be proper to turn more directly to the book itself, with the view of gathering from it one or two particulars as to the author's design and the general characteristics that mark his work. These particulars are of importance in helping us to understand him, and they are intimately connected with the views of his meaning taken in the following Commentary.

1. Of the design it will not be necessary to say much. It is to encourage and strengthen the Church during the period which was to elapse between the close of direct revelation and the second coming of her Lord. That period had been described by Jesus Himself, especially in His last discourses, as one of great difficulty and trial to His people. He had indicated to them in the plainest manner, and in many a different form of expression, that they would not then enjoy prosperity and ease. On the contrary, the sufferings which He had experienced would be repeated in the experience of all the members of His Body. The Bridegroom would be taken away from the children of the bridechamber, and they who were thus deprived of Him would fast in those days. They would have to contend both with outward persecution and with inward degeneracy and apostasy. Men's hearts would faint for fear, and for expectation of the things that were coming on the earth. The very powers of heaven would be shaken. The Book of Revelation, then, was designed to cheer and animate the Church through these days of darkness, and to point out to her more clearly than had yet been done the nature of the position she was to
INTRODUCTION TO THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

maintain, of the contest she was to wage, of the sufferings she was to endure, of the triumphs she was to win, and of the glorious inheritance that was to be bestowed upon her at the last. It was to let her know that she had not been launched upon an ocean of unanticipated trials, but that all had been foreseen by her Divine and watchful Guardian, and that she might rest in the assurance that, followed by the eye of Him who holdeth the winds in the hollow of His hand, she would in due time be brought into her desired haven. In particular, the ultimate theme of the book is the return of the Saviour, and His receiving His people to Himself, that where He is there they may be also. 'Yea: I come quickly,' is the voice that runs through it: 'Amen: come, Lord Jesus,' is the answer which it is intended to awaken in the believing heart. This general object has been recognised by all interpreters, and it need only be added more distinctly that it was not a local or a temporary one. It must, of course, be at once allowed that the book had a special application to those in whose hands it was first placed, and that the peculiar circumstances of Christians at the time when it was written determined both its object and its imagery. The same thing has to be said of all the other books of the New Testament. But in the case of none of them is the universal reference so clear as in that of the Apocalypse. No competent inquirer will deny that the seven churches of Asia represent the universal Church. The apostle, too, did not know when the end would be; and he could not have forgotten the words in which Christ Himself had said, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father hath appointed by His own authority' (Acts i. 7). As he looked abroad, therefore, upon the trials of the Church in his own day, and beheld trial continuing to be her portion in this world to the end, it could not be otherwise than his design to supply her with comfort as abiding as her sorrow. To whatever extent he would first of all instruct and console the Christians around him under trials that may have been peculiar to them, it is impossible not to allow that he desired to supply instruction and consolation in equal measure to Christians under other trials and in other days.

2. Turning from the design to the general nature of the book, what has been said may prepare us for some of those characteristics of it which must be fixed distinctly in our minds, if we would either comprehend its meaning or render to it that justice which it has been so frequently refused.

   (1.) It is a book which deals with principles rather than with particular events. The same remark, indeed, is applicable to all the prophetic books of Scripture, for these are for the most part occupied with principles that are generally, even universally, fulfilling themselves in human life. They were written to call men's attention, not so much to the mode in which at some remote point of time events then to happen would embody their fulfilment, as to direct them to that scheme of the Divine working which continually reappears in history. They are a proclamation of eternal truths,—of the sovereignty of God, of His superintendence of the world, of His approbation of good, of His hatred of evil, of the fact that, notwithstanding all the apparent anomalies around us, He is conducting to final triumph His own plan for the establishment of His righteous and perfect kingdom. To have clothed such truths in language corresponding in minute details with particular incidents of the future, would have deprived them of their most important characteristic, would have exhausted their meaning in one fulfilment, and would have weakened the force of those lessons which they have for all ages and all circumstances. It is well, therefore, that prophecy should be uttered to a large extent in general language. No doubt the difficulty of applying it with universal consent to special incidents is thus increased. The men of one age see it fulfilled in what is passing around them; the
men of another age do the same; till, in almost exact proportion as ages increase in number, interpretations multiply. Then the scorners cries, Behold the folly of endeavouring to interpret prophecy at all; each interpreter has his own interpretation; and, as these interpretations cannot all be true, the probability is that all of them are false, and that the decision of the question is beyond our reach. No language can be more mistaken. In a certain sense each of the interpreters spoke of was right. He was right in seeing the events of his own day unfold themselves in a manner corresponding to the prophecy; and had he merely said, Here is a fulfilment of it, he would have been able to justify his conclusion. His error lay in saying, Here is the fulfilment, as if no other fulfilment had ever been or were to be.

These remarks, applicable to all prophecy, apply with peculiar force to the Revelation of St. John. It is a book in which the general principles of good and evil, together with the judgments of God that follow them, are set in the most direct opposition to each other. The struggle between these two principles marks all time. It returns in every age, and God is always the same God of judgment. So far, then, as is consistent with fair interpretation, we must desire to see the prophecies of this book fulfilling themselves continually, and, as the struggle between good and evil deepens, in continually increasing degree. This, however, we could not do, did they not possess that generality of character which is so closely connected with a figurative style. A definite disclosure of names and years would have brought them into relation with one period alone.

(a.) The figurative and symbolic style of the Apocalypse is intimately associated with the position, the training, the habits, and the purpose of the writer. The Apostle had been a Jew, in all the noblest elements of Judaism a Jew to the very core. We know it from what is told us of his history in the Gospels; we know it not less from numerous little marks which stamp the Fourth Gospel, penned by him, as one of the most genuine productions of a Jewish mind. It is true, no doubt, that we do not meet in that Gospel such figures as we meet in the Apocalypse. The difference is easily explained. In the former, St. John was writing narrative and describing fact. In the latter, he is looking with prophetic eye into the future; and what more natural than that, when he does so, he should adopt the method and the style of those old Prophets whose work had been the glory of his nation, and whose words had fed the loftiest and brightest hopes of his own heart? We may expect that everything written by him from such a point of view will breathe the very essence of Old Testament prophecy, will be moulded by its spirit, be at home amidst its pictures, and be familiar with its words. Why consider this inexplicable? Why deny to a Christian Apostle the right of clothing his ideas in forms of speech sanctified to him by all that was best in the past history of his people, and, may we not hope, also sanctified to us? We do not make it an objection to Isaiah, or Ezekiel, or Daniel, or Zechariah, that they adopted in their communications with men the style which they actually employed. Yet the contents of their prophecies are substantially the same as the contents of that before us—an old and sinful world going down that a new and better world may take its place; the hatefulness, the danger, and the punishment of sin contrasted with the beauty, the security, and the reward of righteousness; the ever-present, though unseen, Ruler of the universe watching over His own, making even the wrath of man to praise Him, and guiding all things towards His own glorious issues. How could one who had fired his soul amidst these pictures of earlier days until he was 'weary with forbearing and could not stay;' who knew that man was the same and God the same in every age; who looked into the future and saw in it, under the light of the Incarnation, not a time entirely
INTRODUCTION TO THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

357
different from what had been, but the fulness of what had long since begun, the
culmination of ages that had gone before,—fail to speak in the tones most familiar to
him when he spoke upon such subjects? Or how could he fail to behold the world
through the medium of figures that had till then had complete possession of his
thoughts? These very figures of the Apocalypse, the symbols that it employs, the
language that it speaks, are a testimony to the thorough reality of the writer, to the
depth of his convictions, and to the profoundness of the emotions with which his soul
was stirred. Then, again, we ought to remember that he was addressing persons
familiar with his style of thought. The Old Testament was the Bible of the Church.
The books of the New Testament had not yet been gathered into a volume. Some of
them may not have been written. The Christian Church, even among the Gentiles,
had been grafted upon the stem of David. It had an interest in Zion and Jerusalem;
it saw in Babylon the type of its enemies; it felt itself to be the true Israel of God.
The language and figures of the Apocalypse were, therefore, closely adapted to its
condition, and must have gone home to it with peculiar power.

(3.) In connection with the symbolical nature of the Apocalypse, and with what
has just been said, it is worth while to take more particular notice of the extent to which
the symbols of the book are drawn from objects familiar to the writer and his readers.
Thus we see him constantly laying the regions of Eastern nature under contribution
for his purpose, and taking advantage of phenomena which, at least in the forms of their
manifestation here employed, may be said to be almost peculiar to the East. Light-
nings, great thunders, hail of the most destructive severity, and earthquakes, play
their part. We read of the wilderness into which the woman with the man-child was
driven; of the dens and rocks of the mountains in which the terrified inhabitants of
earth shall hide themselves from the wrath of the Lamb; of the frightful locusts
of the fifth trumpet-plague; of fowls that fill themselves with the flesh of men. In
like manner we read of eagles, of the sound of the millstone, of olive trees and palm
branches, of the vintage, and of the products of an Eastern clime—odours, ointments
and frankincense, wine and oil. All these are directly associated with the locality to
which the first readers of the book belonged. Even objects well known in other lands
are viewed in the light in which the East, herein differing from the West, regards
them, as when horses are presented to us, not so much in the magnificence as in the
terror of their aspect; or as when the sea, instead of being the symbol of grandeur or
eternal youth, time writing "no wrinkle on its azure brow," is spoken of only as the
symbol of all that is dark or terrible.

Not only, however, does Eastern nature lend a multiplicity of figures to the Seer,
the Old Testament does the same. How often does he refer to Israel and its tribes,
to the tabernacle, to the temple with its pillars and incense, to the high priest's robes,
to the seven-branched golden candlestick, to the ark of the testimony, to the hidden
manna, and to the parchment rolls written both within and on the back! Of his use
of the Prophets we have already spoken, and it is only necessary to add that in
employing them as he does he is not to be regarded as their servile imitator. If his
 correspondence with them be marked, his originality, his free and independent
handling of his materials, is still more so. He evidently feels that although he and
they are dealing with the same great theme,—the development of the kingdom of
God,—he is called upon to deal with it in a higher stage of its progress than that
known to them. Its issues were now both more swift in their execution and more
mighty in their effects.

In connection with this point, it is interesting to observe that no symbol of the
Apocalypse seems to be taken from heathenism. This is not the case with the other
INTRODUCTION TO THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

New Testament writers, who do not hesitate to illustrate and enforce their arguments by considerations drawn from the customs of the heathen lands around them. But it is the case with St. John in the Apocalypse. The symbolism of the book appears to be exclusively Jewish. The 'crown of life,' spoken of in chap. ii. 10, is not founded on the thought of the crown given to those who had been successful in the games of Greece and Rome, but on that of the crown of a king, of one admitted to royal dignity and clothed with royal splendour. The figure of the 'white stone' with the new name written in it of chap. ii. 17 does not spring from the white pebble which, cast in heathen courts of justice into the ballot-box, expressed the judge's acquittal of the prisoner at the bar, but in all probability from the glistening plate borne by the high priest upon his forehead. And all good commentators are agreed that the 'palms' of chap. vii. 9 are not the palms of heathen victors either in the battle or in the games, but the palms of the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles, when, in the most joyful of all her national festivals, Israel celebrated that life of independence on which she entered when she marched from Rameses to Succoth, and exchanged her dwellings on the hot brickfields of Egypt for the free air of the wilderness and the 'booths' which she erected on the open country. (Comp. Trench On the Epistles to the Seven Churches.)

(4.) After what has been said, it will be at once granted that the symbols of the Apocalypse are to be judged of with the feelings of a few, and not as we should judge of symbolical writings in our own nation and age. No one will deny that in the symbols, alike of the Old Testament and of the book before us, there are many traits which, looked at in themselves, cannot fail to strike the reader as in a high degree exaggerated, extravagant, and out of all keeping with nature or probability. They are not conceived of according to the laws, as we consider them, of good taste; and they cannot, without seriously offending us, be transferred from the pages of the book to the canvas of the painter. Take even the sublime description of the one 'like unto a Son of man' in chap. i. 13-16, or of the Lamb in chap. v. 6, 7, or of the New Jerusalem in chap. xxi. 16, and we feel at once in all these instances that nothing can be more out of keeping with the realities of things. This incongruity of imagery strikes us even more in the descriptions given of the composite animals in many of the symbols of the book, as in the case of the four living creatures of chap. iv. 6-8, of the locusts of chap. ix. 7-10, or of the beast of chap. xiii. 1, 2. But the truth is that in all these cases the congruity of the figure with nature, or with notions of propriety suggested by her, was altogether unthought of. It is probable that the style of such representations had been introduced into Judea from Assyria, the wonderful sculptures of which exhibit the very same features,—almost entire ignorance of beauty of form, but massiveness, power, strength, greatness of conception in what was designed either to attract or overawe or terrify. The sculptor in Assyria, the Prophet in the Old Testament, and precisely in the same manner St. John in the Apocalypse, had an idea in his mind which he was desirous to express; and, if the symbolism effected that end, he did not pause for a moment to inquire whether any such figure either existed in nature or could be represented by art. As he felt, so did the spectator and reader feel. It was in their eyes no objection to the symbol that the combination of details was altogether monstrous. One consideration alone weighed with them, whether these details lent a force to the idea that it could not have otherwise possessed. When, therefore, we view the symbols of the Apocalypse in this light, and it is the only just light in which to view them, our sense of propriety is no longer shocked; we rather recognise in them a vivacity, a spirit, and a force in the highest degree interesting and instructive.

(5.) While this is the case, one other observation may be made. There is a
natural fitness and correspondence between the symbolism employed in the Apocalypse and the truth which it is intended to express. In his choice of symbols the Seer is not left to the wildness of unregulated fancy, or to the influence of mere caprice. Consciously or unconsciously, he works within certain limits of adaptation on the part of the sign to the thing signified. It is here exactly as it is in the parables of our Lord, in which all the representations employed rest on the deeper nature of things, on the everlasting relations existing between the seen and the unseen, on that hidden unity among the different departments of truth which makes one object in nature a more suitable type or shadow of an eternal verity than another. Thus, as has been well observed by Auberlen, 'The woman could never represent the kingdom of the world, nor the beast the Church. To obtain an insight into the symbols and parables of Holy Scripture, nature, that second or rather first book of God, must be opened as well as the Bible' (Daniel and the Revelation, p. 87). The principle now spoken of is one of great importance, and what appears to be the correct interpretation of some of the symbols of St. John depends in no small degree on its being kept steadily in view.

IV.—Structure and Plan.

Before attempting to mark the divisions into which the Apocalypse seems naturally to fall, it may be well to notice what appear to be one or two of the leading characteristics of its structure and plan. The matter is not one of curiosity only; it has a very close bearing on the interpretation of the book. Of these characteristics we notice—

1. That the most important visions seem to be synchronous, not successive. We refer especially to the three great series of the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Bowls, which occupy by much the larger portion of the prophetic part of the work. These series indeed succeed one another, as it was absolutely necessary that they should, both in the visions of the Seer and in the apprehension of his readers. The former could not see, the latter could not apprehend, them all in the same moment. But it does not follow that on that account each successive series must present events posterior in time to those of the series preceding it. The same, or at least similar, events may be repeated in each series of visions, and the difference between them may be found only in the fact that they are looked at from different points of view. Such appears to be actually the case. Let us take the first series of visions, that of the Seals, and it is almost impossible to escape the conviction that in them we have events reaching down to the final coming of the Lord. The vision of the sixth Seal, in which we read 'the great day of their wrath is come, and who is able to stand' (chap. vi. 17), can hardly refer to anything else. Then, after an episode, the seventh Seal follows, when there is 'silence in heaven about the space of half an hour' (chap. viii. 1). The work of Christ is accomplished; His enemies are overthrown; and His elect have been gathered in. Let us next take the second series of visions, that of the Trumpets, and more particularly the words of chap. xi. 15, 18. To what period can these words have relation except the great close of all? So that we are thus a second time conducted to the same point, and must regard the two series of visions as synchronous, rather than as historically successive. This conclusion is greatly strengthened when we turn to the third series of visions, that of the Bowls, which, like the two going before, is also ruled by the number seven. At the pouring out of the seventh Bowl in chap. xvi. 17, it is said that 'there came forth a great voice out of the temple, from the throne, saying, It is done,' while at ver. 20 it is added, 'and every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.' These words in both cases surely lead us
to the end. In the latter, indeed, they have the closest possible resemblance to those words of chap. xxi. 11, which cannot be referred to anything but the final judgment. The view now taken derives great confirmation from the singular parallelism running through the judgments of the Trumpets and the Bowls, and exhibited in the following table:—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First,</th>
<th>Second,</th>
<th>Third,</th>
<th>Fourth,</th>
<th>Fifth,</th>
<th>Sixth,</th>
<th>Seventh,</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trumpets relating to</td>
<td>BOWLS RELATING TO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The earth, chap. viii. 7.</td>
<td>The earth, chap. xvi. 2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sea, chap. viii. 8.</td>
<td>The sea, chap. xvi. 3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivers and fountains of the waters, chap. viii. 10.</td>
<td>Rivers and fountains of the waters, chap. xvi. 4.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sun, and moon, and stars, chap. viii. 12.</td>
<td>The sun, chap. xvi. 8.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pit of the abyss, chap. ix. 2.</td>
<td>The throne of the beast, chap. xvi. 10.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great voices in heaven, followed by lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail, chap. xi. 15, 19.</td>
<td>A great voice from the throne, followed by lightnings, and voices, and thunders, a great earthquake, and great hail, chap. xvi. 17, 18, 21.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A simple inspection of this table must of itself be almost sufficient to convince us of the great improbability of the supposition, that the two series in question relate to events of an entirely different kind, and separated from one another by long periods of time. It is surely much more likely that they express the same dealings of the Almighty's providence, though marked by certain points of distinction that we have still to notice.

Other illustrations may help still further to establish the truth of what has been said. Thus at the beginning of chap. xii. we have the vision of the woman clothed with the sun, and the bearer of a man-child who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron. This can be referred to nothing but the birth of Christ; yet it comes in after the visions of the Seals and of the Trumpets have both been closed,—a clear proof that the principle of structure here is not that of historical succession. Another striking instance of the same kind is afforded by the comparison of chap. xii. 6 and chap. xii. 14, where we have not two different flights of the woman into the wilderness, the two being only different aspects of one and the same flight.

These considerations, which might easily be illustrated at greater length, lead to the conclusion that in the main visions of the Apocalypse we have different series, not of successive, but of parallel and synchronous pictures, each series being complete in the particular line of thought presented by it, each being occupied not so much with events upon the temporal relation of which to one another we are to dwell, as with the presentation in a different light of the idea common to all the series. Something of the same kind may be seen in the parable of the wicked husbandmen in Luke xx. 9–15, where a succession of messengers is sent by the owner of the vineyard to demand his portion of the fruits. The dominating thought in the three messages of the owner, and in the threefold reception given to them, is not that of succession of time, as if each rejection involved certain historical events following what went before. The same picture of criminality is rather the leading thought of all the three rejections of the owner's message, though in each it is marked by special characteristics. So in the pictures of the Apocalypse of which we have been speaking there may be succession, even it may be in a certain sense succession of time: but it is succession of another kind altogether upon which we are invited to dwell. We are thus led to a second characteristic of these visions.
2. While synchronous rather than successive, they are at the same time climactic. In the parable of the wicked husbandmen, already referred to, climax in the guilt of those who rejected the just claims of the owner of the vineyard is distinctly traceable. In like manner the visions of the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Bowls, which constitute by far the larger portion of the Apocalypse, are not simply repetitions of the same thing. They are exhibitions of the same principle under different aspects, and the distinguishing feature of the difference is climax. This climax appears in the very selection of the objects by which each series of visions is characterized, and from which it is named. As compared with the first series, the second, by the simple fact that it is a series of Trumpets, indicates a higher, more exciting, and more terrible unfolding of the wrath of God upon a sinful world than was the case under the Seals. The trumpet is peculiarly the warlike instrument summoning the hosts to battle, and it thus connects itself with the judgments of God more closely than the seal (Jer. iv. 19; Joel ii. 1; Zeph. i. 15, 16). The bowl, again, was used in the service of the temple, and thus suggests, when it is made the instrument of judgment, a still more alarming idea of what the wrath of God will effect than is suggested by the trumpet. Besides which the supreme potency of the Bowls is distinctly expressed in the words by which they are introduced in chap. xv. 1, where we are told of the plagues contained in them that they are ‘the last, for in them is finished the wrath of God.’ They are the consummation of all judgment, the most complete manifestation of Him who not only rewards the righteous, but condemns and punishes the wicked.

If, again, we look at the three groups of visions as wholes, the same principle of climax shows itself. The Seals describe to us judgments of God, and thus indeed imply the sinfulness of man, for otherwise there would be no judgment; there would be only ‘peace,’ not a ‘sword.’ But this sinfulness of man is not brought to light, and judgments have not their specific reference to it unfolded. Even when we are bid see the souls under the altar, no more is said than that they had been slain for their adherence to the truth. The slaying itself had not been spoken of; while the different riders who come forth upon their horses are described as having ‘power given’ them to inflict judgment rather than as exercising that power. The series of the Trumpets marks an advance on this. It is not merely hinted now that the ‘souls’ had suffered on earth. We see them in the midst of suffering. They are brought before us, ere the series opens, as sending up their prayers out of their tribulation to Him who will avenge His elect (chap. viii. 3, 4). The judgments, accordingly, that now descend are a direct answer to these prayers. They are brought about by the fire of the altar upon which the prayers were laid being cast into the earth (chap. viii. 5). This progress is continued in the Bowls; yet not so much in temporal, in historical, succession, as in wickedness, in deliberate and determined rejection of the truth. The world has advanced in sin. Prophecy has again been uttered ‘before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings’ (chap. x. 11). The faithful witnesses have witnessed and been slain, and have ascended up to heaven in a cloud; but they that dwelt upon the earth have only rejoiced over them, and made merry, and sent gifts one to another (chap. xi. 10). The dragon, the beast, and the false prophet have successfully played their part (chaps. xii. xiii.). Therefore judgment falls, and falls naturally, with intensely increased severity.

Did our space permit, the point now before us might be very fully illustrated by a more minute comparison than was called for when considering our previous point, between the individual Trumpets and the corresponding Bowls. We can only advise our readers to make the comparison for themselves, when they will not fail to see how strikingly an increased potency of judgment is brought out under the latter.
INTRODUCTION TO THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

Thus it is that we may mark a most important succession in these visions, and this even although each series extends over the whole period of the Church's militant and oppressed history. There is a succession of a far more deeply interesting character than that of time, inasmuch as the successive series reveal to us ever deepening views of the conflict of the Church, of the opposition of the world to the truth, and of the judgments by which the sin of the world shall be visited.

3. In speaking of the structure of the Apocalypse, we have further to mark the symmetrical arrangement of its parts. We see this even in the Epistles to the seven churches in chaps. ii. and iii., which cannot be considered the most characteristic portion of the book. The composition of each of these Epistles upon the same plan is so obvious to every reader that it is unnecessary to enter into details.

When we turn to the body of the Apocalypse this symmetry of arrangement comes before us in a still more striking light. We have seven Seals, seven Trumpets, seven Bowls. Even these again are arranged symmetrically, the first four members of each group relating to earth, and a transition being made in each at the fifth member to the spiritual world. The table of comparison between the Trumpets and the Bowls, already given, may illustrate not only the parallelism, but the symmetry of the series. Still further it may be observed that, except in the case of the Bowls, the members of these series do not run on in uninterrupted succession to the end. There is a break between the sixth and seventh Seals, where we have presented to us the two visions of the sealing of the 144,000 and of the great multitude standing before the Lamb (chap. vii.). Precisely in the same way we have a break between the sixth and seventh Trumpets, where we meet the visions of the little book and of the measuring of the temple, together with the action and fate of the two witnesses who perish in their faithfulness, but are triumphant in death (chap. xi.). These are visions of comfort, episodes of consolation, obviously intended to sustain the soul in the thought of the last great outburst of the wrath of the Most High. It may, indeed, be asked why we have not similar visions between the sixth and seventh Bowls in order to complete the harmony? The answer to the question does not seem to be difficult. In this case the consolatory visions, those of chap. xiv., consisting of the Lamb upon Mount Zion and of the harvest and vintage of the earth, precede not simply the seventh Bowl, but all the seven, because the Lord is now making a short work upon the earth. The element of climax, in short, overcomes at this point that of perfect regularity. It does this, however, only to a small extent, for the visions of consolation are still there. Finally, it may be noticed that of the seven parts into which the Apocalypse may be best divided the seventh corresponds to the first, the sixth to the second, the fifth to the third, while the fourth or main section of the book occupies the central place.

4. Before passing from the structure and plan of the Apocalypse, it may be well to mark the parts into which it most naturally divides itself. These appear to be seven in number.

(1.) The Prologue: chap. i. 1-20. The book opens with a general description of One of whom it is said that He was 'like unto a son of man' (ver. 13); and there can be no doubt that He who is spoken of is the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet it is peculiarly important to observe that the Saviour is here presented to us less in His eternal glory, than as the great King and Head of His Church on earth. He is not only 'the first and the last;' He says of Himself, 'I was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore; and I have the keys of death and of Hades' (ver. 18). Add to this the fact that all the particulars given of Him (vers. 13-16) are taken up again in chaps. ii. and iii., and are there brought into relation with one or other of those seven
churches which, when united, set before us the universal Church, and we can have no hesitation in saying that in the Christ of this Prologue the Church is ideally included. In it Christ is one with His Church, and His Church is one with Him.

(2.) The presentation of the Church as she stands before us upon the field of human history: chaps. ii. and iii. That the seven churches to which the Epistles contained in these two chapters are addressed, represent the Church universal, as she extends throughout all lands, and is perpetuated in all ages, is a point which need not be discussed. All inquirers may be said to admit it. The object, therefore, of these chapters is to make us acquainted with what the Church is, alike in her strength and in her weakness, in her glory and in her shame, before her contest with her enemies is described.

(3.) General sketch of the issue of the Church’s contest: chaps. iv. and v. We have no space to examine the opinions of others with regard to these two chapters, and must rest satisfied with indicating the light in which it seems necessary to regard them. It is obvious that they are no part of the conflict, a description of which is the main object of the book. The visions representing it begin only with chap. vi. They are pictures of an introductory nature, bringing before us the heavenly Guardians of the Church as They preside over her destinies, and the Church herself as, in Their strength, she triumphs over all her foes. In short, having introduced the Church to us in chaps. ii. and iii., and having placed her on the field of actual history, the Seer would now give a representation of the victorious progress that awaits her in the conflict immediately to follow.

(4.) The contest of the Church with her enemies: chap. vi. 1–xviii. 24. In this section we have the leading portion of the book; and its object is to bring the Church before us, both in the height of her conflict with her three great enemies, the devil the world and the false prophet, and in the security of her victory over them. It is impossible at the same time to mistake the progress by which these chapters are marked, until the last Bowls of the wrath of God have been poured out, and Babylon has been completely overthrown.

(5.) The rest of the true disciples of Jesus when their conflict is past: chap. xix. 1–xx. 6. In this section the conflict described in the last section is over. There is no struggle now; there are only hallelujahs of praise. The great enemies of the Church have indeed to be cast out, and this is done with the two, the beast and the false prophet, who had been the viceroy of the devil upon earth. Before the section ends they are plunged into the lake of fire, and the devil himself is bound for a season, that the Church may enjoy undisturbed repose and triumph.

(6.) The final conflict and victory of the saints: chap. xx. 7–xxii. 5. The rest of Christ’s disciples at the close of their great conflict was not yet permanent. The devil had been bound, but not for ever driven away. He is permitted to return and make a final attack upon ‘the camp of the saints and the beloved city.’ But the attack is unsuccessful. He too is cast into the lake of fire, and the glory and happiness of God’s people is perfected in the New Jerusalem.

(7.) Epilogue: chap. xxii. 6–21. The concluding section of the Apocalypse brings before us the use to be made of the delineation given, and stirs up the Church to a more earnest cry than ever that her Lord would ‘come’ and accomplish all the promises of the book.

Such appears to be the most natural division of the contents of the Apocalypse. We can only, before passing to another point, ask our readers to compare it with what has been said in the Introduction to the Gospel of St. John with regard to the sections of that book (p. xxvii.). The present writer has dwelt more largely upon the
V.—Interpretation of the Apocalypse.

The remarks made in the two preceding sections of this Introduction on the general design and nature of the Apocalypse, as well as upon its structure and plan, have so far prepared the way for the principles upon which it is to be interpreted. It is necessary, however, to enter somewhat more fully into this point, for no book of Scripture has suffered so much from the variety of those systems of interpretation to which it has been exposed. To such an extent has this been the case, that many have been led to doubt whether anything like a definite interpretation is possible. Such a suggestion cannot be yielded to for a moment. If one thing be clearer than another, it is that the book was intended to be understood. Let us look at its title. It is ‘The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show unto His servants, even the things which must shortly come to pass’ (chap. i. 1). Let us listen to some of the earliest words spoken to the Seer by the glorious Person who appears to him. They are, ‘What thou seest write in a book, and send it to the seven churches’ (chap. i. 11). Or let us hear almost the last instructions of the angel when the visions of the book have ended, ‘Seal not up the words of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand’ (chap. xxii. 10); while, with still more pointed reference to the use to be made of it, the exalted Redeemer Himself declares, ‘I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify to you these things for the churches’ (chap. xxii. 16). The message of the Revelation, then, was not to be sealed up. It was to be spoken, to be testified, to man; and, if so, can any one for an instant doubt that it was to be listened to, to be apprehended, to be taken home, by man? The words, so solemnly repeated in each of the Epistles to the seven churches of Asia, may certainly be applied, if indeed it was not intended that they should be applied, to the whole of the book with which they are so intimately bound up, ‘He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.’

While it was thus the object of the Apocalypse to be understood, it ought not, upon the other hand, to be supposed that symbolical language is less the expression of thought, or that it is used with a less definite meaning, than any other language which a writer employs. Its details may indeed often elude our powers of interpretation; but this may arise from the fact that even to the Seer himself these details had no separate and individual force. Or, if they had, and we cannot understand them, we may yet be able to reach a sufficiently clear apprehension of the symbols as a whole.

The difficulty of interpreting the Apocalypse, therefore, lies neither in the intention of God nor in the character of the language. Much more than from either of these causes it has arisen from the fact that, owing to its peculiar nature, the book has lent itself in a greater than common degree to the theological polemic, and to the strifes of contending parties in the Church. Dealing with the fortunes of the people of God in this world, it has enabled all who considered themselves peculiarly His people, that is, almost every sect in turn, to launch its anathemas at the heads of others, and to see these others typified in the dark descriptions of which its pages are full. Thus its sublimity has been marred and its beauty soiled; while its noble lessons, intended to inculcate the widest views of God's superintending care of His whole Church, have been converted into catch-words which have not only alienated the world, but have even narrowed the hearts of Christian men. It is most con-
solitary to think that a new era has of late been opening for the Apocalypse.
Recent interpreters, or writers on particular parts of it, have been distinctly approaching
to a unanimity never before observed in regard to its interpretation. We may
hope that the time is not distant when, under a well-regulated exegesis, the Apocalypse
will lighten the dark places of the Church's pilgrimage with a light as clear as that
with which its visions, when originally seen, lightened the lonely rock of Patmos to
the exiled Seer.

1. Of the systems of interpretation which have been applied to the Apocalypse,
but which it is necessary to lay aside if we would profit from it, the first to be noticed
is the Continuously Historical. We speak first of this, because it has probably its
largest number of defenders in the British Islands and in America. The principle of
the system is that the book is a predictive prophecy, dealing with specific events of
history from the beginning to the close of the Christian era. All the greatest incidents,
and, it must be added, some of the most trivial details, of the past or present (such
as the red colour of the stockings of Romish cardinals) are to be seen in its prophetic
page; and the pious mind derives its encouragement and comfort from the thought
that these things were long ago foretold. Nor is there any reason why it should not
do so were it possible to fix the interpretation. But the whole school of historical
interpreters has been irretrievably discredited, if not by the extravagance or paltriness
of its explanations, at least by their hopeless divergence from, and contradiction of,
one another. Besides this, it has to be observed that to make the Apocalypse deal
almost exclusively with these historical incidents belonging to the later history of the
Church, is to make it a book that must have been useless to those for whom it was
first written. How could the early Christians discover in it the establishment of
Christianity under Constantine, the rise of Mahomedanism, the Lutheran Reforma-
tion, or the French Revolution? Of what possible use would it have been to foretell
to them events in which they could have no interest? Would they have been either
wiser or better if they had known them? Would they not have substituted a vain
praying into the future for the study of those divine principles which, belonging to
every age, bring the weight of universal history to enforce the lessons of our own
time? Would it not have made particular events, instead of the principles of the
Divine government of the world, the chief matter with which we have to concern
ourselves? Nothing has tended more to destroy the feeling that there is value in the
Apocalypse than this continuously historical interpretation of the book. The day,
however, for such interpretations has passed, probably never to return.

2. A second system of apocalyptic interpretation which, not less than the former,
must be set aside, is that known as the Praterist. By this system the whole book is
confined to events surrounding the Seer, or immediately to follow his day, these
events being mainly the overthrow, first of the Jews, and next of pagan Rome, to be
succeeded by peace and prosperity to the Church for a thousand years. This system,
the introduction of which in its completeness is generally ascribed to a distinguished
Jesuit of the seventeenth century, seems to have rested partly on the opposition of the
Church of Rome to that Protestant interpretation which regarded her as the apoca-
lyptic Babylon, and partly on the statements of the book itself in chap. i. 1, 3, where
it describes its contents as 'the things which must shortly come to pass,' and expressly
states that 'the time is at hand.' Nor is it to be denied that there is a much larger
element of truth in this system than in that continuously historical one of which we
have just spoken. It may without hesitation be conceded that the Seer did draw
from his own experience, and from what he beheld around him either fully developed
or in germ, those lessons as to God's dealings with the Church and with the world
which he applies to all time. It may also without impropriety be allowed that he could have no idea that the Second Coming of Christ would be so long delayed as it has been, and that he may have thought of it as likely to take place so soon as events, already seen by him in their beginnings, should be accomplished. But it is impossible to admit that, whether or not he anticipated the length of time that was to elapse before the Lord’s return, he deliberately confined himself to the Church’s fortunes in his own day, and left unnoticed whatever of pilgrimage and warfare was still in store for her. The whole tone of the book leads to the opposite conclusion. It certainly treats of what was to happen down to the very end of time, until the hour of the full accomplishment of the Church’s struggle, of the full winning of her victory, and of the full attainment of her rest. We do not object to the Præterist view on the ground that, were it correct, it would make the Apostle speak only of events long since passed away and of little present interest to us. The same reasoning would deprive of permanent value much of the teaching of the New Testament Epistles. We object to it rather upon exegetical grounds. The Apocalypse bears distinctly upon its face that it is concerned with the history of the Church until she enters upon her heavenly inheritance.

3. A third system of apocalyptic interpretation known as the Futurist has still to be noticed, but noticed only to be, like the two preceding ones, set aside. The main principle of this system is that almost the whole, if not the whole, book belongs to the future, that the time for its fulfilment has not yet come, and that it will not come until the very eve of our Lord’s return. With an element of truth in it to which we shall immediately advert, it is obvious that this system, as a whole, is indefensible. It destroys one of the main purposes of the Apocalypse, which was to strengthen and encourage the Church at the moment when it was written. It robs it of no small part of its value for the Church in after ages, for how shall we know when the end of our Lord’s return arrives? Nothing but the return itself, which is to take place like a thief in the night, can show when the eve was. The Church, therefore, upon this system, could never apply the events of the book directly to herself. She could never tell whether she was living in the last days of her history till the days were over. No doubt it may be said that a picture even of the future like that here presented may encourage. But a just exegesis of the book again comes in to prevent our supposing that we have only a picture of the future. The Church is addressed in her present circumstances, and is told what is to be done to her and for her at the instant when she reads the book, as well as at some distant day.

Yet there is an element of truth in the Futurist as well as in the Præterist scheme of interpretation. The book does belong to the time of the end, because that time is always, has always been, at hand. According to our modes of reckoning it may be delayed, but with God ‘one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years are as one day,’ and it is from the Divine point of view that the apocalyptic visions are presented to St. John. The Christian Church has been denied knowledge of the time when the Bridegroom will come, for this reason above all, that she may live in continual expectation of His coming, and so be at all times ready to meet Him. If she is always in the midst of her struggle, she may at the same time always believe that she is near its close. When, therefore, with the lessons of the Apocalypse she associates the idea that the cry is already going forth, ‘Behold, the Bridegroom cometh,’ she is only acting in the spirit of a book the distinguishing note of which is ‘I come quickly.’

The truth is, that both the Præterist and the Futurist system err in adopting too much of the principle which, on the continuously historical scheme, has been carried
to such unwarrantable excess. The former is right, in so far as it recognises the fact that the Seer dealt, first of all, with the events of his own day, and gathered even his most general lessons from them. The latter is right, in so far as it lays emphasis on the fact that throughout the whole book the Lord is at hand. But both are wrong in so far as they imagine that the Apocalypse deals with specific events rather than great principles, and in so far as they fail to observe that the principles with which it deals are applicable not only at the beginning or end, but throughout the whole period of the Church's history in this world. It is a mistake to imagine that the Church of Christ, in order to find comfort, must know the particular form which her trials will assume in any special age. To let her know this beforehand would, in many cases, be an impossibility; for in the nature of things an early age cannot, even if instructed, enter into the experiences of a later one, and so cannot conceive aright what may be the difficulties of the children of God in times long subsequent to itself. The Church knows enough if she is told that throughout all her earthly history her sufferings shall be those of her Lord, that at every point of it she will have to struggle with the world around her as He had to struggle with the world around Him; but that, however various her forms of suffering, her cup shall be no other than that of which He drank, and her baptism no other than that with which He was baptized. More than this is not only unnecessary; it might mislead. It might withdraw the Church's thoughts from the great truth that she is to be the companion of Jesus in His sorrows, in order to make her engage her thoughts with those more particular events which it is not of the slightest consequence for her to know. The Preterist and Futurist systems forget this, and so lose sight of the universal applicability of the book to the Church's fortunes.

Our readers will now easily understand that in the following Commentary the Apocalypse is not interpreted upon any of these three great systems. The book is regarded throughout as taking no note of time whatsoever, except in so far as there is a necessary beginning, and at the same time an end, of the action with which it is occupied. All the symbols are treated as symbolical of principles rather than of events; and that, though it is at once admitted that some particular event, whether always discoverable or not, lies at the bottom of each. All the numbers of the book are regarded also as symbolical, even the two horns of the lamb-like beast in chap. xiii. 11, expressing not the fact that the animal referred to has two horns (which it has not), but an entirely different meaning. The book thus becomes to us not a history of either early, or mediæval, or last events written of before they happened, but a solemn warning to Christians that in every age they have to consider the signs of their own time; and that, if they are true to their profession, they will find themselves in one way or another in their Master's position, and needing to be animated and comforted by the thought that, as He passed through suffering to glory, so shall they. In this sense the Apocalypse was most strictly applicable to St. John's own day, but it has been not less applicable in every age since then, and it will continue to apply with equal force to all ages that may be yet to come before the end.

It is in this point of view that the present writer feels that the Apocalypse is of such inestimable value to the Church; and that he cannot but lament the prevalence of those false modes of interpretation which, as it seems to him, have reduced it from the high moral and religious level at which it ought to stand to that of a puzzle for the curious, or a storehouse of harsh epithets for the controversial. It is strange to think that a book which points out to Christians how great must be their likeness to their Lord in all that ought to make them most humble-minded, most meek, and most forgiving, has been so often used as a means of fomenting spiritual pride and
INTRODUCTION TO THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

every form of uncharitableness. There is no book of Scripture which ought so much to soften the heart, to remind us that we are strangers here, and to lead us, through the thought of that contest with the world which we are so unwilling to face, into feelings of sympathy with all who are in any degree striving to exercise similar self-denial. But it will do this only when we see that the one thought upon which it rests, and which all its symbols are designed to impress upon us, is, that, as the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ in an evil world, our lot is to 'suffer with Him,' that with Him we may be also 'glorified.'

Of the principles upon which this Commentary has been written, as well as of those upon which the text has been determined, it is not necessary to speak now. They have been already explained in the Introduction to the Gospel of St. John (p. xxxv.); and it need only be added that the text of Drs. Westcott and Hort, as being in the opinion of the writer the best critical edition of the Greek New Testament that we possess, has been almost uniformly adopted. The influence of the Revised Version will also be traced throughout the Commentary; but this, in the circumstances, will be allowed to have been natural, if not indeed unavoidable. At the same time the text of that Version has been by no means slavishly followed.

The Author regrets that the limits to which he was confined have prevented so full a discussion of many points as he could have wished. He has been even not unfrequently compelled to give results without stating the grounds upon which they rest. This could not be helped. One effect of the limitation of his space may not be unacceptable to the reader. It has made it necessary to avoid quoting at any length the opinions of other commentators. On all disputed passages, and how numerous these are every student of the Apocalypse knows, the Author has endeavoured to come to an independent and definite conclusion.

This Introduction ought not to be closed without the Author's expressing his sense of obligation to his friend and old pupil, the Rev. James Cooper, Aberdeen, to whom he is indebted for many valuable suggestions, as well as to another friend, also an old pupil, the Rev. Alexander Fiddes of the same city, who has given him great assistance in the correction of the press.

THE UNIVERSITY, ABERDEEN,
1883.
THE REVELATION
OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE.

CHAPTER I. 1-8.

The Preface and Salutation.

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him,
to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent his servant John to his angel unto
the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first-born of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

1 the things 8 quickly 9 add through his angel
4 and signified them unto his servant John 5 witness 6 even
7 the 8 omit be 9 omit and
18 loosed 18 omit own 14 omit hath 15 he made
16 a kingdom, priests 17 his God and Father
18 the glory and the dominion 18 the clouds 19 even they that
21 the tribes 22 over him 22 Ye. Amen.
54 the Alpha and the Omega, 25 omit the beginning and the ending
86 add God; 27 he which

VOL. IV. 24
THE REVELATION.

Contents. In the first paragraph of the chapter we have the Preface and the Salutation of the book, the one extending from ver. 1 to ver. 3, the other from ver. 4 to ver. 8. The Preface consists of three parts,—the person from whom the revelation came; the fidelity with which it was received and uttered by him to whom it was primarily given; and the blessedness of those who receive and keep it. The Salutation consists also of three parts,—a benediction from the Triune God, from whom grace and peace descend to the Church; a doxology to that glorified Redeemer in whom His people are delivered from sin and in their turn prepared for glory; and a brief intimation of the bright prospect, to be further unfolded in the book, of a time when the Lord Jesus Christ, now hidden from the view, shall Himself return to perfect the happiness of His redeemed, and to take vengeance upon all who in this world have persecuted and crucified them, as they once persecuted and crucified Him. Both Preface and Salutation thus prepare us for what is to come, by impressing upon us the supreme importance of the revelation about to be made, and by conveying to the Church, even at the very outset, the joyful assurance of her ultimate and eternal triumph. Finally, both are followed by an utterance of our Lord Himself, interrupting the Seer (as God interrupted the Psalmist in Ps. ii. 6), and commanding our attention by reminding us that He who sends the revelation is very and eternal God.

Ver. 1 is a revelation, a drawing back of the veil which, to the merely human eye, hangs over the purposes of God; and it is a revelation of Jesus Christ, that is, not a revelation of what Jesus Christ is, but a revelation which Jesus Christ gives to His Church, even as the Father had given it to Him. As in the Gospel of St. John, God the Father is here the fountain of all blessing; but whatever He has given to the Son (John xiv. 3; xv. 16; xvi. 5, 10, 17, 18; xvii. 9, 17), and whatever the Son has has in His turn makes His people share,—'Even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us' (John xiv. 21). We have thus Jesus introduced to us not simply as He was on earth, but as He has passed through the sufferings of earth to the glory of heaven. He has been dead, but He is now the First-born of the dead; and as such He sends and signifies the revelation unto His servant John.

The object of the revelation on the part of Jesus Christ (for it is to Him that the pronouns 'him,' 'his,' and 'he' in this verse must in each instance be referred) is to show certain things unto his servants. These are the members of the Christian Church, of the one Body of Christ, without distinction of standing or of office. St. John is a 'servant' (chap. i. 7); the prophets are 'servants' (chap. x. 17; xx. 18); and all members of the Church are designated in the same way (chaps. ii. 20, vii. 3, xii. 5, xxii. 3, 6, 9).—The things to be shown are things which must quickly come to pass. And the word of the original, which can only be rendered in English by 'come to pass,' shows that it is not a beginning that is thought of but a full accomplishment. Nor can we fail to notice that they 'must' come to pass. They are the purposes of no fallible or mortal creature, but of the infallible and eternal God.—The words through his angel are to be connected with sent (comp. chap. xxii. 6); and the word signified must be allowed to stand in all its own absolute solemnity in force. It is by no means improbable that in the latter word there is special reference to 'signs': to the figures which are to be used in the book, and which need to be interpreted. They may indicate not only prophetic intimation (Joel iii. 32, xxiv. 32, xxv. 19; Acts x. 11), but the manner in which such intimation was usual among the prophets (see especially Ezekiel and Zechariah), that is, by signs,' significant and parabolic words. Thus our Lord, by speaking of 'being lifted on high' as the brazen serpent was lifted on high, 'signified' by what manner of death He should die (John xii. 32). On the other occasion in which the word is found in the N. T. it is in a more ordinary sense, it is taken to signify the appearance upon all who in this world have persecuted and crucified Him, as they once persecuted and crucified Him. The revelation of Jesus Christ, that is, not a revelation of what Jesus Christ is, but a revelation which Jesus Christ gives to His Church, even as the Father had given it to Him. As in the Gospel of St. John, God the Father is here the fountain of all blessing; but whatever He has given to the Son (John xiv. 3; xv. 16; xvi. 5, 10, 17, 18; xvii. 9, 17), and whatever the Son has has in His turn makes His people share,—'Even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us' (John xiv. 21). We have thus Jesus introduced to us not simply as He was on earth, but as He has passed through the sufferings of earth to the glory of heaven. He has been dead, but He is now the First-born of the dead; and as such He sends and signifies the revelation unto His servant John.

The object of the revelation on the part of Jesus Christ (for it is to Him that the pronouns 'him,' 'his,' and 'he' in this verse must in each instance be referred) is to show certain things unto his servants. These are the members of the Christian Church, of the one Body of Christ, without distinction of standing or of office. St. John is a 'servant' (chap. i. 7); the prophets are 'servants' (chap. x. 17; xx. 18); and all members of the Church are designated in the same way (chaps. ii. 20, vii. 3, xii. 5, xxii. 3, 6, 9).—The things to be shown are things which must quickly come to pass. And the word of the original, which can only be rendered in English by 'come to pass,' shows that it is not a beginning that is thought of but a full accomplishment. Nor can we fail to notice that they 'must' come to pass. They are the purposes of no fallible or mortal creature, but of the infallible and eternal God.—The words through his angel are to be connected with sent (comp. chap. xxii. 6); and the word signified must be allowed to stand in all its own absolute solemnity in force. It is by no means improbable that in the latter word there is special reference to 'signs': to the figures which are to be used in the book, and which need to be interpreted. They may indicate not only prophetic intimation (Joel iii. 32, xxiv. 32, xxv. 19; Acts x. 11), but the manner in which such intimation was usual among the prophets (see especially Ezekiel and Zechariah), that is, by signs,' significant and parabolic words. Thus our Lord, by speaking of 'being lifted on high' as the brazen serpent was lifted on high, 'signified' by what manner of death He should die (John xii. 32). On the other occasion in which the word is found in the N. T. it is in a more ordinary sense, it is taken to signify the appearance upon all who in this world have persecuted and crucified Him, as they once persecuted and crucified Him. The revelation of Jesus Christ, that is, not a revelation of what Jesus Christ is, but a revelation which Jesus Christ gives to His Church, even as the Father had given it to Him. As in the Gospel of St. John, God the Father is here the fountain of all blessing; but whatever He has given to the Son (John xiv. 3; xv. 16; xvi. 5, 10, 17, 18; xvii. 9, 17), and whatever the Son has has in His turn makes His people share,—'Even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us' (John xiv. 21). We have thus Jesus introduced to us not simply as He was on earth, but as He has passed through the sufferings of earth to the glory of heaven. He has been dead, but He is now the First-born of the dead; and as such He sends and signifies the revelation unto His servant John.
the words of the prophecy. The visions, indeed, are the main foundation and purport of the whole book. They reveal that future upon the knowledge of which the practical exhortations rest. Finally, the blessedness of thus keeping the revelation is enforced by the thought that the time, the distinct and definite season, when all shall be accomplished, is at hand (comp. ver. 1). And it was at hand, though 1800 years have passed since the words were spoken. We shall see, as we proceed, that the book deals with principles which have been exhibiting themselves throughout the whole period of the Church's history. Thus the things written in it were 'at hand' in the days of the Apostle; they have always been 'at hand' to cheer the saints of God in the midst of their pilgrimage and warfare; therefore we ought to be 'fulfilled, Lo, I am with you always;' 'in the world ye have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.'

The Preface of the book is over, and the Salutation follows.

Vers. 4-6. After the manner of the prophets of the O. T., the writer now brings himself forward by name, and directly addresses the Church. In the consciousness of his Divine commission, and of his own faithfulness to it, he is bold. It is the seven churches which are in Asia that are addressed, that is, in Proconsular Asia (comp. 1 Cor. xvi. 19), a Roman province at the western extremity of what is now known as Asia Minor. Of this province Ephesus was the capital, and few early traditions of the Church seem more worthy of reliance than those which inform us that at Ephesus St. John spent the latter part of his life. The city of that name is of the Christian age and would thus naturally be of peculiar interest to him, and he would be more intimately acquainted with their condition than with that of others. The question may indeed be asked, why a prophet having so closely as the Book of Revelation does upon the condition of the whole Church should be addressed to so limited an area. The answer will meet us at ver. 11, and in the meantime it is enough to say that the number seven is to be taken, according to its numerical but its sacred value. It is the number of the covenant, and in these seven churches we have a representation of the Church universal. To the latter, therefore, to the Church of every country and of all ages the Revelation is addressed. The Salutation wishes grace and peace, the same blessings, and in the same order, as so often found in the writings of the other apostles,—'grace,' first, 'peace' afterwards, the love of God supplying us with all needful strength, and keeping our hearts calm even amidst such troubles as those about to be recorded in this book. The Salutation is given in the name of the three Persons of the Trinity. (1) The Father, described as He which is, and which was, and which is to come. In the original Greek of this verse we have a striking illustration of those so-called solecisms of the Revelation of which we have spoken in the Introduction, p. 146. The pronoun 'which' is not grammatically construed with the preposition 'from' preceding it; instead of standing in one of the defective cases, it stands in the nominative. The explanation is obvious. St. John sublimely treats the clause (which is really a paraphrase or translation of the Name of God in Ex. iii. 14—'I AM THAT I AM') as an indeclinable noun, the name of Him who is absolute and unchangeable. That Name denoted God to Israel not so much in His abstract existence as in His covenant relation to His people, and it has the same sense here. Hence the use of the words 'which is to come,' instead of, what we might have expected, 'which will be' (comp. ver. 8, iv. 8). The change of expression does not depend upon the fact that there is no 'will be' with an Eternal God, but that with Him all is, because upon the same principle we ought not to have it said of Him 'which was.' It depends upon the fact that God is here contemplated as the redeeming God, and that as such He comes, and will come, to His people. The Son is never alone even as Redeemer. He 'can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing' (John v. 19). When He comes the Father comes, according to the promise of Jesus, 'If a man love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with Him' (John iv. 23). As, therefore, throughout this whole book the Son is the 'coming' One, so the same term is here properly applied to the Father,—not 'which is,' and which was, and which will be,' but 'which is,' and which was, and which is to come.'

(2) The Holy Spirit, described in the words the seven Spirits which are before His throne. It is impossible to understand these words of any principal angels such as those of Chap. iv. 1-10 already described. For no creature could be spoken of as the source of 'grace and peace,' be associated with the Father and the Son, or be made to take precedence of the Son, who is the Head of the Church that He 'hath the seven Spirits of God.' These seven Spirits, then, belong to the Son as well as to the Father (comp. note on John xv. 26). What has been said will become still clearer if we turn to Zech. iii. 9 and iv. 10, in the first of which we have mention made of the stone with seven eyes, while in the second it is said of these eyes that they 'run to and fro through the whole earth.' This stone is the Messias, so that putting the Old and New Testaments together, no doubt can remain on our minds that we have before us a figure for the Holy Spirit. He is called 'the seven Spirits,' the mystical number seven being identical with unity, though unity unfolded in diversity, and denoting Him in His completeness and fulness as adapted to the seven churches or the Universal Church. By Him the whole Church is enlightened and quickened. The idea of the words 'before His throne' seems to be taken from the thought of the seven-branched golden candlestick in the tabernacle.

(3) The Son. That the Salutation culminates in the Son is proved by the fact that He has three designations, and that, in ver. 6, three separate
part of His work are mentioned. We might have expected the Son to be spoken of before the Spirit. But it is the manner of St. John, strikingly illustrated in the Prologue to His Gospel, so to arrange what he has to say that a new sentence shall spring out of the closing thought of that immediately preceding. Thus in this very chapter the mention of 'John' in ver. 1 is unfolded into the long description of ver. 17 and the mention of the readers and hearers of this prophecy in ver. 3 into the more specific reference to the seven churches in ver. 4. In like manner here the Son is not only the leading theme of the book, but He is dwelt upon in the Redeemer and full statement of vers. 5-8. This, therefore, was the proper place to speak of Him. Three particulars regarding Him are noted. First, He is the faithful witness, the giver of the testimony already spoken of in ver. 2; and, so high and holy is the qualification, that even after the preposition the name 'Witness' in the original is in the nominative case. The idea of witnessing as applied to Jesus is a favourite one both in the Apocalypse and in the Gospel, and in chaps. xiv., xii. are xix. 10, xxii. 20; John iii. 11, 32, iv. 44, v. 31, 32, vii. 7, viii. 14, xii. 21, xviii. 37, etc.). The designation is also found in Ps. lxxxix. 37, and in Isa. iv. 4. The combination with the word 'true' in chaps. xiv., xxi. 5, xxii. 6, and especially in chap. iii. 14, seems to show that the faithfulness is not simply that of One who, even unto death, bore witness to what He had heard, but that also of One who had received the truth in a manner strictly corresponding to what the truth was. Secondly, He is the first-born of the dead. The designation is to be distinguished from that in Col. i. 18, the first-born from the dead, where our bishops are directed by the word of God Himself to turn to those whose He leaves behind Him in the grave, whereas here we have the Redeemer as He has begun that resurrection-life in which He shall yet bring along with Him all the members of His Body. Thirdly, He is the prince of the kings of the earth (comp. chaps. xvii. 14, xix. 16). The meaning is not that He is one of them, although higher than they, but that He is exalted over them, that He rules them as their Prince. The 'earth' is to be understood here, as always in the Apocalypse, of the earth which is alienated from God, and its 'kings' are its greatest powers and potentates. Yet these the exalted Redeemer rules with the rule of Ps. ii. 9 and Rev. ii. 27. In the exercise of their greatest might they are in His hand: He subdues them, and constrains them to serve His purposes.

It has been often imagined that in the three designations employed we have a reference to the prophetic, the priestly, and the kingly offices of Christ. The supposition is improbable; for, in the immediately following doxology with its three members, the description given of the Redeemer does not correspond with these offices in this order of succession. In the three designations of this verse, therefore, we are to see not parallel offices of Christ, but successive stages of His work,—His life on earth, His glorification when He rose from the dead, and the universal rule upon which He entered when He sat down as King at the right hand of the Father.

The thought of the glorious dignity of the Person whom he has just mentioned now leads the Seer to burst forth, in the second part of his Salutation, into a doxology of adoring praise, in which the contemplation not so much of what Jesus is in Himself as of what we experience in Him is prominent. Three relations of the Lord to His people are spoken of. First, He loveth us. Not, as in the Authorised Version, He 'loved us, as if the thoughts of St. John were mainly directed to Christ's work on earth; but He 'loveth us.' He loveth us now; even amidst the glory of His exalted state we are partakers of His love; and His love will give us all things. Secondly, He loosed us (not 'washed us') from our sins in His blood. It is complete salvation that is before the writer's eyes; not simply the pardon of sin, but deliverance from its bondage. They who are 'loosed from their sins in' the blood of Christ are alike cleansed from the stain and defilement of sin, and are quickened and enfranchised in the participation of their Lord's Resurrection-life; 'being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life' (Rom. vi. 22). In the great Head to whom by faith all are united, there are united also to the Father, and are consecrated to Him in the free and joyful service in which Jesus gives Himself to the Father for evermore. Thirdly, He is made us a kingdom, a priest, and his God and Father. The words are in a certain measure parenthetical, the doxology which follows connecting itself directly with the clause immediately preceding them; but they do not on that account less express one of the greatest of all privileges bestowed upon believers. Particular attention ought to be paid both to the word 'kingdom' and to the relation in which it stands to 'priests.' It is not said that we are made a kingdom, a term now not applied to Christians in their individual capacity. We are made a kingdom, yet not, as some would have it, a kingdom with which Christ is invested, but ourselves a kingdom, clothed in our corporate existence with not dignity and honour. The regal glory is that of Him who has been set as King upon God's holy hill, but it extends to and gloriifies that Body which is one with Him. Only in her collective capacity, however, in her oneness, in the harmonious combination of all her parts, is the Church such a kingdom as is here described, the eternal kingdom of an eternal Lord, for 'every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation' (Matt. xii. 25). 'We,' says the Seer, 'are not kings, but a kingdom.' The relation in which the word 'kingdom' stands to the word 'priests' is to be equally observed. From the collective word we pass to that which describes our individual position, and brings out its most distinctive and essential feature. We are 'priests,' to minister to one another, to plead for one another and for the world, to set forth before those less favoured than ourselves the praise and glory of God. Not for our selfish gratification, for our own personal enjoyment, has the 'kingdom' been bestowed on us, but that we may be God's ministers for the world's good. And this service belongs to every follower of Jesus. All Christians are 'a kingdom,' but in that kingdom, sharing its privileges, each Christian is a 'priest.' The same thought lies at the bottom of Ex. xix. 6 (comp. also 1 Pet. ii. 9); and the same order is exhibited in our Lord's own ministry. The glory of His kingship
THE REVELATION.

373

upon earth consisted in His bearing perfect witness to the truth, with all that was implied in doing so (John xviii. 37). He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister: that was His glory, and the glory, He says in His high-priestly prayer, 'which Thou hast given Me I have given unto them' (John xxi. 22). How important to be reminded of this at the very beginning of a book which is to describe in such exact and ins the triumphs of God's children, and from which they have so often gathered pleas for selfish and worldly aggrandisement!

To One in Himself so exalted in His threefold greatness; to One who has done so much for us in His threefold actions of God, let us may well ascribe the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Ver. 7. The third part of the Salutation follows, closely associated with that Redeemer to whom the doxology of the second part had been addressed. The thought of Jesus is not exhausted by the mention of what He had done. Another great truth is connected with Him,—that He will come again, to complete His victory, and to be acknowledged by all in His glory and His majesty. Behold, he cometh with the clouds. May it not be that these clouds are not the mere clouds of the sky, but those clouds of Sinai, of the Shechinah, of the Transfiguration, of the Ascension, which are the recognised signs of Deity? This is the coming prophesied of in Dan. vii. 13 and Mark xiv. 62 (also of Matt. xxvi. 64) though a different preposition is there used; and in the triumphs of God's children, it is a coming to judgment. And every eye shall see him, not the eyes only of those who shall then be alive upon the earth, as it would thus be impossible to explain the meaning of those who put Their Him, but the eyes of all who, in any age and of any nation, have rejected His redemption (cp. what is said below on the meaning of the word 'see').—Even they that pierced him. The reference is undoubtedly to John xix. 34, 37, and to Zech. xii. 10 (cp. note on John xix. 37); and this, combined with the facts, that in the passage of the prophet the Jews are the representatives of the whole human race; that it was a Roman soldier, not a Jew, though at the instigation of the Jews, who pierced the side of Jesus as He hung upon the cross; and that the relative employed is not the simple but the compound relative—whosoever—is sufficient to show that the persons referred to are not the Jews only, but they who in any age have identified themselves with the spirit of the Saviour's murderers. The reader ought not to pass these words without remembering that the piercing of the Saviour's side is spoken of by St. John alone of all the Evangelists, may, not only spoken of, but that too with an emphasis which shows how deep was the importance he attached to it (John xix. 34-37). A clear trace of the importance of the fact in the writer's mind is likewise presented to us here. And all the tribes of the earth shall wail over him. It is important to notice the word 'tribes,' the same word as that applied to the true Israel in chaps. v. 5, vii. 4-5, xxi. 12. The 'tribes' of Israel are the figure by which God's believing people, whether Jew or Gentile, are represented. In like manner all unbelievers are now set before us as 'tribes,' the mocking counterpart of the true Israel of God. They are the tribes of the 'earth,' i.e. not the earth in its merely neutral sense, but as opposed to heaven, as the scene of worldliness and evil. Thus in Matt. xxiv. 30, 31, 'all the tribes of the earth' are distinguished from the 'elect.' In neither of the two clauses, then, now under consideration have we any distinction between Jew and Gentile. The same persons are thought of, numerically and personally, in both. The distinction lies in this, that, according to a method of conception common in the Apocalypse, the same persons are looked at first under a Jewish, and then under a Gentile, point of view. The Χριστός which follows seems to be the testimony of the Lord Himself to what had just been told of Him (comp. chap. xxii. 20). The Amen is the answer of believers to the statement made.

We have still to ask, In what sense shall all 'see' and 'wail'? The latter word must determine the interpretation of the former. Is this a wailing of penitence, or is it both, so that the wailers embrace alike the sinful world and the triumphant Church? We cannot suppose the same word used to denote wailings of a kind so entirely distinct from and opposite to one another; and the following additional reasons appear to limit the wailing spoken of to that of the impotent and godless:—(1) This is the proper meaning of the word, and it is so used in chap. xvii. 9. (2) Such is also its meaning in that prophecy of which the Apocalypse is moulded (Matt. xxiv.). (3) It corresponds with the idea of the tribes of the earth, which do not include the godly. (4) Throughout this book the godly and ungodly are separated from each other. There is a gulf between them which cannot be passed. If this be the meaning of the second clause, that of the first must correspond to it, and the 'seeing' must be that of shame and confusion of face. The whole sentence thus corresponds with the object of the book, and the coming of Jesus is described as that of One who comes to overthrow His adversaries and to complete His triumph.

Ver. 8. This conclusion is strengthened by the words of the eighth verse, in which the emphasis lies upon the Almighty, thus bringing into prominence that all-powerful might in which Jesus goes forth to be victorious over His enemies. It is Christ, 'the Lord,' who speaks, and who says that He is the Alpha and the Omega; that He is God (for we are not to read the two words Lord God together); that He is he which is, and which was, and which is to come; and that all culminates in His title the Almighty. To suppose that the words are spoken by the Father is to introduce a thought not strictly corresponding to what precedes. The unity of the whole passage is only preserved by ascribing them to the exalted and glorified Redeemer. The words are thus highly important as witnessing to the true Divinity of Christ, and in particular to His possessing the same eternity as the Almighty. Thus, in the assurance that the Lord will come in His might for the accomplishment of His plans, the Seer is prepared to enter upon a description of the visions which he had enjoyed.
Chapter I. 9-20.  

The Introductory Vision.

9 I JOHN, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, 6

11 as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being 8

13 turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they were burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.
The Revelation.

Contents. We are introduced to a vision of the Saviour, in that light in which He is peculiarly presented to us in the Apocalypse—the Head of His Church, the great High Priest and King of His people. From Him the Seer receives the commission to deliver His message to the Church.

Ver. 9. Again the apocalyptic writer, after the manner of the prophets, especially Daniel, names himself (comp. Dan. vii. 15, viii. 1, ix. 2, x. 2, xii. 5). But he is not only a prophet: he is not less personally concerned than those to whom he writes in the revelation which he is to declare. He is his brother, and he is a fellow-partaker with them in the things of which he speaks. In what a touching light does St. John thus present himself to the afflicted Church! for the words which he uses are more than touching. They take for granted that all who read are feeling as acutely as himself; and such is the nature of the Apocalypse, that, unless we either are or put ourselves as far as possible into his position, we shall never understand the book. For an afflicted Church, and not for a Church in worldly prosperity and ease, it has its meaning. The things spoken of by the apostle are three in number, and they are bound together into one conception, although the first is the main particular to be dwelt on, the other two being only additional and explicative (comp. on John xiv. 6). The first is tribulation, 'the tribulation' through which the followers of the Lamb in every age must pass; but the mention of it is followed by that of the kingdom, the present, not the future kingdom; and the patience, the steadfast endurance which holds out to the end amidst all sorrow, the patience, the triumph of patience, which the Seer is to declare. Let us then read the words of our Lord in Luke xxi. 19, that in it we shall 'win souls' (later reading; comp. Revised Version). These, too, are in Jesus—not of Jesus as if only His spirit were made manifest through His Church as if only we were suffering and rejoicing and enduring for His sake, but 'in Him,' believers being one with Him, and therefore partakers of His trials, His royalty, and His heavenly strength.—Was; literally, 'became,' passed into, an expression, be it noted, that supports, though it could not have originated, the tradition of the writer's banishment.—In the vale that is called Patmos, a small and barren island in the Egean Sea, such as those to which it was customary at that period to banish prisoners. To this island it is generally supposed that St. John was exiled in the time of the Roman Emperor Domitian, and the following words are in harmony with the supposition that this was the explanation of his being there. Because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. The 'word of God' is that which comes from God, the 'testimony of Jesus' that which is given by Jesus; but they cannot be limited here, as at ver. 2, to the revelation of this book (comp. also chap. vi. 9, xx. 4). All revelation may be so described.

Ver. 10. Was; literally, 'became,' see on ver. 9. It was not his ordinary condition (comp. Ezek. ii. 2).—Having been inserted here, the expression occurs four times in the book, each time at a great crisis in the development of the visions (chaps. i. 10, iv. 2, xvii. 3, xxi. 10). It denotes removal in thought from this material scene, elevation into the higher region of spiritual realities, transportation into the midst of the sights and sounds of the invisible world.—On the Lord's day. Certainly not the last day, the great day of judgment, known in the New Testament by a different expression, 'the day of the Lord,' and before which, not on which, the events of the Apocalypse take place, but the first day of the week (comp. the expression used by St. Paul, 'the Lord's Supper,' in 1 Cor. xi. 20). Yet the words are not to be regarded as a simple designation of the first day of the week in its distinction from the others. The nature and character of the day are to be kept particularly in view. It is the day of the 'Lord,' the risen and glorified Lord, the day of Him who, thus risen and glorified, had founded that new city of light which no enemies shall prevail. Wipe therefore in contemplation of the glory of this Lord; not simply with the peaceful influences of the day of rest diffused over his soul, but dwelling amidst the thoughts of that authority and power which are possessed by the risen Jesus at the right hand of the Father, St. John receives the revelation which is here communicated to him. Thus, then, we have both the outward and the inward circumstances of the Seer; and it will be observed that they correspond closely to the condition of the Lord Himself. St. John is at once in a state of humiliation and of exaltation. He has the marks of suffering upon him, but he is also in possession of a glory which enables him to triumph over suffering: he is 'in Jesus.'

The vision follows, and the first part of it is the hearing of a great voice as of a trumpet. There can be little doubt that the trumpet spoken of is that so frequently alluded to in the Old Testament, the Shophar, the trumpet of war and judgment (see more fully on chap. vii. 9), not the trumpet of festive proclamation; therefore not merely (as commonly supposed) the trumpet by which the Lord comes to victory, but also a strong and clear sound, but with a sound inspiring awe and terror, and corresponding in this respect to the distinguishing characteristic of the Lord in the further details of the vision.

Ver. 11. The first clauses of the verse in the Authorised Version must be removed, and the words of the voice begin with what thou seemest to write in a roll. Under the 'seeing' is included all that is to be written in the roll, not merely chaps. ii. and iii.; and the command to write is so given in the original as to show that it is urgent, and that it must be obeyed at once (chaps. i. 19, ii. 1, 8, 12, 18, iii. 1, 7, 14, xiv. 13, xix. 9, xxi. 5). When the roll is written it is to be sent unto the seven churches which are named. These are the seven churches already spoken of in ver. 4, and no reasonable doubt can be entertained that they represent the universal Church in all countries and ages; for (1) The Apocalypse is designed for all Christians (chap. i. 3); (2) There were other churches in Asia at the time, at all events those of Magnesia and Tralles, probably those also of Colosse and Hierapolis. These two latter cities had indeed suffered from an earthquake before the Apocalypse was penned, but there is no reason to think that their churches had been wholly destroyed, or that, if destroyed for a time, they might not have been restored. Although, however, there were thus more than seven churches in Asia, this book, it will be observed, is addressed not to seven, but to the seven (ver. 4). (2) We must bear in mind the importance of the number seven, which often occurs in the Apocalypse, and apparently nowhere in its merely literal sense. Here as elsewhere, therefore, it is to be typically understood, as an
emblem of the unity, amidst manifoldness, of that Church with which God makes His covenant. (4) The matter in which the Redeemer is presented to these seven churches consists of a summary of particulars which are afterwards applied separately to the seven churches in chap. ii. and iii. But the summary represents Jesus as a whole; and the natural inference is, that the seven churches constitute a whole also. (5) The symbolism of the whole book is thus preserved. On any other supposition than that we have here a representation of the whole Church of Christ, chap. i. 20, and that in the book, however, each of the seven churches is thus symbolically represented, the whole symbolism is destroyed. 

Ver. 12. The Seer naturally turns to see; and the first thing that strikes his eyes as the outer circle of the vision is seven golden candlesticks, each of them like the golden candlestick of the Tabernacle. That we have seven candlesticks instead of one points to the richness and fulness of the New Testament Dispensation in its contrast with the Old. The idea that we have before us only one candlestick with seven branches is to be rejected as alike inconsistent with the language of St. John and with the symbolism of the book. It is, besides, wholly unnecessary to think of only one candlestick for the sake of unity. The number seven is not less expressive of unity than unity itself.

Ver. 13. We have beheld the contents of the outer circle; but there is something more glorious within. In the midst of the seven golden candlesticks is One, not walking as in chap. i. 1, but standing, who is like unto a Son of man, i.e. appears in human likeness. As in chap. xiv. 14, the Greek word for likeness is as in chap. i. 12, i.e. ‘With His feet like unto the feet of a bear’ (Hebrew comp. that from the treading of these burning feet no ungodly of any nation shall escape. Lastly, His voice as a voice of many waters. The connection in chaps. xiv. 2, xix. 6, between ‘many waters’ and ‘thunderings’ as once points out the meaning of this figure. The voice is not simply loud and clear, but of irresistible strength and power, a voice the rebuke of which no enemy shall be able to withstand. All the features of the description, it will be observed, are those of majesty, terror, and judgment;—absolute purity, penetrating and consuming fire, the white heat of brass raised to its highest temperature in the furnace, the awful sound of many waters.

Ver. 16. From the personal appearance of the Redeemer, the Seer now passes to His equipment for His work, and that in three particulars.

And He had in His right hand seven stars; and the seven stars are the seven angels which keep the seven stars which are in the right hand of the Lord. The stars are grasped ‘in’ His hand; to denote that
they are His property. When the idea is varied in ver. 20, the preposition is also changed,—they are then not 'in' but 'upon' His hand. The seven stars are further explained in ver. 20 to be 'the angels of the seven churches' (see on that verse).—The second particular mentioned is that of the sword. Out of his mouth a sword, two-edged, sharp, proceeding forth. The order of the words in the original, and the love of the Seer for the number three, seems to make it desirable to understand 'proceeding forth' as an attribute of the sword parallel to the other two, instead of connecting it directly with its position in the sense, 'out of his mouth.' (Luke ii. 35), but it is very frequently used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, particularly in Ezekiel. In Ezek. v. 1 it is associated with the attribute 'sharp.' In Ps. cxlix. 6 we have it connected with the epithet 'two-edged.' or two-mouthed, the edge of the sword being considered as its mouth by which it devours (Isa. l. 20; cp. Heb. xi. 34, where the plural 'mouthe' of the Greek leads to the thought of the two edges.) The use of this figure in Scripture justifies the idea that there is here a reference to the Word of God which proceeds out of His mouth (Eph. vi. 17; Heb. iv. 12); but there is no thought of 'comforting' or of 'the grace and the power of the Word.' Its destroying power is alone in view, that power by which it judges, convicts, and condemns the wicked. 'He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He实干杀人.' (Isa. xi. 4; cp. John xii. 48). Hence, accordingly, the various epithets here applied to the sword, all calculated to emphasize its destroying power,—two-edged, sharp, proceeding forth, the latter denoting that it is not at rest, but in the act of coming forth to execute its work.—And his countenance as the sun shineth in his power. The third particular of Christ's equipment. We might have expected this particular to be connected with the previous group describing the appearance of the Lord. Its introduction now as a part of Christ's equipment leads directly to the conclusion that we are to dwell mainly upon the power of the sun's rays as they proceed directly from that luminary. Hence, also, in all probability the particular Greek word used for 'countenance,—not so much the face as the appearance of the face, the light streaming from it. The sun is thought of not at his rising, but in his utmost strength, with the scorching, intolerable power which marks him in the East at noontide.

It thus appears that, throughout the whole of this description, the 'Son of man' is one who comes to judgment. To His Judgment the time has been committed (John v. 22, 27), and the time has arrived when He shall take unto Him His great power and reign. Nor are we to look how it is possible that this should be the prominent aspect of the Lord in a book intended to strengthen and console His Church. That God is a God of judgment is everywhere throughout the prophecies of the Old Testament the prominent aspect of the righteous. They are now oppressed, but ere long they shall be vindicated; and there shall be a recompense unto those that trouble them.

Vers. 17, 18. The effect of the vision upon the Seer is now described. I fell, he says, as his feet were as dead. (cp. Ex. xxxiii. 20; Isa. vi. 5; Ezek. i. 28; Dan. viii. 17, x. 7, 8; Luke v. 8). The effect upon the present occasion is, however, greater than on any of those referred to in these other passages. It corresponds to the greater glory that has been witnessed. But St. John is immediately restored both by act and word. For the act cp. Dan. viii. 18, x. 10, 18; for the word, Matt. xiv. 27; Luke v. 10, xii. 32; John v. 20, xii. 15. The right hand is, and the powerful hand in which the churches are held (ver. 16); and no doubt the Seer is at the same time set upon his feet (cp. Ezek. i. 26, ii. 1, 2).

But this was not all. The Revelation reveals Himself as the Lord who through humiliation and death had attained to glory and victory. In the words in which He does so, reaching to the end of ver. 18, it seems to be generally allowed that we have three clauses, but commentators differ as to their arrangement. Without discussing the opinions of others, it may be enough to say that the best distribution appears to be as follows:—(1) I am the first and the last and the Living One; (2) and I became dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore; (3) and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

(1) I am the first and the last (cp. ver. 8, ii. 8, xiii. 13). It is the Divine attribute of eternal and unchangeable existence that is in view here. I am not kindling like a lamp, nor am I changing like a wax taper. I am not a phenomenon of the mind, but the realization of it; for me to be the first is not to be the first but the first in eternity; for me to be the last is not to be the last but the last in eternity. I am the first and the last, I am the Beginning and the End. (Rev. xxi. 6). (2) And I became dead. The Divine Son emptied Himself of His glory, and stooped as man to death itself. All this is included in 'became.'—And behold, I am alive for evermore, words which ought not to be separated from those immediately preceding them; for, according to the conception of St. John, the Resurrection and Glorification of our Lord are to be taken along with His humiliation as parts of one great whole (cp. note on John xx. under Contents.). We are thus carried a step further forward than in the previous part of our Lord's declaration of Himself. (3) and I have the keys of death and of Hades. The two words 'death' and 'Hades' are combined, as in chap. xx. 13, 14, and both are conceived of as a fortress or place of imprisonment. Hence the figure of the 'keys' (Isa. xxxviii. 10; Matt. xvi. 19; cp. Rev. x. 1, xx. 1). Neither 'death' nor 'Hades' is to be understood in a neutral sense. The one is not simply death, but death as a terrible power from which the righteous should be delivered; the other is a region peopled, not by both the righteous and the wicked, but by those alone who have not conquered death. Both words thus describe the condition of all who are out of Christ, and are not partakers of His victory. Yet, however, they may be opposed to Him, He
has the keys of the prison within which they are confined; He can keep them there, or He can deliver them at His will. The third part of the declaration thus carries us further than the second, and introduces us to the thought of Christ’s everlasting and glorious rule as King in Zion. All the three parts appropriately follow the words ‘Fear not.’ They tell of the Divine pre-existence of the Son; of death endured but conquered in His Resurrection; of irresistible power now exercised over His and the Church’s enemies. They are thus supplementary to the description which had been given, as the Son of man in vers. 13–16, and they include a revelation of the fact that He who is judgment to His enemies is mercy to His own.

Vers. 19. We are therefore, not simply in continuation of the ‘write’ of vers. 11, or because the apostle has recovered from his fear, but ‘Write, seeing that I am what I have now revealed Myself to be.’ The following clauses of this verse are written in great difficulty, and very various opinions have been entertained regarding them. Here it is only possible to remark that the things which thou sawest, although most naturally referred to the vision of vers. 10–18, are not necessarily confined to what concerns Jesus in Himself. In these verses He is described as the Head of His Church, as One who has His Church summed up in Him; and we are thus led not merely to the thought of His individuality, but to that of the fortunes of His people. This being so, the following clauses of the verse are to be regarded as a resolution of the vision into the two parts in which it finds its application to the history of the Church, so that we ought to translate the clauses such as in the Seer, which shall come to pass after these things, ‘The things which are’ then give expression to the present condition of the Church, as she follows her Lord in humiliation and suffering in the world; ‘the things which shall come to pass after these things’ to the glory that awaits her when, all her trials over, she shall enter upon her reward in the world to come. The verse, therefore, consists of two parts, although the second part is again divided into two. There appears to be no sufficient reason for rendering the second clause of the verse ‘what they are’ instead of ‘the things which are.’ The plural verb in that clause is better accounted for by the thought of the mingled condition, partly sorrow and defeat, partly joy and triumph, of the Church on earth, while hereafter it shall be wholly joy and wholly triumph.

Vers. 20. The mystery of the stars which thou sawest upon my right hand. It is generally agreed that the word ‘mystery’ here depends on ‘write,’ and that it is in apposition with the things which thou sawest. The word denotes what man cannot know by his natural powers, or without the help of Divine revelation. It occurs again in chaps. x. 7, xvii. 5, 7; and its use there, as well as its present context, forbids the supposition that it refers merely to the fact that the seven stars are angels of seven churches, or that the seven candlesticks are seven churches. It includes the whole history and fortunes of these churches. All that concerns them is a part of the ‘mystery’ which is now to be written, and which the saints shall understand, though the world cannot. We may further notice that, in the second clause of the first half of this verse, and the seven golden candlesticks, the last word is not, as we might have expected, dependent upon ‘mystery.’ It is in the accusative not the genitive case; and would thus seem to depend upon the verb ‘sawest,’ and to be subordinate to the first clause, though closely connected with it (comp. John ii. 12, xiv. 6). If so, the ‘seven stars’ are the prominent point of the mystery, thus illustrating the unity of the Church with the Saviour Himself, for He is ‘the bright, the morning star’ (chap. xxii. 16). Further also we may notice the ‘upon’ prefixed to ‘my right hand’ instead of ‘in’ as in vers. 13–16; in spite of the commentators, there is a difference. The Seer beholds the churches ‘in’ the hand of their Lord as His absolute property and in His safe keeping. The Lord Himself beholds them ‘upon’ His right hand, in a more upright and independent position; they are churches which He is about to send forth to struggle in His place.

An explanation of what the stars and the candlesticks are is now given. The seven stars are angels of the seven churches. It seems doubtful if stars are ‘in all the typical language of Scripture symbols of lordship and authority ecclesiastical or civil’ (Trench). They are often emblems of light (Num. xxix. 2; Ps. cxlv. 3; Jer. xxxiii. 5; Ezek. xxxii. 7; Dan. xii. 3; Joel ii. 10, iii. 15; 2 Pet. i. 19; Rev. ii. 28, xxii. 16), so that it cannot at least be inferred from the use of the word that the ‘angels’ are persons in authority. What they are is more important, and the most various opinions have been entertained regarding them. Several of these may be set aside without much difficulty. They are not ideal messengers of the churches, supposed to be sent on a mission to the Seer, as the Seer by them, not to them. They are not the officials known as angels or messengers of the synagogue. Such an office is too subordinate to answer the conditions of the case, and there is no proof that it had been transferred to the Christian Church. They are not the guardian angels of the churches, for, instead of protecting, they represent the churches, and they are spoken of in the epistles which follow as chargeable with sins. Two interpretations remain of wider currency or of higher authority. They are thought to be the Bishops or presiding ministers of the churches. But, even supposing that the Episcopal constitution of the Church at this early date could be established on other grounds, ‘it is difficult to see how a personage whose name (angel, one sent forth) implies departure from a particular locality should be identified with the resident governor of the Church’ (Saul of Tarsus, p. 143); nor could a Bishop be appropriately commended for the virtues, or condemned for the sins, of his flock. The interpretation of some of the oldest commentators on the Apocalypse is the best. Angels of a church are a method of expressing the church itself, the church being spoken of as if it were concentrated in its angel or messenger. In other words, the angel of a church is the moral image of the church as it strikes the eye of the observer, the presentation of itself which it stands up to the view of its King and Governor. There is much in the style of thought marking the Apocalypse to favour this view, for the leading persons spoken of in the book, and even the different departments of nature referred to in it, have each its ‘angel.’ God proclaims His judgments by angels (chap
THE REVELATION.

xvii. 1, xviii. 1, 21): He executes them by angels (chaps. viii. 2, xiv. 1, 6); He seals His own by angels (chap. vii. 3); He even addresses the Son by an angel (chap. xiv. 15). The Son in like manner acts by an angel (chap. xx. 1); and reveals His truth by an angel (chaps. i. 1, xii. 6, 16). Michael has his angels (chap. xii. 7); the dragon has his angels (chap. xii. 7, 9); the waters, fire, the winds, and the abyss have each its angel (chaps. xvi. 5, xiv. 16, vii. 1, ix. 11). In some of these instances it may be said that the angels are real beings, but in others it is hardly possible to think so. The method of expression seems to rest upon the idea that everything has its angel, its messenger by whom it communicates its feelings, and through whom it comes in contact with the external world. The angels here spoken of are, therefore, not so much ideal representatives of the churches, as a mode of thought by which the churches are conceived of when they pass out of their absolute condition into intercourse with, and action upon, others. Perhaps the same mode of speaking may be seen in Dan. x. 20, 21, xii. 1, where Persia and Greece are represented by angels.

With the view now taken the equivalent designation 'stars' agrees much better than the supposition that these stars are persons in authority.

When it is said of the Son of man that He has the 'seven stars upon His right hand,' it is much more natural to think that we have here a symbol of the churches themselves than of their rulers; and in chap. xii. 1 the twelve stars are not persons, the number twelve being simply the number of the Church. It may indeed be argued as an objection to the above reasoning, that it is immediately added in this verse that the candlesticks are the seven churches, and that we shall thus have two figures for the same object. But between the figures there is an instructive difference confirmatory of all that has been said; for the 'star' represents the Church as she gives light in the firmament of heaven, as she shines before the world for the world's good; the candlestick represents her as having her Divine life nourished in the secret place of the tabernacle of the Most High. The one is the Church in action, the other the Church in her inner life; and hence, probably, the mention of the former before the latter, for throughout the Apocalypse it is with the working, struggling Church that we have to do. Hence also in ver. 13 the Son of man is 'in the midst of the candlesticks;' while the stars are 'upon His right hand' (ver. 20), the hand that is stretched out for acting and for manifesting His glory to the world.

CHAPS. II., III.—THE EPISTLES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES.

CHAPTER II. 1-7.

1. The Epistle to Ephesus.

1 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

6 But this thou hast, that thou hastest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear...

---

14 omit somewhat
15 hast
16 that
17 didst let go
18 omit will
19 omit quickly
20 move
21 its
22 works
what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

I will give to him out of the midst of

CONTENTS. Reserving any remarks to be made upon the general structure of the Epistles to the seven churches of Asia, and upon their relation to one another, we only notice at present their position in the Apocalypse as a whole. The great Head of the Church has been brought before us in chap. i.; and now we have the Church herself. We must learn to know her in her calling and her condition before we can understand her fortunes.

Ver. 1. The first church addressed is that of Ephesus, the city in which St. John himself is reported, according to the unanimous tradition of Christian antiquity, to have spent the closing period of his life. Yet, even if we adopt the later date for the composition of the Apocalypse, we can hardly suppose that we are to find in this circumstance the reason why Ephesus is first mentioned. It is more reasonable to think that the importance of that church in itself, together, it may be, with the peculiar position in the city and the condition, determined the place which is now assigned to it. Ephesus was the most influential city of Asia Minor, the meeting-place of Eastern and Western thought, renowned not only for its commercial relations, but for that magnificent temple of Diana which was looked upon as one of the wonders of the world (Acts xii. 27). St. Paul showed his sense of its importance by spending but no less than three years of his busy life, and by using it as one of the great centres of his missionary labours. The angel of the church, that is, as we have seen, not its bishop or presiding pastor, but the church itself viewed as the appointed interpreter and messenger of Christ's purposes to the world, is now addressed by St. John.

First of all we have a description of Him from whom the message comes, taken from the description already given of Him in chap. i., and more especially from ver. 13 and 16. There is a peculiar fitness in the selection for the first Epistle of these, the obviously prominent characteristics of the Lord as He is brought before us in that chapter; but there is nothing to lead us to think that the Church at Ephesus, viewed by itself, is more representative of the universal Church than any other of the seven. Two points of difference between the description of the Redeemer here and in chap. i. are worthy of notice,—(1) The substitution of the word holdeth fast for the word hath of the latter (ver. 16). The first of these words is much stronger than the second, and denotes to retain firmly in the grasp (comp. chaps. ii. 25, iii. 11). It is therefore employed in the present instance with peculiar propriety, when the aim of the Seer is to set forth not so much the glory of the Lord Himself, as the power with which He retains His people under His care, so that, even when decay has begun to mark them, they shall not be allowed finally to perish (John x. 28). (2) The word walkedeth for the simple being or standing of chap. i. 13, in order to indicate not merely that Christ's people surround and worship Him, but that He is engaged is observing and protecting them. W. Not one of their backslidings or errors escapes His notice; they have no weakness which He will not strengthen, no want which He will not supply.

Ver. 2. The address to the Church follows, embracing vers. 2-6. The first part of it, containing the close of vers. 1, seems to contain seven points of commendation,—(1) I know thy works, and thy toil and patience. By the word 'know' we are to understand not approbation, but simply experimental knowledge; and by 'works,' not hero-deeds, but simply the whole tone and conduct of the church's life, together with the outward manifestation of what she was. These works are then resolved into two parts; 'toil,' which is more than laborious service to the Lord; and 'patience,' which is more than the passive virtue commonly represented by that word. The meaning would be better expressed by 'endurance,'—the strong, firm, and many-bearing of all sufferings of its internal for the sake of Christ.—(2) And thou hast not feared evil men. The evil men referred to, are a different class from those spoken of in the preceding clause, and they are thought of as a burden too heavy to be borne. The Ephesian church had a holy impatience of those who, by their evil deeds, brought disgrace upon the Christian name, and she commended it.—(3) And thou didst try them, and didst call themselves apostles. These persons had made a special claim to be apostles (comp. 2 Cor. xi. 13), even in all probability disowning St. John himself. But the Ephesian Christians had 'tried,' and in trying had discovered their false pretensions. The Greek word here used for 'try' is different from that found in 1 John iv. 1, where we read, 'Believe not every spirit, but prove (not, as in the Authorised Version, 'try') the spirits, whether they are of God.' A distinction has been drawn between the two, the latter being referred to faith and doctrine, the former to works; and the distinction has been thought to find support in ver. 6. But the false teachers there spoken of are not the same as those mentioned in the clause before us. The distinction seems rather to lie in this, that 'try' expresses simply the trial, with the superadded thought of disenchaining to the persons tried; that 'prove' expresses the bringing forth of solid worth by trial (comp. 1 Cor. xvi. 3; 2 Cor. viii. 8; 1 Tim. iii. 10; 1 Pet. i. 7). Here, therefore, 'prove' could not be used. The Ephesian Church knew what these deceivers would show themselves to be, and turned from them with the instinct of the Christian heart before it
THE REVELATION.

em to a formal proof.—And they are not, in the Authorised Version with the omission word ‘they.’ The addition of the clause, compared with 1 John iii. 1, affords an striking illustration of the style of the apostle, and such we are—ought there to be inserted text (comp. also chap. iii. 9).—(4) And find them false (comp. chap. iii. 9; 1
6).—(5) ye is no evidence to show that false teachers these could have existed only in the very period of the Christian Church, that they must be assigned to the closing years of the ministry, and that the Apocalypse must therefore have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem. The words of St. Paul to the Presbyters in Acts xx. 29 lead rather to the belief that the manifestation there spoken of must take place until at least most of the as had been removed from this earthly scene.

(5) And thou hast patience. The patience spoken of is the steadfast endurance mentioned in ver. 2, but the possession of that is endangered by the end of the world.—thou hast it, it is thine. (6) And thou bear because of my name. They had not with evil men (ver. 2); and yet, in not doing them, in rejecting them, and in not bearing the burden of their sins, in not their burden (Luke xi. 41), they had borne the burden laid upon them because of the name of that of the Church of the Great King, who had given them in His name (John xiv. 13, 14).—(7) And thou hast born weariness. For the use of the word weariness, comp. John iv. 6. In ver. 2 they were condemned for their ‘toil;’ but now a is laid upon the ‘burden’ of the ‘name.’ And they had not ‘grasped’ in it. How hard the duty, and how high the ace!

are the seven points in which the Presbyters are commended; and, if we are to consider them as seven, it will follow be fourth, ‘didst find them false,’ is the g one of the seven; or, in other words, the chief point of commendation in the state of Christians at Ephesus is their instinctive test and rejection of false teachers; and the true doctrine of Christ as handed by His commissioned and inspired apostles. This all else that in their case was worthy of commendation centred. Here was the ‘toil’ never wearied, the ‘endurance’ that never ‘bearing’ of that bitter cross which led, as it did so largely in the case of our in contending against the ‘grievous wolves’ ad entered into God’s heritage, and were ing and scattering the sheep (John x. 12).
rest work of Christ, to maintain God’s true tion of Himself against selfish error, appears Ephesian church.

Commendation has been bestowed; served blame that had been incurred now Nevertheless I have against thee that didst let go thy first love. The Authorised t is here manifestly injured by the omission word ‘somewhat,’ to which there is nothing original to correspond. The declension serious and not a slight one,—the letting ‘kindness of her youth,’ the ‘love of her are with which the Lord had met her Lord ‘in the day of His espousals, and in the day of the gladness of His heart’ (Cant. iii. 11). Nothing but the love of the bride can satisfy the Bridegroom; all zeal for His honour, if He is to value it, must flow from love, and love must feed its flame. There is no contradiction between the state now described and that in vers. 2 and 3. Nor is there any need to think that these latter verses apply only to the ‘angel’ as if he were a distinct personality, while this verse applies to the church at large. The history of the Christian Church has been too full of zeal without love to justify any doubt as to the verisimilitude of the picture. Let the times immediately subsequent to the successful struggle against Arianism, and again to the Reformation in Germany, testify to the fact.

Ver. 5. The exhortation to the church now follows in three parts:—(1) Remember therefore from whence thou hast fallen; her first condition being regarded as a height; (2) and repent, by contrasting thy present with thy former state; (3) and do the first works; for it is the duty of the church to ‘abide’ in Christ: ‘Even as the Father hath loved Me,’ says Jesus Himself: ‘I also have loved you; abide ye in My love’ (John xvi. 9). ‘Works’ are here to be understood in that widest sense of the word peculiar to St. John. The Lord does not lay His Church act as if acting were everything and feeling nothing. Feeling is rather the thing mainly thought of. There was no want of action: what was needed was the love which alone makes action valuable (cp. 1 Cor. xiii),—or else I come unto thee; not the final judgment, or the Second Coming of the Lord; for, in that case, we should hardly have had the words ‘unto thee’ attached to the warning, but a special coming in judgment, an earnest and symbol of the great Coming at the last.—And will move thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent. The removal of the church’s candlestick denotes removal from her high standing and privileges in the sanctuary of God. There is nothing here of what has been described as simply ‘the removal of the candlestick, not the extinction of the candle; judgment for some, but that very judgment the occasion of mercy for others.’ The word ‘move’ is in the Apocalypse a word of judgment (cp. chap. vii. 14), and there is no thought of anything else in the warning given. Surely also, it may be remarked in passing, the warning distinctly shows us that the ‘angel’ of the church cannot possibly be its bishop. ‘Thy candlestick!’ where is the Church spoken of as if she belonged to any of her office-bearers? She is always the Church of Christ. Contrast with ‘thy candlestick’ ‘My sheep,’ ‘My lambs’ (John xxi. 15-17).

Ver. 6. The Lord cannot leave them without a fresh word of commendation. But this thou hast, that thou hastest the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. Who the Nicolaitans thus referred to we shall best learn at ver. 15. In the meantime it is enough to say that we have here more than a mere repetition of what had been said already at ver. 2; and that the last words, ‘which I also hate,’ appear to be added partly at least for the sake of bringing out the fact that, notwithstanding the declension of the Ephesian Christians, there was still one point on which their Lord and they were similarly minded.

Ver. 7. A promise is to be added to the main body of the Epistle, but before it is given we have
THE REVELATION.

[Chap. II. 8-11.]

...a general exhortation to men to listen. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. These words are found in all the seven Epistles, but with a different position in some of them as compared with others. In the first three they occur in the body of the letter, immediately before the promise to him that overcometh: in the last four they are introduced at the end. No student of the Apocalypse will doubt that this difference is designed, and that although he may be unable to say what the design is. In the case of the seals, the trumpets, and the bowls, we meet the same division of seven into its constituent parts three and four, only that, in each of these the line of demarcation is at the close of the first four, not, as in the present instance, at the close of the first three. Nor does it seem difficult to understand this division, for four is the number of the earth, and the judgments relating to it are thus naturally four. It is not so easy to see why in the seven Epistles the number three should take precedence. Perhaps it may be because three is the number of God; and because the arrangement adopted, the Divine aspect of the Church in her existence considered in itself is brought out with a force which would otherwise have been wanting (see closing remarks on chap. ii.). Jewish feeling, so much appealed to by numbers and their arrangement, may have been alive to this in a manner that we can hardly understand. Whether the above explanation be satisfactory or not, the fact itself is both interesting and important: It throws light upon the measure of artificiality which appears in the structure of the Apocalypse, and is thus a help in its interpretation.—To him that overcometh. The expression is a characteristic one with St John. It occurs in each of the seven Epistles, as also in chap. xxi. 7. In chap. iii. 21 it is used of Christ Himself (cp. also chap. xii. 11 ; John xvi. 33 ; 1 John ii. 12, v. 4, 5.—I will give to him that overcometh the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God. For the tree of life cp. chap. xxii. 2, 14, 19. What victorious believers eat is ‘out of’ the tree of life, not something that grows upon it, its branches, or leaves, or flowers, or fruit. The particular preposition used in the original carries us to the thought of what is most intimately connected with the tree, to the thought of its very heart and substance. For the idea of eating, cp. John vi. 51. The question is naturally asked, What are we to understand by this ‘tree of life’? and different answers have been given. By some it is supposed to be the Gospel, by others the Holy Spirit, while several of the later commentators on this book suppose it to be that eternal life, with all the mystic perfection and beauty which comes from Christ. The true answer seems to be that it is Christ Himself. Nor is it any reply to this to say that in chap. xxii. 3 we have not one tree but many, for the tree of life there spoken of is really one; or that the Give must be different from the gift, for the highest gift of the Lord is the Incarnate Lord Himself, ‘in whom,’ says St. Paul, ‘dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily’ (Col. ii. 9); ‘is whom,’ says St. John, ‘is life, and incorruptible life,’ out of whom His people have received their life and grace for grace’ (John i. 16). (Cp. on ver. 23.) At the same time this view is confirmed by the use of the preposition ‘out of.’ Who but the Lord Jesus Christ is that fulness ‘out of’ which all believers eat and live?

There may be a correspondence intended between the promise of ‘eating’ and the victory over the Nicolaitans, one of whose characteristics was that they ‘ate things sacrificed to idols’ (ver. 14). Those who eat of the table of devils cannot eat of the Lord’s table (1 Cor. x. 21). They must share the exclusion from the tree of life of fallen Adam and his fallen seed. But the faithful who, like the Second Adam, and is His might, refuse the devil’s dainties (Ps. xvi. 4; Matt. iv. 3), obtain in deepest truth the privilege from which our first parent was excluded (Gen. iii. 24).

CHAPTER II. 8-11.

2. The Epistle to Smyrna.

A ND unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and, 1 became the first and the last, which was 2 rose to life, and 3 add thy 4 omit works, and 5 add they 6 omit I know 7 fear not the 8omit I know 9 art about to 10 omit they themselves 11 is about to 12 the 12 t # cp. chap. xxii. 2, 14, 19. What victorious believers eat is ‘out of’ the tree of life, not something that grows upon it, its branches, or leaves, or flowers, or fruit. The particular preposition used in the original carries us to the thought of what is most intimately connected with the tree, to the thought of its very heart and substance. For the idea of eating, cp. John vi. 51. The question is naturally asked, What are we to understand by this ‘tree of life’? and different answers have been given. By some it is supposed to be the Gospel, by others the Holy Spirit, while several of the later commentators on this book suppose it to be that eternal life, with all the mystic perfection and beauty which comes from Christ. The true answer seems to be that it is Christ Himself. Nor is it any reply to this to say that in chap. xxii. 3 we have not one tree but many, for the tree of life there spoken of is really one; or that the Give must be different from the gift, for the highest gift of the Lord is the Incarnate Lord Himself, ‘in whom,’ says St. Paul, ‘dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily’ (Col. ii. 9); ‘is whom,’ says St. John, ‘is life, and incorruptible life,’ out of whom His people have received their life and grace for grace’ (John i. 16). (Cp. on ver. 23.) At the same time this view is confirmed by the use of the preposition ‘out of.’ Who but the Lord Jesus Christ is that fulness ‘out of’ which all believers eat and live?

There may be a correspondence intended between the promise of ‘eating’ and the victory over the Nicolaitans, one of whose characteristics was that they ‘ate things sacrificed to idols’ (ver. 14). Those who eat of the table of devils cannot eat of the Lord’s table (1 Cor. x. 21). They must share the exclusion from the tree of life of fallen Adam and his fallen seed. But the faithful who, like the Second Adam, and is His might, refuse the devil’s dainties (Ps. xvi. 4; Matt. iv. 3), obtain in deepest truth the privilege from which our first parent was excluded (Gen. iii. 24).

A ND unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and, 1 became the first and the last, which was 2 rose to life, and 3 add thy 4 omit works, and 5 add they 6 omit I know 7 fear not the 8 omit I know 9 art about to 10 omit they themselves 11 is about to 12 the
He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

Ver. 8. The second church addressed is that of Smyrna, a city situated a little to the north of Ephesus, and in the same province of Asia Minor. Smyrna was one of the most prosperous and wealthy cities of Asia, lying in the midst of a rich and fertile region, and enjoying peculiar facilities for commerce. Its citizens worshiped, and, as a natural consequence, drunkenness and immorality were extremely prevalent.

Again the Epistle opens with a description of Him from whom it is sent. The description is taken from chap. i. 17, 18. For the renderings rose to life, which we have adopted here, comp. chap. xii. 14 and John v. 21. The substance of the Epistle follows.

Ver. 9. The first words of the address to the church, as given in the Authorised Version, ‘I know thy works,’ are to be omitted both here and in ver. 13, the salutation to the church at Pergamos. They are found in all the other Epistles, and we may be assured, therefore, that their omission in these two places is designed. We shall venture to offer what seems the most probable explanation in the general remarks on the Epistles as a whole at the close of chap. iii. Three features of the condition of the church at Smyrna are noticed:—
(1) I know thy tribulation. The word ‘tribulation’ is to be understood in the general sense of affliction, suffering, but with a special reference to persecution brought upon believers for steadfastness in their Master’s cause (comp. John xvi. 33); (2) And thy poverty (but thou art rich). Like all the churches of that early time, the church at Smyrna was composed of members for the most part poor. ‘Not many rich, not many noble, were called.’ But in the possession of a better inheritance it was ‘rich,—rich in faith, and an heir of the kingdom which the Lord promised to them that love Him’ (Jas. ii. 5); (3) And the blasphemy of them which say that they themselves are Jews, and they are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. The ‘blasphemy’ referred to probably includes not simply reviling against Christians, but against their Lord. Then, as now, the Jews were notorious for the fierceness of their language against Christ, to whom they did not hesitate to apply every epithet of contempt and hatred (comp. 1 Cor. xii. 3; Jas. ii. 7).

The most interesting inquiry here has relation to the meaning of the word ‘Jews.’ Before endeavouring to answer it, it is of importance to observe that the word is not directly employed either by the Lord or by the Seer in His name. The persecutors and blasphemers referred to used it of themselves. ‘They hate me because I am a Jew.’ But none would so use the term except such as really were Jews by birth and by religion; while, in so using it, they intended to assert that they were the true people of God, and that Christians had no title to the place which they were endeavouring to claim as His. It is now denied by the Author of the Epistle that the term had any proper application to them. Had they been truly Jews, Jews in any proper sense of the word, they would have taken up an altogether different attitude towards Christ and Christianity from that which they actually occupied. They would have seen that in the faith of Jesus the purpose of their own Mosaic economy was fulfilled; and they would have cast their lot with the Christian Church. They did not do so. In dealing with them in Jesus, they were everywhere the chief stirrers up of hatred and persecution against His followers (Acts xiv. 19, xvii. 5, 13, etc.). How could they be Jews? The Jews at least worshipped God, and assembled in His synagogue to study the Law and the Prophets; of these blasphemers it could only be said that they were a synagogue of Satan. It is not denied that the word ‘Jews’ is thus used here in an honourable sense; and, accordingly, it has often been urged that we have in this a proof that the Author of the Apocalypse cannot have been also the Author of the fourth Gospel, inasmuch as in the latter those named ‘the Jews’ are the embodiment of everything that is most hard and stubborn and devilish. Two answers may be given to the charge:—(1) St. John does not originate the word, he only quotes it; and (2) the expression is not the same as that used in the Gospel,—there the Jews, here Jew.”

Ver. 10. An exhortation not to fear the things which it was about to suffer. Fresh persecution was immediately to arise. The children of God are not comforted amidst their troubles by the assurance that these are about to pass away. It may often happen, on the contrary, that one wave of tribulation shall only be followed by another. Strength and comfort are to be found in other thoughts. The tribulation to be expected is then further specified. It shall proceed from the devil, a name of Satan chosen with a reference to the calumnies and slanders previously alluded to. Under that name he is ‘the accuser of the brethren’ (Rev. xii. 10; comp. Job i. 1; Zech. iii. 1, 2). But the devil is not only to slander them. He is about, it is said, to cast some of you into prison, prevailing upon the heathen powers, ever ready to listen to accusations against the Christians, to visit them with this punishment. Further, he is to do this in order that ye may be proved. It is not that they may be ‘proved’ God proves His people. Satan tries them; and this trial shall come from his hands, to be the means, if possible, of effecting his Satanic purposes. Their tribulation, they are told, shall be one of ten days.
THE REVELATION. [CHAP. II. 12-17.

(comp. Dan. i. 12). By these words we are neither to understand ten literal days, nor ten years, nor ten separate persecutions stretching over an indefinite period of time. Like all the other numbers in the Apocalypse, the number is symbolical. It denotes completeness, yet not the Divine fulness of the number seven. They are to have tribulation frequent, oft repeated, lasting, it may be, as long as life itself, yet after all extending only to this present scene, the course of which may be best marked by 'days' that are 'few and evil' (Gen. xlv. 9; Job viii. 9; Ps. xc. 12; comp. 1 Pet. i. 6).—Be thou faithful unto death, that is, not merely during the whole of life, but even to the extremity, if necessary, of meeting death.—And I will give thee the crown of life, that is, the crown which consists in 'life' (comp. 2 Tim. iv. 8)—in life corresponding to the life of Him of whom we have been told in ver. 8 that He 'rose to life.' This last consideration ought alone to be sufficient to determine whether we have here the crown of a king or that of a victor in the games. It is not the latter, but the former (comp. chaps. iv. 4, v. 10), the crown of the Lord Himself (chap. xiv. 14; comp. Ps. xxi. 3, 4). The use of the word stephanos, not diadema, seems to flow from the fact that the crown spoken of is not the mere emblem of royalty, but of royalty reached through severe contests and glorious victories,—its garland crown.

*So should desert in arms be crowned.*

In addition to this, however, we may well include the thought of the Hebrew crown of joy, the crown with which Solomon was crowned in the day of his espousals, and in the 'height of his gladness of his heart' (Cant. iii. 11). Yet there, too, we must remember there is the thought that Solomon had won his bride.

Ver. 11. For the first clause of this verse, comp. what has been said on ver. 7.—He that overcometh shall in no wise be hurt of the second death. For the 'second death,' comp. chaps. xx. 6, 14, xxi. 8, the only other passages where the expression occurs. It is in obvious contrast with the 'life' of vers. 8 and 10. The expression is taken from the Jewish theology, and denotes the death that follows judgment.

The distinguishing feature of the Epistle to Smyrna seems to be the rise of persecution against the followers of Jesus, and their faithfulness is meeting it; while in the next Epistle, that to Pergamos, we shall see persecution in all its form culminating. If so, we have the very progress once indicated by our Lord Himself in His last discourse to His disciples, 'Every branch that beareth fruit, He cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit' (John xv. 2). The lessons taught to the church at Smyrna may well have been present to the soul of Polycarp, Bishop of that see, in his hour of agony, and may have powerfully contributed to sustain that glorious martyr, who was so eminently 'faithful unto death.'

____________________________

CHAPTER II. 12-17.

3. The Epistle to Pergamos.

12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two f

13 edges;* I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of 'Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes,* which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that

* omit sharp

* omit thy works, and

* throne

* filled

* Nevertheless some

* thou hast also

* add in like manner

* add therefore

* omit will

* sword, two-edged, sharp

* didst not deny

* the

* add fast

* teaching

* omit which thing I hate

* and I will make war
overcometh 10 will I give to eat 9 of the hidden manna, and 21 will give him a white stone, and in 22 the stone a new name written, which no man 23 knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

10 add to him 20 omit to eat 21 add I 22 upon 23 one

Ver. 12. The third church addressed is that of Pergamos, now generally written Pergamum, a city which, in every thing except commerce, rivalled the most celebrated cities of Asia at the time. Without in any degree attempting to trace its history, which in no way concerns us here, it may simply be remarked that in the apostolic age Pergamos was especially noted for its worship of Æsculapius the god of medicine. With the genuine pursuit of medicine, however, there was then mixed up a great variety of other inquiries, which, dealing with the secret springs of life, and with drugs, pulleters, and potions, whose methods of operation no one could explain, invested the healing art with an air of impenetrable mystery. Licentiousness and wickedness of every kind were the inevitable result. Add to this the temptations of wealth, learning, and art, together with an apparently indescribable beauty, and we need not be surprised that Satan had at Pergamos an almost peculiar seat, and that what the Old Testament condemns under the name of witchcraft—or attempts to traffic with any spirit, however evil, in order to obtain knowledge or gratify desire—was more than ordinarily prevalent among the inhabitants of the city.

Again, as before, we meet first of all a description of Him from whom the Epistle comes. It is taken from chap. i. 16. Two only of the three characteristics there mentioned of the sword are here referred to, but it will be observed that the third meets us in ver. 15—an illustration of that style of the Apocalypse which leads it to take its details of the same object in different parts of the book, so that we have often to bring them together from great distances before we learn to know the object as a whole.

Ver. 13. As in the Epistle to Smyrna, the words 'thy works' do not belong to the true text. Three particulars in the state of the church are noted—(1) Its outward position. It dwelt where Satan's throne is. The word used is not 'seat,' but distinctly and intentionally 'throne' (comp. Ps. xciv. 20), the purpose of the writer being to contrast the throne of Satan with the throne of God, of which it is the evil and mocking counterpart, and thus to point with peculiar emphasis to the temptations and dangers which the Christians of Pergamos had to encounter. Very different opinions have been entertained with regard to the reasons which may have determined the Lord of the Church to describe Pergamos by this language. Some have traced it to the circumstance that the chief worship of the place was that of Æsculapius, and that the symbol of that divinity was a serpent. The explanation is fanciful. Others have attributed it to the idea that Pergamos was more given over to idolatry than other cities. There is no proof that such was the case. Others, again, have sought an explanation in the fact that Pergamos was under the Roman power, and that thus, representing the heathen persecutors of the Church, it might be said with more than ordinary force to hold the throne of Satan. This expla-

nation also fails, for Satan is in the Apocalypse distinguished from the world-power. The true explanation seems to be that of one of the oldest commentators on the Apocalypse, that in Pergamos persecution first culminated, reaching even to the shedding of Christian blood. In ver. 10 Satan had persecuted to the point of imprisonment; here he kills; and the repetition of the closing words of the verse, where Satan dwelt, 'of Christ's dwelling, of Christ's connection with the putting of Antipas to death, is obviously designed to associate the thought of Satan's dwelling-place with the thought of this last extremity of his rage. In a city, where science itself was the very pillar of witchcraft and idolatry, Satan had been enabled to put forth against the bodies of the Christians every evil which envy at their souls' escape from him suggested. He had been permitted even to reign over their bodily life; for, whereas he had once been commanded to spare the life of Job, he had now succeeded in putting Antipas to death. Even in such a city, however, the church had been found faithful, for it is said to it, (2) Thou hast fasted. The word 'name' is used here, as elsewhere in the writings of St. John, for the fulness of that revelation of the Father which is given in the Son; and the use of the verb 'hold fast' instead of the simple 'have,' may be determined, as in chap. iii. 11, by the peculiar difficulties of the situation in which the church was placed. At the same time, it is the answer of faith to the 'holding fast' predicted of Jesus in ver. 1.—(3) And didst not deny my faith, not the confession of Christ's faith, but faith of which Jesus was Himself the direct object and the substance. The mention of this faith is made still more emphatic by the fact that it had been maintained even in days when persecution reached to death. Who the Antipas spoken of was it is impossible to say, any notice of him in the martyrologies being founded on this passage. There is even a high probability, when we consider the general structure of the Apocalypse, that there was no such person. The name may be symbolical, although it is at once to be allowed that every attempt hitherto made to point out its symbolical signification has failed.

Ver. 14. The defects of the church are next alluded to. There were in Pergamos some that hold fast the teaching of Balaam. Comp. Num. xxv., xxxi. 16. The sins next mentioned are in all probability to be literally understood. It is to be observed that these teachers of erroneous doctrine, these seducers to grievous sin, were not merely inhabitants of the city; they were members of the church. — Thou hast are the words employed.

Ver. 15. So thou also hast some that hold fast the teaching of the Nicolaitans in like manner. The chief point of inquiry connected with these words is, whether they introduce a second group of erroneous teachers, or whether they constitute a second description of the Balaamites already mentioned. Various considerations may be urged in favour of the latter view:—(1) Of the Nicolaitans
as a separate sect nothing is known. Some of the early fathers derived the name from Nicolas, one of the seven deacons mentioned in Acts vi. 5, and supposed that a sect, of which they knew nothing more than they found in this passage, had sprung from him. But the tradition varied; it is in itself in the highest degree improbable; and we may safely regard it as a mere conjecture intended to explain the apparent meaning of the words before us. (2) In verse 20-24 this same sect is obviously compared to Jezebel, a mystical name, making it probable that the name used here is also mystical. (3) The position of the word 'also' in the verse is to be noticed. It is to be closely connected with 'thou,' not 'thou hast also,' etc., as if a second class of false teachers were about to be spoken of, but 'thou also hast,' etc.: the ancient church had its Balaamites, thou hast thy Niccolatians. (4) The addition of the words 'in like manner' is important, showing, as they do, that the second class of false teachers is really identical with the first. In these circumstances, it becomes a highly probable supposition that the word Niccolatian is a rough transliteration of the Hebrew term Balaamites, destroyers or conquerors of the people. Nor is there force in the objection, even if well founded, that such a derivation is not etymologically correct. The popular instinct, so strong amongst the Jews, which took delight in noting similarities of sound, did not concern itself about scientific etymology. Similarity of sound was enough. Nor does there seem to be any perplexity as to the use of the compound Greek word of a verb signifying to conquer rather than to destroy. Evil is ever in the writings of St. John the counterpart of good. Christ is constantly the Conqueror, the Conqueror; and in him we see his enemies are the would-be conquerors, the would-be overcomers of His people. We are thus led to the conclusion that these Nicolaitians are no sect distinct from the followers of Balaam. They are a mystical name for those in the church at Pergamos imitated the example and the errors of that false prophet of the Old Testament; and we have another illustration of the manner in which St. John delights to give double pictures of one thing (comp. chaps. i. 20, ii. 14, 15).

Ver. 16. The exhortation follows. Repent therefore, as in ver. 5 to Ephesus, or else I come unto thee quickly. Comp. on ver. 5, but note that the word 'quickly' is now added; although the coming is still special, not general. We have again an illustration of that climactic style of address which appears in these Epistles when they are considered as a whole. And will make war against them with the sword of my mouth. The Lord will come to war against the Nicolaitians, not against the church. Against His Church, even in her declension, He cannot war. Her threatened punishment (and is it not enough) is, that the Lord will make war upon His enemies without her; and that, not taking part in His struggle, she shall lose her part in His victory. It is difficult to say whether in the sword spoken of there may be any allusion to the sword of the angel in Num. xxiii. 23; but such an idea is not improbable.

Ver. 17. The promise contained in this verse has always occasioned much difficulty to interpreters. It consists of three parts:—(1) To him that overcometh, to him will I give of the hidden manna. The allusion may perhaps be to the pot of manna which was laid up in the innermost sanctuary of the Tabernacle (Ex. xvi. 33), for we see from chap. xi. 19 that the imagery of the ark within which the manna was stored was familiar to St. John. Such an allusion, however, is at the best indirect, for the manna laid up in the ark was not for food, but in memory of food once enjoyed. It seems better, therefore, to place the emphasis on the thought of the manna itself, that bread from heaven by which Israel was nourished in the wilderness, and which is now replaced in the Christian Church by 'the bread which cometh down from heaven,' so that any one may eat thereof, and not die (John vi. 50). (2) And I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it. The tendency of the Apocalypse is to reduce particulars into threes, and so seems to require the separation of this clause from the next following, and to demand that it be considered in itself, and not as simply subordinate to the new name. In determining the meaning of the 'white stone,' it will be well to bear in mind that in the Apocalypse 'white' is not a mere dull white, but a glistening colour, not even necessarily white, and that we must seek for the foundation of the figure in Jewish not in Gentile, and rather than in rabbinical traditions. We shall thus have to dismiss the idea that it refers to the white pebble of the ballot-box, or to any one of the three following tablets, that given to the victor in the games and having certain privileges attached to it, that which entitled the receiver to the liberal hospitality of the giver, or that which admitted the stranger to the enjoyment of the idol feast. Rejecting these, we may also reject the supposition that the white stone has no more importance than as a medium for the name written on it. Nor does it seem easy to accept the explanation, although more legitimate than any of the above, that it was the Urim which the high priest bore within the breastplate of judgment (Ex. xxviii. 30); for the stone thus referred to was probably a diamond, and we cannot easily conceive that the name here spoken of could be inscribed on such a stone.

In these circumstances, what appears by much the more likely interpretation is that which supposes that we have an allusion to the plate of gold worn on the forehead of the high priest, with the words inscribed on it, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. What seems almost conclusive upon this point is, that we learn from other passages of this book that it was upon the forehead of the child of God was borne (chaps. iii. 12, viii. 3, xiv. 1, xxii. 4); cp. also chap. ix. 4; and we have already had occasion to speak of the importance of that law of interpretation which, in the Apocalypse, leads to the bringing of different passages together for the sake of complementing and completing one...
4. The Epistle to Thyatira.

18 AND unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto 1 a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine 2 brass; I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy 3 patience, and thy works; and the 4 last 5 to be more than the first.

19 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because 6 thou sufferest that woman 7 Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce 8 my servants to commit 9 fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to 10 repent of her fornication; and she 11 repented not. 12 Behold, I will 13 cast her into a bed, and them that 14 commit adultery with her into great 15 tribulation, except they 16 repent of their deeds. 17 And I will 18 kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one 19

---

1 eyes as 2 white 3 and thy love, and faith, and ministry, and 4 omit and thy works 5 thy 6 add works 7 are
8 Nevertheless I have against thee 9 thy 9 that 10 thy wife 11 and she teacheth and seduceth 12 omit of her fornication 13 willeth not to repent of her fornication 14 do 15 a great 16 out of her works 17 each
24 of you according to your works. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I have received.

28 of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Ver. 18. The fourth church addressed is that of Thyatira, a city finely situated in a rich and well-watered district of Asia Minor, at no great distance from Pergamos, but possessing none of the political importance of the latter. It is interesting to notice in connection with Acts xvi. 14, though it does not concern us at present, that Thyatira was famous for its purple or scarlet dyes. The sun-god was the leading object of worship to the heathen inhabitants of the city; and it has been thought that there is thus a peculiar propriety in the light in which Jesus presents Himself to its church, as One whose eyes are as a flame of fire. For the description now given of Himself by the great Head of the Church, cp. chap. i. 14, 15. The most remarkable part of it is that in which He designates Himself the Son of God. It was as One 'like unto a Son of man' that He had been beheld by the Seer of Babylon, chap. ii. 13, although that description was in no degree intended to exclude the thought of His essential Divinity. He was really the Son of God like unto a son of man. Now, however, the Divine aspect of His person is brought prominently forward, yet not simply because in this Epistle He is to speak of executing judgment, for He both executes judgment in other Epistles, and He does so as Son of man (John v. 27; see note there), but because Divine Sonship is part of that constitution of His person upon which it becomes the Church constantly to dwell. Perhaps also the distinct phase of the Church upon which we enter in the second group of these Epistles may explain the prominence given to the thought of the 'Son of God.' She has been hitherto regarded in what she is. She is now to be looked at in her struggle with the world (cp. remarks at close of the seven Epistles) let her learn that 'God is on her side,'

Ver. 19. The words I know thy works, which had been omitted from the second and third Epistles, are resumed in the fourth, and they meet us in each of the four Epistles of the second group. The general term 'works' is next specialised into four parts, or two groups of two members each, the members of the first group corresponding to those of the second. Love shows itself in Ministry; Faith in Patience or endurance. But more than this. Thyatira's last works are more than the first. Not that 'ministry' and 'patience' are greater than 'love' and 'faith,' or that they alone deserve the designation 'works.' That term is as applicable to the latter as to the former. The fact condemned is that there is progress in them all. The path of the church has been as the morning light shining unto the perfect day. She has not fallen back like Ephesus; she has advanced.
It had allied itself with them. Many, no doubt, had remained pure (ver. 24), but the church as a whole was guilty. The Jezebel of the Old Testament, whose story lies at the bottom of the apostle’s language, was a heathen both by birth and training; and Ahab’s marriage with her was the first instance of the marriage with a heathen princess of a king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Thus had Thasya sinned, had entered for the sake of worldly honour into alliance with the world, and was still continuing the sinful tie. The sentence, ‘thou suffest thy wife Jezebel,’ it must be noticed, is complete in itself, ‘thou toleratest,’ ‘thou lettest alone’ (comp. John xi. 45, xii. 7; and for the story of Jezebel, 1 Kings xvi., xvii., xix., xxi.; 2 Kings ix.). Most commentators admit that the name Jezebel is to be understood symbolically; but they are not agreed whether, as so used, it refers to a single person,—a false female teacher,—or a heretical party within the church. The latter opinion is by much the more probable of the two, although we have before us not so much a regularly constituted party, as separate persons who were themselves addicted to the false teaching and who were endeavouring at the same time to seduce others. In Jer. iv. 30 we have a similar description of the degeneracy of the Church. The persons thus pointed at were, in all probability, within the Church. They had drawn their erroneous views and sinful practices, it is true, from heathenism, as Jezebel was the daughter of a heathen king, but they were not themselves heathen. They were professedly reformers, for they were the whole of the Christian community, for this Jezebel calleth herself a prophetess, not a false prophetess, but one with a divine commission. (2) And she teacheth, etc. The sins into which the persons alluded to sought to betray the church are not mentioned. They are the sins already spoken of in the case of Pergamos; yet there is at the same time an important distinction. At Pergamos the evil came from an outward source, Balaam; at Thasya from an inward source, Jezebel. The former was a Gentile Prophet; the latter was the wife of the King of Israel. Mark the progress.

Ver. 21. (3) And I gave her time that she should repent. It is intended by the use of the word ‘time’ here, that we should fix our thoughts upon the delay of the Son of God in executing His righteous judgments (comp. chap. x. 6). All along punishment was deserved, but He withheld His hand that His goodness might lead the evil-doers to repentance. (4) She will not repent of her fornication. The delay was in vain. The hearts of these transgressors was set in them to do evil. They ‘willed’ not to repent. The expression is remarkable and characteristic (comp. on John vi. 6, vi. 21).

Ver. 22. Behold, I cast her into a bed, etc. The bed is not one of lust, but of sickness and sorrow (comp. Ps. xli. 3). And I will cast her children with death. Those thus named ‘her children’ are generally distinguished from the persons formerly mentioned either as her ‘proper adherents,’ in contrast with ‘those who encouraged her,’ or as the ‘less forward,’ ‘the deceived,’ in contrast with the deceivers. There seems ground for either view. The latter destroys the force of the word ‘children’ (comp. John i. 12), the former that of the previous clause. The truth is that the two classes are the same; they are in both cases those who partake of her spirit, and who follow her example. It will be observed that the fate of the historical Jezebel is repeated in those who imitate her. As Ahab’s queen was cast out of the window, so this Jezebel is to be cast into affliction. As Ahab’s sons were slain, so the spiritual progeny of this Jezebel shall be killed. And all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts. All the churches, an indication of the universal reference of these Epistles. And the ‘churches,’ not the world, shall know, shall have inward knowledge and experience of the fact (comp. ‘knoweth’ in ver. 17). The wicked are not in the Lord’s thought, ‘for God’s judgments are above out of their sight, but all who ponder these things and lay them to heart’ (Trench). And I will give unto each one of you according to your works. The clause is particularly important when taken along with that immediately preceding it. The Lord tries the ‘reins and hearts,’ the most inward parts of men. From these the ‘works’ of men cannot be separated. His ‘works’ are the whole of the outward manifestation itself in the outward; the value of the outward is dependent upon the inward.

Ver. 24. But unto you I say, the rest that are in Thasya. The apostle turns from the church at large to that smaller section of it which had resisted the influences of the false teachers symbolized by Jezebel. They have not this teaching; that is, they have it not as their possession, they do not make it their own. Nor have they known the depths of Satan. The word ‘depths’ was a favourite one at the time with those who pretended to a profound knowledge of the truth, whether of God or Satan, than could be gained through the authoritative teachers of the Christian Church, and who seem not unfrequently to have associated with their religious speculations lives of shameless and unrestrained licentiousness. The prevalent idea is, that these persons spoke only of ‘the depths’ or of ‘the depths of God,’ and that in bitter irony the Lord of the Church either adds here the words ‘of Satan,’ or substitutes the name of Satan for the name of God. Such suppositions are perhaps unnecessary. We may have before us a trace of that Gnostic sect known as the Ophites, a name derived from the Greek word for a serpent, the emblem of Satan. That sect entertained a profound reverence for Satan, looking upon him as the benefactor, not the destroyer of man, while the ultimate result of their religious system was that they converted Satan into God and evil into good. The heresy was one of a most disastrous character; and yet in some of its forms it attained a widespread influence in the early Church, more especially in that district of Asia Minor which embraced the seven churches of the Apocalypse. No wonder that we find it alluded to as it is here! I cast upon you none other burden. It is
difficult to determine what precise 'burden' is thus alluded to, whether the sufferings of one kind or another which the faithful remnant of the church was enduring, or the Christian obligations under which it lay to avoid the sins and errors encouraged by the Nicolaitans. This latter view has been thought to find confirmation in the decree of Acts xv. 28, 29, where it is a very similar to that now before us is employed. By such an interpretation, however, the Christian life itself would be represented as a 'burden'; while, at the same time, the use of the word 'cast' is unsuitable to the thought of Christian precepts. The circumstances of the case must determine the meaning. The church at Thyatira 'suffered' Jezreel. The 'burden' of that part of it which remained true to its Lord was that this was done. Jezreel ought to have been put away: the alliance with the world ought to have been broken. The struggle to effect this, one maintained not against the world, but against brethren in a common faith, was so great that the Lord of the Church would lay upon those engaged in it 'no other burden' (comp. on chap. ii. 1).

Ver. 25. But what ye have hold fast until I shall come. It is important to notice the change of expression in the original for the 'coming' spoken of. Twice already in this chapter (vers. 5, 16) have we read of a coming of the Lord, but on each of these two occasions it was closely associated with, and limited by, the words 'unto me.' These 'comings' therefore referred not so much to the final coming as to special judgments in which it was foreshadowed: this refers rather to that in which all special judgments culminate, the Second and final Coming. Again, a clear and true parallel to the climactic nature of these Epistles.

Ver. 26. And he that overcometh. We come now to the promise contained in this Epistle for the faithful, and it will be observed that for the first time it is not predicated by the call to him 'that hath ears to hear,' That call in the four last Epistles of the seven is reserved for the close (comp. on ver. 7).—And he that keepeth my works unto the end. The construction of the original shows that this description is distinct from the preceding. Attention ought to be directed to the expression 'My works,' commentators appearing to miss their force. They are not simply the works which Jesus commands, but those which He does,—a fresh illustration of that close identification of Jesus with His people which marks the writings of St. John. We meet the opposite identification, that of Jezreel and her followers, in ver. 22.—To him will I give authority over the nations. By the 'nations' we are not to understand the nations as such, but the nations as opposed to the true Israel of God, and as alienated from God,—properly the Gentiles. The allusion is to Ps. ii. 8, 9; and the believer shall not merely have power, but rightful power, authority, over them.

Ver. 27. And as a shepherd he shall tend them with a sceptre of iron. The figure has nothing to do, as so often supposed, with the Homeric title, 'Shepherd of the people.' Jesus as King is Shepherd of His own; but He is also Shepherd of His enemies, though in a different way. Hence the 'iron sceptre,' for the instrument alluded to is not a rod or shepherd's crook, but a king's sceptre (comp. chaps. xii. 5, xix. 15). The fact that it is of iron brings out the judgment involved,—As vessels of the potter are they broken to shreds, words which cannot be interpreted as expressing 'a judgment behind which purposes of grace are concealed,' 'a threat of love.' Whether grace may one day be revealed even for those upon whom the judgments spoken of descend, we are not told. Actual facts proved that He had the words, 'in the day thou castest thereof, thou shalt surely die,' such purposes of grace lay: but they were not contained in the words; nor are they here. As I received of my Father. Again we have the privileges of Christ's people closely identified with those which He Himself enjoys. He receives of the Father, and what He receives He makes theirs.

It must be noticed that, like all the promises of these Epistles, this promise belongs to the future, not to the present life. The reader, too, will not fail to mark the correspondence between it and the description of the Lord in ver. 18, as well as that between it and the particular trials of this church. A heathen element in Thyatira was sufficiently strong to destroy the life of God's people there. They have given them the assurance of the coming of a time when that element shall be crushed beneath their feet.

Ver. 28. And I will give him the morning star. Very various opinions have been entertained with regard to the meaning of this 'star.' It has been supposed to be the devil, or the king of Babylon, or the glorified body of the heavenly glory, or the earnest of the sovereignty of light over darkness. We must gather the meaning from the Apocalypse itself; and from chap. xxii. 16 we shall be led to the belief that the morning star is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the blessed and morning star, and He gives Himself to His people, that in Him they may find their victory and joy. There is a peculiar propriety in the mention of this reward for the Church at the end of the moment when she is thought of as set on high, over all her enemies. When she is secretly nourished in the Tabernacle of God she is a candlestick: when she has met and conquered the world she is a star,—the Lord Himself in the most illustrious instance both the one and the other. With this idea of the morning star no thought of bringing in those who have rejected Jesus ought to be combined. Whether or not they shall be brought in lies in the secret purposes of God unrevealed to us (comp. on ver. 27).

Ver. 29. Comp. on ver. 7.

In the church at Thyatira we seem to pass for the first time to the Church considered in her widest aspect and as brought into positive relations with the powers of the heathen world. These powers have penetrated within her, and she has in part yielded to their influence. God's people have allied themselves with a heathen princess, and she has tempted them to sin. The first Epistle of the second group thus corresponds to the first of the first group, although with a difference in harmony with the general nature of the two groups as wholes. In the first Epistle of the first group the evil is wholly from within; the church has forsaken her first love. In the first Epistle of the second group the evil enters from without; the world tempers, and the church yields, at least in part, to the temptation in order that it may have a share in the world's glory. In the one case she has forgotten Him who walketh in the midst of the
seven golden candlesticks, and whose love never fails: in the other the power of the present and the seen has led too many of her members to break their covenant with Him who is the Son of God, whose kingdom is not of this world, and whose rewards are future and unseen.

CHAPTER III. 1-6.

5. The Epistle to Sardis.

And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the "seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthe, the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and hast heard, and hast kept, and the tears of repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

add thou Become stablish which were omitt not no works of thine fulfilled add my after what manner didst hear keep omit on thee But thou omit even didst not defile add along the same add thus garments in no wise and

The fifth church addressed is that of Sardis, one of the most famous of the seven cities to which these Epistles are sent, the capital in former days of the great kingdom of Lydia, Croesus' kingdom, largely engaged in commercial enterprises, and distinguished for a magnificent temple of the goddess Cybele, the rites of whose worship were in a high degree impure. A few uninhabited ruins now remain.

Ver. 1. First, as in each previous case, we have a description of Him from whom the message comes, He that hath the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars (cp. 1. 4, 16). The description is different from that of chap ii. 1, where the Lord is described as 'holding fast the seven stars in His right hand.' There He holds them fast for their protection; here they are simply spoken of as His possession. He is their Lord, and they ought to worship Him. The fact that He has also the 'seven Spirits of God,' or in other words, the Holy Spirit in His fulness, is on the one hand a proof of the doctrine of the Western Church on the relation of the Holy Spirit to our Lord, while on the other hand it also points to the true and spiritual nature of the service which He requires. They that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth. This last is precisely what the church at Sardis failed to do. To the world she seemed a star, but He who, as having the Spirit without measure, has the stars also, knew that she was not what she seemed to be.—That thou hast a name that thou livest, and that art dead. These words denote more than that Sardis was dead while she lived. She had a name, a prominent, famous name, a name of which the whole connection shows us that she boasted. The thought of this name was her ruin; 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.' More than this; let a prosperous church, a church commanding the high places of the earth, a church no more persecuted, but at ease in the enjoyment of her privileges, the admiration of multitudes, an object of attention to the world,—let such a church remember that the outward is not the inward, and that power and splendour of position have no value in the sight of Heaven compared with spirituality of heart and life.
THE REVELATION.

Ver. 2. Become watchful. Sardis had failed to ‘watch,’—the very sin into which spiritual pride is sure to fall. Therefore must she first of all awake, discover what her temptation is, and put herself on her guard against the foe.—And establish the things that remain which were ready to die; that is, which were ready, at the moment when the searching eye of her Lord was first directed towards her, to sink into the state characterized as ‘dead.’ Christian graces, not persons, are alluded to,—a part of the church’s works that had as yet been preserved from the complete degeneracy by which she had been overtaken.—For I have found no works of thine fulfilled before my God. In no part of the Christian life had Sardis reached that perfect spirituality after which she was to aspire. Spirituality is Christ’s perfection, His consummation in His state of glory. At the right hand of the Father He is ‘spirit,’ not to the exclusion of a body, but with a ‘spiritual body,’ a body completely accordant and harmonious with that state of spirit in which He is. But the Church is Christ’s fulness; and so long, therefore, as she is not spiritual, her works are not ‘fulfilled.’ It is difficult to say why we should have the word ‘my’ prefixed to God; but the probability is that it is for the purpose of bringing out that true nature of God which leads Him to demand spiritual worship. ‘My God,’—‘the God for whom and in whom I live, who are your ascended and glorified High Priest and King. The Pharisee might think that God would be satisfied with outward profession: the heathen might offer Him a merely formal service. Jesus knew that He was ‘spirit’ (John iv. 24), and that only in spirit could He be worshipped.

Ver. 3. The exhortation to Sardis is to remember, not the simple fact that she had received, but how she had done so, after what manner she had received, the earnestness, the faithfulness, and the zeal which had marked the first stages of her spiritual life. The change of tense in the next clause is interesting.—Didst hear? She had ‘received,’ and she still retained possession of the truth; hence the perfect. But she no longer ‘heard’ in that sense of obeying so common in the writings of St. John; hence the aorist pointing to a specific moment of the past. There is always a reason, whether we can discover it or not, for such changes of tense (cp. on viii. 14).—If, however, the church at Sardis will not obey the command to watch, she shall not escape. The Lord will come as a thief. It is not the suddenness or unexpectedness of the hour only that is thought of under the image of a thief, for that image has rather its expression in the last clause of the verse. It is the object with which the thief comes that is in view,—to break up and to destroy. Thus the Lord ‘comes as a thief,’ and the hour shall not be known till He is come (comp. Luke xii. 19; 1 Thess. v. 2; 2 Pet. iii. 10).

Ver. 4. Sardis was not wholly given over to evil, and the Lord does not less mark and approve the good than condemn the evil that was in her.—But thou hast a few names in Sardis which did not defile their garments. It is impossible to miss the play upon the word ‘names’ as compared with ‘thou hast a name’ in ver. 1. A few had resisted the temptations to licentiousness so prevalent around them, and had maintained their Christian life and character in a manner corresponding to the pure and lofty aims of the faith which they professed.—Hence the promise, again leading us back to the grace to which it is attached; they shall walk along with me in white. The grace which clothed them even here as a white robe shall become a robe of glory. Their glory shall be the very glory of their Lord, for there is force in the preposition along with; they shall be sharers in that the glorified Redeemer is.—For they are worthy (comp. for contrast, chap. xvi. 5, 6).

Ver. 5. He that overcometh shall thus be clothed in white garments. He shall be clothed about, shall be wrapped round and round with the glistering glory of ver. 4.—And I will in no wise blot out his name out of the book of life. The ‘book of life’ is a book conceived of as a register, containing the names of the true citizens of Zion (cp. Ex. xii. 32; Dan. xii. 1-2; Luke xiv. 20; Rev. xiii. 8, xvii. 8, xx. 12, xxi. 27, xxii. 19). There is no statement here that there is such a process of erasure of names from the book of life as may warrant us in saying that names once admitted to that book are being continually blotted out. Nor is such a thought in harmony with the general teaching of the Apocalypse, which looks rather at the number of the saved and of the lost as being from the first complete. What we are told is, not that some names shall be blotted out, but that certain names shall in no wise be so.—And I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels (cp. Matt. x. 32, 33). He who has sought no names before men (comp. ver. 1) shall have his name confessed by his Lord in the great day.

Ver. 6. The usual call, with which the four last Epistles close.

CHAPTER III. 7-13.

6. The Epistle to Philadelphia.

7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy

1 one
2 shall shut
works: behold, I have set an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. He that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Ver. 7. The sixth church addressed is that of Philadelphia, a city of Asia Minor, of which it is unnecessary to say more than that it possessed considerable importance, without attaining to the rank of the other cities mentioned in these chapters.

To this church the Lord is introduced in terms corresponding to those of chap. i. 13. 18. The first two parts of the description are founded on the words 'Son of man' in ver. 13, the third on the statement of ver. 18, that He who is thus spoken of has the 'keys of death and of Hades.' By the word holy we are to understand not so much one who is free from sin, as one who is consecrated and set apart to the service of God (see on John i. 9); and by the word true, one who is the essence of reality as opposed to one who is only phenomenal and shadowy (see on John i. 9). Both appellations are illustrated by a prophecy of Isaiah that is evidently in the writer's eye, in which the rejection of the false Sheba and the calling of the faithful Elisha are foretold (Isa. xxii. 20-35). The Jews are represented by the one, and they are now deposed from their priestly and prophetic office. The Christ is represented by the other, and He as God's 'holy' and 'true.' Priest with His people in Him is come to be the Head of that Israel of God, which is to be the 'salt of the earth,' and the 'light of the world.' As God's 'consecrated' and 'true' one, Christ is the Archetype to which all things point, whether in nature or providence or grace. Everything is 'fulfilled' in Him.—Further, He is he that hath the key of David, that openeth and no one shall shut, and shutteth and no one openeth. For the signification of 'key,' comp. on chap. i. 18. It is neither the key of knowledge,—of opening up the meaning of Scripture,—nor the key of discipline,—of receiving into or excluding from the Church. It is rather the key of power, of that power by which the Lord of glory is Ruler in His own house,—the kingdom of God. He is the Way, no one cometh unto the Father but by Him; and against those that come to Him the gates of Hell shall not prevail (comp. Isa. xxii. 22). There is thus a much closer connection between this latter part of the description and the two earlier parts than we might at first suppose; for it is as the divinely-commissioned servant of the Most High, absolutely perfect, absolutely 'true,' comprehending in Himself the essence of all reality, of all enduring and eternal life, that the Son of man is the 'Captain' of our salvation, the Prince of life who opens and closes the kingdom of heaven on conditions involved in the nature of things, and therefore irreversible by any power in heaven or earth or hell.

Ver. 8. The contents of the Epistle begin in the usual manner, and then proceed, the first sentence being parenthetical, Behold, I have given before thee an open door, and no one can shut it. The translation of the original thus offered cannot be said to be idiomatic; but, when the inspired author has employed unidiomatic Greek for the
purpose of giving expression to a particular thought which appeared to him important, it seems to be the duty of a translator to follow his example, and to endeavour as best he may to find utterance for the same thought in his own language. This is the case here. There can be no doubt that the verb ‘to give’ is a very important one in the writings of St. John, and not least so in these seven Epistles, in every one of which it has a place. In the words before us it is not used through any imperfect knowledge of the Greek tongue. It is deliberately chosen to bring out the fact that every advantage we possess, every privilege we enjoy, every victory, is the gift of Him in whom we live. The Lord does not merely do certain things for His people; in the doing of them He bestows His ‘gifts.’ Nay, not only so, His giving is part of a chain that binds together the lowest and the highest in His kingdom. The Father gives the Son; the Son gives Himself: in giving Himself, the Son gives us all things: whatever we receive is part of one line of giving. There is difficulty in determining the meaning of the ‘opened door.’ We may at once set aside the idea that it is a door of access to the understanding of Scripture. Is it then, as generally viewed, a door of opportunity for carrying on the mission work of the Church,—mission work which is then thought by some to have reference to the Gentiles, by others to the Jews? This idea is no doubt taken from such texts as 1 Cor. xvi. 9; 2 Cor. i. 12; Col. iv. 3; but the supposed analogy loses its force when we observe that no instance of it can be quoted from the writings of St. John. On the other hand, there can be no hesitation as to the meaning of the word ‘door’ in chap. iv. 1, or in 1 John iv. 1. It is something that leads the persons before whom it is opened into the happiness referred to in the context. Still further, it is unfavourable to the idea of missionary work here.—(1) That the thought of converting the world by the instrumentation of the Church is foreign to the Apocalypse; (2) That missionary results achieved in this world cannot be described in the language of ver. 9. Jews and Gentiles, when converted, neither worship before the Church nor pay such homage to her as is there implied; they worship before Christ; He is the object of their homage; (3) That the Church is conceived of here in her royal as well as in her priestly capacity. This appears from mention of the ‘crown’ in ver. 11, and from the fact that the verb translated ‘worship’ suggests the thought of homage to royalty; (4) Add what is said on the clause ‘and he shall in no wise go any more out’ in ver. 12; (5) Lastly, notice the peculiar construction of the sentence, where the thrice, or rather the twice repeated ‘behold’ (for the third behold is merely the taking up again of the second, as ‘knowing’ in John xii, is the taking up again of the same word in ver. 1) leads to the inference that ver. 9 is simply a second picture, or fuller explanation of ver. 8. But ver. 9 certainly does not express any conversion of the Jews; and yet, therefore, is ver. 8 the expression of means taken for the conversion of either them or the Gentiles.

The ‘opened door,’ then, is no other than that by which the faithful enter into the enjoyment of the heavenly glory, as well as that by which those spoken of in ver. 9 enter, so far at least as to see them, in order to pay them homage while they sit upon their throne. This door no one shall shut, that is, no one shall be able to prevent believers from entering on their reward. Their enemies may frown upon them, persecute them as they persecuted their Lord, but it will be in vain. The world shall be compelled to own them as it was compelled to own Him in part even here, and fully, however much to its shame, hereafter (comp. chap. i. 7).—The following words present in three particulars the ‘works’ referred to in the first clause of the verse.—(1) Thou hast a little power. The church at Philadelphia had not altogether failed. (2) Didst not thy name? that is, my word for utterance (comp. John xvii, 6, 8). She had preserved the Word of the Lord as a precious heritage.—(3) Didst not deny my name. She had stood firm when tempted to deny her Lord, openly confessing Him.

Ver. 9. The two parts of this verse each beginning with ‘Behold’ must be taken together, for the second ‘behold’ is the repetition of the first. Those referred to are described as in ver. 6, 9 (see note there). Commentators generally imagine that we have here a promise of the conversion of the Jews literally understood, not indeed of the whole nation, but of that ‘remnant’ which, as we learn from other passages of Scripture, remained, amidst the general obstinacy of the nation, susceptible to the influences of the Christian faith. It is impossible to take such a view, for not only do the prophecies upon which the language before us is founded, as well as the context (Isa. ii. 3, xlix. 21-23, lx. 14-16; Zechar. viii. 20-23), refer to the coming in of the Gentiles rather than of the Jews; but there is nothing in the words in the least degree resembling a promise of conversion. They speak of a constrained submission to a Church which has been hitherto disowned, and of acknowledging what has been hitherto denied,—that Christians are the object of God’s love (comp. John xiv. 31). It ought further to be observed, that in the language employed by the Lord it is not some of these Jews that are thought of, but all. There is no mention of the ‘remnant’ alluded to by St. Paul in Rom. xvi. 27. We are therefore entitled to conclude that in this verse nothing is said of a calling in of the Jews, whether in whole or in part. What we read of is simply the bowing down of the Church’s enemies before her feet. The outward progress of the Church, as illustrated in the case of Philadelphia, is again worthy of notice. At chap. ii. 9 these enemies of the faith were only not to be feared: now they bow in submission before her whom they had persecuted. Nor is the inward progress of the Church less perceptible. For the first time in these Epistles we see her bearing witness to Christ in word, opening her lips to speak the Word of God, herself, in short, a continuation of The Word.

Ver. 10. Because thou didst keep the word of my patience. The reference is neither to any precepts of Christ concerning patience, nor to any accounts given us of the patience of Christ Himself, but simply to Christ’s ‘word,’ which cannot be kept without much patient endurance on the part of His people.—I also will keep thee out of the hour of the trial, etc. The hour spoken of is described as that of ‘the trial,’ the great, probably the final, trial which was now about to come, which was near at hand. ‘Out of’ (comp.
John xvi. 15) this trial believers are to be kept,—
not that they are to be kept in it, when in the
course of providence it comes upon the Church as
well as others, but that they are to be kept entirely
out of it; it shall not touch them. This trial, then,
is not to be a trial of the world, in order to see
whether it will repent, or a trial of the Church,
in order to confirm her in faith; nor is it to
come in two ways,—bringing out the fidelity of
the believing, and hardening the unbelieving. It
really befalls the impenitent alone, and is the just
recompense of their sin (comp. Matt. xxiv. 5, etc.;
1 Thess. iii. 3). Even if the righteous suffer in it,
it will not be to them a ‘trial;’ they are already
elect, safe. That this is the true sense of the
passage is confirmed by what follows. The trial
comes upon the whole inhabited world; no part
of the world shall escape it. But at the
same time, it comes to try them that dwell upon
the earth, not all living men without exception,
but, as clearly shown by the use of this expression
in the Apocalypse, only the wicked (comp.
chaps. vi. 10, viii. 13, xi. 10, xii. 8, 13, 14,
vii. 2, 8). The ‘earth’ is the opposite of
‘heaven’ (comp. John iii. 12), and they that
‘dwell upon the earth’ do not include the saints
who are already seated in heavenly places (comp.
chap. vi. 9, xii. 1).
Ver. 11. I come quickly. Comp. chap. ii. 25
and ver. 3, in both of which the general, rather
than any special, coming of the Lord had been
spoken of. He was to ‘come’ in the first, to
‘come as a thief’ in the second; now He ‘comes
quickly.’—That no one take thy crown, that
is, take it away (comp. chap. vi. 4), deprive
the church of it. The crown is the crown of
future glory, the kingly crown (comp. on chap.
iv. 10).
Ver. 12. We have now the promise to him that
overcometh, which is divided into three parts, not
two. (1) Him will I make a pillar in the
temple of my God. He shall not merely be a
living stone in the temple, but something much
more beautiful and glorious. It may be doubted
if the idea of stability ought to be introduced here
in connection with the word ‘pillar.’ That idea
seems to be drawn from the words immediately
following, which have been improperly associated
with those before us. The thought of the pillar
is rather that of ornament and beauty to the build-
ing of which it is a part. (2) And he shall be in
no wise come forth any more. These words are
not to be taken in the sense of, he shall be in no
danger of being thrust out or of falling away.
They rather form, when rightly viewed, a remark-
able illustration of the unity of thought between
the Apocalypse and the fourth Gospel, as well as
of that close identification of the believer with his
Lord which is so prominent in each. The verb
‘come forth,’ as used of Jesus in the fourth Gospel,
expresses not only His original derivation from
the Father, but His whole manifestation of Him-
self as the ‘sent’ of God (John viii. 42, xiii. 3,
vii. 30, xviii. 1 and note there). It includes,
therefore, the thought of all His suffering and
sorrow, of all His humiliation and self-sacrifice
until He returned to the Father. In a similar
sense it seems to be used of the believer here.
The Lord is now exalted in glory, and ‘comes
forth’ no more; the believer, when crowned with
his glory, shall in like manner be safe from all
future trial. (3) And I will write upon him,
etc. Three things are to be written, not upon
the pillar, but upon the victorious believer—first,
the name of my God. Considering the manner
in which one part of the Apocalypse enlarges and
explains another, it is hardly possible not to take
this part of the promise as an enlargement of what
has already met us in chap. ii. 17. We are thus
led to think again of the inscription upon the
forehead of the high priest. Secondly, the name
of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem,
which cometh down out of heaven from my
God. The Jerusalem referred to is not the earthly,
but the heavenly city, the city now with God, but
which is hereafter to descend (chap. xxi. 2, 10).
Thirdly, my new name, that is, a name of
Christ in His character as Redeemer. All three
things mentioned refer to the blessings of the
covenant. They express in one way or another
the relation of the believer to God as his Father,
to Christ as the Redeemer of the Father, and to
the privileges and joys of citizenship in the king-
dom made known to us in the Father and the
Son. They thus appear not substantially different
from the promise of chap. ii. 17, but rather an
expansion of the ‘new’ name there spoken of.
They contain a fuller statement of its con-
tents, and bring to view alike the Lord whom
His people serve, and the spirit in which they
serve Him. We may note the correspondence,
too, between witnessing to the name of Christ in
ver. 8, and the bestowal of the name mentioned
in the promise. May it also be that there is a
correspondence between the description of the
Lord in ver. 7 as ‘He that is holy,’ and the
‘name’ here given to him that overcomes? If
so, we shall be the more led to think of the in-
scription upon the forehead of the high priest as
the basis of the description of ver. 12.
Ver. 13. The usual call at the close of the
second group of the seven Epistles.

---

Chapter III. 14-22.

7. The Epistle to Laodicea.

14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans I write;
These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true, the
beginning of the creation of God; I know thy
witness in Laodicea.
works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, 'I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear;' and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

Behold, 'I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

---

Ver. 14. The seventh church addressed is that of Laodicea, an important and wealthy city not very far from Philadelphia. The chief interest of Laodicea, apart from that lent to it by the fact that it was one of the seven cities addressed in the Apocalypse, arises from its connection with the history of St. Paul. That apostle had not indeed founded the church there, nor at the time at least when he wrote the Epistle to the Colossians had he visited the city (Col. ii. 1), but he cherished a lively affection for its Christian inhabitants, and anxiously sought to promote their welfare (Col. iv. 16). It is probable that the New Testament Epistle, known as the Epistle to the Ephesians, was primarily intended for the Gentile Christians of Laodicea and the neighbouring towns.

Again we are first met by a description of the exalted Redeemer, which cannot be said to be taken directly from any part of the description of the Son of man contained in chap. i. It seems rather to be composed of characteristics selected for their suitableness to the closing Epistle of the Seven. The Lord is the Amen. The appellation is no doubt taken from Isa. lxv. 16, where the words of the Authorised Version, 'the God of truth,' fail adequately to represent the original. The Lord is rather there named 'Amen;' and the meaning of the same here is not that the Divine promises shall be accomplished by Him to whom it is given, but that He is Himself the fulfilment of all that God has spoken to His churches.

Again, He is the faithful and true Witness. His work is to be a witness of God, and in that work He has been perfectly 'faithful,' absolutely 'true.'—Once more He is the beginning of the creation of God, not merely the first and highest of all creatures,—a view entirely out of keeping with what is said of our Lord in the Apocalypse,—but the principle, the initial force, to which the 'creation' of God owes its origin. More doubt may be entertained as to what the 'creation' here referred to is, whether the material creation in all its extent or the new creation, the Christian Church, that redeemed humanity which has its true life in Christ. The former is the view generally taken, but the third term of the description thus falls to correspond with the first two which undoubtedly apply to the work of redemption, while at the same time the subjoined words 'of God' become meaningless or perplexing. Add to this that in chap. i. 5, immediately after Jesus had been called the 'faithful Witness,' He had also been described as the 'first-begotten of the dead' (see note there), and we shall hardly be able to resist the conclusion that, if the whole creation be alluded to, it is only as redeemed, in its final condition of rest and glory, when the new Jerusalem has descended from heaven, and the enemies of the Church have been cast into the lake of fire (comp. Rom. viii. 21, 22; Jas. i. 18).

The three predicates thus form an appellation peculiarly appropriate, not so much to the church at Laodicea considered alone, as to the last church addressed in these Epistles. We have already seen that the first Epistle, that to Ephesus, has a general as well as a special character. A similar remark is applicable now. Christ is the 'Amen' of the whole counsel of God: He is the 'Wit-
THE REVELATION.

ness' who has faithfully and completely exhibited His truth; He is the source and spring of that new creation which is called into being according to His will.

Ver. 15. The contents of the Epistle now begin. That thou art neither cold nor hot. The latter words throw light upon the interpretation of the former, for they show that we cannot well understand by 'cold' either the state of a heart simply untouched by the Gospel of love, and occupying thus a merely negative position, or that of one which has relapsed from the trail for the truth into a condition of indifference. In no circumstances could either of these states be to the Lord an object of desire, for experience shows that there is none out of which it is so difficult to awaken the heart to a proper reception of the Divine message. There must be some positive quality in him who is thus 'cold,' for the sake of which Jesus can say, 'I would thou wert cold or hot;' and this being so, it seems only reasonable to think of 'coldness' as real attachment to the world, and active opposition to the Church. It may indeed be objected that such a character is wanting in that Christian element which we must suppose to exist in what is 'cold' before it could be spoken of in the language of this verse; but there is nothing to compel us to think of such an element; and the first words of the exhortation in ver. 19, 'Be zealous,' may with perfect propriety be referred to that state of condition which, although not in itself Christian, is always the ground upon which the true Christian character is reared. 'Hot,' again, can only express warm Christian zeal. The church at Laodicea was neither 'cold' nor 'hot.' It was lukewarm; it had no deep impression had been made upon it. Its members were not zealous for the truth, but neither were they zealous against it. It was lukewarm, destitute of enthusiasm for anything whether good or evil. Had it been 'hot,' it would have been all that Jesus wished. Had it been 'cold,' it would at least have possessed those elements of natural character which might be turned to a satisfactory issue. As it was, nothing could be made of it.

Ver. 16. Hence the emphatic threatening of this verse. For the figure comp. Lev. xviii. 28, xx. 22.

Ver. 17. This verse is sometimes connected with the preceding, as giving a further statement of the reason why the Lord would deal with the church at Laodicea according to His threatening. But it is more natural to connect it with ver. 18, and to regard it as containing the ground of the counsel there given. The question may be asked, whether we are to understand the words of the first half of the verse as referring to temporal or spiritual wealth. The words of ver. 18 determine in favour of the former. It was not spiritual pride that had made the church at Laodicea lukewarm; 'the spiritually proud have too many positive elements of character to justify such a description in their case. It was worldly prosperity that had made the church indifferent to the energy and the fruit of the Divine truth, and hardly she could still profess the Christian faith. But, to be held in reality, that faith must be accompanied by a clear and deep perception of the vanity of this world. To such a state of mind riches are a bar. The rich may no doubt enter into the kingdom of God as well as the poor, but they do so with difficulty (Mark x. 23, 24). Their wants are satisfied with 'corn and wine;' the world pays homage to them; they have 'much goods laid up for many years;' they are free from anxiety as to the future; and they will 'leave their Heritage to their babes.' Why should they be eager about religion? They have difficulty in being 'hot.' Yet they would not oppose religion. It is easier to conform to it, than they cannot oppose it or be 'cold.' Such is the state of mind which the Lord sees here to address, and hence the powerful language of the following words, and knowest not that thou art the wretched one, and miserable, etc. 'Thou callest the poor wretched: thou art the wretched one; to thee really belong the misery and the poverty and the blindness and the nakedness for which thou piestest or professest to pity others.'

Ver. 18. The counsel follows. I counsel thee to buy of me gold refined out of fire, not that gold which cannot stand the fire of the great day, but the true gold of My kingdom, purified by being burnt in the furnace of trial, that thou mayest be rich; and white garments, that thou mayest appear clothed when I come; and oye-salve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see (comp. John ix. 6). The three things mentioned are in obvious contrast with those spoken of in ver. 17, although they are not mentioned in the same order. For 'buy' comp. Isa. iv. 1.

Ver. 19. As many as I love I convict and chasten. The 'I' before 'convict' is very emphatic.—'I, who though I was rich became poor, who bought true riches by suffering and death.' For the force of 'convict' comp. note on John xvi. 8.—Be zealous therefore, and repent. 'Be zealous' comes first, because it relates to a general change of spirit. Were He not full of Christian zeal in view, repentance ought to take precedence. The tenses in the original deserve notice, the first expressing the general habit, the second the decisive act.

Ver. 20. Behold, I stand at the door. The figure is not intended to convey to the church the thought of the Lord's constant presence, but rather the assurance that He has taken up a new position, that He is at hand for judgment, and that He will immediately admit His people to the full enjoyment of His promised blessedness.—And knock. These words bring more forcibly home to us the Lord's standing at the door and the nearness of His presence. No knocking in various ways, by providence, by conscience, by the ordinances of the Church, by the work of the Spirit, is referred to. The words simply show how near Jesus is, and how ready to bless (comp. Jas. v. 9).

If any one hear my voice, etc. The picture is one of the heavenly reward, and both statements, I will sup with him, and he with me, are to be taken together. The first is not confined to the blessedness of earth, the second to the blessedness of heaven; but the two combined express the glory and joy of the future world, where the believer shall be for ever with His Lord. Different opinions have been entertained as to the foundation of the figure, a very common supposition being that it rests upon St. John's own personal intercourse with Jesus related at John i. 39, and upon his Master's visits to him at the close of many a day's labour during his ministry. Such a reference is far-fetched; and it is much more natural to think of the words of the Song of Solomon in chap. v. 2, and to behold
here the festivity and joy of the time of the Lord’s marriage to His Church. Rev. xix. 9, where we read of the marriage supper of the Lamb, appears to confirm this. May we not also connect with the supper of this verse the thought of the last supper in the upper chamber at Jerusalem? We are dealing with the last of the Epistles, and the imagery may well be drawn from one of the closing acts of the Saviour’s life on earth. That Supper is not a mere memorial of death; it is a spiritual feast in which the life of the believer is most intimately bound up with that of his Lord, in which the union is not merely the closest of all unions, that between the Bridegroom and the bride.

Ver. 21. He that overcometh, to him will I grant to sit down along with me in my throne, etc. This promise is the highest of all that we have met in the seven Epistles. The throne of Jesus is the throne of God,—‘I am in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one;’ (John xvi. xiv. 23.) The promise is the ‘apostolosis of victory,’ and as such it has evidently a reference not only to the church at Laodicea, but to the whole series of the seven churches, and of the promises addressed to them.

Ver. 22. The Epistle closes with the usual call of the Spirit to the churches.

We have considered the Epistles to the seven churches separately; but, before leaving the subject, it may be well to make a few remarks upon them as a whole. That they are intended to be thus looked at is allowed by every interpreter. We have not before us affliction letters to seven individual churches, which no inner bond connects with one another, and where there is no thought of any general result; we have a representation or picture of the Church at large. Yet the traits given us of the condition of each church are historical, the seven churches selected being preferred to others, because they appeared to the apostle to afford the best typical representation of the Church universal. Longer ‘some’ (Chap. ii. 9) was ‘the midwif who tolerate evil. The Church as a whole does so. She ‘suffereth,’ beareth with, Jezebel, a heathen princess, the fitting type of the world and the world’s sins. She knew the world to be what it was, and yet she was content to be at peace with it. It may be worthy of notice, too, that as the first picture of the church in herself—that in the Epistle to Ephesus—showed her to be peculiarly faithful on the point of doctrine, so the first picture of the church, as she begins to yield to the world, shows us that it was in doctrinal steadfastness that she failed. In the Epistle to Sardis, the second city of the second group, there is more yielding to the world than even in Thyatira. A few indeed there have not defiled their garments, but the church as a whole reproduces the Pharisees in the days of Christ, loud in their profession and renowned for it, but with no works to go with it. General righteousness fulfilled before God. Decadence in doctrine had soon been followed by declension in practice. Amidst all such declensions, however, it must never be forgotten that the Church has her times of noble faithfulness, and such a time seems to be set before us in the Epistle to Philadelphia. That the church there has been
struggling with the world we see by the description of her vanquished enemies who come in and worship before her feet (chap. iii. 9); but she had not yielded to the world. No word of reproach is uttered against her. The Epistle to Philadelphia represents either a time when the Church as a whole maintains her allegiance to the Captain of her salvation, or that remnant within the Church (as there was a remnant even in the Jewish Church of our Lord's time) which keeps "the word of the Lord's patience" in those seasons of conflict with the main body of the Church herself that are far more hard to bear than any conflict with the world. Lastly, in Laodicea all that is most melancholy in the history of the Church's relation to the world culminates, and the last picture that is given us of her state is at the same time the saddest (comp. Luke xviii. 8). The Church is here conformed to the world, and takes her ease amidst the wealth and the luxury which the world affords to all her votaries, and to none with so much satisfaction as to those who will purchase them at the cost of Christian consistency.

Such appears to us to be a general outline of the course of thought embodied in these seven Epistles. But it is not easy to speak with confidence regarding it. The general conception of the two groups of three and four may perhaps be accepted as correct; and starting from that point, other inquirers may be more successful in determining the special characteristic of the Church which each Epistle of both groups is undoubtedly intended to express.

1 The present writer has treated the subject more fully in a paper in the Expositor for July 1885.

CHAPTER IV. I–II.

Preparatory Visions.

AFTER this 1 I looked, and, behold, a door was 2 opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was 2 as it was 3 Ezek. i. 1; Jo. i. 51. were of a trumpet talking 4 with me; which said, 5 Come up hither, and I will show thee things 6 which must be 7 hereafter. 6 Ch. i. 19.

And I immediately 8 was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was 11 set in heaven, and one sat 12 on the throne.

And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper 18 and a sardine 14 stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment;

and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings, and voices: and there were seven lampstands of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And the four

1 these things 2 saw 3 omit was 4 speaking 5 one saying 6 the things 7 come to pass 8 omit hereafter 9 omit And 10 After these things straightway 11 there was a throne 12 sitting 13 omit stone 14 thrones 15 golden crowns 16 there proceed 17 torches 18 omit there was 19 living creatures 20 add of
beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come. And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, the Almighty, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

having add severally, omit about them, omit and they are add round about and and they have no rest Lord, who art God, he which was, and which is, and which sitteth to him that shall fall shall worship Worthy art thou our Lord and our God didst create add they because of thy will were

CONTENTS. Chaps. iv. and v. form the third section of the Apocalypse, but the struggle of the Church, which it is the main object of the book to describe, does not yet begin. These two chapters are preparatory to the struggle, presenting us with such pictures of the glory of the heavenly Guardians of the Church as may fill our minds with confidence that, whatever be her trials, she shall be conducted through them to a glorious issue. As the foundation of all that God is, has done, and will do, St. John receives in chap. iv. a vision of His absolute holiness, which is borne witness to by His Church, and by the whole of His redeemed creation. This is followed in chap. v. by another vision, from which it appears that the mystery connected with the dealings of the thrice holy One (chap. iv. 8) shall not last for ever. Immanuel, the Incarnate Lamb of God, the mystery otherwise so oppressive shall be made manifest; and our hearts may be at peace. The visions of these two chapters have their parallel in Isa. vi., where the vision of the thrice holy God presented to the prophet (ver. 1-8) is introductory to his terrible commission at ver. 9. Isaiah is warned by his vision that the Almighty, notwithstanding the mystery of His dealings, is holy, and that the beings who see what He is doing cannot but adore Him.

Ver. 1. After these things denotes succession of visions, not of time; and the rest of the verse is preparatory to the vision rather than strictly speaking a part of it. The apostle must be understood to stand still in the spirit, for that is the state in which at chap. i. 10 he hears the voice now referred to. Two things are introduced to us by the word behold:—(1) A door opened in heaven, not opening but open, so that there may be the freest intercourse between heaven and earth (comp. Ezek. i. 24; John i. 51); and that we, seeing into heaven, may understand what is to happen upon earth. Faith is the condition of true wisdom. (2) The voice, identified with that spoken of in chap. i. 10 by being described in the same language. It is the same mysterious voice of judgment, therefore, as that heard there. The Seer is invited to ascend to the place whence the voice issued, and is told what will be shown him. The language describing what he is to see has already met us in chap. i. 19; and it points to the fortunes of the Church throughout the whole period of her history down to the time of her glorification.

Ver. 2. As the closing expression of ver. 1 in the Authorised Version, after these things, is not necessary to complete the meaning of the clause to which it is at present added, it seems better to connect it with what follows at the beginning of the second verse. It thus constitutes a resumption of the same expression in ver. 1, and introduces the true beginning of the visions to be described. St. John is prepared for them by passing into the spiritual or ecstatic state. Even in ver. 1, indeed, he was in that state; but here, where the visions begin, there is a propriety in making special mention of the fact, and the word was, which is properly 'became,' may be designed to call our attention to the renewal of the first vividness or fervour of his spiritual condition. Two things are seen:—(1) A throne not in heaven (comp. Ezek. i. 26-28). The verb 'set' seems to express not merely that the throne was there, but that it was so by the Divine appointment and arrangement (comp. Jer. xxiv. 1; Luke ii. 34; John ii. 6, 5, 6, 7; Rev. xxii. 16). For the particular shape and aspect of the throne see on ver. 6. (2) One sitting on the throne. It is not easy to determine who is meant. That the Sitter on the throne is neither Jesus nor the Holy Spirit is indeed obvious from the fact that in later verses He is distinguished from them both (chaps. v. 5, vi. 16). But is He the Father or the Triune God? Commentators generally adopt the former view, but there is much that may seem rather to determine in favour of the latter.
The revelation. 401

is founded upon Isa. vi., where we have not only the throne high and lifted up, the seraphim, and the train filling the temple, but also the
Trinity, 'hoi, holy, holy,' etc. The vision of Isaiah, however, is always justly regarded as one of the greatest adumbrations of the Trinity contained in the Old Testament (comp. especially ver. 8, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?') so that we are thus naturally led to think now also of the Trinity. In addition, it has to be observed that one great distinction between the visions of chap. iv. and chap. v. seems to lie in this, that in the former we have the Almighty presented to us as He is in Himself absolutely, that is, in the latter only are we directly introduced to the Covenant of grace in which we learn to know God as Father. Nor does it seem that there ought to be any peculiar difficulty in accepting this interpretation on the ground that the Son and the Holy Spirit are afterwards spoken of as if distinct from Him who occupied the throne. All that is contended for is, that God is here introduced to us as He is in Himself, and not according to that separation of hypostases or personalities revealed to us in other passages of Scripture. We deal as yet with the Divine Being as He exists in Himself, and with Him viewed in that light the conception of Trinity in Unity is fundamentally connected.

Ver. 3. The description of Him that sat upon the throne is given: He was like unto a jasper stone and a sardius. It has been noticed that the two stones here mentioned are the first and the last in the 'breastplate of judgment' (Ex. xxviii. 17, 20); but it is difficult to attach any importance to this circumstance, for the order is reversed, the sardius being there the first, and the jasper the last. The analogy of Ezek. i. 27 seems to warrant the inference that the colours of the two stones were not mixed throughout, but that the upper part of the body was marked by the one and the lower part by the other. There can be little doubt, though some interpreters dispute the fact, that the colours of these stones, as well as of the emerald to which the rainbow round about the throne was like, are to be understood symbolically. In chap. xxii. 11 we learn that the colour of the jasper was a bright sparkling whiteness, while that of the sardius was a fiery red. The first, therefore, can hardly denote anything but that holiness of God which this very chapter shows to be the feature of His character mainly in view of the sacred writer at the time (ver. 8); the second most naturally expresses the wrath with which He consumes His enemies, and which is represented in the lightnings, etc., of ver. 5 (comp. Ps. l. 3, etc.; Ezek. i. 4).

The colour of the rainbow is described as that of the emerald, or green. Not that the other colours are wanting, but that they are subordinate to, or lost in, that green colour, which of all others is the most pleasing to the eye. The object itself, its colour, its Old Testament history, and even the mode of its formation in nature, combine to suggest the meaning of a rainbow as the figure of the kind and wrath of God encompassed by His covenant grace. It is difficult to say whether we are to think of this rainbow as a half or a whole circle spanning the throne. The mere fact that it is called a 'rainbow' is not conclusive in favour of the former, for the Seer employs his figure with great freedom (comp. i. 13, ii. 17, and the 'green' colour in this verse); while the words 'round about the throne,' and the language used in chap. x. 1, suggest the latter. We are probably to think of the rainbow as either floating above the throne or as encompassing it in a vertical plane. For the rainbow comp. Ezek. i. 28.

Ver. 4. In the next part of the description we are told that there were round about the throne twenty-four thrones, and upon the thrones twenty-four elders. It is important to observe the word 'thrones' (not as in the Authorised Version, 'seats') here used by St. John, for there can be no doubt that it is deliberately chosen in order to bring out the fact that the glorified Church of Christ is placed in no lower position than that of the Saviour's and the Father's throne (comp. iii. 21). These twenty-four thrones were like the rainbow round about the throne. It may be a question whether they were within or without the circle of the rainbow. Chap. iii. 21 seems to determine against the latter. But perhaps we are even to think of them as set in the veiled circle of the rainbow in order to denote standing in the covenant of grace. The thrones were occupied by twenty-four elders; and, as these unquestionably represent the one Church of Christ in its triumphant condition in heaven, that number must be taken from some idea which presented itself to the mind of the Seer as a suitable expression for the whole Church of God. The twenty-four divisions of the sons of Aaron, described in 1 Chron. xxiv., might have suggested it, though the difficulty being that this classification of the priesthood belongs to the time of the Temple rather than of the Tabernacle. It seems better, therefore, to have recourse to the doubling of the number twelve, so that the whole number twenty-four may represent the Church in her double aspect as at once the Church of the Old Covenant and of the New. We have already met with this principle of doubling, although in a somewhat different form; and there does not appear to be anything unnatural in resorting to it now. The twenty-four elders, thus embodying the conception of the Church of Christ in her perfected condition, have three characteristics: (1) they are sitting, the attitude of rest and honour. (2) they are clothed in white garments, the robes of perfect purity, the robes of priests. (3) they have on their heads golden crowns, those of chaps. ii. 10, iii. 11, and xiv. 14, in which last passage the same 'golden crown' is assigned to the Son of man. Like Him, they are not only priests but kings. At chap. vi. 11 the 'white robe' alone, without the golden crown, is given to the souls under the altar; but the reason is obvious. These souls are waiting. Here the time of waiting is past. The Church is before us in her triumphant condition.

Ver. 5. The description is continued with the mention of lightnings and voices and thunders which proceed out of the throne. These represent neither the 'outpouring of the Holy Spirit' nor the 'agency of the Gospel,' but the fact that the throne of God is a throne of judgment (Ps. ix. 7). The world is judged not merely by God Himself, but by His Church (chap. ii. 27). Judgment against sin is a necessary accompaniment both of holiness and love. Nor need it surprise us that such indications of judgment should proceed from the throne at a time when the
Church is regarded as having attained her glorified condition, and is safe from all her enemies, for it is not so much the actual exercise as the attribute of judgment that is now in view, and such an attribute is eternal. These lightnings and voices and thunders, therefore, are not to be regarded as a manifestation peculiar to the moment at which they are witnessed by the Seer: they are essential and perpetual accompaniments of the throne.—In addition there were seven torches of fire burning before the throne, which are explained to be the seven spirits of God, or, in other words, His one Spirit in the fulness and manifoldness of His operations. Yet it is not the gracious operation of the Spirit by which God calls, enlightens, and sanctifies the world that is in view. It is rather His penetrating influence, similar to that of chap. i. 14, by which He searches the innermost recesses of the heart.

Ver. 6. And before the throne as it were a glassy sea like unto crystal. The most various opinions have been entertained regarding the 'glassy sea' here spoken of, some of which may at once be rejected. It is not intended to signify 'the will and law of God in constituting the kingdom of grace,' or 'the mysterious judgments of God,' or 'the purity, calmness, and majesty of God's rule,' for no passages of the Old Testament can be referred to in which these principles of the Divine government are represented by a sea similar to that now mentioned. Other interpretations, again, such as those that understand by it 'Baptism' or 'the volume of the Scriptures,' may also be rejected as having no foundation in the imagery of this book. The idea that the sea is identical with the river of the water of life 'clear as crystal' in chap. xxi. 1, may likewise be regarded as untenable. A sea and a river are entirely different from one another, and it is impossible to connect the 'sea' of chap. xv. 2, which must be the same as this one, and upon which those who had overcome took their stand, with the 'river' of chap. xxi. More naturally might we be led to associate the great brazen sea of Solomon's temple (1 Kings vii. 23-26) with the sea here spoken of, were it not that, as a general rule, the images of the Apocalypse appear to be taken not from the temple, but from the tabernacle, and the 'laver' of the latter is never called a sea.

In endeavouring to determine the meaning of the figure, we must have recourse to that rule of interpretation so often needed in the Apocalypse, which calls us to supplement the description given of any object in one place by what is said of it in another. Doing so in the present instance, the 'glassy sea' of chap. xv. 2 supplies various hints which may be helpful to us here. That sea is not only glassey, but 'mingled with fire,' an expression which at once suggests the thought of the Divine judgments, while the same thought comes prominently forward in the song sung by those who, standing upon the sea, celebrate the 'righteous acts of the Lord which have been made manifest.' Again, it is to be observed that the song sung by these conquerors is called 'the song of Moses, the servant of God,' as well as 'the song of the Lamb'; and the most natural reference of these words is to the song of triumph sung after the crossing of the Red Sea, of which it is said, 'Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously:

the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea' (Ex. xv. 1). The propriety of this reference is confirmed by the fact that it is not said of these conquerors that they 'had gotten the victory over the beast' (Authorised Version), or even that they 'had come victorious from the beast' (Revised Version), but that they 'had come victorious out of the beast,' the preposition used distinctly indicating that they had been delivered by escape from their enemies rather than by victory over them in the field. To these considerations let us add that the deliverance of Israel from Egypt had been always appealed to, both by Psalmists and Prophets, as the peculiar token of that providential care and guidance which the Almighty extended to His people (Ps. lxvi. 12; Isa. xliii. 2, 3), and we shall be led to the conclusion that in the 'glassy sea' of this verse we have an emblem of that course of Providence by which God conducts those who place themselves in His hands to their final rest in His immediate presence. The different manner in which the 'sea' is viewed in the words before us, and in chap. xv. 2, seems to favour this conclusion. In the one it is simply 'before the throne,' and under the eye of Him by whom the throne is occupied. It is seen from the Divine point of view, and is therefore only 'clear as crystal.' Its darker are to Him as bright as its more transparent elements. The 'sea' that mingled with it is not less a part of His counsel than its most pellucid waters: 'the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee' (Ps. cvi. 3). In the other it is occupied by man, and is seen from the human point of view. Hence the 'fire,' always there, but not mentioned in the first instance, is now seen. They who stand upon it cannot forget those 'righteous acts' of God which they have witnessed, or the troubled paths by which they have escaped the great enemies of their salvation. Judgment upon their foes, as well as mercy to themselves, marks the whole of that way by which they have been led. It may be only further remarked in conclusion, that to behold in the glassy sea the Almighty's providential guidance of His people harmonizes with the whole spirit of a chapter dealing mainly with creation and providence before we pass in chap. v. to the more special subject of redeeming grace.

The description is continued, and we are next introduced to four living creatures full of eyes before and behind, which were in the midst of the throne and round about the throne. The living creatures do not support or bear up the throne; nor are they to be thought of as stationed together at the same spot. They are rather at the extremities of two diameters passing through the centre of the round throne, thus preserving perfect symmetry. In other respects the relation of these beings to the throne presents some difficulty, because it is natural to think that the Seer, having begun his description with Him who sits on the throne, is now proceeding from the centre outwards. The four living creatures would thus appear to be outside both the Sitter on the throne and the twenty-four elders and the glassy sea. But this is not probable—(1) Because the words describing their position indicate a greater degree of nearness to the throne. (2) Because of the position of the cherubim in the tabernacle. (3) Because in chap. v. 6 the absence of the words 'in the midst of' before 'the four living creatures,'
seems to show that the latter are so closely connected with the throne as to be almost a part of it. The real explanation is to be found in this, that the position of the cherubim in the Holy of Holies of the tabernacle was above the mercy-seat. In like manner the living creatures here spoken of are not on the same plane as the throne; for although, therefore, St. John really describes from within outwards what he beheld, and although, before we reach the present point of his description, he has already spoken of the outermost circle, that which bounded the glassy sea, it does not follow that the living creatures were beyond that circle. They were really above it, yet within it; and it is by now lifting his eyes upwards that the Seer beholds them. What has been said finds support in the language of Isa. vi. 2, where the prophet, after speaking of the Lord's sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, adds, 'above it stood the seraphim.' It is remarkable to see how St. John manages to combine the visions of both Isaiah and Ezekiel,—the one the prophet of the coming Saviour, the other the prophet of the restored Church; by the view now taken the harmony of the description is preserved, and the four living creatures are a part of the accompaniments of the throne, and not beyond it. They are full of eyes, we are further told, before and behind; they share the attribute of God, seeing in all directions with a perpetual glance (comp. chap. i. 14), that they may the better execute the Divine purposes.

A fuller description of them is now given. Vers. 7, 8. And the first living creature was like a lion, and the second living creature like a calf, and the third living creature had its face as of a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, having each one of them severally six wings, are full of eyes round about within. Want of space will not permit us to enter at any length upon the meaning of these remarkable figures, and the writer of this Commentary may therefore be pardoned if he refers to his fuller treatment of the subject in the Bible Educator, vol. iii. p. 290. It may be enough to say at present that the points to be chiefly noted are the following:—(1) That the living creatures here are substantially identical with those mentioned in connection with the garden of Eden (Gen. iii.) the Tabernacle (Ex. xxv. 18-20), the Temple of Solomon (2 Chron. iii. 11-13), and the visions of Ezekiel (Ezek. i. 5). Slight modifications of structure are due simply to the fact that the idea intended to be expressed by them had become clearer as time ran on. (2) That a human element has a place in each. Their general form suggests what is human not less than what is bestial. This point is rendered clear by the peculiar method of expression adopted in the case of the third 'living creature' of the present passage. The human figure was characteristic of them all; but, in addition to less distinct indications, the third had also the human face. (3) That, while in part human, they are also marked by characteristics taken from other forms of creaturely existence. They have wings, and three of them have respectively the faces of a lion, of a bull-calf, and of an eagle. (4) They do not symbolize attributes of the Almighty. Creativelye position and ministerial functions properly belong to them. (5) If, then, we ask now what they represent, it would seem as if one answer only can be given. They represent in the first place man, but, secondly, man as the crown and head of this lower creation, man with his train of dependent beings brought near to God and made partakers of redemption, thus fulfilling in symbol the language of St. Paul,—that 'the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God' (Rom. viii. 21). (6) Finally, it may be observed that the meaning of the animal faces spoken of is to be found in a direction entirely different from that in which it is usually sought. The animals named are not the emblems of majesty, endurance, and soaring energy, but of strong and fierce rage. They represent qualities that strike terror into the hearts of men, and they suggest the idea of a destructive force which nothing is able to withstand. Thus, then, they now surround the throne of God, from which proceed lightnings and thunderings and voices; and there they symbolize redeemed creation as it adores the holiness and magnifies the righteous judgments of its Lord.

Ver. 8a. And they have no rest day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord, who art God, the Almighty, he which was and which is, and which is to come. The Triongion thus sung by the living creatures is found also in Isa. vi. 3, in a passage which we have already seen lies largely at the bottom of the description of this chapter. It is thus natural to think that it is sung to the glory of God in the same character as that in which He there appears, that it is sung therefore to God in the absoluteness of His being and perfections, and not as specially the Father. With this agrees the fact, seen especially in the last words of this chapter, that it is the glory of God as Creator rather than Redeemer that is especially contemplated throughout the whole vision. The ascription of praise appears to consist of three parts, not as commonly supposed of two. He to whom it is sung is first addressed as 'Lord' or Jehovah, and is then celebrated as 'God'; as 'the Almighty;' and as 'He which was, and which is, and which is to come.' The order of the clauses in the third part is reversed from that in ch. i. 8. There the Lord Himself speaks, dwelling first upon the thought that He 'is' before mentioning that He 'was' or that He 'is to come.' In singing this song the living creatures 'rest not day nor night.' We are reminded of the words of our Lord in John v. 17, 'My Father worketh even until now, and I work.' The work of God as the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all knows no intermission. He is everywhere present throughout His wide creation, upholding all things by the word of His power, and as marvellous in that work as in the utterance of the first fiat which summoned them into being. Therefore do the living creatures, 'full of eyes round about and within,' always waiting upon Him, always watching Him, never rest from adoring, as He never rests from working. The Triongion of the living creatures immediately awakens the response of the whole Church of Christ represented by the twenty-four elders. Ver. 9. And when the living creatures shall give glory and honour and thanks to him that sitteth on the throne, to him that liveth for ever and ever. In these words we have
a description of the Triagion which has just been sung, and the description introduces the fact that the four-and-twenty elders are stirred by the lofty melody. It is remarkable that this should be the order of the song of praise. We might have expected that the twenty-four elders as representing the Church would be first, and that by them the representatives of creation would be stirred to a like enthusiasm. As it is, the order is reversed. The explanation is to be sought in the general character of this chapter, as compared with the one that follows it. The song raised is not so much one of praise for redemption, as of praise for that creation and providence of God which preceded and prepared the way for redemption. Redeemed creation therefore begins it; but it is immediately taken up by the Church.

Ver. 10. The four and twenty elders shall fall down before him that sitteth on the throne, and shall worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and shall cast their crowns before the throne, saying. Three acts of worship and homage on the part of the elders are described, ‘falling down,’ ‘worshipping,’ and ‘casting their crowns before the throne.’ It is not necessary to ask whether the crowns thus cast down are again resumed, for it is simply the act of homage that is described. The song of the Church follows.

Ver. 11. Worthy art thou, our Lord and our God, to take the glory, and the honour, and the power, for thou didst create all things, and because of thy will they were, and they were created. In the response thus proceeding from the Church, we mark a higher tone than in the song of the four living creatures to which the response is given (ver. 9). The word ‘our’ is introduced, marking the more intimate relationship in which these redeemed ones stand to God. The word ‘power,’ substituted for ‘thanks,’ not that they fail in gratitude, but that, in the very excess of gratitude, they completely forget themselves. The article is introduced before each substantive, not to carry us back to the ‘glory,’ etc., of ver. 9, but to show that what is present to their minds is ‘the’ glory, ‘the’ honour, and ‘the’ power, which are the absolute possession of the Almighty. Hence also it seems better to translate the verb by ‘take’ than by ‘receive’ (comp. chaps. v. 7, 9, xi. 17). Lastly, the verb to take is in the aorist not the present tense, an indication that those who use it are contemplating in thought the completion of God’s great plan, and His victory over all His enemies, as an accomplished fact. The particulars embraced under the word ‘because’ refer primarily to creation; and so far, therefore, the majority of commentators are right in saying that the Almighty is here celebrated as creation’s God. Yet it is not enough to say this. The Church cannot view God first as Creator simply, and then as Redeemer. Her view of Him is one, and in the works of His hands, as well as in the provisions of His grace, she beholds her redeeming God. Redemption is the final issue of all the works of God. But, feeling thus, we may pause at the thought of creation, and may praise Him who called it into being for this end. Thus looked at also, there is no tautology in the last two clauses of the verse. ‘Thou didst create all things,’ that is the simple fact. ‘Because of Thy will,’ etc., is more than the fact; it is the ground upon which their creation rested, that they might be the expression of the will of Him who creates that He may have a creation in His Eternal Son.

—The combination of ‘were’ and ‘were created’ is undoubtedly very difficult to understand. The first verb does not mean ‘came into being;’ nor can it mean that, having had no existence before, they existed after God created them; for, in that case, the order of the two clauses ought to have been reversed. Besides which, it is not the manner of St. John to apply the verb ‘to be’ to temporary and passing objects. No explanation seems possible but that which leads us to think of an eternal type existing in the Divine mind before anything was called into existence, and in conformity with which it was created when the moment of creation came. The idea thus expressed is very similar to that of Heb. viii. 5. ‘See that thou make all things according to the pattern that was showed thee in the Mount.’

Chapter V. 1-14.

Preparatory Visions (continued).

1 And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, and sealed a Ezek. ii. 9.
2 with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor on earth, e Rom. xi. 33.
3 neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look 11 on a roll of a book back close-sealed great roll
4 one on the earth nor or omit and to read
thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, 'Weep not: for the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

And when he had taken the book, the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.
Thus presents us with a picture of the heavenly guardianship exercised over the Church by God as a redeeming God, or rather by that risen and glorified Saviour who is her protector in every trial, and the solution of all her difficulties. In the latter part of chap. x. we behold God as the Creator and Governor of all things. In this we behold Him who, when already slaughtered and risen, can say, 'All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth' (Matt. xxviii. 18). The two visions, taken together, may be regarded as a commentary on the words of Jesus in His last discourse to His disciples, 'Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in Me' (John xiv. 1). By means of both the mind is calmed in the prospect of the approaching troubles of the Church. Before she enters upon them we know that hers shall be the victory.

Ver. 1. The book beheld by the Seer is on, not 'in' (comp. chap. xx. 1) the right hand of Him that sat on the throne, and it shall be opened for the inspection of all His saints (comp. Dan. xii. 10; Mark iv. 11). Although God's judgments are a great deep, His secret is with them that fear Him. The Greek word commonly translated 'book' was really a 'roll,' after the fashion of the sacred rolls of the Jewish synagogue. This ought to appear in the translation, as it is otherwise impossible to attach a meaning to the important statement that it was written both within and on the back. Such a translation is also the more necessary, because the description of the 'roll' is intended to correspond with, and is indeed taken from, that in Ezek. ii. 9, 10. And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and lo, a roll of a book was therein; and he spread it before me; and it was written within and without.—That the roll was written both 'within and on the back' is apparently intended to do more than indicate the richness and fulness of the contents. It indicates also that the whole of these had been determined by God Himself. No other might add to them.—The roll is close-sealed, — a strong expression, to mark the mysterious and inscrutable nature of its contents. The same idea is also brought out by the mention of the seven seals.

It may be granted that if the number seven is to be understood as denoting nothing further than the number itself. The seven churches are one Church, the seven Spirit one Spirit. Why not the seven seals one seal? The number one is elevated into the sacred number seven in order to indicate the completeness of the sealing. By this view, which analogy commends, we are saved all the questions raised by commentators as to the mode in which the seals were fastened to the roll, and as to the possibility of conceiving how each of them could secure a certain portion only of the contents. Even the successive openings of the seals need not imply more than a further unrolling of the parchment. The seals are successively broken in order to comply with the requirements of the poetic delineation.

The general nature of the contents of the roll may be gathered from the reference to that of Ezekiel (chap. ii. 10).—'lamentations, and mourning, and woe.' The revelation itself, afterwards given to the Seer, confirms this. Judgment upon the Church's foes is the prominent idea of what the roll contains.

Ver. 2. The angel of this verse is strong, and his voice is great, because his cry has to be heard in every region of the universe, in heaven, in earth, and in Hades (comp. chap. x. 3). That an 'angel' raises the cry may remind us of the interest taken by angels in the plan of redemption and in the fortunes of the Church (Rom. i. 12). At the same time, it may be nothing more than a part of that imagery of this book of which we have already spoken (see on chap. i. 20).

Ver. 3. And no one in heaven, nor on the earth, nor under the earth, was able to open the roll, or to look thereon. As in Phil. ii. 10, the universe is designated under the three divisions here mentioned. It is implied that no answer is given to the cry. Hence Ver. 4. And I wept much. There is nothing in this weeping inconsistent with the fact that a revelation had been promised (chap. iv. 1). That promise is already in course of being fulfilled; but the Seer does not know how far it is to extend. Therefore he weeps because he fears that the revelation may be already about to close. Besides this, there is nothing unnatural in the supposition that the promise may not at this instant have been clearly present to his mind. He is completely rapt away by what is before his eyes. One, however, there is who is worthy to do what no other creature can.

Ver. 5. And one from among the elders saith unto me, Weep not, behold the Lion, which is of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, overcome, to open the roll and the seven seals thereof. The words are spoken by one of the twenty-four elders, and the propriety of this is obvious. These Elders represent the triumphant Church, which knows by happy experience the blessedness of her victory. Who so fit to magnify the glories of the Lamb? A twofold description is then given of Him of whom 'Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write' (John i. 45), the one part taken from the law, the other from the prophets.

1. He is 'the lion of the tribe of Judah.' The words are from the law (Gen. xlix. 9), where we have the promise of the Messiah as the culminating point of the history of the leading and famous tribe of Judah. Many passages of the Old Testament at the same time remind us that the lion is the emblem not of courage only, but of fierce and destroying power (Job x. 16; Ps. vii. 2, etc.).

2. He is 'the root of David.' The words are now taken from the prophets (Isa. xi. 1), and they mark Jesus out (comp. also chap. xxii. 16) not as the root out of which David springs, but as the sucker which, springing from David as a root, grows up to be a stately tree. In Him the conquering might of David the 'man of war,' as well as of Judah 'chosen to be the ruler' (I Chron. xxviii. 4), comes forth with all the freshness of a new youth. Compare for the witness thus given to our Lord, Matt. xvii. 5, with the parallel texts.—This Lion 'overcame.' For ver. 9, where the ground of the Lamb's worthiness to open the roll is again celebrated, takes us clearly to the past, and to a work then finished. The verb is therefore to be understood absolutely (as so often in the seven Epistles to the churches), and not to be connected only with the words 'to open,' as if the meaning were simply that the Lamb had overcome all obstacles in the way of opening the roll. Much more is said that He 'overcame.' He is the Archetype and Forerunner...
of all them that 'overcome.' He conquered sin, death, the devil—all the foes of God and man. He accomplished in His life, death, and resurrection, a complete and everlasting victory (comp. chap. iii. 21). Therefore, having gained such a victory, He is worthy to open the book which records its issues. No sooner has the Seer been told this than the words are fulfilled in vision.

Ver. 6. The words are fulfilled; yet how differently from what might have been expected! The Seer had been told of a lion, and he beheld a lamb; and ver. 9 makes it evident that the lamb is thought of not merely in its gentleness and patience, but as an animal used for sacrifice. From the same verse also it would seem that it is the Paschal lamb that is present to the view of the apocalyptic writer. The particular word used in the original for 'lamb' is found in the New Testament, with the exception of the Apocalypse, only in John xxi. 15; and an argument has been often drawn, from the employment of a different word in John i. 29, 36, against the identification of the apocalyptic figure with the figure of the Gospel. It is enough to reply that in John i. 29, 36, the Evangelist uses similar recent words of the Baptist. That he himself preferred the other term arises probably from the fact that he had often heard it, and not at John xxi. 15 alone, from the lips of the Master whom he loved. It is used by him twenty-nine times in this book.

The question of the position of the Lamb is both interesting and difficult. It is generally supposed to have stood Jerusalem, the throne, of which the four living creatures were in attendance, but not in the form of a throne, but more as a Mediator between God and man. Some place it in the very centre of the throne. The former idea is the more probable, and it finds a certain amount of confirmation in the word 'came' of ver. 7. We have thus the throne with the four living creatures above (see on chap. iv. 6), then the Lamb, then the twenty-four Elders. The position now assigned to the Lamb is made the more probable by the fact that it was a Lamb standing on a throne one sits. The 'standing' of the Lamb is deeply important. First of all we may observe that it is as slaughtered (not 'slain,' but 'slaughtered') for sacrifice, the word being sacrificial (Ex. xii. 6), that the Lamb appears. Jesus suffering even unto death is before us. But though 'slaughtered' the Lamb 'stands,' stands as a living, not as a dead, animal. Jesus risen and glorified is presented to our view. In short, we have here the great lesson alike of the Apocalypse and of the Fourth Gospel, that we are redeemed not merely by a Saviour who died, but by one who also rose to everlasting and glorious life. Through all eternity, too, the Risen Lord bears the marks of His earthly sufferings. While His people live for ever in His life, they never cease to feel that they were redeemed in His blood.—The Lamb has still further seven horns. In Scripture the horn is always the emblem of strength and force (Deut. xxxii. 17; 1 Sam. ii. 10; Ps. cxii. 9, 14; Luke i. 69; Rev. xii. 3); the number 'seven' denotes, as usual, completeness. It has also seven eyes, which are explained to be the seven Spiritœ of God sent forth into all the earth. They are thus substantially the same as the 'seven spirits' of chap. iv. 5, and we need say no more of them at present than that they are distinctly connected with the Son as well as with the Father. The word 'sent' belongs to the eyes alone, and not also to the horns.

Ver. 7. And he came, and he hath taken it out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. The change of tense is worthy of observation, for it is impossible to agree with those who urge that the two tenses used are simply equivalent to each other. In the very next verse the Seer returns to the tense of the earlier 'came,' when he says 'took,' and not 'hath taken.' The latter word therefore implies more than 'took.' St. John sees the Lamb not merely take the roll, but keep it. It is His,—His by right of the victory He has won; His as Immanuel, God with us; His not as the Divine Eternal Son only, but as our Redeemer, the Head of His Church; His to unfold in all its meaning for the Church for which He died. He 'hath taken it,' He is worthy to open it, and it shall be opened. Therefore the song of praise and joy begins, gradually widening until it embraces all creation.

Ver. 8. The four living creatures are mentioned first as being nearest the throne; but all they do at this moment is to fall down before the Lamb. There is no reason to think that they have also harps and golden bowls, or that they join in the song of ver. 9. Such a song is unsuitable to beings which represent the material creation; and the prayers of the saints are more naturally presented by the twenty-four priestly Elders. The language of the four living creatures is given at ver. 14. In the remainder of ver. 8, therefore, we have to do only with the four living creatures. (1) Each has a harp, the idea being taken from the Tabernacle and the Temple service. (2) The twenty-four Elders have also golden bowls full of incense; not the ordinary bowls used by the priests in the first or outer apartment of the Tabernacle, but rather that used by the high priest when he went into the Holy of Holies once a year. The Church of Christ is clothed with high-priestly functions, and has access into the immediate presence of God. The incense is the prayers of the saints, that is, of God's suffering saints. The Elders on their thrones are the representatives of the Church triumphant. It is to be noted, on the one hand, that the latter do not pray for themselves, that for themselves they praise; and on the other, that they are not intercessors for the saints on earth, that they but offer to the Lamb the prayers of the saints, of whom they are, as it were, the hand rather than the mouthpiece. Were we, with some commentators, to understand by 'the saints' those in heaven, it would be difficult to draw a sufficiently clear line of distinction between them and the twenty-four Elders. The bowls are full (comp. John ii. 7, xix. 29, xxi. 11). (3) Further still, the twenty-four Elders sing. Ver. 9. 10. And they sing a new song, saying, Worthy art thou to take the roll, and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slaughtered, and didst purchase to God in thy blood men out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation; and didst make them to our God a kingdom and priests, and they reign over the earth. Note again a change of tense. The Elders 'sing,' not 'sang.' The continuous worship of heaven is brought before us by the change. The song, as we have seen, is taken from chap. iv. 5, and we need say no more of them at present than that they are 'new'
song, new in its substance, because it celebrates what no imagination of man could before have conceived, and no tongue have uttered—the glory of a complete redemption. The song is not sung only because the roll is opened: its main burden is the ground upon which the Lamb had been found worthy to open it. It consists of three parts:—(1) 'Thou wast slaughtered.' The sacrificial death of the Lamb is the prominent point; but this death is not necessarily confined to the death upon the cross. It includes the whole of the humiliation and self-sacrifice of Jesus. (2) 'Thou didst purchase,' etc. Applying the rule of interpretation already more than once alluded to, these words must be compared with the larger and fuller expressions of chap. xiv. 3, 4, where we have the addition of the words, 'from the earth' and 'from men.' It is thus not of redemption from death only by the sacrifice of the Lamb that the song before us speaks, but of the fact that, through that sacrifice, believers are taken out of the earth with all its evils, and are translated into the happiness of the heavenly and triumphant Church. Those purchased are gathered out of all the earth, universality being indicated by the mention of four sources from which they come,—and they are purchased 'in' the blood of the Lamb. Full force ought to be given to the preposition 'in;' for here, as always, the 'blood' of Christ is more than the blood shed at the moment of His death. It is the blood,—the life won through death,—in which He presents Himself before the throne of God, with all His people in Him. 'In His blood they stand.' 'In' His life they live; and they appear before God not merely with their sins washed away, but planted into their Lord's life of perfect obedience and submission to the Father's will. They offer themselves as 'living sacrifices' in Him who, having died once, dieth no more; and, not in virtue only of a righteousness outwardly imputed to them, but also of an inward and real life-union to Him in whom the Father is glorified. In this sense, as well as the sense in which we are 'accepted' and 'complete.' The force of this great truth is lost if we translate either 'by the blood' or 'with the blood.' (3) 'And didst make them,' etc. (comp. chap. xiv. 6.)

At the word 'priests' there seems to be a pause, the following clause constituting a distinct proposition. Nor ought we to translate 'upon,' but 'over,' the earth. They are not upon the earth at all, and cannot therefore be said to be there exerting those influences, promoting those principles, and dispensing those laws of righteousness, holiness, and peace which in reality rule all the best developments of life and history. They are the Church triumphant in heaven. The 'earth' has been their foe, and it is not now reformed by them: it is subdued beneath them. They have the position of Jesus Himself (comp. chap. iii. 21); the final promise to 'him that overcometh' is fulfilled to them; their victory is complete. Finally, we may notice the word 'them' in ver. 10. We might have expected 'us' to be the word used by the triumphant Church as the spokes in the twenty-four Elders who represent her. But the Church views herself objectively; and in the song that she sings, turns her thoughts to Him who has redeemed her. The method of expression is not unlike that of John xiv. 3.

Ver. 11. The song of the triumphant Church has been sung, and an innumerable host of angels takes up the chorus. These angels occupy a place outside of all that we have hitherto met in connection with the throne,—of the throne itself, of the four living creatures, and of the twenty-four Elders. The reason is obvious. The Son of God, in carrying out the process of redemption, took on Him the nature of man, that man might be elevated to a participation in His Divine nature, and it is this process of redemption that is here the main topic of praise. Angels do not share in it, and they accordingly are farther from the throne. The same thought is implied in Ps. viii. 1, Cor. vi. 1; Heb. ii. 10. Although, however, angels are not themselves partakers of the redemption spoken of, they have the deepest interest in its glorious results (comp. Luke xvi. 20; Eph. iii. 13; 1 Pet. i. 12).—The number of the angels is given in general terms, for they cannot be numbered (comp. Heb. xii. 22). It is remarkable that the smaller number seems to be given last, and various explanations have been offered,—that 'in enormous numbers distinctions vanish,' that the larger number preceding, large as it is, is not enough, that 'the same idea is conveyed whether by climax or anteclimax.' No one of these explanations is satisfactory. The Seer's arrangements of his words are always for the purpose of strengthening his statement in the second part. We may observe that he often uses another word for thousands (chaps. xi. 3, xii. 6, etc.); but it is always with inferior objects, never with men. With men we see invariably the word here employed (chaps. vii. 4, xi. 13, etc.); only once is it used with a material (if even then a 'material' object (chap. xxii. 16). It would seem, therefore, as if with this word were associated a higher idea than that of number, such as that of spiritual superiority and rule. Thus, though 'thousands' is a numerically smaller number than 'myriads,' the idea associated with it is greater. Such being the numbers of the angels, we have now their song.

Ver. 12. Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to take the power, and riches and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing. It will not be observed that the article is connected with 'power' alone, thus showing that this power stands in a conception by itself, and that the other parts of the doxology are added for the sake of enlarging the idea, so constituting one whole (comp. note on John iv. 6). The thought of 'the power' then is no doubt prominent, either because 'reigning' had been spoken of immediately before, or, as has been suggested, because of ver. 3. No one was 'able,' had power, to open the roll, but the Lamb overcame, so as to open it.—This power belongs essentially to the Lamb, and He takes it to Himself (comp. on chap. iv. 11). The other things ascribed to Him follow as parts of the Messianic kingdom, the kingdom of redemption; and it may be noticed that all, taken together, make up the sacred number seven.—The chorus is now still further enlarged.

Ver. 13. And every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea; and all things that are in them, heard I saying, The blessing and the honour and the glory and the dominion be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and
CHAPTER VI. 1-17.

The Seals opened.

1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer. And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword. And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld,

1 seven seals 3 omit as it were the voice of thunder 5 living creatures 4 add as with a voice of thunder 8 omit and see 6 came 1 om at had 2 needy living creature 9 saying 10 came forth
11 omit power was given 12 add it was given 13 out of 14 slaughter 15 saw
and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not

7 the oil and the wine. And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with

9 the beasts of the earth. And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

10 and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed

12 as they were, should be fulfilled. And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the

13 moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men,

15 and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him who

17 sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able

to stand?

---

CONTENTS. With the beginning of this chapter we enter upon the fourth or leading section of the Apocalypse, extending to chap. xviii. 24. The section contains what had been described in chap. iv. 1 as 'the things which must come to pass,' Chaps. iv. and v. have been only preparatory to
those 'things': now we come to the things themselves. Here, therefore, the Apocalypse in the stricter sense of the word may be properly said to begin. The object of the section is to unfold the great principles which shall mark the history of the Church in her struggle with the world, throughout the whole period of the present Dispensation. We are to behold 'the Son of man' (chap. i. 13), the Priest and King of His Church, meeting and overcoming His people's foes, establishing His own reign of truth and righteousness, preserving His saints amidst all the sorrows and persecutions which they meet while they follow in His steps, bringing them out even of the degenerate Church herself, and finally conducting them to the perfect happiness of the New Jerusalem. The reader must observe that throughout the whole of this section we have to deal with principles, not with particular historical events. This will become clearer as we proceed; but even at the outset it is necessary to fix the thought firmly in the mind. No single detail of future history will be presented to our view. We shall see only in successive pictures the great relations subsisting between God and man in the present preparatory scene, the relation of the glorified Church to God, to His own people, and to the Church of the world; also, the relation of the glorified Church to the world, and the Church of the world to God. These pictures are not intended to be presented such as we have them at present, but as they will exist in the future. The reader must not think of anything absolute, but only of the principles and the relations which are involved in them. This is not a literal history; it is a picture of future events, in which the relations and the principles are more prominent than the details. We shall see here only the relations and the principles, and shall not stop to consider the details. We shall not stop to consider the details, but shall go on to see how these relations and principles are to be carried into effect.

This Revelation begins in chap. vi. with the opening of the roll sealed with seven seals which the Lamb has in His hands. The seven seals are divided into two groups of four and three. Various considerations make this so clear that it is unnecessary to dwell upon it at any length. It will be observed that the first four are distinguished from the three that follow by the fact that each of them sets before us a great event in the history of the Church. The four are: 1. The vision of the Lamb; 2. The vision of the seven trumpets; 3. The vision of the seven bowls; 4. The vision of the seven churches. The three that follow are: 5. The vision of the Lamb's second coming; 6. The vision of the seven woes; 7. The vision of the millennium. The four dominate; the three are subordinated. The four are the main events; the three are the sub-events. The four are the great events; the three are the minor events.

Ver. 2. All the figures of this verse are those of victory,—the horse and its whiteness, the crown, and the distinct statement at the close of the verse (comp. chap. xii. 11, 14). The bow expresses the fact that the Conqueror sees and strikes down His enemies from afar.

The great question is: Who is this rider? On the one hand it might seem as if it cannot be the Lord Himself, for how in that case shall we preserve a perfect parallelism between the first vision and the three that follow it? Can Christ be named in the same category with War, Famine, and Pestilence? On the other hand, if it be not the Lord, how shall we draw a line of distinction between the first and the second vision? Both will symbolize war. Besides which, the last words of the verse to conquer so clearly point to complete and permanent victory that it is difficult to limit them to any lower object than the triumphant Saviour. In the Old Testament, too, the judgments of God are three, not four, in number,— 'the sword, the famine, and the pestilence' (Ezek. vi. 14, etc.), exactly those found in the three following riders. We are thus led to see here our Lord in His cause and kingdom 'riding prosperously' (as in Ps. lxxiv.), because of truth and meekness and righteousness, His arrows sharp in the heart of His enemies, and His right hand teaching them terrible things. It is His kingdom, first in Himself and then in His people, who are one with Him and in Him, that passes before the Seer's eye,—a kingdom which shall yet prevail over every adversary. By looking at the matter in this light we preserve the analogy of the four riders, not one of whom is strictly speaking a person, while at the same time we render full justice to each part of the figure. 'Wars' and 'famines and pestilences' are foretold in the same order by our Lord in Matt. xxiv. 6, 7.

Ver. 3, 4. The second horse is red, the colour of blood (comp. 2 Kings ii. 22); and he and his rider appear in answer to the second cry 'Come.' In this seal Jesus comes just as He came in the
victory of the first seal; but He comes in war and with the sword. There are two ways in which the warfare may be viewed. It may be the struggle of light with darkness and of truth with error, the opposition awakened by the faithful proclamation of the Gospel, and deepened into fiercer enmity as the Gospel makes progress in the world, the contest spoken of by our Lord in Matt. x. 34-36. Were this the struggle alluded to, the 'war' represented by the second rider would be that between the world and the Church, an opposition shaping itself into many other forms than those of the march of infantry or the thunder of artillery. But the words of ver. 4 forbid this interpretation. The war there thought of is not between the Church and the world, but between different portions of the world itself. The 'earth' out of which peace is taken is the ungodly world, and the slaughtering of which we read is not produced by the attacks of the wicked on the good, but by those of the former on one another. War, in short, is here represented as one of the curses or judgments which a world that will not accept the rule of the Prince of peace brings upon itself. It rejects those principles by which alone security and peace can be enjoyed. It yields to its own evil passions, and the sword and the battlefield are the result. In the midst of all this nothing is said of what shall be the condition of the righteous. By and by we shall hear more of them. In the meantime, with the first vision in our mind, we may rest in the assurance that they are safe in the hollow of their Redeemer's hand. Before passing on it may be well to notice the extremely peculiar language, the words 'God's dealing' (ver. 2), 'portion of His people' (ver. 3), 'life which is the portion of His people' (ver. 6). The word 'share' (Rev. vi. 12) is often used of the right of heaven. The share of the elect is to be in the kingdom of God. In the interpretation of the first vision therefore, the word 'share' is to be understood in the sense of the elect's share in the kingdom of God. The word 'portion' is used in Rev. xiv. 4 of the portion of the world. The word 'life' is used of the portion of the world. The word 'life' is used of the portion of the world. The word 'life' is used of the portion of the world. The word 'life' is used of the portion of the world.

Vers. 5, 6. The third horse is black, the colour of mourning and of famine (Jer. iv. 28, viii. 21, xiv. 2; Mal. iii. 14, margin; Rev. vi. 12), and he cometh forth with his rider in answer to the same cry as before, Ocoma. Again Jesus comes in this seal just as He had come in the first and second seals, although no more than in these is the rider Jesus Himself. The judgment of this seal is famine. The rider has a balance in his hand, in order to weigh the corn. The usual method of dealing out corn was to measure it; here he is to be weighed, not measured, and the mention of the 'measures' in the following words is simply to give us a proper idea of the quantity weighed out. The symbol is one of great scarcity (Ezek. iv. 16; comp. Lev. xxvi. 26-28). A voice, or rather as it were a voice, is then heard in the midst of the four living creatures, a voice, therefore, which can only come from the throne of God, saying, A measure of wheat, etc. The 'measure' referred to was considered to be the amount needed for the daily support of one man. The penny, nearly ninepence of our money, was the wage of a complete day's work (Matt. xx. 2), and sufficed in ordinary circumstances to purchase about eight 'measures.' The meaning is, that so great would be the scarcity that a man, by working all day, could not acquire what was necessary for the daily support of one of his family. He might indeed obtain three measures of barley for the same sum; but to be obliged to depend upon barley was itself a token of severe scarcity. The scarcity is produced by the rider's 'hurting' the wheat and the barley. The words next addressed to him, therefore, and the oil and the wine, hurt thou not, mean in the first instance that he is not to carry this hurting to an unreasonable extent. The tendency of the voice is to check and limit the agency of the rider on the black horse, and to provide that, notwithstanding his errand, sustenance shall not utterly fail. Yet it is not enough to say this. We are persuaded that the meaning lies much deeper. 'Oil' and 'wine' are not to be regarded only as the privilege of the rich; and thus the symbol cannot be one of the mocking contrast between an abundance of luxuries and a famine of the necessities of life. In Eastern lands 'oil and wine' are as needful to the poor as to the rich (comp. Deut. xv. 14; Luke vii. 46). But to all, both rich and poor, they were symbols not so much of the ordinary provision for existence as of feasting and joy (Ps. xxiii. 5). The rider here alluded to is described in the second of the three clauses of the description, and that they should slaughter one another. The verb is the sacrificial word already met by us in chap. v. 6, and it appears to be chosen for the purpose of bringing out the irony of God's dealings with those who reject His Son. They will not flee to the slaughtered Lamb, taking advantage of His sacrifice. In the righteous judgment of God, therefore, sacrifice of another kind shall be required of them: they shall 'slaughter one another.' Their mutual and fratricidal war is coming of Jesus to judgment. Compare Isa. xxiv. 6, 'The Lord hath a sacrifice in Bochim, and a great slaughter in the land of Judah.'

Vers. 7, 8. The fourth horse is pale in colour, that is, with the livid paleness of a corpse. He comes forth in circumstances precisely similar to those already met by us, and he is to be looked at in the same way. As in them, so also in him and in his rider Jesus comes to judgment. The name of the rider is given, Death, which is to be
understood in its natural signification. For the mode of expression comp. John iii. 1. He is represented as accompanied by Hades, who does not follow after him, but 'with him;' or, in other words, is his inseparable companion. We are to understand Hades here in the same sense as that in which we met it in chap. i. 18 (see note). Neither Hades nor death touches the people of God. The judgment is on the world.—Authority is given unto them to kill, etc. May these words not be an echo of the words, 'they sought to kill Him;' so that it said of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel? His enemies sought to 'kill' Him: He, in His judgments, 'kills' them (comp. on ver. 4). That there are four things by which death and Hades kill we learn from Ezek. xiv. 9, to which passage there is here an obvious reference. It is true that we have a change of preposition when we come to the last of the four; but this change may be dependent upon the fact that the same preposition which had been used with the first term could not also be used with the last. —The authority to kill spoken of is given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, that is, over a fourth part of the ungodly, not of all who dwell upon the surface of the earth. Over the elect, who are preserved unharmed, they have no power. Thus again there is a climax when we pass from the third to the fourth seal. In the third seal provision for the saints was to be left unharmed; in the fourth white death and Hades accomplish their dread work around them, they are untouched. It is not easy to say why the 'fourth' part of the earth should be selected as the prey of this last and greatest judgment. The theory that it is to be represented as a correspondance with the 'fourth' rider is unsatisfactory, and finds no analogy in chap. viii., where a third part is spoken of. The object may be only to give scope for the climax which we shall hereafter find in comparing the Trumpets and Bowls with the Seals. At this point of the Apocalypse the judgments of God appear in their earliest and most limited range. Were they to extend over the whole earth, there would be no room for the extension of judgment that is to follow. The Seer therefore beheld them exercising their sway only over a part of the earth; and that he chose the fourth, as hereafter the third, part may arise from nothing more than this, that the numbers four and three were so often in his mind, and that a fourth part was smaller than a third.

Such then are the first four seals which, to be understood, must be viewed ideally. They refer to no specific war or famine or pestilence nor do they even necessarily follow one another in chronological succession. They express the great principle borne witness to by the whole course of human history,—that the world, refusing the yoke and kingdom of the Son of God, draws down upon itself His righteous judgments. These judgments again are confined to no particular period. War, famine, and pestilence, or the troubles and sufferings which they symbolize, darken the whole history of man, and all of them are but ominous forerunners of the more terrible judgment to come, when the Lord shall finally and for ever vindicate His own cause, put all His enemies beneath His feet, and establish His reign of perfect peace and righteousness (Matt. xxiv. 8). During the calamities produced by them, too, the Lord preserves His own. They suffer, but judgments such as these are not directed against them. On the contrary, in sorrow they rejoice, in famine they 'live' by other than bread, and they are unaffected by the pestilence that walketh in darkness. Even in death itself they do not die, and the spirit in which they are enabled to meet their outward trials is to them 'a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, to the end that they may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which they also suffer' (2 Thess. i. 5).

Ver. 9. And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw beneath the altar the souls of them that had been slaughtered because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they held. With the opening of the fifth seal we pass into scenes of a kind in many respects distinguished from those of the first four. No voice of one of the living creatures now cries 'Come;' there are no horses and their riders: we make a transition from what is of earth to what is of not of earth.

The Seer beholds first 'the altar.' We have already seen that the whole imagery of the heavenly abode is taken from the structure of the Tabernacle, as afterwards copied in the Temple. The only question, therefore, is whether we have here the altar of incense which stood in the holy place, or the great brazen altar of burnt-offering which stood in the outer court. One answer is given to this question by all the most eminent commentators, and it would seem as if one only could be given. It is the latter of the two; and if any difficulty be found in accepting this owing to the fact that we might expect the souls of the saints to be preserved in the inner sanctuary, the answer will be found in the first consideration to be immediately submitted when we inquire who the saints are. But whether that answer be correct or not, there can be little doubt that we have here a vision of the brazen altar. What is seen under it is the blood (see below) of those slaughtered in sacrifice. Nothing of this kind found a place at the altar of incense, while the command of the law was that the blood of animals sacrificed should be poured out 'at the bottom of the altar of burnt-offering, which is before the tabernacle of the congregation' (Lev. iv. 7). Those here referred to had been sacrificed. The word used, the same as that applied to the Lamb in chap. v. 6, leaves no doubt upon the point. They had been sacrificed in the same manner as their Lord; their blood had been shed as He was, and their bodies had been laid upon God's altar to be consumed as an offering acceptable to Him. It corresponds with this that what St. John sees under the altar is in all probability blood. He speaks indeed of 'souls,' or rather 'lives;' but to the Hebrew blood and life were equivalent terms; 'the life of the flesh,' he said, 'is in the blood' (Lev. xvii. 11). No shadowy spectres, therefore, were beheld by the Seer. He beheld only blood, but he knew that that blood was the soul or lives of men.

Two important questions demanding consideration meet us. First, What is the period to which these martyred saints belong? Secondly, What were they martyrs in the sense in which that word is usually employed, or do they include a larger number? In reply to the first of these questions, we have to urge that these saints belong neither to
the period of the Neronian persecution, nor to any longer period of Rome's history, nor to the whole Christian era from its beginning to its close. We must agree with those who think that they are saints of the Old Testament Dispensation. (1) Mark where the place lies. It is under the brazen altar in the Court. The way into the Holiest of all had not yet been manifested. (2) Observe the manner in which their 'testimony' is described. The word used for 'testimony' occurs nine times in the Apocalypse, and in every case (including even chap. xi. 11), except the present and chap. xi. 7 which may be in some respects similar, it is associated in one form or another with the name of Jesus. The absence of such addition in the words before us can hardly be thought of otherwise than as designed; and, if so, a distinction would seem to be drawn between the 'testimony' here alluded to and the full 'testimony of Jesus.' (3) The word 'Master,' not 'Lord,' of ver. 10 is remarkable. It can hardly be referred directly to Christ: it is rather an epithet of God Himself, to whom it breathes the feeling of the 'New Testament relation' (comp. Acts iv. 24; Jude 4, Revised New Testament margin). (4) The parallelism of thought between vers. 10 and 11 of this chapter and Heb. xi. 39, 40 is very marked, and confirms what has been said. (5) A powerful argument tending towards the same conclusion is that the saints of the New Testament receive during their life on earth that very 'white robe' which is here given to the souls under the altar. This is shown in chap. ii. 14, after they have been described as 'standing before the throne and before the Lamb,' it is said of them, in the Elder's inquiry, Who are they and whence they came, that they had washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.' The words evidently implying that the cleansing and whitening referred to had taken place during the period of their mortal pilgrimage. In chap. iii. 4, they who are described as 'few names' must have been already clothed in the 'white garments' which they had not 'desiled.' In chap. xix. 8 the Lamb's bride is made ready for the marriage which has not yet taken place, by its being given her to array herself 'in fine linen, bright and pure;' and in the 14th verse of the same chapter, at a time when the Church's victory has not yet been completed, the Rider on the white horse is followed by the armies of heaven 'clothed in fine linen, white and pure.' To the same effect is the counsel addressed to the Church of Laodicea in chap. iii. 18, that she shall buy of her Lord 'white garments,' as well as the description in chap. xix. 8 of what 'fine linen' means, 'for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.' It is true that in chap. vii. 9, 13 and iv. 4, these white robes are also those of glory in heaven, but it is unnecessary to dwell upon the fact that the believer appears there in the same perfect righteousness as that in which he is accepted here. The 'white robe' of the present passage, therefore, is a more complete justification than that which was enjoyed under the old covenant. It is that referred to by St. Paul when, speaking to the Jews at Antioch of Pisidia, he said, 'By Him every one that believeth is justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses' (Acts xiii. 39). It is that robe of righteousness which had been promised in Is. lxi. 10 and Zech. iii. 4, that complete reward for which David longed (Ps. li.), and to which both Jeremiah (chap. xxxi. 34) and Ezekiel (chap. xxxvi. 25) had pointed as the great gift of Gospel times. The promise of the Old Testament, that the saints of God who then lived did not 'receive,' was not simply that of a better country, but of the 'day' of Christ, with all the blessings that should accompany it. In that hope they 'exulted,' and at length they 'saw it and rejoiced' (comp. note on John viii. 56). Not until Christ came were even Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their faithful seed perfected. At death they passed into a place of holy waiting until the great work of redemption should be finished; and then they receive what is now bestowed upon the followers of Jesus even during his earthly life. Only under the Christian Dispensation have they been made equal to us; and at this moment they wait, as we wait, for the making up of the full number of the redeemed, and for the open acknowledgment and acquittal which shall yet be granted them. (6) Finally, it ought to be noticed in the verse before us that Christ is here not said to have been killed under the fifth seal which, like all the others, starts from a point of time contemporaneous with the beginning of the Christian age. It is rather distinctly implied that they had been killed before. The moment the seal is broken their blood is seen.

These 'souls underneath the altar,' therefore, are the saints of the Old Testament waiting for the completion of their happiness by having added to them their 'fellow-servants' of New Testament times.

The second question is not less important than the first. We cannot enter upon it fully, and it will meet us again. In the meantime it is enough to say that the analogy of the Apocalypse leads to the conclusion that the persons alluded to are not confined to those who had actually been killed in the service of God. It includes all who had remained faithful unto death, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob; and the whole line of those who, whether known or unknown, had died in faith. All were offerings. All had a life of struggle. All shared 'the reproach of Christ' (Heb. xi. 26); and all had an interest in crying, 'Lord, how long?' If, therefore, martyrs in the ordinary sense of the term are to be first thought of, it seems to be only as the type and emblem of the whole company of those who had lived and died in faith.

Ver. 10. And they cried with a great voice, saying, How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? 'They cried (yet not the martyrs themselves but the blood which represents them) as the blood of Abel cried (Gen. iv. 10). The cause of holiness and truth suffering in them was at stake; and only as they identify themselves with this great cause do they cry.' They cried with a 'great' voice in the earnestness of their cry. The cry is addressed to Him who is spoken of as 'Master,' and by whom we are most probably to understand not Christ but God. There is much indeed that might lead us to think of the former, but the song of chap. xix. 1 appears to determine in favour of the latter. Their confidence that God will deliever is confirmed by the thought of the attributes which distinguish Him. He is 'the
holy,' therefore He will the more surely punish wickedness. He is the 'true,' that is, certainly not the truthful, which is never the meaning of the word here employed, but either the Being who alone has true and substantial existence, or the Master who completely corresponds with the idea of what a Master ought to be.—Their cry is, How long will it be before the Judge arises to claim the victory as His own, and to punish His adversaries as they deserve? Those who are thus to be judged are then described as 'they that dwell upon the earth;' and by the 'earth' here, as almost always in the Apocalypse, is to be understood the ungodly earth: those that dwell on it are the ungodly. It may be observed that all the ungodly are included. This is allowed by the best commentators, and it supplies a strong argument in favour of what was said with regard to the number of those underneath the altar,—there all the godly belonging to the time spoken of he, all the ungodly here.

Ver. 11. To the cry of these martyred souls an answer is given both by deed and word. By deed; for a white robe, denoting the purity of saints perfected in Christ, was bestowed on each of them (comp. chaps. iii. 5, iv. 4, vii. 9). This robe is the garment of all who overcome,—another indication that all such, and not martyrs only, are included in the souls underneath the altar. To this act of grace words are added, telling them that they must rest a little while until their fellow-servants of the New Testament Dispensation shall be completed, and all the children of God shall be gathered together, 'no wanderer lost, a family in heaven.'

Vers. 12, 13. And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake. The verb 'saw' is again to be taken absolutely as in vers. 1, 2, 5, 6. The things seen divide themselves naturally into four groups; and we need not add to what has been already said as to the meaning of this number. (1) 'A great earthquake,' which must be understood in its usual sense as a shaking of the earth alone (chaps. viii. 6, xi. 13, xvi. 18), and not as a general shaking including heaven as well as earth. The celestial phenomena immediately following are quite independent. The idea of the earthquake may be in part that of Matt. xxiv. 7, but it is especially that of Matt. xxiv. 29. The figure is frequently used in the Old Testament as a symbol of the judgments of God about to come upon a sinful world (Ps. ix. 3; Isa. xiii. 13; Hag. ii. 6, 22, 23).

Vers. 12b, 13, 14a. And the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood, and the stars of the heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her unripe figs when she is shaken of a great wind, and the heaven withdrew as a book-roll when it is rolled together. (2) We pass from earth to the heavens. The vision is still couched in the language of Matt. xxiv. 29, and that again rests upon the figures with which Old Testament prophecy had made the Jews familiar (Isa. xiii. 10, l. 3; Jer. iv. 23; Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8; Joel ii. 31, iii. 15; Amos viii. 9, 10; Mic. iii. 6). The sun became black as sackcloth of hair, the coarse sackcloth made of the black hair of camels. His light is quenched; and, instead of shining with his splendour in the sky, he appears as a great black orb. It is obvious that here, as in innumerable parts of the Apocalypse, we are to content ourselves with the main idea of the writer, and not to demand prosaic verisimilitude.

Ver. 14b. And every mountain and island were moved out of their places. (3) In these words the third member of the description follows. It will be observed that we have in them much more than the mention of the earthquake in ver. 12b. An earthquake shakes the earth, but when the shaking is over things return, no doubt with some exceptions, to their old positions. Here all things are 'moved out of their places;' the confusion and overthrow are complete.

Vers. 15-17. (4) These verses contain the fourth and last member of the description. Of the persons on whom the terror of God's judgments falls prominence seems to be given to the first, the kings. The words of the earth are associated with them, and the other appellations follow for the purpose of enlarging and completing the idea. The word 'earth' must again be understood in its usual acceptation, not the neutral earth, but the earth as opposed to heaven, the seat of ungodliness and sin. The righteous have thus no place in the enumeration which follows; but the ungodly without exception, whatever their rank or station, are divided into seven groups in order to indicate that none escape. In alarm at the awful judgments which they behold immediately impending, they rush into the caves of the mountains and into the rents of their rocks, in order to seek not safety but destruction. The crushing of the rocks is nothing compared with appearing before Him who sitteth upon the throne, and before the wrath of the Lamb. The question has been asked, how it happens that these 'kings,' etc., use the language of Christians in speaking as they do of Him that sitteth upon the throne and of the Lamb. But the answer is not to be found in the idea that we have in them the Church in its Laodicean state. The use of the word 'earth' would alone forbid such an interpretation. We have rather here one of the most striking lessons both of the Apocalypse and of the Fourth Gospel,—that those who reject Jesus shall have in this their chief element of condemnation, that they shall fully know what they have done. They shall believe, but believe to their destruction, not to their salvation. They have loved the darkness. At last they shall have light, but of what a kind! They shall see not the redeemed, Christ's glory, but with this tremendous difference that, along with that sight, their eyes shall be opened to behold their own sin and folly in having rejected Him. The very fact that they
are now compelled to use Christian language, to confess in trembling to the truths which they have hitherto scorned, is the most fearful element in their woe.

There remains still one question regarding the sixth seal which must be briefly noticed. Does it bring us down to the end of the world, to the final judgment; or does it not? One answer only can be given,—that we reach here the beginning of the end. The use of the word great before day forbids the thought of judgments exhibited in phenomena of the world’s history which are either simply local or preparatory to the final issue. Nor, when the structure of the Apocalypse is taken into account, does it militate against this view that, when we come to the Trumpets and the Bowls, we shall have to go back to a point of time much earlier than that at which we stand, and that any thought of a continuous progression of the events of the book will thus be destroyed. To look for continuous progression is forbidden by the Apocalypse itself (see Introduction). With the sixth seal we reach the end, but the end is not yet described.

CHAPTER VII. 1-17.

Visions of Consolation.

1 And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand. After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice..."
voice, saying, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts," and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them any more, for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

VER. 1. The words After this denote succession of visions rather than of time.

The Seer beholds four angels standing at the four corners of the earth. The number four is that of the world; and hence 'the four corners'—North, South, East, West,—as well as four angels (comp. chap. xx. 8). By the word which these angels hold fast we are no doubt in the first place to understand natural winds, although it is clear that storm-winds or tempests must be intended. Yet it is as impossible to think here of mere winds as it is to think of mere earthquakes or of mere changes in sun and moon in the preceding chapter. The idea of four storm-winds bursting forth, when they are let loose, from all the four quarters of the earth is too unnatural, almost too grotesque, to be entertained. The winds are those upon which the Almighty rides, and the symbols of His judgments (comp. 1 Kings xix. 11; Jer. xxii. 23, xlix. 36; Ezek. i. 4; Dan. vii. 2; Zech. xi. 1; Rev. vi. 13). But God stays them at His pleasure, and there is a calm. Thus Ps. xxxix. describes a storm coming up from the 'great sea,' shaking the land, dashing the cedar trees, and dividing the flames of fire. The storm, however, is in the hands of One who sitteth King for ever, who gives strength unto His people, who blesses His people with peace. It is to be noticed that the winds here are not only ready but eager to be let loose: hence the four angels do not only hold them, but hold them fast.—The object is that no wind should blow on the earth, nor on the sea,
THE REVELATION.

[CHAP. VII. 1-17.

nor on any tree. The word 'tree' is used in its ordinary sense, not as meaning the great ones of the earth,—an interpretation that would necessarily lead us to think of the 'sea' as the mass of the heathen nations, and of the 'land' as the stubborn Jews. Such meanings may be possible. They are by no means out of keeping with the tone of the Apocalypse. But they are not natural at present. The word, therefore, ought to be taken literally—'trees' being probably selected from amongst other objects on the surface of the earth because they are the first to be presented before the storm-wind. The figure used in this verse is at once appropriate and natural. We may compare Hamlet's account of his father's care of his mother—

'So loving to my mother,
That he might not let even the winds of heaven
Visit her too roughly.'

Vers. 2, 3. The more peculiar contents of the vision follow. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, from the quarter whence issues great orb of day which is the symbol of the Sun of righteousness (comp. chap. xvi. 12).—Having a seal of the living God, of that God who both has life and gives life,—and he cried with a great voice to the four angels already spoken of, telling them not to execute the judgments with which they were entrusted,—till we shall have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads. In Ezek. ix. 4, a man 'clothed with linen and having a writing inborn by his side' is instructed to go through the midst of Jerusalem, and to set 'a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.' That mark is for their security, and for a similar purpose the seal of this angel is applied. The sealed shall be kept safe in the times of trial that are to come. Their Redeemer will set them as a seal upon His heart and upon His arm (Cant. viii. 6), and no one shall pluck them out of His hand. For the opposite marking, the mark of the service of the Beast, see chaps. xiii. 17, xiv. 11. The Seer next beholds the number of the sealed.

Vers. 4-8. One or two subordinate points may be noticed before we ask who these sealed ones are.

(1) There is no difficulty in determining the manner in which the number 144,000 is obtained. And we have the number of the witnessing Church, taken from the 12 tribes of Israel; and, multiplying by 1000, we have the number taken from each tribe. This number is then multiplied by 12 for the twelve tribes, and yields 144,000. (2) In looking at the names of the tribes several remarkable circumstances at once strike the eye. (a) Dan is omitted. The reasons generally assigned for this are either that Dan had been peculiarly given to idolatry (Judg. xviii. 1-31), or that it had disappeared as a tribe in the days of St. John. Both reasons are unsatisfactory; the first, because the idolatry of Dan does not appear to have been so excessive as to warrant its extinction; the second, because the fact has not been ascertained, and because, even though ascertained, it would be little to the purpose; for, as in the case of the Tabernacle, the Apostle takes the ancient condition of things for his guide. A more probable explanation is to be found in the words of Gen. xlix. 17, 'Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path,—a prophecy which, interpreted in a good sense denoting subtlety and skill in dealing with enemies, may have been the occasion of the tribe's choosing a serpent for its emblem. When we remember St. John's allusion to 'the old serpent' in chap. xii. 9, and the possibility that in chap. ii. 24 he has the early heretical sect of the Ophites in his eye, the supposition seems not improbable. This connection of Dan with the 'serpent' may have been enough to make the Seer leave out that tribe from his enumeration of the twelve which constitute the Christian Church. It may be worth while also to recall to mind that, when the twelve apostles received God's seal of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, one who had originally belonged to their number was no longer there. He had been cast out because 'he was a devil,' and his place had been supplied in order to make up the sacred twelve. St. John may have seen in this a sufficient indication that, when the twelve tribes making up the Church were to be sealed, it was proper that one of the original number, because found unworthy, should be absent, and its place be taken by another. (4) Levi is included, and this, owing to the peculiar inheritance of Levi, was not usual in the catalogues of the tribes given us in the latter books of the Old Testament. The explanation usually offered seems correct. In the Old Testament Levi was the priestly tribe, and stood apart; in the New Testament such distinctions have passed away. All Christians are priests. The distinction between ministers and people are distinctions of function only, and do not touch the personal relations of each man to God. (c) Instead of Ephraim Joseph is substituted. This seems to be due to the fact that throughout the Old Testament history Ephraim was peculiarly untheocratic, so that it became the symbol of opposition to faithful Judah (Ps. lxx. 2; Isa. vii. 17; Jer. vii. 15). (3) The order in which the tribes are named is worthy of notice. It is possible, indeed, that because of chap. v. 5 Judah may come first, and that Benjamin, as the youngest, may with propriety be last. Beyond this it seems as if nothing can be said. The tribes are not mentioned either in the order of the birth of the sons of Jacob, or of any pre-eminence we may suppose to belong to the children of his wives over those of his maid-servants; nor is their order that of the lists presented to us in Ezek. xliii. 1-31 and xlvii. 1-31.

We are now prepared for the further and more important inquiry, Whom do the 144,000 represent? Is it simply Jewish Christians? and, if not, Is it a select number out of the Christian community, or the whole of the community itself? These two inquiries may be taken together, and the following considerations will supply the answer:

1. According to the analogy of the Apocalypse, in which Jewish terms are christianised and heightened in their meaning, the word 'Israel' must be understood not of Jewish only but of all Christians. Such is also the lesson taught by the strain of the New Testament, Gal. iii. 28, 29, ix. 6, 7; Gal. vi. 16; Phil. iii. 3. 2. The number 144,000 is a complete number—the number of the Church (not of Israel in its more limited sense) multiplied by twelve, and then taken a thousandfold. Christians so numbered can hardly be Jewish believers alone, but must be the Church of Christ in its widest extent.
and final comprehensiveness. 3. There is no limitation of the 144,000 in the description given of them in the third verse of the chapter, ‘Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we shall have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.’ These words seem to imply that all the servants of God, and not merely a select portion, were to be sealed, just as the whole earth, and not a part of it only, was to be left unharmed. 4. In the fourteenth chapter of this book we have again the 144,000 brought before us, and there the vision follows the description of the enemies of Christ, as these enemies have reference not to any one portion of the Church but to it all, while it precedes that harvest and vintage of the earth which are to be wide as the whole world in their effects. 5. In chap. xiv. 1 the 144,000 standing with the Lamb upon Mount Zion are spoken of as having ’His Father’s name written on their foreheads’; and in chap. xxii. 4 this trait marks all the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem—‘and they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.’ 6. The changes made in the tribes as here given, although the grounds of them are not very clear which indicate in part at least that we are not to think of the literal Israel, and thus strengthen the argument. 7. In chap. xxi. 12 the ‘twelve tribes’ evidently include all believers. 8. There is another marking spoken of in various passages of this book, that by Satan of his own (chaps. xiii. 16, 17, xiv. 9, xvi. 2, xix. 20, xx. 4), and no one acquainted with the style of St. John will doubt that this marking is the direct antithesis of the sealing by God. A comparison of the several passages referred to will also show that in both cases a sealing or marking on the forehead is spoken of. Now it will not be denied that the mark of the beast is imprinted upon all his servants, and the contrast requires that the seal of God should be equally imprinted upon all his people. 9. The plagues that are to come threaten all, Gentile as well as Jew; the sealing must in like manner protect all believers. 10. The next following vision has its scene laid in heaven, not on earth; so that, if Gentile Christians are not included among the tribes of Israel, they are nowhere spoken of as sealed.” We conclude, therefore, that we have before us neither Jewish Christians in particular, nor a select portion out of the whole Christian Church. To the Church of God in every age and land the sealing is applied, and in it there is neither Jew nor Gentile; all its members are one in Christ Jesus.

A second important question meets us, At what time does the sealing take place? The answer is involved in what has been said of its comprehensiveness. If the 144,000 are the whole Church of God, then the sealing goes on during all the Church’s history. Through all the period of their earthly struggle God has been preserving and sealing His own. The vision has relation to no particular or limited period. Another vision follows.

Ver. 9. The vision now introduced is distinguished from the former by the fact that it belongs to heaven, while the sealing took place on earth. Those beheld stand before the throne and before the Lamb (comp. iv. 5, 6, 10, v. 8, etc.), and the other particulars correspond. They are clothed with white robes, emblematic of priestly purity. They have palm in their hands, not palms of victory at heathen games, but palms of festive joy, especially of the feast of Tabernacles. The whole scene appears to be modelled upon that of John xii. 12, etc., even the great multitude here reminding us of that mentioned there. This great multitude is out of every nation, the word ‘nation’ being then enlarged and supplemented. The terms used are four, an indication of the universality of the host. But not Gentile Christians alone are included; Jewish Christians must also be referred to; a fact throwing a reflex light upon the vision of the sealing, and confirming the conclusion already reached, that the 144,000 are not to be confined to the latter class. Nor does the statement that this is a multitude which no man could number prove that it is a larger company than the 144,000, for these figures are to be understood not numerically, but symbolically and theologically.

Ver. 10. They cry with a great voice, a voice expressing the intensity of their thankfulness and joy, and in their cry they attribute the glory of their salvation to Him whom they describe as our God which sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb. To this psalm of praise as here rendered the echo given by the use of the present tense ‘cry,’ is sung unceasingly, a choral response is immediately given.

Vers. 11, 12. The angels spoken of in these verses must be the same as those at chap. v. 11, although it may be worthy of notice that the other beings in the neighbourhood of the throne are here arranged in a different order,—the ‘living creatures’ of chap. v. 11 there taking precedence of the ‘elders,’ while in the words before us the order is reversed. In the one case the throne is looked at from its outer circle to its centre, in the other from its centre to its outer circle. In the first passage also it is not said of the angels that they fall before the throne on their faces. This trait is probably now added because a higher manifestation of God’s purposes has been reached. Here, as there, the doxology is sevenfold, but the words and the order differ. The doxology of the angels includes no mention of the Lamb, for angels had not been ‘loosed from their sins in His blood’ (chap. i. 5). The vision thus given is so important that an explanation is subjoined.

Ver. 13. These which are arrayed in white robes, who are they, and whence came they? The question is not asked by the Seer. It is addressed to him in order that his attention may be drawn to it with greater force, and one of the elders is the speaker. In chap. vi. the four living creatures spoke, because they represented creation, and were the instruments of vengeance. Now one of the elders speaks, because the elders represent the triumphant Church.

Vers. 14–17. The Seer does not say that he cannot answer the question, but he implies that the elder is better able to do so. He himself has no experience of the state described, and he cannot therefore speak of it as it should be spoken of. His language is peculiarly graphic, neither ‘I said’ of the Authorised Version, nor ‘I say’ of the Revised, but I have said, as given in the margin of the latter. The perfect tense has its appropriate power of bringing down to the present moment the feeling that is expressed. The wonder of that instant in the apostle’s life is not a matter only of the past. It presents itself still as vivid to his mind as when he first uttered the
words, and asked an explanation of the glorious spectacle (comp. note on John i. 15). The word *knowest* is to be understood in a far deeper sense than that of possessing information only. It is used in the sense of the word *know* in the Fourth Gospel, and expresses experimental knowledge (comp. note on John iv. 32 and Rev. iii. 17).

The answer to the question is next given, and its importance appears in the fact that it consists of three parts: (1) the first, *they that cometh*; (2) the second, *he that cometh*; and (3) the third, *He that cometh,* in the Fourth Gospel. We have here, in short, another illustration of that identification of believers with their Lord which is so characteristic of the writings of St. John. Members of the Lord's body, they are one with Him in all His fortunes, and may be fitly described by the same terms.—*The great tribulation* is that out of which they come. It is that period of trial, suffering, and perplexity which falls upon the Church in the midst of its earthly pilgrimage, and which is both known and foreseen by God in advance; and it is still described as one mark of the genuine Christian. The idea of many ancient expositors that the martyrs washed their robes in their own blood may be at once rejected. But neither can we refer the 'washing' to justification alone, and the 'making white' of the following clause to sanctification. 'Robes' are the expression of character (comp. the English word 'habits'), not simply of legal standing, and lead us to the thought of the whole cleansing efficacy of the work of Christ, to its removal of the power of sin as well as to pardon, to new life imparted as well as to old transgressions forgiven (comp. Zech. iii. 4). In the view of St. John, water alone does not exhibit the special blessing of the New Covenant (comp. John v. 6). The Old Covenant has water; the New has 'blood,' and blood is life. What is here signified, therefore, is that these believers are made new creatures in Christ Jesus; they are alike justified and sanctified, when they are 'washed' in the blood of Christ.—Thirdly, they *made* their robes white in the blood of the Lamb. This is more than the mere result of the washing. It is the addition of a new feature. In the blood of the Lamb they made them not only clean but glistering, so that they shine with a dazzling brightness (comp. Heb. ix. 11-14).

Such being the persons spoken of, the place occupied by them is next described in two particulars; first, in the terms already employed in ver. 9, and secondly, as the innermost sanctuary of the temple of God, the innermost recess of the heavenly abode. Then follows a description of the blessedness of the righteous, in what seems to be seven particulars having reference to the future. Why should we have the future here instead of the present, as in the former parts of the vision, may be difficult to say. Probably it is because we pass at this point to an exchange of thought, not now to the place of blessedness, but to that blessedness itself which shall never end.

(1) *He that cometh,* etc. (comp. xxi. 3). God shall be their constant shelter and defends them especially shall *He spread his tabernacle over them* at the joyful feast of Tabernacles to be celebrated by all nations (Isa. iv. 5, 6; Zech. xiv. 16).—(2) They shall hunger no more (Isa. xlix. 10).—(3) Neither thirst any more (Isa. xlix. 10).—(4) Neither shall the sun strike on them nor any heat (Isa. xlix. 10).—(5) The Lamb shall be a Shepherd and lead them (Ps. xxiii. 1).—(6) He shall guide, etc. (Isa. lxvii. 21).—(7) God shall wipe, etc. (Isa. xxxv. 8).

Before passing from these two consolatory visions we have still to notice the manner in which they are related to each other. In doing so it is important to observe, in the first place, that the second vision does not refer to Gentile, the first to Jewish, Christians only, and that the second class is not treated simply as an 'appendix' to the first. We have already seen that the 144,000 embrace the whole Israel of God, Jewish and Gentile Christians in both passages. Nor are we to understand by it merely a special tribulation at the close of the world's history. It is rather the trial experienced by the whole body of Christians during the whole period of their pilgrimage, at one time greater than at another, but always great. Secondly, they washed their robes, and that too, it is obviously implied, in the blood of the Lamb. The idea of many ancient expositors that the martyrs washed their robes in their own blood may be at once rejected. But neither can we refer the 'washing' to justification alone, and the 'making white' of the following clause to sanctification. 'Robes' are the expression of character (comp. the English word 'habits'), not simply of legal standing, and lead us to the thought of the whole cleansing efficacy of the work of Christ, to its removal of the power of sin as well as to pardon, to new life imparted as well as to old transgressions forgiven (comp. Zech. iii. 4). In the view of St. John, water alone does not exhibit the special blessing of the New Covenant (comp. John v. 6). The Old Covenant has water; the New has 'blood,' and blood is life. What is here signified, therefore, is that these believers are made new creatures in Christ Jesus; they are alike justified and sanctified, when they are 'washed' in the blood of Christ.—Thirdly, they made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb. This is more than the mere result of the washing. It is the addition of a new feature. In the blood of the Lamb they made them not only clean but glistering, so that they shine with a dazzling brightness (comp. Heb. ix. 11-14).

Such being the persons spoken of, the place occupied by them is next described in two particulars; first, in the terms already employed in ver. 9, and secondly, as the innermost sanctuary of the temple of God, the innermost recess of the heavenly abode. Then follows a description of the blessedness of the righteous, in what seems to be seven particulars having reference to the future. Why should we have the future here instead of the present, as in the former parts of the vision, may be difficult to say. Probably it is because we pass at this point to an exchange of thought, not now to the place of blessedness, but to that blessedness itself which shall never end.

(1) *He that cometh,* etc. (comp. xxi. 3). God shall be their constant shelter and defends especially shall *He spread his tabernacle over them* at the joyful feast of Tabernacles to be celebrated by all nations (Isa. iv. 5, 6; Zech. xiv. 16).—(2) They shall hunger no more (Isa. xlix. 10).—(3) Neither thirst any more (Isa. xlix. 10).—(4) Neither shall the sun strike on them nor any heat (Isa. xlix. 10).—(5) The Lamb shall be a Shepherd and lead them (Ps. xxiii. 1).—(6) He shall guide, etc. (Isa. lxvii. 21).—(7) God shall wipe, etc. (Isa. xxxv. 8).

Before passing from these two consolatory visions we have still to notice the manner in which they are related to each other. In doing so it is important to observe, in the first place, that the second vision does not refer to Gentile, the first to Jewish, Christians only, and that the second class is not treated simply as an 'appendix' to the first. We have already seen that the 144,000 embrace the whole Israel of God, Jewish and Gentile Christians in both passages. Nor are we to understand by it merely a special tribulation at the close of the world's history. It is rather the trial experienced by the whole body of Christians during the whole period of their pilgrimage, at one time greater than at another, but always great. Secondly, they washed their robes, and that too, it is obviously implied, in the blood of the Lamb. The idea of many ancient expositors that the martyrs washed their robes in their own blood may be at once rejected. But neither can we refer the 'washing' to justification alone, and the 'making white' of the following clause to sanctification. 'Robes' are the expression of character (comp. the English word 'habits'), not simply of legal standing, and lead us to the thought of the whole cleansing efficacy of the work of Christ, to its removal of the power of sin as well as to pardon, to new life imparted as well as to old transgressions forgiven (comp. Zech. iii. 4). In the view of St. John, water alone does not exhibit the special blessing of the New Covenant (comp. John v. 6). The Old Covenant has water; the New has 'blood,' and blood is life. What is here signified, therefore, is that these believers are made new creatures in Christ Jesus; they are alike justified and sanctified, when they are 'washed' in the blood of Christ.—Thirdly, they made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb. This is more than the mere result of the washing. It is the addition of a new feature. In the blood of the Lamb they made them not only clean but glistering, so that they shine with a dazzling brightness (comp. Heb. ix. 11-14).
The opening of the Seventh Seal.

1 And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was a silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

CHAP. VIII. 1-6.

The opening of the Seventh Seal.

1 omits had 2 followed a 3 stand 4 and there were given unto them 5 should add it unto 6 all the saints 7 omit which came 8 went 9 hath taken 10 add he 11 add the 12 upon 13 thunders, and voices

Contents. The opening verses of this chapter look back not upon chap. vii., but upon chap. vi., and they introduce the second great series of Visions, that of the Trumpets. They thus complete one series and anticipate another. Much difficulty has, indeed, been experienced by commentators in the effort to determine whether we have all the contents of the seventh Seal in the first six verses of this chapter, or whether out of it the seven Trumpets are also developed. In the latter case the seventh Seal will really extend to chap. xv. 4, or rather (for the symmetrical structure of the book will compel us to apply the same principle to the Bowls) to chap. xvi. 21. It is not impossible that it should be so, but it is at least unlikely. Again, if the seven Trumpets develop themselves out of the seventh Seal, we should expect the seven Bowls to develop themselves out of the seventh Trumpet; but at chap. xv. 5 there is no indication of this. Once more, the seventh Trumpet has lightnings and voices and thunders as one of the distinguishing characteristics of its close (chap. xi. 19). The seventh Bowl at its close has the same (comp. xvi. 18-21). It is natural to think that we shall find the seventh Seal ending in the same way; and, if so, it must be at chap. viii. 5, the next verse being then simply one of transition. We conclude, therefore, that the seventh Seal does not embrace the contents of the seven Trumpets. The Trumpets are an independent series of visions; and the seventh Seal, however connected with them, stands alone, completing the series of Seals.

Ver. 1. The opening of the seals is resumed in almost exactly the same strain as before in chap. vii. When the seventh seal was opened there followed a silence in heaven. This silence is generally supposed to relate to the cessation either of the songs of praise spoken of in chap. vii., or of the trials of the Church, which is now to enjoy a blessed period of rest. Both interpretations are unsatisfactory: the first, because, having returned to the subject of chap. vi., we have now nothing to do with chap. vii., and because it is hardly possible to imagine that the Seer would represent the songs of the heavenly host as interrupted even for a moment; the second, because the silence took place in heaven,' and cannot represent the rest of the Church on earth. We suggest that the ‘silence’ alluded to refers only to the cessation of the ‘lightnings and voices and thunders’ of chap. iv. 5. These are the accompaniments of the Almighty’s throne in that aspect of it with which St. John has especially to do (comp. chap. vi. 1). They probably did not pause while the seals were opening. Now they cease; and the meaning is that there is a pause in the judgments of God before a second and higher manifestation of them takes place. This interpretation may find support in what appears to be the meaning of the words half an hour, words which are neither to be literally understood, nor to be regarded as expressing only a short space of time without having been suggested by any definite idea in the writer’s mind. Omitting all reference to the views of others, it seems to us that three considerations may be noted; first, that the word ‘hour,’ though here part of a compound word, can hardly be separated from the ‘hour’ so often spoken of by our Lord—
THE REVELATION.

(Chap. VIII. 1-6)

This is your hour, and the power of darkness; the hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified; Father, save me from this hour, but for this cause came I unto this hour (Luke xxi. 53). John xii. 27; secondly, that the idea embodied in the 'half of anything is that of the thing interrupted or broken, as in three and a half the half of seven; thirdly, that St. John is frequent in the habit of marking a pause before any great step in the further development of the history which he gives is taken. We see this last trait of his mode of thought on different occasions in the Fourth Gospel, and a marked illustration of it is afforded in Rev. xx. Keeping these points in view, the silence of half an hour may well be understood to mean that the hour of judgment is interrupted or broken. In other words, judgment is not yet completed, and we must pause in order to prepare for that unfolding of it which is yet to come.

Ver. 2. The seven angels spoken of stand before God ready to execute His will. It is implied that this is their usual position, and not merely that they are there for the moment.—And there were given unto them seven trumpets. These trumpets are neither those of festal proclamation, nor are they, with some recent commentators, to be regarded as a mere 'manifestation of will.' They are trumpets of war and battle, like those whose sound brought down the walls of Jericho, or those whose blast struck terror into the hosts of Midian (Judg. vii. 22). This is apparent to us in that if in them we have an advance upon the seals. The seals only announce judgment. The trumpets indicate action, which at the same time they arouse and quicken.

Ver. 3. As we are here at a higher stage of judgment than before, a greater amount of preparation is made for it. Hence the second angel appears. Who this, called another angel, was we are not informed. But, when we compare chap. x. 1 (see note), we shall probably conclude that, though not actually our Lord Himself, he is a representation of Him. He is distinctly pointed to as the Mediator of the prayers of the saints, and it is justly possible that the angel thus sent, Christ's place, too, as our High Priest, is by the altar. Commentators have felt much difficulty in determining which of the two altars of the Tabernacle is referred to in the verse before us as 'the altar,' and whether we are to distinguish between it and that afterwards spoken of in the same verse as the golden altar which was before the throne. Upon the whole the probability seems to be that they are the same, the difference of expression depending upon the fact that the fuller description is given when the special purpose of the altar is more particularly alluded to. At ver. 5, where we have again the simple designation 'the altar,' it is hardly possible to think of any other than the golden altar or the altar of incense. Besides this altar then the angel appears standing with a golden censor. Much incense is given him that he should add it unto the prayers of all the saints, so that the prayers and the incense might ascend together, a memorial before God of the trials and sufferings of His people. These prayers are obviously those of the suffering Church; and they are offered, not that she may be prepared to meet the coming judgments, but that she may hasten them (comp. Luke xviii. 7, 8). It is clear that both in this verse, and throughout the passage, we are dealing not with any select company of believers, or with martyrs in the ordinary sense of that term, but with the whole Church of Christ conceived of as being in a martyr state.

Ver. 4. The smoke of the incense, now added to the prayers of the Church, went up before God, reminding the Almighty of the sufferings of His people, and of the answer for which they cried.

Ver. 5. The angel filled the censer with the fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth. For the thought of 'filling' comp. John ii. 7, xix. 29, xxi. 11. For the Nemesis so characteristic of St. John, observe that the sufferings which had been spoken of, endured at the hands of the 'earth,' return in judgment upon the 'earth' (comp. chap. vi. 4–8). The peculiar sense of the verb hath taken is in all probability employed in order to bring out the fact that the censer had never been laid aside by the angel from the moment when he first took it into his hand (comp. on chap. vii. 14). The thunders and voices and lightenings and earthquakes which are next spoken of are the appropriate accompaniments of judgment.

Before passing from these verses, one important question connected with them ought to be noticed, from its bearing on the general character of the Apocalypse. Of what nature are the prayers referred to? They have been sometimes described as prayers for the salvation of the world, at other times as prayers for mercy to such as will receive mercy, for judgment on the impenitent and hardened. Both views are out of keeping with the context. Let us compare the fact, noted in ver. 5, that the angel took the golden censer and filled it with fire of the altar and cast it into the earth, with the two facts mentioned in ver. 3, that the golden censer there spoken of is the one out of which the angel had just caused the smoke to go up with the prayers of all the saints before God, and that the fire is taken from the golden altar upon which these prayers had just been offered, and we shall feel that it is impossible to accept either interpretation. There is no thought of mercy for the world. The prayers are for judgment only. They are prayers that God will vindicate His own cause, and they are answered by Him who, when His people cry to Him, will arise to judgment. 'To a similar effect is the thought of the souls under the altar in chap. vi. 10; and, when judgments are poured out, all the hosts of heaven behold in them the brightest manifestation of God's glory (chap. xix. 1, 2; comp. chap. xi. 17, 18). Yet it would be a grievous mistake to see in passages such as these any desire for personal vengeance on the part of the righteous, any want of that compassion which longs for the salvation of the whole world. They express only that longing for the reign of perfect truth and holiness which is one of the most essential constituents of love, whether in God or man.

Ver. 6. The prayers of the suffering Church have been heard, and the answer is to be given. Hence we are told in this verse that the seven angels prepared themselves to sound. The words are, strictly speaking, a part neither of the seventh nor of the first trumpet. They mark a transition point, preparatory to the latter.
Chapter VIII. 7-13.

The First Four Trumpets.

7 THE first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

8 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;

9 and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter. And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

10 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

11 And the

12 add and the third part of the earth was burnt up, and the trees

13 even they that

14 omit it were

15 torch

16 should be

17 should not shine

18 the

19 in like manner

20 saw one eagle

21 flying in mid-heaven

22 remaining

23 who

24 about

World of the children of God; while the judgments of the Almighty upon Egypt, vindicating His own glory and effecting the deliverance of His people, became types of the manner in which the same great ends shall be effected in every age of the Church's history. But the plagues of Egypt are not followed in their order, nor are they alone resorted to for the imagery of these visions. All the figures of judgment used in the Old Testament are familiar to the mind of the Apocalyptic Seer, and he uses them in the manner which he thinks best adapted to his plan. That of this verse is founded on Ex. ix. 23-25, where we are told that the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous; and the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that
was in the field, both man and beast; and the
hail smote every herb of the field, and brake
every tree of the field. ’ In some respects the
judgment of the first trumpet seems less terrible
than that on Egypt. In other respects the terrors
of the latter are increased. More particularly is
this the case with the mention of ‘blood,’ for the
fire and hail are not mingled ‘with’ blood.
They are mingled ‘in’ blood; that is, the blood is
what we see; but beneath its surface are hail-
stones and coals of fire. It seems unwise to
attempt to connect particular judgments, such as
wars or pestilences or the incursions of barbarians
or the demolition of cities, with the special things
mentioned as objects of terror either in this or the
following visions. By no enumeration could the
Seer have given symbolical expression to all the
variety of ways in which the world has suffered
because it has refused the revelation of Divine
truth offered it in Christ Jesus, and has persecuted
those by whom, at one time in word, at another
in life, that truth has been received and faithfully
proclaimed. Any selection from these would, there-
fore, have been arbitrary, or at least have misled
us as to the relative importance of different
Divine judgments. It is more natural to think
that these objects of terror simply denote judg-
ment in general, and that they are to be interpreted
neither of classes of judgments nor of
individuals of a class.—The effect of the
judgments spoken of is, that the third part of
the earth, that is, of the surface of the earth, and
the third part of the trees, and all green grass,
were burnt up.

Again, as at chap. vii. 1 (see note), we are not
to interpret these words in any specially meta-
aphorical sense. The figure, as belonging to the
third part of Egypt, would indeed prove quite
incongruous if we did, for the trees would neces-
sarily perish when that portion of its surface was
destroyed, and the statement of the next clause,
that only a third part of the trees was burnt up,
would be inept. Neither does it seem as if any
particular meaning were intended by the
‘third part’ mentioned. It was necessary to fix
upon some fractional part in order to leave room
for the heavier judgments that are yet to come,
and the ‘third’ may have been selected for no
more important reason than that the numeral
three plays so large a part in the general structure
of the Apocalypse, or that the instruments of judg-
ment mentioned immediately before had been
three in number.

Vers. 8, 9. These two verses contain the second
trumpet, at the sounding of which what resembled
a great mountain, as it were a great mountain
burning with fire was cast into the sea. There
is nothing in this part of the description to remind
us of the plagues of Egypt, but in Jer. li. 25 we
read of a ‘burnt mountain.’ It may be doubted,
however, whether there is any reference to this,
and the image may be only intended to convey to
us the idea of a judgment frightful to behold, and
terrible in its effects. That we are not to think
of any particular object is evident from the want
of all direct correspondence between the instru-
ment of judgment and its effects. The casting of
a burning mountain into the sea has no tendency
to turn its waters into blood. In the description
of the effect produced we are reminded of the first
plague of Egypt (Ex. vii. 20, 21), as before,
and no doubt for the same reason, it is a third
part of the sea, and of the creatures which were
in the sea and of the ships, that suffers. The
first becomes blood, the second die, the third are
destroyed. The ships appear to be thought of
apart from their crews.

This trumpet is distinguished from the first by its
containing judgments on the sea instead of the
land, but both sea and land can only be regarded
as together making up the surface of the earth.
They are not separately symbolical, the one of
the mass of the Gentile nations, the other of the
Jews.

Vers. 10, 11. These verses record the sounding
of the third trumpet, when the star fell from
heaven a great star burning as a torch. The
star fell upon the third part of the waters of the
divine judgments exclusive of the sea, which had been already
visited under the second trumpet. These waters
are naturally divided into two portions, rivers
and fountains. The one-third part, though not
expressly mentioned, is to be understood in
connection with the latter as well as with the former,
for it appears from ver. 11 that no more than one-
third of all waters was burnt. The very
hurt occurred in communicating to the waters the poisonous
bitter qualities of the star which, in order to
express its extreme bitterness, is called Worm-
wood; while the bitter waters themselves remind
us of the waters of Marah (Ex. xv. 23), and of
those waters in the vision of Ezekiel which were
only made whole by means of the living stream
beheld by the prophet as it issued from the temple
(Ezek. xlvii. 9). They represent the benediction
of that water with which, instead of the water of life,
the world seeks to quench the thirst of its votaries.
Under the third trumpet we first meet with men.
Under the first we had nothing but inanimate
nature; under the second, the animal creation
with creatures that had life; now we read of the
death of many men. As the judgments of God
are sent forth one after another they deepen in
intensity.

Vers. 12. In this verse we have the contents of
the fourth trumpet, which touches the sun, the
moon, and the stars. Yet it must not be sup-
posed that, because these heavenly bodies are
now introduced, we are taken beyond the con-
ception of men in the present world. Sun, moon,
and stars are thought of only in their relation to
earth and its life and comfort, so that when they
are affected it also suffers. The idea of the judg-
ment rests upon the Egyptian plague of darkness.
Any attempt to connect particular objects upon
earth with the heavenly bodies mentioned in the
judgment is vain. As we have already seen under
the previous trumpets, the objects judged are
simply parts of the world in which men dwell,
and it may be noticed that they are substantially
taken up and gathered together as a whole when,
in chap. xiv. 7, the Almighty is described as He
‘that made the heaven and the earth and sea and
fountains of waters.’ It may be further worth
while to remark that the sun and moon and stars
are by no means so seriously affected here as they
were under the sixth seal (chap. vi. 12, 13). There
the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and
the whole moon became as blood; and the stars of the
heaven fell unto the earth. ‘Now only a third
part of their light is taken away. The whole
series of the trumpets is more intense in judg-
ment than that of the seals, but not to such a
degree that the judgment of the fourth trumpet
may not be lighter than that of the sixth seal. At the same time we are not to infer that the first four trumpets necessarily precede the sixth seal, except in thought.

Ver. 13. The first four trumpets are over, and we might have expected to pass, as in the case of the seals, directly and without interruption, to the fifth. But we are dealing with a higher potency of judgment than that which met us under the seals; and at this point therefore, when a transition is to be made from the earthly to the spiritual world, our attention is specially called to the judgments that are to follow. And I saw, and I heard one eagle flying in mid-heaven. The reading of the Authorised Version 'angel' instead of 'eagle' is undoubtedly a mistake of copyists, and the word 'one' ought to be given effect to, as at chaps. ix. 13 and xix. 17. Nor can there be much hesitation in determining why the eagle is thus fixed on as the bird of all others to proclaim woe. Most commentators indeed allow without hesitation that here at least, as so frequently in the Old Testament, the eagle is thought of as the bird of rapine and prey (Deut. xxviii. 49; Jer. xlviii. 40, xlii. 22; Ezek. xvii. 3; Hos. viii. 1; Hab. i. 8; Matt. xiv. 28; comp. also note on Rev. iv. 7). That this eagle flew in 'mid-heaven' is easily explained. It was there that he could best be seen, and thence that his voice could most easily be heard by men. His cry is Woe, woe, woe to them that dwell on the earth, by reason of the remaining voices of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound. By them that dwell on the earth are to be understood the ungodly alone (comp. on chap. iii. 10). The solemn warning has been given, and all is ready for the sounding of the fifth trumpet.

CHAPTER IX. 1-12.

The Fifth Trumpet.

1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace: and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit.

2 And there came up out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

3 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle: and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

1 omit fall 2 out of 3 fallen into 4 and there was given to him 5 omit bottomless 6 well of the abyss 7 went up 8 well 9 And there came forth locusts out of the smoke into 10 said unto 11 such 12 as 13 on 14 And it was given them 15 it 16 in no wise 17 add they 18 fleeth 19 for war 20 add unto 21 omit the 22 rushing to war
THE REVELATION.

10 And they had 18 tails like unto scorpions, and there were 18 stings in their tails: 18 and 19 their power was 18 to hurt men five 11 months. And they had a 18 king over them, 18 which is 18 the angel of the bottomless 19 pit, 21 whose name in the Hebrew tongue 22 is Abaddon, but 22 in the Greek tongue hath his 20 name Apollyon. One 20 woe is past; and, 20 behold, there come 9 two woes more 20 hereafter.

20 have 26 omit there were 96 add in their tails is 49 omit which is 80 omit bottomless 88 in Hebrew 84 and 86 The one 87 omit and

22 omit in their tails 28 They have over them as king 81 abyss 83 his 84 he hath the name 86 yet two woes

is of Christ's (comp. Eph. vi. 12, where Satan and his angels are called 'the world-rulers of this darkness').

Ver. 3. Out of the smoke, we are next told, there came forth locusts into the earth. We need not ask whether these locusts came out of the well, or only out of the smoke after it reached the surface of the earth. The latter is all that the Seer beholds, but it cannot be doubted that he looks upon the plague as demoniacal in its origin. The locusts are compared with the locusts of the earth, and they have given unto them the frightful power of destruction belonging to the latter. The idea of the plague is no doubt taken in the first instance from the Egyptian plague of the same kind (Ex. x. 14, 15); but a similar image of terrible and irresistible destruction is frequently employed by the prophets (Ps. cv. 34; Jer. xlv. 23; and especially Joel ii. 1, 2).

Ver. 4. In one respect, indeed, there is a remarkable distinction between the ravages of the locusts mentioned here and those of the common locusts of the earth. Grass and trees and all green things are what the last lay desolate, but such things these locusts are forbidden to touch. It was said unto them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; and the prohibition may be so given in order to bring out, more strongly than would otherwise be done, the singleness with which their rage is directed against men, as well as the degree to which that rage is increased by want of their ordinary food. Not all men, however, only such men as have not the seal of God on their foreheads, are to be smitten by the plague; and the inference, in its bearing on the interpretation of the sealing in chap. vii., ought not to pass unnoticed. If we confine the sealing to the tribes of Israel, it will be impossible to extend the locust plague beyond that limit; yet no one will contend for such a view.

Ver. 5. While 'men' are thus the object of the locust plague, its violence is even as to them restrained. And it was given them that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months. The killing of men is reserved for a still higher stage of judgment, under the sixth trumpet. In the meantime torment alone is to be inflicted, but that of a kind most painful and acute, as the torment of a scorpion when it striketh a man. The locust is generally said to have no sting (see below). Here, therefore, in order to bring out the terror of the

CONTENTS. The verses before us contain an account of the fifth trumpet.

Ver. 1. What the Seer beheld was not a star 'fall' out of heaven, but a star fallen (as in the Authorised Version). The difference is important, for we are thus led to think not of any punishment in which befell the star, but of its moral and religious condition at the time when it was permitted to infect the plague to be immediately described. The mention of a 'star' leads to the thought of a powerful, potent body, and, as what is said of it can hardly be separated from the statement of chap. xii. 7-9, there is little doubt that the star represents Satan,—there his expulsion from heaven, here his condition after he is expelled. This conclusion is confirmed by the fact that it is everywhere where the manner of St. John to present evil as the direct counterpart of good. Christ is the 'Morning Star' (chap. xxii. 16); Satan is a 'star fallen.' The words used suggest also the important consideration that, in the view of the apostle, Satan was not originally evil. He is a spirit fallen 'out of heaven,' not merely 'from heaven,' as if to describe the greatness of his fall, but 'out of heaven,' that abode of purify and bliss to which he had formerly belonged. Once he was like other happy spirits there: he is now fallen into the earth, the abode of sin and trouble.

That which was given him was the key of the well of the abyss. The word 'pit' in both the Authorised and Revised Versions fails to convey the proper meaning of the original. It is a 'well' that is spoken of: and, though the expression may seem strange, it is proper to retain it, both because what men lock is not a pit but the long shaft of a well, which to this day in the East is often covered at the mouth and locked, and because we seem to have here one of the remarkable contrasts so characteristic of St. John.—that between a fountain and a 'well.' Truth emanates from a fountain. Jesus Himself is the true 'fountain of Jacob' (John iv. 6, 14). Only to the eye which does not yet see is that fountain a 'well' (John iv. 12).—The shaft of the well goes down into the 'abyss,' the abode of Satan (chaps. xi. 7, xviiii. 8, xx. 1, 3).

Ver. 2. No sooner was the well opened than there went up a smoke out of the well as the smoke of a great furnace. The smoke must be thought of as so thick and black that the sun was shrouded from view and the whole air darkened. It is hardly necessary to remind the reader that darkness is the note of Satan's kingdom as light
plague, it has the sting of the scorpion assigned to it (comp. Deut. viii. 15; Ezek. ii. 6).—The time during which the torment is to be inflicted is 'five months,' and the explanation most commonly given is, that five months are the period of the year during which locusts commit their ravages. The explanation is improbable, because—(1) There is no sufficient proof that five months is really the duration of a locust-plague. So (2) the plague is furtive, short and swift; (3) It is out of keeping with the style of the Apocalypse to give literal periods of time; (3) On the supposition that five months are the ordinary duration of a locust-plague, the ravages here referred to are committed during the whole time to which the plague naturally belongs; whereas the period of five months is named for the sake of showing that the plague is checked. We must, therefore, apply the same principle of interpretation as in chap. vii. 1. Five is the half of ten; it denotes a broken, imperfect, limited, shortened time. The type of the period spoken of may perhaps be found in the Deluge, which lasted for five months. 

Ver. 6. So terrible is the plague that men shall desire to die—a point reached under the sixth seal, but now under the fifth trumpet, the usual climax of the Apocalypse. Before passing on it may be well to notice the remarkable reference to the book of Job in these verses. There, as here in ver. 5, Satan was restrained when the patriarch was delivered into his hands (Job ii. 6). There, as here, the smitten one longed to die (Job iii. 11, 17). This is considered as conclusive upon the point that Job is in the Apostle's eye; and, if so, nothing more is needed to convince us that the locust-plague is demonical not earthly in its origin.

Verse 7. The locusts are now more particularly described, and the description consists of three parts; the first general, the second special, the third the locust king.

(1) The general description. Their shapes are like horses running in war. The same comparison is found in Joel ii. 4; and the likeness of the locust to a horse is so marked that the insect is named in German Hexenfuss, and in Italian Cursalia (Cheval).

(2) The special description in seven particulars. 1. On their heads were, as it were, crowns like unto gold—not crowns but 'as' crowns, so that any yellow brilliancy about the head of the insect is a sufficient foundation for the figure. The crowns are emblems of victory (chap. vi. 2), and the locusts are presented as a conquering host. 2. Their faces were as faces of men, again not actually human faces, but faces suggesting the likeness, which the face of the locust is said to do. It is a question whether the word 'men' is to be understood in the general sense of human beings, or (in contrast with women) of the male sex only. Chap. iv. 7 seems to determine in favour of the latter. Boldness and strength, perhaps even severity and fierceness, are suggested by the figure. 3. And they had hair as hair of women. There is said to be an Arabic proverb comparing the antecedence of locusts to the hair of girls. If so, we have a sufficient foundation for this feature of the comparison. What the idea may be it is not easy to say. But softness and effeminacy, with their attendant licentiousness, are probably the point in view.—4. And their teeth were as teeth of lions. This feature, whether drawn from actual observation of the insect or not, is sufficiently accounted for by Joel i. 6. And they had breastplates as it were breastplates of iron—a feature taken from the thought of the plate which forms the thorax of the locust, and which resembles the plates of a horse clad in ancient armour when prepared for war. 5. And the sound of their wings, etc. It is said that the locusts in their flight make a fearful noise (Smith's Dict. of Bible, ii. 132).—7. And they have tails like unto scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men five months. There is general agreement that, in this reading at least, comparison with the insect as it exists in nature fails; although, if the insect be the Acriadium lineata, and if the plate in Smith's Bible Dict. (vol. ii. p. 129) is to be trusted, there is a distinct sting in the tail. In such a case the sting now spoken of is only magnified, and declared to be like a scorpion, in order to bring out its destructive power.

(3) Their king. Unlike the insect-locusts of whom it is expressly noted in Prov. xxx. 27 that 'they have no king,' these locusts have a king, the head of their kingdom (Matt. xii. 26). They have over them as king the angel of the abyss. This 'angel' is the expression of the abyss, in whom all its evil influences are concentrated. In other words he is Satan. It is no serious objection to this that we have found the 'star' to be Satan (ver. 1). We are not told that the king spoken of issued out of the abyss, and we must not think of the locusts either as his hosts or as those of the 'star.'—The name of the king is in Hebrew Abaddon. The word is used for the place of perdition in Job xxvi. 5, xxvii. 22, Ps. lxxviii. 12, Prov. xv. 11, but its first meaning seems to be perdition itself. Here, however, the idea of perdition is personified; and hence the mention of Apollyon, where the Greek term for perdition is so changed as to make it also a personification of the abstract idea. The character of the king and of his host appears in the name borne by the former. Their aim is not to save, but to destroy.

Before passing from this vision we have still to ask more particularly as to its meaning. All application to the host of the Mahomedans may be at once dismissed. The woe falls upon the whole world, not merely upon a part of it, and it is not permitted to afflict the redeemed Church. At the same time it cannot find its fulfilment in mere war, or in the calamities which war brings. The woe is obviously spiritual. It issues from the abyss of hell; the smoke of it darkens the air; the torment which accompanies it is not one that brings death but that makes the soul weary of life. These circumstances point to a great outburst of spiritual evil which shall aggravate the sorrows of the world, make it learn how bitter is the bondage of Satan, and teach it to feel, even in the midst of enjoyment, that it was better to die than to live.

Ver. 12. We are now at a higher stage of judgment than in the seals. More solemnity therefore befits the occasion. At the close of the fifth seal we passed directly to the sixth; not so now. The Seer interposes with the warning. The one woe is passed; behold, there come yet two woes hereafter.
CHAPTER IX. 13-21.

The Sixth Trumpet.

13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from heaven, saying to the sixth angel who had kept the trumpet, Loose the four angels which were bound in the great river Euphrates.

14 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and of brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and they had heads, and with them they do hurt. And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

1 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from heaven, saying to the sixth angel who had kept the trumpet, Loose the four angels which were bound in the great river Euphrates.

2 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and of brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and they had heads, and with them they do hurt. And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.
mentioned; but this arises from the fact that four
is the number of the world, the whole of which is
to be affected by the plague. The name of the
river is used symbolically, and the thoughts upon
which the symbol rests may be traced without
difficulty. The Euphrates was the boundary line
of Israel on the North-East. When the covenant
was first made with Abram, the promise of the
Lord to the patriarch was, ' Unto thy seed have I
given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the
great river, the river Euphrates' (Gen. xv. 18).
This promise was subsequently repeated (Deut.
i. 19; Josh. i. 4), and in the days of David and
Solomon it appears to have been fulfilled (2 Sam.
ixii. 3–8; 1 Kings iv. 2; 2 Chron. ix. 26).
The Euphrates thus formed the natural defence
of God's chosen people against the terrible armies
of Assyria on the other side. But for the same
reason it became also, especially when swollen by
those floods to which it is periodically subject, a
fit emblem of the judgments inflicted by the
Almighty upon Israel by means of Assyria and
Babylon. Because 'refused the waters of Shiloah so
go softly,' the great river was brought up as it were in flood to overflow
with a deep stream the whole land of Immanuel
(Isa. viii. 5–8). To the prophets the Euphrates thus
became the symbol of all that was most
disastrous in the judgments of the Almighty, and
in this sense, therefore, we are here to understand
the mention made of it. With the literal river we
have no more to do than in so far as it supersedes the foundation of the figure. In its
essential meaning it has no closer connection with the East than with the West or North or South.
The plague may issue from any of these quarters
as well as that supposed to be specially referred to.
It is interesting to notice the progress from the
fifth trumpet plague to that before us. In
Judg. vi. 5 the Midianite invaders of Palestine are compared to locusts, 'they came as locusts' (not 'grasshoppers,' as i.A. V.) 'for multitude,' and they 'left no sustenance for Israel, neither
sheep, nor ox, nor ass' (ver. 4), but they left the people in the land. Now we have reached a
further stage in the process of God's judg-
ments. We are at the time of the cruel and murderous
invasions of Assyria and Babylon, when not only sustenance was destroyed but men were killed
(Lam. ii. 21).
Ver. 15. A new circumstance connected with
the four angels is added in this verse. They had
not only been bound: they had been kept ready
for an appointed moment. They had been prepared unto the hour and day and month and
year. The translation of these last words in the
Authorised Version conveys an altogether false
idea of their meaning, suggesting as it does that
we are to put together the four periods mentioned,
and to regard the sum as indicating the length of
time during which either the preparation had been
going on, or the plague was to continue. It is to
be observed, however, that the words 'unto' and
'the' are not repeated before 'day and month and
year.' Add to this the fact, already illustrated in the writings of St. John (chap. v. 12; John xiv. 6), that when we have a series of nouns grouped together in this way the emphasis lies
upon the first, the others only filling up the thought, and we shall be satisfied that we are not
to combine into one these portions of time. The
meaning is that the angels are prepared 'unto the
hour' appointed by God, and that this hour shall
fall in its appointed day and month and year.
The commission given to the angels is to kill the
third part of men. The point chiefly to be noticed is the climax from a one-fourth part under
the seals to a one-third part here. In the climax marking the separate members of the trumpets the progress is from the 'tormenting' in the fifth trumpet to the 'killing' in the sixth.
Vers. 16, 17. A further part of the vision is unfolded, in which we are introduced to horsemen, as
if we were already familiar with them, although
nothing had been said of them before. The number of the horsemen was so great that they
could not be counted: St. John only heard the
number of them. A fuller description both of the
horses and of their riders follows. The latter,
ot the former, had breastplates of fire, and of
hyacinth stone, and of brimstone. The hyacinth
stone is of a dull dark-blue colour resembling that
produced by flaming brimstone; and thus the
colours of the breastplates are those of the things
that in the next words issue out of the mouths of
the horses. The breastplates also are more than
mere weapons of defence. With the brimstone
blueness of their colour they inspire the beholder
with terror. It is possible that the colours are
only the reflexion, on the breastplates of the
riders, of the 'fire and smoke and brimstone'
that come forth from the horses' mouths. This
idea is in keeping with the general strain of the
passage, which seems to attach all the terror to
the horses and to keep the horsemen in the background; but there is no direct evidence in its
support, and it is unnecessary to resort to it.
Having spoken of the riders the description turns
to the horses. To the Jew the horse, even con-
sidered by itself, was an object of terror, not of
admiration. It was connected only with war, a
living and swift weapon of destruction. As, how-
ever, the locusts of the fifth trumpet were more
terrible than the locusts of the earth, so the horses
of the sixth have their terror enhanced by the
addition of new features not found in the horses
of this world. Their heads were as the heads of
lions (comp. on chap. iv. 7).—And out of their
mouths went forth fire and smoke and brim-
stone; that is, all the three elements of woe issue
from the mouth of each horse of the whole host,—
a frightful substitute for foam.
Ver. 18. Before the description of the horses is
continued, the effect of the three plagues that
issue from their mouths is noticed. By these
three plagues was the third part of men killed,
—the third part, that is, of men over the whole
earth, and whatever the division of the human race
to which they belonged.
Ver. 19. The description of the horses is re-
sumed, for the purpose of bringing out another
terrible feature of their destructive power. That
power is also in their tails, for their tails are
like unto serpents, having heads, and with
them they do hurt. Three characteristics of the
tails are specially mentioned; first, they are 'like
unto serpents,' long, smooth, subtle, clasping
their victim in an embrace from which he cannot
escape; secondly, they 'have heads' at the ex-
tremity farthest from the body; where the power
of an ordinary tail ceases these tails receive in-
stantaneous intensity of power, the glittering eye,
the poison fang; thirdly, with them, that is, with the
heads, they 'do hurt.' The tail of a horse is for
its own protection: these tails devastate. Yet they are not so fatal as the mouths. The former 'hurt,' the latter 'kill.'

Vers. 20, 21. The vision is over, but the guilt of the world which was now under judgment has to be set forth with greater fulness, in order that we may better understand the evil of sin and the justness of the judgments that overtake it. And the rest of men which were not killed in these plagues repented not. 'Men' here are obviously the ungodly, the same as those of ver. 4, or as those spoken of in chap. viii. 13, in the words 'they that dwell on the earth.' By the works of their hands it is generally agreed that we are to understand not their course of life but, the idols mentioned immediately afterwards. As a natural consequence of not repenting of their idol-worship these men also repented not of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts. Four sins are mentioned, implying universality, and leading our thoughts to both, Jew and Gentile. Nor does even the mention of 'idols' entitle us to confine the obstinate hardness of heart spoken of to the heathen. Idolatry is chargeable against all the enemies of God, whether Jew or Gentile (comp. 1 John iv. 21). Again we see that the 'sealed,' upon whom this plague certainly does not fall, must belong to both these divisions of mankind.

We may here pause for a moment to make one or two general remarks upon the sixth trumpet. In general characteristics it greatly resembles the fifth, but the climax of the Apocalypse may be easily marked in the progress from the latter to the former. Not only are the horses of the sixth trumpet more powerful than the locusts of the fifth, but the terribleness of the one is much greater than that of the other. To quote the words of an old commentator (Bishop Forbes of Aberdeen), 'the horses are said to have heads of lions to denote open rage and professed cruelty, whereas the locusts covered their lions' teeth with faces of men and hair of women.' Their destructive energy too is more fatal, for the power of the locusts 'to hurt' (ver. 10) becomes in them a 'power to kill.' In other respects no distinction need be drawn between the two trumpets. Special forms of judgment visiting the earth at different periods of its history can hardly with propriety be sought in them. The judgments which they represent are peculiar to no people or age. They are rather those judgments of a general kind which always have followed, and always will follow, sin. These spring in every form from the same causes, and are designed to promote the same ends. The misery with which earth is filled, whether from war or pestilence or famine, whether showing itself in poverty or crime or death, is to be traced to one and the same root,—that evil of the human heart which leads men to reject the revelation of the love of Him who willeth not that any of His creatures should perish, who would stanch all their wounds and heal all their sores. Upon this we are to fix our thoughts, not only under the last two, but under all the trumpets, noting only further, as we do so, that the longer mercy is despised the greater is the judgment which follows, and that the later messengers of Divine wrath are more dreadful than the earlier.

CHAPTER X. I-11.
First Consolatory Vision.

I

AND I saw another mighty\(^1\) angel \(^2\) come\(^3\) down from \(^4\) heaven, clothed with a 'cloud: and a' rainbow was \(^5\) upon his head, and his face \(^6\) was as it were \(^7\) the sun, and his

feet as pillars of fire: and he had in his hand a 'little book \(^6\) of Ezech. ii. 9.

open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot \(^7\)
on \(^8\) the earth, and cried \(^9\) with a loud \(^10\) voice, as when \(^11\) a 'lion 

roareth: and when he had \(^11\) cried, seven \(^12\) thunders uttered

their voices. And when the seven thunders had \(^11\) uttered their voices, I was about to \(^\prime\) write: and I heard a voice from \(^14\) heaven saying unto me,\(^15\) 'Seal up those \(^16\) things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. And the angel which I saw stand \(^17\) upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand \(^18\) to heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and

\(^1\) strong \(^2\) coming \(^3\) out of \(^4\) the \(^5\) omit it were

\(^6\) book-roll \(^7\) omit foot \(^8\) upon \(^9\) and he cried \(^10\) great

\(^11\) omit when \(^12\) omit had \(^13\) the seven \(^14\) out of \(^15\) omit unto me

\(^16\) the \(^17\) standing \(^18\) right hand
the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be no more time no longer: but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

CONTENTS. It can hardly be doubted that the whole of chap. x. and the first part of chap. xi. (vers. 1-13) are episodical, after the same manner and with the same purpose as chap. vii. The sixth Trumpet, or the second Woe, seems obviously to close at chap. ix. 21; the two visions contained in the passage upon which we enter are of a tone entirely distinct from that of a Woe; and the seventh Trumpet only begins at chap. xi. 14. These considerations are sufficient to determine the character of the visions before us. It has indeed been urged that the words of chap. xi. 14 are conclusive against this view, and that they indicate the continuation of the second Woe to that point. The insertion of these words, however, in the place where we find them may be explained without our so entirely mistaking the nature of the passage between chaps. x. 1 and xi. 13 as to suppose that it forms the conclusion of a Woe. The word 'quickly' is the emphatic word in chap. xi. 14, denoting as it does that climax in judgment which is to be made known under the seventh Trumpet. But to have introduced it at chap. ix. 21 would have led to the impression that the third Woe was immediately to follow. It was necessary therefore to postpone the statement that the second Woe was past and the third at hand, until the moment when the latter was to be introduced. Thus the two consolatory visions of chaps. x. 1-21 xi. 13 are interposed between the end of the second Woe and the declaration that the third is about to begin.

Ver. 1. A strong angel is seen coming down out of heaven who is said to be another. Already, at chap. v. 2, we have met with a strong angel, who is also introduced in connection with the book-roll spoken of in that chapter. It is reasonable to think, therefore, that this mention of another has reference to that one, and not to the many angels of whom we have elsewhere read. What we are to think of this angel will be best considered after we have noticed the things said concerning him. (1) He comes out of heaven, where is the throne of God. (2) He is clothed with a cloud. The expression of a cloud, or the cloud, or clouds, is met with seven times in the Apocalypse, and in five of these it is distinctly connected with the Son of man as He comes to judgment. In the sixth, chap. xi. 12, we shall see that it must also be the investiture of the Son of man. The cloud here must have a similar meaning.—(3) And the rainbow was upon his head. The article does not lead us to the well-known ordinary rainbow, or to the rainbow of Gen. ix. 13, but to that already mentioned at chap. iv. 3.—(4) And his face was as the sun. These words take us back to chap. i. 16, and again bring the sun before us in a light similar to that in which it is presented there,—as the source of burning, scorching heat.—(5) And his feet as pillars of fire. These words carry us to chap. i. 15, and the fire is that of judgment (comp. chap. xx. 9).—(6) And he had in his hand a little book-roll open. It appears from ver. 5 that the book must be in the left hand of the angel, and an important distinction is thus drawn between it and the roll of chap. v. The latter was on the hand, and that hand the right; the former is in the hand, and that hand the left. The contents of the two rolls,
therefore, cannot be exactly the same, although the fact that the word employed in the original for the 'roll' is mentioned is a distinctive of that which meets us at chap. v. 1, combined with the whole contents of the present passage, is sufficient to show us that the two rolls are of the same general character. The roll now before us is 'little' in comparison with the larger one previously spoken of, and it is 'open' while the latter was 'sealed.' The interpretation of the passage is affected by all these circumstances. Vers. 2, 3. The action of the angel is next described. First, he set his right foot upon the sea and his left upon the earth, thus asserting his supremacy over the whole world; and then he cried with a great voice as a loud roar; thus intimating that something terrible was about to be revealed. Immediately thereafter the seven thunders uttered their voices. The analogy of the 'seven churches,' 'seven spirits of God,' etc., leads directly to the conclusion that these thunders are seven, not because St. John at the moment heard seven, but because they represent the thunder of God in its completeness and intensity. Further three questions must still be answered in connection with these verses. First, as to the personality of the angel. On the one hand, it appears to be impossible to adopt the idea of many, that this angel is the Lord; for, throughout the Apocalypse, angels are everywhere distinguished from the Divine Beings, and in chap. v. the 'strong angel' spoken of is certainly neither the Father nor the Son. On the other hand, it appears equally impossible to think that we have before us simply a created angel. The mention of 'the cloud,' of 'the rainbow,' of the 'face as the sun,' of the 'feet as pillars of fire,' and of the 'little book-roll in the hand,' leads us to something more. These are the characteristics of the Divine Lord Himself. The explanation is to be sought in what has been already more than once remarked, that in the Apocalypse the action of any person or thing is said to be effected by means of this here. We have here, therefore, neither the Lord, nor a mere creature executing His will, but a representation of His action. The angel by whom such representation is effected has necessarily the attributes of the Being whose action he embodies.—Secondly, the light in which the angel appears is that of judgment, not of mercy and judgment combined. The 'rainbow' is indeed the symbol of mercy, but everything else mentioned speaks of judgment. Mercy is alluded to simply because the Lord is gracious, and because it would convey an imperfect and false idea of His character were we to think of Him only as a judge. It is the Lord of love who judges. Thirdly, we have to ask as to the contents of the 'little book-roll.' These we have already seen cannot be the same as those of the larger book-roll of chap v. It is more difficult to determine what they are. Upon this point the most various opinions have been entertained. We cannot examine them, and must be content to note one or two particulars which may assist in guiding us to a satisfactory conclusion. (1) It is a very natural characteristic of the Apocalypse that it generally anticipates beforehand in some brief statement what is afterwards to be unfolded at greater length. We may be sure that the judgments contained in the little roll will meet us again in subsequent visions of this book. (2) The contents have an important relation to that work of prophesying or witnessing which is to distinguish the true people of God at the stage of their progress which they have now reached. The witnessing and not merely the suffering Church is to be comforted. (3) We have thus a point of connection with the consolatory vision of the two witnesses in chap. xi., and that too in a manner precisely analogous to the relation which exists between the two consolatory visions of chap. vii.; there, suffering in the first followed by heavenly bliss in the second; here, action in the first followed by going up to heaven in the cloud (chap. xi. 12). But the vision of the two witnesses, as we shall yet see, deals with the preservation of a faithful remnant in the midst of a professing but faithless Church which is cast out. The natural conclusion is, that the vision before us is also occupied with the same thought; (4) The effect produced upon the Seer by his action with the little roll is worthy of notice. When he eats the book the first taste of it is sweet: he has heard glad tidings and is filled with joy. When he has eaten the book, when he has had further experience of its contents, it is bitter. The bright dawn becomes clouded; joy gives way to disappointment and sorrow: (5) The whole symbolism is taken from Ezek. ii., and it is reasonable to suppose that the facts but the aim and spirit of that chapter were present to the Apostle's mind. Of the latter, however, there can be no doubt. The language of the fourth and fifth verses of the chapter is unmistakable. 'And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them. For thou art not sent unto a people of a strange speech and of an hard language, but unto the house of Israel.' (6) We shall find, as we proceed, that a large part of the Book of Revelation, its most sublime, if at the same time its darkest and most mysterious, part is occupied with the judgments of God upon a worldly and apostate Church. Putting all these circumstances together, it seems most natural to suppose that the contents of the 'little book-roll' are occupied with the dealings of the Lord not so much towards the world as towards His Church in her connection with the world, when she yields to the temptations which the world presents to her, and when, from having been a pure virgin faithful to Him to whom she is espoused, she becomes a harlot. Thus also perhaps may we explain the epithet 'little' applied to this book-roll in contrast with that of chap. v. It is 'little,' not as being less important, but as relating more immediately to the fortunes of Christ's 'little flock.'
THE REVELATION.

Pelled and light in its full brightness shines around them (comp. John ii. 22, xli. 16). Vers. 5–7. Intimation is now made that though the thunders are sealed the judgments which they threatened will not be long delayed, and the solemn manner of making it corresponds to the great issues that are to come. The angel whom the seer saw standing upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his right hand to heaven, and swore by the great Creator of the universe that there should be delay no longer. The ‘delay’ here spoken of is the space of time referred to in Matt. xxiv. 22, where it is said that the days shall be shortened for the elect’s sake. The coming of the end in view is next defined alike as to its time and its results. Its time shall be in the sounding of the seventh trumpet; its results shall be seen in the completing of the mystery of God, that is, in the completing of all His purposes with regard to His Church on earth. According to the good tidings which he declared. The word ‘good tidings’ is remarkable. Most interpreters will admit that it does not imply that the tidings were only of mercy. In reality the whole context shows that they were tidings of judgment upon the enemies of God. Yet even these were ‘good tidings,’ for they told that ‘the righteous Lord loveth righteousness,’ and that for the welfare of His creatures He would yet ‘take His seat on His holy throne to reign.’ It will be well to remember this in the interpretation of a more difficult passage to follow.

8. The Seer is commanded to take the open book-roll in the hand of the angel.

Ver. 9. The command is obeyed, and the further action given, Take it, and eat it up. For a similar action comp. Ezek. iii. 1. The eating of the roll can hardly be anything else than a symbol of the complete assimilation of its contents.

Ver. 10. The effect of eating the roll is next described. It was, says the Seer, in my mouth sweeter than honey, and when I had eaten it my belly was made bitter. The double character of this effect was not produced by different parts of the contents of the book, as if these were partly sweet partly bitter, partly of joyful parts of sorrowful tidings. The contents of the book are one; are all, like those of the larger book-roll, judgment, and all ‘mourning and lamentations and woe.’ For the same reason also the double effect cannot be ascribed to the double character of the Seer, the sweetness being felt by him as a prophet, the bitterness as a man. He is a prophet throughout, and his human feelings have been so identified with those of his Lord that whatever is the Lord’s pleasure is also his. Equally impossible is it to think that the bitterness was due to the thought of those persecutions which he and other faithful witnesses would have to endure in making known their message to the world. Believers feel that while they suffer they are walking in the steps of their great Master, and that they are suffering with Him. In the midst of suffering they learn to glory in His cross, and to welcome it as a gift of the Divine love (comp. Phil. i. 29; 1 Pet. iv. 13). The bitterness proceeds from the nature of the tidings. The little book-roll dealt with the fortunes of the Church, not of the world; and the fact that it did so made the first taste of it sweet. To learn that the Lord had chosen out of the nations a people for His name; that He loved the Church, and gave Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the Word, that He might present the Church to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish;—such tidings could not fail to be sweet. But then to learn still further that that Church would forget her Lord, yield to the seductions of the world, and become lukewarm in the service of One who had bought her with His own precious blood, was bitter. Yet these were the contents of the book now eaten by the Seer. No wonder, therefore, that though sweet, as honey in his mouth the little book made his belly bitter.

Ver. 11. The little book-roll has been eaten; and, in the midst of the judgments which it foretold, it has brought consolation to the Seer, for the only true consolation of the righteous is that all evil, whether in the world or in the Church, shall be put down, and that nothing but ‘righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost’ shall reign. Animated by this prospect he is ready to hear that he has still a work to do. He must prophesy again before many peoples and nations and tongues and kings. The intimation, and they say unto me, with which these words are introduced, may help us to understand the nature of the prophesying referred to, for these words are hardly equivalent to the formula ‘It is said.’ They may be much more naturally referred to the seven thunders which had already spoken at ver. 3. A voice of thunder, however, is a voice of judgment, and the ‘prophesying’ now spoken must be also judgment. One further remark may be made. The verb ‘to prophesy’ is used only twice in the Apocalypse, here and of the two witnesses at chap. xi. 3. In the latter case it cannot be confined to the proclamation of the visions of this book, and neither in like manner can it now be so. When, therefore, the Seer is told that he must ‘prophesy,’ the meaning does not appear to be that he must declare the contents of the little book to an audience the various parts of which are immediately enumerated. The meaning rather is that he must go on uttering to the world his general testimony to the truth of God, and so preparing the world for its self-chosen fate. In other words, the Seer in this verse is less the apocalyptic revealer than the minister of Divine truth in general, the type and pattern of all the preaching of the New Testament Dispensation.
CHAPTER XI. 1-14.

Second Consolatory Vision.

1 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and an half; and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt upon the earth. And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from heaven entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the

1 omit and the angel stood
5 hath been
9 and one said
13 omit power
15 shall desire
19 omit bottomless
23 omit shall
27 omit shall
31 omit shall
35 omit shall
37 a spirit of life out of

8 And
13 the heaven
14 add they
18 shall desire
22 with
26 body
30 omit shall
34 add they
38 And from among the peoples
41 the
Chap. XI. 1-14.] THE REVELATION.

And the third woe cometh quickly.

... and by the analogy of chap. viii., to be for preservation, not, as sometimes imagined, for destruction.

Ver. 2. While it shall be thus with the innermost part of the temple-buildings, it shall be otherwise with the rest. The court which is about the temple includes every part of the precincts not belonging to the Holy and Most Holy place; and this fact, together with the instruction 'cast it out,' shows that it symbolises not the world but the false members of the Church, the branches of the vine that bear no fruit. These parts of the building are not to be measured; they are to be 'cast out.' The expression is important. It is that of John ix. 34, 35, and implies exclusion from the community of God's people. The faithless members of the Church, those who have yielded to the power of the world, have been given over to the nations, the nations of chap. x. 11, of chap. xx. 3. (For contrast see chap. ii. 26.)—Of these nations it is further said, the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. In the words 'the holy city' the first allusion is to Jerusalem, but not in a material sense, as if the meaning were that the literal city should be trodden down under the feet of hostile armies. The sense, whatever it be, is metaphorical, as in the case of the 'temple,' the 'altar,' and the 'court.' Jerusalem was the place which God had originally designed to be the residence of His people. In idea and in name it was still that place, but it had been profaned by too many of its citizens. At the time when our Lord knew it, and when its condition became to St. John the mould of the future, it contained both true and false members of the Jewish Church, those who were fulfilling the great end of the economy under which they lived and those who were proving themselves unworthy of their glorious destiny. The counterpart of this in after times is the outward Christian Church, containing both good and bad members. Glorious things may be said of this city of God; but that with which we have now to do is the entrance of a heathen, of a false, element into her, by means of which the 'tions' tread her under foot (comp. Ps. lxxix. 1). They do this for forty and two months. The period thus alluded to meets us again in chap. xiii. 5, where it is said of the beast that 'power was given unto him to continue 40 and 2 months.' Again we read of '1260 days' (= 42 months of 30 days each) in chap. xi. 3, where the two witnesses prophesy 1260 days, and in chap. xii. 6, where the woman is nourished in the wilderness 1260 days. And once more, in chap. xii. 14 we read of the woman's being nourished for 'a time and times and half a time.' The comparison of the two latter passages proves that the time and times and half a time are equivalent to 1260 days; and we can thus have no doubt left upon our minds that all the three periods are

CONTENTS. The contents of this chapter will be better understood as we proceed with the exposition. In the meantime it is enough to say that we have a second consolatory vision, which stands to that of chap. x. in much the same relation as does the vision of the palm-bearing multitude in chap. vii. to the sealing there.

Ver. 1. A reed was given to the Seer.—it is not said by whom, and we are left to infer, as at chaps. x. 4, 8, 11, that it was by one in heaven. The word 'my' in ver. 3 may lead us to the thought of the Lord Himself. The reed is for measuring, but it is stronger than a common reed, and is thus more able to effect its purpose: it is like unto a rod. May it not even be a rod of judgment (comp. 1 Cor. iv. 21)? Omitting for the present the import of the measuring, we notice only that the idea is taken from Ezek. xi. 3; Zech. ii. 2. Three things are to be measured. First, the temple of God, meaning not the whole temple-buildings, but the Holy and Most Holy place. Secondly, the altar. This altar, considering where it stands, can only be that of incense, not the brazen altar transferred to another than its own natural position. Upon this altar the prayers of God's persecuted saints were laid (chap. viii. 3), and it is with the persecuted saints that we have here to do (ver. 7). Thirdly, they that worship therein, that is, in the innermost sanctuary of the temple; while to 'worship' is the expression of highest adoration.

The last clause alone is a sufficient proof that the three things to be measured are not to be understood literally. If those who worship in the temple be thus measured with a reed? But, if one of three objects mentioned in the same sentence and in the same way be figurative, the obvious inference is that the other two must be looked at in a similar light. By the 'temple,' therefore, it is impossible to understand the literal temple in Jerusalem supposed to be as yet undestroyed. Even although we knew, on other and independent grounds, that the overthrow of the city by the Romans had not yet taken place, it would be entirely out of keeping with the Seer's method of conception to suppose that he refers to the temple on Mount Moriah. His temple imagery is always drawn not from that building but from the Tabernacle first erected in the wilderness. It is the shrine of the latter not of the former that he has in view, and the word used in the original, however its rendering in English may suggest such associations to us, has no necessary connection with the Temple of Solomon. For a clear proof that this is St. John's mode of viewing the 'Nasar' (i.e. the shrine, the 'temple' here in question) see the note on ver. 19.

As to the import of the measuring there can be little doubt. It is determined, by the contrast of ver. 2, by the measuring of chap. xxi. 15, 16,
the same. This designation of time is taken from Dan. vii. 25 (comp. also Dan. xii. 7); and the different numbers must be understood symbolically. The main question is, What do they symbolize? First of all it is obvious that 3½ must be regarded as the half of 7; and 7 is indeed expressly presented to us in this light in Dan. ix. 27 where it is said, 'and he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblations to cease.' The middle of the week is the half of 7, or 3½. Hence the general meaning may be learned with an approach to certainty. Seven is the number of the covenant with its fulness of peace and joy and glory; three as a half is that number broken, incomplete, looking forward to something else. It symbolizes, therefore, a period of persecution and sorrow, when the covenant seems to be broken, and the promise to fail; when instead of joy there is tribulation, instead of the crown the cross. All the three numbers have essentially the same mystic meaning.

Not only, however, is this the case; the considerations now adduced lead to the further conclusion that the three periods referred to denote not three periods of the same length but the same period, and that the change of nomenclature is due to the difference of aspect under which the period is viewed. When 'months' are spoken of, the prominent idea seems to be that of the rule of evil, when 'days' that of the suffering of the good. Thus it will be found that chaps. xi. 2 and xii. 5 on the one hand, and chaps. xi. 3 and xii. 6 on the other, go together. The 'times' or years of chap. xi. 6 lead us rather to the thought of God's preserving care of His Church while evil rules and good suffers. The space of 40 and 2 months is thus identical with that of 1260 days, and both express the whole time of the Church's militant and suffering condition in the world, the whole time between the First and Second Coming of the Lord. They are the latter half of the week of the prophet Daniel, the 'middle' of the week being the point from which the calculation runs.

Ver. 3. The voice is continued, and the use of the word my connected with the two witnesses seems to indicate that it is the Lord who speaks, though in all probability by means of the 'strong angel' mentioned in chap. x. 1. The witnesses receive both the words of their prophecy and the power to utter them. The duty of 'prophesying' laid upon them is that of proclaiming the truth of God for the instruction or warning of men; while the clothing with sackcloth, a rough cloth of goats' or of camels' hair, reminds us of Elijah and the Baptist (2 Kings i. 8; Matt. iii. 4), and indicates the sufferings which the witnesses shall endure in delivering their message (2 Kings xix. 1; Ps. xxx. 11; Isa. xxii. 12).

Ver. 4. First, the witnesses are described as the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the Lord of the earth. The figure is taken from Zech. iv., with this difference, that there we have only one candlestick with an olive tree on either side of it, while here we have two candlesticks as well as two olive trees. Clear indication is thus given that, whoever the two 'witnesses' may be, each combines in himself the functions both of the olive tree and of the candlestick, and that they are not, the one, one of these objects, and the other, the other. They stand 'before the Lord of the earth,' 'before the universal Ruler and King. They too, therefore, must be sought in something universal. Their 'standing before the Lord' indicates their acceptance in His sight and their readiness to act for Him (comp. vii. 5; Luke xxi. 36).

Ver. 5. If any man desireth to hurt them fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies. There can be no doubt that the allusion is to 2 Kings i. 10, 11; although literal fire may not be thought of, but rather those 'words' of the Lord in the mouth of His prophet of which it is said, 'I will make them fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them' (Jer. v. 14). In the last half of the verse we have the lex talionis, judgment returning in kind upon the oppressors of the just. These oppressors hurt to the extent of killing, just as the Jews 'went about to kill Jesus' in the days of His flesh. As a consequence, in this manner must they be killed.

Ver. 6. Not only does fire proceed out of the mouth of the witnesses; they have also the power to shut the heaven that it rain not during the days of their prophecy, if they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague as often as they shall desire. The allusions are obviously to Elijah and Moses, but the power of the witnesses is described in language far stronger than that of the Old Testament. For three and a half years only was rain kept back by Elijah: the witnesses have power to withhold it during the whole time of their prophecy. Moses had control over the waters of Egypt: they over all waters. The plagues with which Moses could smite were definite in number and limited in range: the witnesses may smite the whole earth with 'every plague as often as they shall desire.'

Ver. 7. That the witnesses have a testimony to deliver has already appeared from the words 'they shall prophesy' in ver. 3, and from their coming before us in ver. 4 as fruit-bearing and light-giving. This work they shall accomplish: this witness they shall 'finish' in the spirit of Him who cried upon the cross, 'It is finished:' and at that moment, as in His case so in theirs, their opponents shall seem to have the victory. —The beast that cometh up out of the abyss shall make war with them, and overcome them, and kill them. This 'beast' is without doubt that of chaps. xiii. 1 and xvii. 8, here mentioned by anticipation; and he shall act as the beast in Dan. vii. 21.

Ver. 8. Their enemies are not satisfied with putting them to death. Dishonour and contumely are heaped upon them after they have been slain. The use of the singular for the plural number in speaking of them in this verse is remarkable, for the true reading is not, as in the Authorised Version, 'their bodies shall lie,' but their dead body lies. There must be a sense in which the witnesses, though spoken of as two, may be regarded as one. —Their dead body lies in the street, in the broad open way, where there are many passers-by to behold the contempt and the profanation (comp. Ps. lxix. 3). —This street belongs to the great city, several characteristics of which are next given. Spiritually it is called Bodom and Egypt, and there also their Lord was crucified.

That this city is in the first place Jerusalem not, as many suppose, Rome seems clear from the statement that it is the city in which the Lord
was crucified. But the question still arises, What does 'Jerusalem,' so spoken of, denote? The literal Jerusalem alone it cannot be, not only because all such names are in the Book of Revelation allegorically used, but also because the city is 'spiritually,' that is allegorically, called Sodom and Egypt. Sodom and Egypt; however, were both remarkable for three things, their sinfulness, their oppression of the people of God, and the judgments by which they were overtaken. As these ideas, again, correspond exactly with the course of thought in the present passage, we are justified in thinking that they are the ideas mainly associated in the mind of the Seer with the two names. 'The great city,' therefore, is something sinful, persecuting, doomed to judgment. Still further the thought of both Jews and Gentiles must be connected with this city—mention of the crucifixion leading us to the one, of Sodom and Egypt to the other. We are thus led to regard 'the great city' as a designation for a degenerate Christianity, which is submitted to the world.

Ver. 9. The spectators mentioned in this verse come from the whole world in its fourfold designation of people and tribes and tongues and nations. All look upon the 'dead body' of the witnesses without commiseration for the miserable state in which it lies. This they do for three days and a half, not literal days but, according to the analogy of three and a half years, a broken, incomplete, and probably short period. That during this period the world suffers not their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb heightens the picture of contempt and injury (comp. Gen. xxiii. 4; Isa. xiv. 19, 20).

Ver. 11. The short time of the world's triumph passes away. Then a spirit of life out of God enters into them, and imparts to them such power that they stand up upon their feet, and strike all unbelievers with terror.

Ver. 12. Nor that alone. They hear a voice summoning them to ascend into heaven in the presence of the same believers, and they obey. They went up into heaven in the cloud, not in the clouds, or simply in a cloud; but in a distinct and definite cloud, that of the angel of chap. x. 1, or of Christ in chap. xiv. 14-16; and their triumph was witnessed by those who killed them.

Ver. 13. And in that hour, that is, at the very moment when the witnesses ascended, judgment fell upon the guilty world. There was a great earthquake, the constant symbol of judgment. The tenth part of the city fell. The city is without doubt 'the great city' of ver. 8; but only a tenth part falls because judgment does not yet descend in all its fulness. In the earthquake were killed seven thousand persons. The expression in the original for 'persons' is remarkable, meaning literally 'names of men.' A similar use of the word 'names' has already met us at chap. iii. 4, and the usage throws light upon the employment of the word 'name' in the writings of St. John. It seems hardly necessary to say that the earthquake, the fall of the tenth part of the city, and the number 7000, must all be regarded as symbolical. And the rest were apprified. By the rest are to be understood all the ungodly who had not been killed. They are not only apprified, they gave glory to the God of heaven. In what sense, it must be asked, are we to take these words? Do they express, as many imagine, the conversion of the Jews, or, as many others, that of the degenerate Christians of the city? We must answer, Neither. Conversion is not spoken of, and there is nothing to lead us to the thought of Jews. Inasmuch, however, as we are here dealing with inhabitants of Jerusalem, the holy city, it is not improbable that the faithful members of the Church, as distinguished from the faithful witnesses, are in the prophet's view. Yet he does not behold their conversion. To the change implied in that word the being apprified is not a suitable preliminary; and the whole tone of the passage suggests that, when they who are thus apprified give glory to the God of heaven (comp. chap. xvi. 11), they do so from no recognition of His heavenly character as compared with the wickedness of earth, but from the conviction which they have received of the irresistibleness of His power and the terror of His judgments. They are terrified, awed, subdued, but they are not converted. It is possible that conversion may follow, but we are not told that such will be the case.

Looking back upon the whole of this difficult passage, one or two questions in connection with it demand an answer.

The first and most important of these is, Who are the two witnesses? Our space will not permit even a slight attempt to discuss the opinions of others. We must content ourselves with saying that it is in the highest degree improbable that these witnesses are either two individuals already known to us, such as Enoch and Elijah, Moses and Elijah, Zerubbabel and Joshua, or two who are yet to arise, and in whom the power of the true Church shall be concentrated. Thus an interpretation the number two is understood with a literalness inconsistent with the symbolism of numbers in this book. If, too, we take literally the number of the witnesses, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to show why we should not give a literal interpretation to their prophecying, their miracles, their death, their resurrection, and their ascension into heaven in the presence of their enemies. Their prophecying also, as we have already seen, reaches to the whole earth, for it is that of chap. 11; while the plagues inflicted came upon all the dwellers upon earth (ver. 10). Nor is the time during which the witnesses prophecy less inconsistent with this view. No individuals live through so long a period. It may indeed be at once admitted that, in a manner conformable to the whole structure of the Apocalypse, the Seer starts from the thought of two historical persons. Examples of this kind in sufficient number, and of sufficient importance to justify his resting upon them as the material basis of his prophecy, were not wanting either in the Old Testament or in the history of our Lord. In the former we have Moses and Aaron, Joshua and Caleb, Elijah and Elisha, Zerubbabel and Joshua, and even the two pillars in the temple, Jachin and Boaz. In the latter we have our Lord sending forth both his Apostles and the Seventy disciples two by two, together with such a promise as that contained in the words 'if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything
that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven' (Matt. xvi. 19). Although, however, the starting-point may be found in such allusions as the Seer certainly passes from the thought of any two individuals whatever to that of all who in any age or land fulfill the idea of witnessing present to his mind. The two witnesses are thus believers who, amidst all the defection of others, remain faithful to their Lord. They are the true Divine seed within the outward Church, the little flock that listens only to the voice of the Good Shepherd and is led astray neither by the world nor hireling shepherds. All the particulars of the description correspond to this view. One other remark may be made. The climax of the Apocalypse is peculiarly observable in the relation of the vision of the Two Witnesses to that of the Palm-bearing Company in chap. vii. The latter speaks only of deliverance from tribulation; the former introduces us to the thought of the action which brings tribulation with it. The faithful in Christ Jesus have advanced from being merely sufferers to being zealous agents in their Master’s cause. They have been executing their commission, uttering their testimony, working their work, warring against their foes. Their position is loftier, nobler, more inspiring; and their reward is proportioned to their struggle. Commission, work, reward, judgment—everything, in short, is higher than before.

Ver. 14. The second woe is past, behold the third woe cometh quickly. At chap. viii. 13 mention was made of three Woes. At chap. ix. 12 the first Woe was said to be past. The sixth trumpet then sounded and was continued to chap. x. 21. From chap. x. 1 to xii. 13 we have had consolatory visions, and now in the verse before us the second Woe is declared to be past. The object of the verse, therefore, is to remind us of what we might perhaps have forgotten, that the second woe had closed some time before, but that nothing shall now interrupt the sounding of the seventh trumpet on the coming of the third Woe.

CHAPTER XI. 15-19.

The sounding of the Seventh Trumpet.

15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were 1 great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and
16 he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their 2 seats, fell upon their
17 faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord 3 God 4 Almighty, 5 which art, and wast, and art to come; 6 because thou hast taken to thee thy great power,
18 and hast 7 reigned. 8 And the nations were 9 angry, and thy wrath is come, 10 and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, 11 and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and 12 to 13 the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; 14 and shouldest 15 destroy them 16 which destroy the earth. And 17 the temple of God was opened 18 in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: 19 and there were 20 lightnings, and voices, and thunders, 21 and an earthquake, and great hail.

1 followed 2 kingdom 3 the 4 is 5 the possession 6 sit 7 thrones 8 Lord, 9 omit to 10 the Almighty
11 add which 12 omit and art to come 13 omit to thee
14 didst reign 15 roused to wrath 16 came 17 to be judged
18 and the time to give their reward 19 both 20 omit to
21 the small and the great 22 and to 23 add that is 24 omit was opened 25 covenant 26 followed 27 thunders

CONTENTS. In the verses before us we have the seventh Trumpet and, because the seventh Trumpet, therefore also the third Woe. It may seem indeed at first sight as if what is now to be revealed did not present the characteristics of a Woe, and were rather occupied with describing
the triumph of the Church. In the meantime it is enough to say that the triumph of the Church implies the overthrow of her enemies, and that the greater and more glorious the one the more disastrous and humiliating must be the other. Particulars in the most strikingly illustrating the character of a Woe will be noticed as we proceed with the expounding.

Ver. 15. It is difficult to say whom the great voice spoken of in this verse belong. They can hardly come from angels, or from the four living creatures, or indeed from any created thing. They seem rather a poetic method of giving expression to the fact that those counsels of the Almighty which had been long since taken, but which had been hitherto concealed from every eye but that of faith, were about to go into open execution. — The words uttered by the voices are, The kingdom of the world is become the possession of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. The word 'kingdom' used here is to be understood in the sense of dominion over, and not in that of all the kingdoms of the world united into one. This dominion is celebrated under the Son of the Son and to the Son in the Father; and it shall be theirs for ever and ever, all its enemies being completely overthrown.

Ver. 16. The voices in heaven are now answered by the twenty-four Elders, the representatives of the redeemed Church on earth. Enraptured with the prospect before them, these fall upon their faces and worshipped God.

Ver. 17. This is the last part of their song of praise and thanksgiving. In reading, a comma is to be placed after the word Lord, which presents us with the name of Him who has thus triumphed, and brought the troubles of His Church to an end. The name 'Lord' is thus followed by three appellations as at chap. iv. 8, first, God; secondly, the Almighty; thirdly, which art and which wast, the third clause usually belonging to the last appellation, 'which is to come,' being left unconnected. This is the end of the Lord's coming. This part of the song of praise deals with the general statement that the Lord has taken Him His great power. That power had indeed been always His, but for a time He had permitted His enemies to contend against it. He is to permit this no longer.

Ver. 18 contains the second part of the song of praise, defining more accurately, and apparently in three particulars, the precise nature of the moment which had arrived, and of the events which distinguish it. The first of these particulars is, The nations were roused to wrath (comp. Ps. ii. 1, and especially Rev. xx. 3, 9). Instead of being converted at the last moment, the nations are excited to fiercer rage than ever against God. They are not merely angry against Him; that they had always been. They are roused to a sudden burst of wrath. Such is the true meaning of the original; and, thus looked at, the words before us really form an epistle of chap. xx. 7-9.

The second particular is, Thy wrath came, the wrath of God, so much more terrible than that of the nations. This third particular occupies the remainder of the verse, and seems again to be subdivided into three parts—(1) The time of the dead to be judged. By 'the dead' here we are not to understand all men both good and bad, but simply the latter; the judgment spoken of is not general, it belongs to the wicked alone. This appears from the use of the word 'judge,' which is always employed by St. John to indicate only what is due to sin and sinners, as well as from the fact that the 'giving reward' immediately described is obviously not a part of the judgement, but an independent member of the group of things here spoken of. (2) And to give their reward unto thy servants the prophets, both the saints, and them that fear thy name, the small and the great. Much difficulty has been experienced by commentators in their attempts to arrange these clauses. Without dwelling on the opinions of others, we suggest that the true arrangement is to take the first class mentioned, 'thy servants the prophets,' as standing alone at the head of the group, and as including all those classes afterwards referred to. All God's people are prophets. As we have seen in the previous part of the chapter, they are 'witnesses' who 'prophecy;' they proclaim the Word of God to a sinful world (comp. ver. 3). These prophets are then divided into two classes, 'the saints,' and 'they that fear God's name.' The two classes appear to be mentioned upon the principle of which we have already several illustrations, that objects are beheld by the Seer in two aspects, the one taken from the sphere of Jewish, the other Gentile, thought. 'Saints' or consecrated ones, was the name for all true Israelites. 'They that fear God' was, as we see in the Acts of the Apostles, the appellation constantly applied to Gentile Proselytes. No distinction is indeed drawn between a Jewish and a Gentile portion of the Church. Both are really one, but they may be, and are, viewed under a double aspect.

The last clause, 'the small and the great,' then applies to all who have been mentioned. While, therefore, the 'dead' are 'judged,' the children of God, the members of His believing Church, receive their reward. (3) And to destroy them which destroy the earth, where the less talents is again worthy of notice.

Ver. 19. We have here exhibited in act what had just been proclaimed in word (vers. 14-18). As throwing light upon the imagery of vers. 1 and 2 it is important to notice that, when there was opened the temple of God that is in heaven, there was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant. The word 'temple' is apt to mislead, for we immediately think of the temple on Mount Moriah; but the innermost shrine is alone spoken of in the original, that most Holy Place which belonged not only to the later temple but to the Tabernacle in the wilderness. In the former the ark of God's covenant could not have been seen, for it had disappeared at the destruction of the first temple, long before the days of St. John. The inference is clear that, although the word 'temple' is used, it is really the Tabernacle from which the imagery is obtained. No doubt the temple thus spoken of was 'in heaven,' but to the eye of the Seer things in heaven were in the same and pattern of the heavenly things on earth; and no one who has entered into his spirit will maintain that, if in this verse the shrine of the Tabernacle is referred to, it is possible to find another and a different reference for the shrine spoken of in the first verse of the chapter. All arguments, therefore, as to the date of the Apocalypse, drawn from the use of the word 'temple' in ver. 1, are necessarily unfounded. It is the Tabernacle as
it is described in the Law, not a temple of stone existing in his own day, that is in the writer's view. The 'ark of God's covenant' is the symbol of God's covenant love to His people; the type of the Incarnate Lord in whose heart the Law of God is laid up, and who is the 'propitiatory' (Rom. iii. 25) or Mercy-seat. And there followed lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail. We have similar judgments at chap. viii. 5, at the close of the seventh seal, and when preparation was made for the sounding of the trumpets. We shall again meet them in chap. xvi. 18, at the close of the seventh bowl. We are now, therefore, at the close of the seventh trumpet, and about to enter upon the seven bowls. It will be observed that these 'lightnings,' etc., are only exhibited in heaven. They do not yet fall upon the earth, but are symbols of what is to come.

CHAPTER XII. I-XIII. 1A.

The First great Enemy of the People of God.

1 And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman
2 clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that she should feed her there a thousand two hundred and three score days.

3 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them

1 sign sign 8 arrayed was and she crieth out in pain
2 sign 7 and upon his heads seven diadems draweth
9 about 10 that when she is delivered he may devour her child
11 And she was delivered of a son, of man's sex, symbol of God's covenant love to His people; the type of the Incarnate Lord in whose heart the Law of God is laid up, and who is the 'propitiatory' (Rom. iii. 25) or Mercy-seat. And there followed lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail.
16 fell out 17 making war 18 with 19 made war the
21 he that is called 22 he that deceiveth the whole inhabited world
23 great 24 in heaven saying 25 add the the power
27 authority 88 out 29 who accuseth
CHAP. XII. 1–XIII. 1A.]  
THE REVELATION.  

11 "before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony;  
12 and they 'loved not their lives' unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that 'dwell' in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he "persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child." And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth 'opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the 'remnant' of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

CHAP. XIII. 1A. And I "saw" upon the sand of the sea.

CONTENTS. The third Woe, or the seventh Trumpet, came to an end with chap. xi.; and, as the seven Trumpets followed immediately after the seven Seals, we might now have expected that these, in their turn, would be followed by the seven Bowls. The pouring out of these Bowls, however, does not begin until we reach chap. xv. Three chapters intervene; and it becomes both important and difficult to fix their place in the articulation of the Apocalypse as a whole. The inquiry is rendered more difficult than it might otherwise have been by the fact that chap. xii. seems distinctly to take us back to the beginning of the Christian era, to the birth of Christ. Can it be, then, that hitherto we have witnessed only the fortunes of the Jewish Church, and that the Christian Church is now to be brought before us in the wider sphere of the Gentile mission? The supposition is plausible, but it is hardly possible to accept it. The Church of Christ is not thus divided by St. John into two parts. He takes his figures, indeed, at one moment from Judaism, at another from Gentilism, but it is always one Church that he has in view, in which there is neither Jew nor Greek. The enemies of the Church, again, described in chaps. xii., xiii., are certainly not peculiar to her Gentile branch, but are equally hostile to all believers from whatever quarter they come. The course of events, too, under the seven Bowls is so strictly parallel, though at the same time climactic, to that under the seven Trumpets, that it is impossible to regard the former in any other light than as a series of visions directed to the same object and filled with substantially the same meaning. How then explain this long intercalary portion of three chapters? The key is to be found in the words of chap. xv. 1, 'Seven plagues, which are the last, for in them is finished the wrath of God.' We are on the verge of the seven final and most disastrous plagues. The moment is thus far more critical than any at which we have previously stood. The purposes of the Almighty are now to be fully accomplished. The whole mystery of His dealings with a sinful world to which He has offered salvation is about to end. No place, therefore, could be more suitable than the present for once more gathering together the main elements of the conflict and the main features of the result.

The first object of the Seer is to give us a full and correct idea of the three great enemies of the people of God. Of these the earliest and chief is the Dragon; and to make us acquainted at once with his power and with his weakness is the aim of chap. xii. The chapter obviously divides itself into three parts or scenes, the relation of which to one another will come before us in the course of exposition.

Ver. 1. And there appeared a great sign in
heaven. The 'sign' consists of three particulars, and the first of these is again divided into three parts, mention of which occupies the remainder of this verse, a woman arrayed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. The immense body of light constituting the sun is her garment. The moon, the second of the light-giving bodies of heaven, is under her feet, yet certainly not in token of subjection,—an idea entirely out of keeping with the position immediately afterwards assigned to the twelve stars. Nor does it seem possible to behold in 'the moon' a representation of the Church, or of the legal Israel, as the foundation of the Christian Church. The Church is founded not on the Law but on Christ (1 Cor. iii. 11). In order to ascertain the meaning we must take sun, moon, and stars together; and, when we do so, the idea appears to be that the woman is completely enveloped in light. This is not secured by the simple mention of the sun as her garment, for that only wraps her body round from the shoulders to the feet. The other bodies of light which shine in heaven are therefore called into requisition. By means of them she has light around, beneath, and above her. The stars are not set as jewels in her crown. They are her crown, a crown of victory. The woman is a conqueror, and twenty-five is the number of the Church. (For the whole description comp. Song of Solomon vi. 10; Rev. i. 16, xxi. 12, 14.)

Ver. 2. And she was with child. These words form the second particular of the vision; while the third determines her status at that moment suffering the pangs of childbirth, and she crieth out, travailing in birth, and in pain to be delivered.

To the question, Who is this woman? different answers have been given. We need not dwell upon them. In one sense or another she must be the Church of God, yet not the mere Jewish Church, but the Church in the largest conception that we can form of it, as first indeed planted in Israel but afterwards extended to all nations. More will have to be said upon this point immediately. In the meantime, if it be objected that Christ bears the Church, not the Church Christ, it may be sufficient to reply that there is a sense in which Christ may truly be said to be the Church; He is the Church, the body of the Chosen Family, concerning the flesh He comes of Israel. So much is He one with His people that even His conception by the power of the Spirit and His birth of a virgin (who had no power of her own to produce Him) have their counterpart in them. They are born of the Spirit: they are the many children of a mother who was barren (Gal. iv. 27). The Church, therefore, may properly be described by images taken from the history of Christ's own mother and of His own nativity.

Ver. 3. And there appeared another sign in heaven. In every respect this second sign is the counterpart or opposite of the first; and, like it, it is described in three particulars. The first has relation to the object seen,—And behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads seven diadems. The dragon is 'great' in power. He is 'red' with the colour of blood because he kills men (chap. xvii. 3, 6; John viii. 44; 1 John iii. 12). He has 'seven heads and ten horns,' a figure by which is indicated his rule over all the kingdoms of this world as well as the force with which he rules them. The 'diadems,' it may be further noticed, are not crowns like that of the woman. They are rather bands or fillets round the head. Even in the greatest lustre of his might the dragon is not a conqueror.

Ver. 4. His tail draweth the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth. The second particular thus mentioned of the dragon has relation to what he does, and is in contrast with what had been said of the woman when we were told that she 'was with child.' The present tense of the first half of the sentence shows that the words describe a characteristic of the dragon, an element of his nature, and not something that happened at the moment.

The woman was pregnant with life, the dragon can do nothing but destroy. Mention has been so frequently made of a 'third part' of things (chaps. vii. 9, 10, 11, 12, ix. 15, 18) that we cannot be surprised at meeting it again, and all that it seems possible to say is that the proportion is not to be too literally interpreted. Enough that it designates great influence for evil, yet influence restrained by a power mightier than its own. The second half of the sentence is founded upon Dan. vii. 10, and the allusion in the mention of 'stars' is to powers originally heavenly. Against men who are made to shine as stars in the heavenly firmament the dragon can do nothing. They have rather trampled him beneath their feet and gained over him an everlasting victory. The 'stars of heaven' spoken of can only be those of whom it is elsewhere said that they 'kept not their first estate' (Judg. x. 15). In this particular the work of the dragon is again presented to us as the exact counterpart of that of the woman—

'She raiseth mortals to the skies, He draws the angels down.'

And the dragon stood before the woman which was about to be delivered that, when she is delivered, he may devour her child. In these words we have the dragon doing what Pharaoh did to Israel (Ex. i. 15-22), and again and again in the Psalms and Prophets Pharaoh is spoken of as the dragon (Ps. lxix. 13; Isa. xxvii. 1, li. 9; Ezek. xxix. 3). Nor is it without interest in this connection to remember that Moses' rod was wraithed with a dragon (the serpent) and Pharaoh's which was turned into a serpent. It is worth while to notice, too, how entirely the imagery agrees with the record of the infancy of our Lord in St. Matthew's Gospel (comp. especially Matt. ii. 13, 15). The motive alike of Pharaoh and of Herod was envy, Satan's motive.

In this verse also the dragon is in direct contrast with the woman. She is to bear a living child; he would destroy it as soon as it was born.

Ver. 5. The birth takes place. The woman is delivered of a son, of man's sex. The last expression is remarkable. In the Authorized Version we read simply of 'a man child,' in the Revised of 'a son, a man child.' We have given another rendering in the hope of thereby bringing out the force which in the original obviously belongs to the words. The object is not simply to tell us that the 'son' is a male, which as a son he must be, but to impress upon us the thought of his manhood, power, and force. He is already more than a child; the properties of manhood belong
to Him from His birth (comp. John xvi. 21 and note there).—The function of this Son is as a shepherd to tend all the nations with a sceptre of iron. He is to subdue and rule the hostile world (chap. xi. 27); and He is caught up unto God and unto His throne not merely that He may be safe there, but that with Divine power He may destroy him who would have destroyed Himself (chap. iii. 21). It may be well to observe, as that power is not said to be as yet actually exercised by the son. It belongs to Him, and it shall be exercised in due season.

Ver. 6. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she had a place prepared of God, that they may nourish her there a thousand, two hundred, and threescore days. The fortunes of the woman's child having been described, we are now informed of her own. The flight of Elijah into the wilderness, perhaps even to the temptation of our Lord there, is present to the writer's mind; and the words are applicable to the condition of the Church during her whole pilgrimage state in the present world. Thus closes the first scene of the chapter, and we have now to ask how its meaning appears to us that the key to this is to be found in the opening verses of the Gospel of St. John (chap. i. 1-5), the parallelism of which to the present passage it is impossible to mistake. We have the same contrasts as those of chap. iii. 1-5,—light, darkness, light shining in the darkness, the darkness trying to prevail against the light, but not overcoming it (see note on John i. 5). Here also, as there, nothing is said of the origin of the darkness. We read only that it exists.

If these observations be correct we can now understand the scene. It is not interrupted at ver. 7, in order that the war in heaven may be described, and again resumed at ver. 13. Then, there is a marked difference between the two scenes contained in vers. 1-6 and vers. 13-17, and the difference consists in this, that the first is ideal, the second actual. Strictly speaking, the woman in vers. 1-6 is neither the Jewish nor the Christian Church. She is light from Him 'who is light, and with whom there is no darkness at all,' light which had been always shining before it was partially embodied either in the Church of the old or the new covenant. Her actual conflict with the darkness has not begun. We behold her in her own glorious existence, and it is enough to dwell upon the potencies that are in her as 'a light of man.' In like manner the dragon is not yet to be identified with the devil or Satan. That identification does not take place till we reach ver. 9. The former differs from the latter as the abstract and ideal power of evil differs from evil in the concrete. As the woman is ideal light, light before it appears in the Church upon earth, so the dragon is ideal darkness, the power of sin before it begins its deadly warfare against the children of God. Thus also we learn what is intended by the term 'Son of man' in the vision.

He is not the Son actually incarnate but the ideally incarnate Son, 'the true light, which lighteth every man, coming into the world' (John i. 9). More distinctly may be felt in answering the question, whether, along with the Son Himself, we are to see in this 'son, of man's sex,' the true members of Christ's Body. Ideally, it would seem that we are to do so. All commentators allow that in the son's being 'caught up unto God and unto His throne' there is a reference to the ascension and glorification of our Lord. But, if so, it appears to be impossible to separate between the risen, ascended, and glorified Lord and those who are in Him this risen, ascended, and glorified. In a note on John xvi. 21 we have called attention to the use of the word 'man' instead of child in that verse, as showing that we are there invited to behold the new birth of regenerated humanity, that new life in a risen Saviour with which the Church springs into being. The thought thus presented in the words of Jesus meets us again in this vision of the Seer. Christ's true people as well as Himself are made to sit down with Him in His throne, even as He sat down with His Father in His throne (chap. iii. 21). They not less than their Lord tend as a shepherd the nations with a sceptre of iron, even as He received of His Father (chap. ii. 26, 27). We cannot separate Him from them or from Him. Everything then in these verses is anticipatory or ideal. The forces are on the field. We see light and darkness, their natural antagonism to each other, the fierce enmity of the darkness against the light, the apparent success but real defeat of the darkness, the apparent quenching but real triumph of the light. God's eternal plan is before us. We have a 'pattern' like that 'showed to Moses in the mount' (comp. chap. iv. 11).

Vers. 7-9. With the words of ver. 7 the second scene of the chapter opens, and the transition from the ideal to the actual begins. As the first scene is that of the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel (vers. 1-5), so this scene corresponds to its second paragraph (vers. 6-13). It is not enough that the light shall withstand the darkness. It has also to assault and overcome it. Hence it is that Michael and his angels are the first to move; and hence in all probability the remarkable grammatical construction of ver. 7 in the original,—a construction which seems intended to bring out this thought.

The war opens in heaven. No explanation is afforded of our finding evil there; nor is there greater difficulty in conceiving of evil in heaven than in admitting its existence upon earth. All things are primarily good and pure and holy. Such is the fundamental idea of existence; but this idea is disturbed by sin. The good is not perfectly unmixed; and, without knowing how the evil originated, we are compelled to acknowledge that it exists. Traces of the same teaching as that found here are to be seen in 1 Kings xxii.; Job i., ii.; Zech. iii.; and in the words of Jesus, of which this whole scene is a symbolical representation, 'I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven' (Luke x. 18). The war begins is conducted on the one side by Michael and his angels, on the other by the dragon and his angels. The mention of Michael is taken from Dan. x. 13, 21, xii. 1; comp. Jude 9. He is certainly not Jesus Himself, nor is he merely a created angel to whose guardianship the Church is committed. He is rather an expression of Jesus, an aspect (if we may so speak), a representation, of the Divine good embodied in Him; and His angels are the varied agencies belonging to that good and executing its designs.—The 'dragon' is next more completely identified by a description consisting of three particulars. First, he is the old serpent, a reference to the
history of the fall. Secondly, he is he that is called the devil and Satan, the former of these terms denoting the deceiver (chap. xx. 8), the second the accuser (ver. 10), of the saints. Thirdly, he is he that destroys the whole inhabited world, the world with all its inhabitants, and not simply they that dwell upon the earth.' Not that he succeeds in eventually betraying all. But even the saints he endeavours to deceive. He tempts them as he tempted our Lord in the wilderness.—When the war has been continued for a time, the dragon is not only defeated, but no place is found for him any more in heaven. He was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. The victory of good over evil is complete. It may be well to notice that, if the devil is thus cast out of heaven, out of the assembly of the saints, he must have been originally good. Had he not been so he would never have been in heaven, but would have ruled from a past eternity in some realm of his own.

Vers. 10-12. The victory thus gained is followed by a song of praise and thanksgiving, which proceeds from a great voice in heaven.

Whose voice this is we are not told, and it may be well to leave it in its indefiniteness.—The song is one of adoring praise that the salvation, and the power, and the glory, and the might, and the honor, and the dominion of all things, and the people, and the animals, and the birds, to Him that sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be for ever and ever.

—This victory of the brethren has been gained because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of His testimony. By ear the former can only be understood the blood of Jesus shed and presented before God on behalf of His people, by the latter that testimony of Jesus, that witness concerning Him, which they had been enabled to declare.

When the victory has thus been spoken of as gained the great voice further cries, Rejoice ye heavens, and ye that tabernacle in them. They who thus tabernacled in the heavens can hardly be angels; nor are they the spirits of the just made perfect contrasted with the righteous still struggling upon earth. The victory of all the righteous is by this time supposed to be complete. They can be no other than the whole redeemed family of God. These form the Divine Tabernacle, the place in which God rests, as He rested of old in the tabernacle in the wilderness (comp. chap. vii. 15, xiii. 6, xxi. 3). Thus constituting a tabernacle for God, they may by an easy transition be said themselves to tabernacle, for the true idea of the Tabernacle consisted in this, that it was the meeting-place of God and man. There is no thought of the transition of a tent, or of tent life. While all the good rejoice, there is woe for the earth and for the sea, that is, not the neutral earth or the ocean, but all who are unconnected with God's kingdom 'the heavens.'—Because the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time. The consciousness that it is so fills him with the rage of despair.

The second scene of the chapter is a distinct advance upon the first. We pass from the dragon the ideal representative of evil to the devil or Satan, known to us as the source of all the sin and misery from which earth suffers. Further, we learn why the Church on earth has to contend with this great adversary. He has been cast, with his angels, out of heaven; and it is God's decree that the main and last struggle between good and evil shall be fought out on earth. Among men, not angels, the plan of redemption shall be conducted to its glorious issue. To impress these thoughts upon us is the reason why the second scene of this chapter has its place assigned to it.

Vers. 13, 14. From what has been said it will be evident that with the 13th verse there is no reverting to the point which the angel had made in ver. 6. On the contrary, another step is taken in advance; and we are invited to behold in actual warfare the forces that in the first scene had been only ideally described, and the entrance of one of which into the world had been brought before us in the second. The dragon has not been led to submission by the fact that he had been driven out of heaven. He has rather been roused to greater fury (ver. 12), and in that fury he attacks the woman. She is described as the woman which brought forth the child of man's sex, and is thus identified with the woman of ver. 1. Yet she is not exactly the same.

Then she was viewed as the ideal, now she is viewed as the actual Church, as indeed the Church of Israel, but as the Church universal, the Church of every age and nation, the Church within which the light of Divine truth shines, and which is persecuted by the devil's agents.

Although, however, the woman persecuted she is not overcome. The light is safe under the care of God. This circumstance is set forth in the fact that to the woman were given the two wings of the great eagle that she might fly into the wilderness into her place. The flight, the wilderness, the nourishment afforded there, and the flood of water to be immediately spoken of, remind us so much of the flight of Israel from Egypt and the actual wilderness and the manna they were there provided with. To leave no doubt that these events lie at the bottom of the description, although, as usual, they are treated with great freedom, forming only the starting-point from which the Seer proceeds to the clothing of his idea. The eagle is certainly not that of chap. viii. 13. Yet the articles employed in the original, which are not generic, show that a definite eagle is meant. It can be no other than the eagle of Ez. xix. 4; Deut. xxxii. 11; Ps. xxxvi. 7. The eagle is God Himself, and its wings are His wings. On these wings the woman flies into the desert, into her place, i.e. the place of ver. 6, the place already prepared for her, and where, though in the desert, she shall be secure. What is good, what is Divine, has not in this world its Canaan. It is still in the wilderness, but it is preserved there by the loving care of the Most High. In this place she is nourished. The reference is probably to the history of Elijah, who was nourished first at the brook Cherith and then at Zarephath during the three years and a half when there was no rain; but it may be also to the extraordinary means by which God sustained His people in the wilderness, not by natural supplies of food, but by the manna, the water, and the flesh with which He miraculously provided them. —This is done for a time, and times, and half a time, or for three years and a half,—the whole period
THE REVELATION.

chap. XIII. 1b-10.

The Second great Enemy of the People of God.

I AND I saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, 'Who is like unto the beast? who is as the dragon?' And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was

---

1 of the militant condition of the Church in a present world.

Vers. 15, 16. The imagery employed in these verses is difficult. It is in all probability taken from the passage of Israel across the Red Sea and the river Jordan into the Promised Land. This reference is the more probable when we remember the language of David in Ps. xlviii., when he declares, 'the floods of ungodly men (emissaries of Satan, persecutors) made him afraid, and then at vers. 15-17 he declares his deliverance to the passage of Israel through the Red Sea. With this may be mixed the thought of the history of Korah and his companions, when men who had envied Moses and risen against him in a formidable insurrection were destroyed by the earth's opening her mouth (Num. xvi. 32). The symbol is of God's protecting care of His people. In the day of their trial He will provide for them a way of escape.

Ver. 17, and chap. xiii. 1a. Defeated in his purpose the dragon breaks forth into a paroxysm of rage. The important expression in this verse, the rest of her seed, is difficult, and it has been very variously interpreted. These interpretations it is impossible to examine, and it must suffice to say that 'the rest of her seed,' as appears from the immediately following description of their character, can only mean that portion of the woman's seed which remained faithful to its trust. They are 'the saints' of chap. xiii. 7. We have here, in short, one of those anticipatory indications, like that of the measuring in chap. xi. 1, of a separation between the Church as a whole and a part of the members, between the vine as a whole and its fruit-bearing branches, which prepare us for the further manifestation of this mystery in later chapters of the book. The expression 'the rest' seems to correspond to the 'remnant' referred to by St. Paul in Rom. ix. 27, xi. 5, and it is used in Rev. ii. 24 in a similar sense.

The first great enemy of the Church has been described. One thing more is necessary, that ready for the conflict, he shall take up his position on the field. Accordingly it is to be observed that the first clause of chap. xiii. 1 ought to form a part of the last verse of this chapter, and that the true reading of the clause is not that of the Authorised Version 'I stood,' but 'he stood' or 'took his stand.' The dragon took his stand upon the sand of the sea, upon the margin of that 'earth' and 'sea' in which he finds his prey (ver. 12).

---

1 coming 2 ten horns and seven heads 3 diadems 4 omit the 5 names 6 throne 7 as though it had been slain unto 8 his death stroke 9 and the whole earth 10 because he 11 his authority 12 and there was given unto him authority 13 for blasphemies 14 omit and 15 tabernacle
given him "over all" kindreds,^18 and "tongues,"^19 and "nations."^20
8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose
names are "not written" in the book of life of the Lamb^21
9 slain from the "foundation of the world."^22 If any man have
10 an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into "captivity shall go into captivity:"^23 he that killeth^24 with the "sword must be killed with the sword."^25 Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

16 and there was given unto him authority^17 omit all every tribe
18 and people and tongue^19 nation
every one whose name hath not been written from the foundation of the world
that hath been slain^20 omit from the foundation of the world
If any one is for captivity into captivity he goeth
if any one shall kill^21 with the sword must he be killed

CONTENTS. The twelfth chapter has set before us the first great enemy of the Church. This chapter introduces us to other two by means of whom the devil or Satan carries on his warfare against the truth. The first is described in vers. 1-10; the second in vers. 11-17.

Ver. 1. A beast is seen coming out of the sea. The word of the original translated 'beast' has occurred only once before (at chap. vi. 8), and is wholly different from that which, to say nothing of many other passages, meets us no fewer than seven times in chap. iv. alone; and which, rendered in the Authorised Version by the same term, ought to be translated 'living creatures.' The 'living creatures' are symbolic of all that is noble and admirable, of all deep and true spiritual life; the 'beast' represents whatever is most violent and repulsive. It is not simply a beast but a wild beast, unrestrained in its fierce and destructive rage. This beast is beheld in the act of ascending out of the sea—a circumstance which explains the order of the words in the next following clause, where, according to the true reading, the 'horns' are mentioned before the 'heads,' because they rise first above the surface of the water. In chap. xviii. 3, when the beast has risen, the heads are mentioned first. —By the 'sea' we are not to understand the ocean everywhere embracing and surrounding the land. The word has its usual symbolical sense, and denotes the nations of the earth, the whole mass of the ungodly. The beast not only rules over them, it springs out of them and is their native king. Although not expressly stated, there can be no doubt that this beast comes up from the sea at the call of the dragon (who had stationed himself for this purpose upon the shore, chap. xii. 18), in order to serve him and be his vicegerent among men.—Having ten horns and seven heads; the same number of both as the dragon had (chap. xii. 3); the order only, for the reason already spoken of, being different. It is a question how we are to think of the distribution of the horns. The probability seems to be that they are all connected with the seventh head, for in Dan. vii. 7, which gives us the groundwork of the representation, they belong to the fourth beast alone, and at chap. xvii. 11, 12, where the figure before us is interpreted, it is said that the ten horns are ten kings receiving their power along with the beast who had been spoken of as the 'eighth.' The beast before us is thus at no early stage of its progress. In the true spirit of prophecy we are invited to behold it in its final and completed form.—And upon his horns ten diadems, emblems of royalty. Comp. chap. xvi. 12 'the ten horns are ten kings,' and chap. xix. 12 where He who is described as 'King of kings and Lord of lords' has upon His head 'many diadems,' 'tokens of the many royalties—of earth, of heaven, and of hell (Phil. ii. 10)—which are His' (Trench, Syn. i. p. 92).—And upon his heads names of blasphemy. No indication is given what the names were. The fact, however, that they were upon the heads is important, for there can be little doubt that we have in this a mocking caricature of the name borne upon the forehead of the high priest, and transferred in this book to Christ's faithful people (comp. chaps. ii. 17, vii. 3, xiv. 1).

Ver. 2. The description of the 'beast' is continued. The three animals, the leopard, the bear, and the lion, some of whose parts it possessed, are the first three great beasts of Dan. vii. 4-6; although they are here introduced in a different order, and are combined into one. The qualities represented are the most offensive of their kind, the swift cruel spring of the leopard, the brutish relentlessness of the bear, and the devouring power of the lion.—And the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority. Three things are mentioned; first, the power itself; secondly, the position from which it is exercised; and thirdly, the right to use it. They are the things which Christ had been offered by the dragon, but which He had refused (Matt. iv. 9). They are now accepted by the beast at the expense of becoming the dragon's slave and sharing its fate. It is probable that St. John has the Temptation in the wilderness as described by the earlier Evangelists in his eye.

The question as to the precise meaning of the first beast has perplexed inquirers, and very various opinions in regard to it have been entertained. There is indeed an almost general agreement that it is a symbol of worldly antichristian power. But by some this power is supposed to be that of heathen Rome, in which case the seven heads become the seven hills upon which Rome was built, or seven of its emperors. Others add the
THE REVELATION.

idea of Papal to that of hethen Rome, in which
case the seven heads become seven forms of
Roman government—Kings, Consuls, Decemvirs,
Tribunes, Dictators, Emperors, Popes; while
others again understand by the seven heads seven
kingdoms which, either in the Bible or in
Christian history, oppress and persecute the
Church of God,—the Egyptian, Assyrian, Baby-
lonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, Roman, together
with the Germanic-Sclavonic kingdoms by which
the downfall of Rome was followed. The point is
of great importance, especially for the interpreta-
tion of chap. xvii.; and the following remarks may
be:
1. The numbers seven and ten must, as else-
where, be regarded as symbolical, as expressing
the idea of fulness or completeness rather than
the mere value belonging to them in the numerical
scale. We are not, therefore, entitled to make
an arbitrary selection from the worldly powers op-
posed to the Church of God, and to use it as simply
illustrative of the nature of these powers in general.
Our selection, if made at all, must be made in
such a manner that it shall make plain the idea of
completeness.
2. The rule symbolized by the power of the beast must be a rule over the whole
world. The dragon of chap. xii. rules it all, and
not merely a part of it (chap. xii. 9); his vice-regent
must do the same. We learn from ver. 7 of this chapter, and from its fourfold division
of 'tribe and people and tongue and nation,'
that he actually does so. It is to be remembered,
too, that the description given us of the power of
the beast is a mocking caricature of the power of
Christ, and His rule is universal.
3. The objects represented by the heads of the beast must be
kingdoms, not personal kings like the Emperors of Rome.
'Such is the sense in which the word 'kings' is
used both in the Book of Daniel and in the
Apocalypse, where there is nothing in the context
to compel us to think of personality (comp. Dan.
vii. 17, 23; Rev. xvii. 2, xviii. 3), and the seven
heads are said in chap. x. to be seven
'kings.' Apart from this it may be observed that
no seven Emperors of Rome can be a fitting
representation of the world-wide-power. They
might represent the power of Rome, but that is
not enough to meet the necessities of the case with
which we deal. 4. It will hardly be denied that
the seven heads must severally and individually bear a similar relation to the Church of God, for
it is in relation to that Church that the beast is
viewed; but no seven Emperors of Rome did so.
They were not all persecutors; under some of
them the Church enjoyed peace. 5. We may
conclude from analogy that the objects, whatever
they may be, lying at the bottom of the series
of seven are taken either from what was before the
Seer at the moment, or from his acquaint-
ance with the past. 6. But, if so, chap. xvii. 10
at once affords us the point from which to start.
There we are informed that five are fallen and
'the one,' i.e. 'is' at the time when St. John lived
and wrote. This can be no other than the Roman
power; and, counting backwards from it, we have
the Greek, the Medo-Persian, and the Chaldean
for three of the five. The two earlier, still
counting backwards, are the Assyrian and the
Egyptian. These two last-mentioned powers are
often named together in the Old Testament as
enemies of God's people, 'I will bring them again
oise the land of Egypt, and gather them
out of Asyria' (Zech. x. 10); 'and it shall
come to pass in that day, that they shall come
which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria,
and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall
worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem',
(Isa. xxvii. 13). We have thus six of the 'heads,'
—Egypt, Assyria, Chaldea, Persia, Greece,
Rome,—all of which had successively been
opponents and persecutors of the Church of God.
The seventh, resoluble into the ten horns, is no
one definite kingdom. It had not yet arisen: but
St. John saw that the wicked Roman Empire
was tottering to its fall, and that it would be
dissolved in other and final war.

Ver. 3. And I saw one of his heads as though
it had been slain unto death: and his death
was healed. The rendering alike in the
Authorised and Revised Versions of the Greek
word which we have translated 'slain' (in the one
'wounded,' in the other 'smitten') is peculiarly
unfortunate and objectionable. The word occurs
eight times in the Apocalypse. In seven of these it
must be translated 'slain,' or 'slaughtered,' or
'killed.' How can it be otherwise translated here?
The statement in the verse is the counter-
part of that in chap. v. 6, where we read of the
'Lamb as though it had been slaughtered.' In
both cases there had been actual death, although
in both there had also been a revival, a resur-
rection, to life. The one is a mere symbol of the
other. The Seer does not tell us to which of
the seven heads he specially refers, but a
comparison of the words now used by him with
those of chap. xvii. 8–11 seems clearly to show
that the sixth head, or the Roman power, was in
his eye.

The language before us, it will be observed, is
thus utterly inconsistent with the idea entertained
by so many in modern times, that the sixth head,
instead of being the Roman power in general, is
the Emperor Nero himself, regarding whom the
rumour is said to have prevailed, that after his
death he would return to life and revive all the
horrors of his former reign. It is
extremely doubtful whether such a rumour was in
existence at the time when the Apostle wrote.
The thought would seem rather to have arisen
long afterwards, when the misinterpretation of
this passage gave it birth. Even Renan admits
that 'the general opinion was that the monster
(Nero), healed by a Satanic power, kept him-
self concealed somewhere and would return'
(L'Antechrist, p. 350). The form which the belief
assumed was not that Nero had died, but that
he had hidden himself in the wilds of Parthia,
from which he would come again to strike terror into the world. This being the case, there are at least two important points on which the statement of the passage before us is directly at variance with that rumour. In the first place, the head of the beast spoken of had not simply disappeared from view: it had been actually slain. A death-stroke had been inflicted. It had died as really as the Lamb of God had died on Calvary, and the Seer saw that it had done so. The words 'as though' before 'it had been slain' no more imply that there had not been a real death than they imply this in chap. v. 6, where they are used of the slain lamb. In the second place, this head was not to revive at some future day. It had already revived, and its death-stroke had been already healed. In order, therefore, to make the story of Nero's disappearance and reappearance constitute the foundation of the passage before us, it is necessary to suppose that the prevalent rumour was that that monster of iniquity had both died and risen from the dead; and neither particular was embraced by it. What is spoken of is the world-power in the form of its sixth head. That power received a mortal stroke by the work of Christ. The world was then ideally and really overcome. It revived, and resumed its working. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him. These dwellers upon the earth are in contrast with those who 'tabernacle in heaven.' They are the ungodly as distinguished from the godly; and again they are not confined to the Roman Empire, but include all who anywhere worship the beast. — Every one whose name hath not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain. The plural of the first clause of the verse, 'all,' passes into the singular of the second clause, those referred to being now looked at individually (comp. John xvii. 21, vi. 37). — The connection of the last clause is doubtful. It may be joined, as in the Authorised Version, with the 'Lamb that hath been slain,' but chap. xvi. 8 seems to determine in favour of connecting it with the word 'written.' Besides which, the clause is less appropriate to the slaying of the Lamb, an act which took place in time, than to those counsels of the Almighty which are from eternity.

Ver. 4. This verse contains a parody of the acclamations of praise given to the true God in many passages of the Old Testament (Psa. xlv. 8, 25, xlvi. 5; Ps. cxliii. 5, etc.). If the words apply to Nero they must apply to Nero redactus, for it is unnecessary to spend time in showing that it is to the beast as healed, and not before it was slain, that the song is raised (comp. especially chap. xvi. 8). But there is not a tittle of evidence to prove that homage of this kind was paid even to the thought of the resuscitated tyrant. The acclamations with which he had been received by the citizens of Rome, when he returned from Campania, his hands red with the blood of his murdered mother, belong to a period before his death, and afford no indication of the feelings with which he was regarded after that event. It is true that some even then cherished his memory and decked his tomb with flowers. But, as invariably happens when a tyrant dies, the sentiment of the masses underwent an immediate and profound revision. Suetonius tells us that the public joy was so great upon the occasion that the people ran up and down with caps upon their heads' (Nero, chap. 57). Horror rather than admiration filled their breasts.

Ver. 5. And there was given him a month speaking great things and blasphemies. This is the first of three things spoken of (vers. 5-7) as 'given,' i.e. given by God to whom in its utmost might the beast is subject. The description is taken from Dan. vii. 8, 20, 25, where similar language is used of the 'Little Horn.' The second thing 'given' is authority to work forty and two months. For the time here specified see chap. xi. 2.

Ver. 6. In this verse the blasphemies of ver. 5 are more particularly described.

Ver. 7. The third thing is 'given'; and the authority is universal, the whole world being marked out by the four departments into which it is divided.

Ver. 8. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him. These dwellers upon the earth are in contrast with those who 'tabernacle in heaven.' They are the ungodly as distinguished from the godly; and again they are not confined to the Roman Empire, but include all who anywhere worship the beast. — Every one whose name hath not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain. The plural of the first clause of the verse, 'all,' passes into the singular of the second clause, those referred to being now looked at individually (comp. John xvii. 21, vi. 37). — The connection of the last clause is doubtful. It may be joined, as in the Authorised Version, with the 'Lamb that hath been slain,' but chap. xvi. 8 seems to determine in favour of connecting it with the word 'written.' Besides which, the clause is less appropriate to the slaying of the Lamb, an act which took place in time, than to those counsels of the Almighty which are from eternity.

Ver. 9 contains a solemn call to listen, and is best connected with what follows.

Ver. 10. If any one is for captivity, into captivity he goeth; if any one shall kill with the sword, with the sword must he be killed. In a climax of two clauses consolation is afforded to the righteous amidst all their trials. There is a lex talionis in the dealings of God. They who lead His people into captivity, they who kill them with the sword, shall experience a similar fate. — Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. For surely there is enough to nerve our patience and to stimulate our faith in the thought that 'God judgeth in the earth,' and that it is a righteous thing with Him 'to recompense tribulation' to them that trouble His people.
Chapter XIII. 11-18.

The Third great Enemy of the People of God.

11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had "two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a man.
12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

1 saw authority 2 death-stroke 3 signs 4 omit so 5 that he should even make 6 omit deadly 7 to come 8 out of 9 by reason of 10 it was given him 11 which hath the stroke of the sword 12 And it was given unto him breath 13 add the 14 and the rich and the poor 15 that there be given them 16 upon 17 one 18 omit and 19 omit 20 even 21 and sixty

CONTENTS. The passage upon which we now enter describes the third great enemy of God's people, and closes with the mysterious indication of the number of the beast.

Ver. 11. And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth. This is the third great enemy of the saints, the second 'beast.' It is characterized by the same general term as the second enemy or the first beast; and although therefore, as afterwards mentioned, it resembles a lamb, this in no degree diminishes the fierceness of its nature. It is still a 'beast.' It comes up not out of the 'sea' like the first beast, but out of the 'earth.' The contrast between the 'sea' spoken of in ver. 1 and the 'earth' now mentioned makes it impossible to refer the latter to any one particular portion of the world, such as the Asiatic Continent, or even to the whole world itself, or to human society and its progress, or to earthly thinking and willing. The true meaning of the term must be sought in that distinction between the Jews and all other nations by which Scripture is pervaded. The 'sea' represents the latter; the 'earth' the former,—yet not the former simply as a nation. The 'sea' is the nations as opposed to God. The 'earth' is the Jews, as God's prophetic and priestly people. That this beast comes up out of the earth is therefore a token that it springs out of a religious, not a secular, source; and this trait corresponds, as we shall see, to the whole description of it.—And he had two horns like a lamb. The lamb-like form of
the horns can only be a travesty of the seven horns of 'the Lamb' spoken of in these visions (chap. v. 6); and the number two is not to be understood literally. Like the 'two' of the two witnesses in chap. xi. 3, the number is symbolical, and denotes all who are animated by the spirit of this lamb. The number two, therefore, does not 'complete the similarity' to the animal in its 'natural condition,' nor does it show that its power is 'much less' than that of The Lamb, because two is less than seven. It rather connects with this beast an element of persuasiveness. There may even perhaps be a reference to the two false witnesses of Matt. xvii. 60, who came against our Lord. The like enemies will come against His people. The religious element again appears in the lamb-like horns.—And he spake as a dragon. The first beast does not speak: the second does. It is not said that the words spoken are religious; but, when we remember how often the word 'spake' of the original is used of Christ in the Fourth Gospel, and that it denotes not so much an occasional remark as a formal and more important discourse, we can hardly be wrong in seeing here again a travesty of our Lord. The beast professed to teach religious truth; but his mode of teaching was fierce and murderous, the very opposite of that of Him who did not strive nor cry aloud, neither did any one hear His voice in the streets (Isa. xlii. 2; Matt. xii. 19).

Ver. 12. And he exerciseth all the authority of the first beast before him. The words 'before him' are to be connected with 'exerciseth;' and they are again a travesty of that 'before God' which we find predicated of the Son, of the Spirit, and of the saints (chaps. iii. 5, i. 4; ii. 5, 6). The second beast is characterized as before the first, in his presence, sustained by him, ministering to him, doing his pleasure (comp. chap. viii. 2, where the seven angels are described as standing 'before God').—And he maketh the earth... whose death-stroke was healed. The word 'worship' leads us directly to the thought of religious service, and therefore to that of the religious persuasion by which it is secured. —The description of the first beast is characterized by words is highly important—'whose death-stroke,' or 'the stroke of whose death,' was healed. We have here an unmistakable description of the first beast, not as he appeared in the earlier stages of his manifestation under the first five heads, but as he appeared after the sixth, after he had been slain and had risen to life. Let us allow that St. John gave credit to the rumour that Nero would return, could he have supposed that he had returned?

Ver. 13. And he doeth great signs that he should even make fire to come down out of heaven into the earth before man. The 'great signs' are again a symbol of what is done by false prophetic and priestly power. The 'fire out of heaven' is explained by the function of this beast. He is to direct men to the worship of the first beast in whom the Satanic power of the dragon is personified. As therefore Christ, in whom the power of God is personified, is preceded by Elias, who is to direct men's eyes to Him, so the first beast has in the second his Elias, who travesties the miracle of the ancient prophet (2 Kings i. 10–12).

Ver. 14. And he deceiveth, etc. The word 'deceiveth' again leads us to the thought of false teaching (Matt. xxiv. 24, etc.).—Saying to them that dwell on the earth that they should make an image to the beast which hath the stroke of the sword, and rose to life. The difficult expression 'image of the beast' occurs ten times in the Apocalypse, xii. 14, 15 (thrice), xiv. 9, 11, xv. 2, xvi. 2, xix. 20, xx. 4. It is to be explained by the help of Gen. i. 26; Rom. viii. 29; 1 Cor. xi. 7, xv. 49; Col. i. 15, iii. 10; Heb. i. 5. Comparing these passages, the thought of the Seer appears to be as follows—First, we have God, the Son the true 'image' of God, and man 'renewed' in the Son 'after the image of Him that created him.' Secondly, we give the first beast or the world-power in all the ungodliness of its spirit, that spirit supposed to be incarnated in its 'image,' and men so created after that image that they may be said to be 'of their father the devil' (John viii. 44). The second beast or the false prophet will then stand in the same relation to the first beast and men as that in which Christ the true prophet stands to God and men. It may indeed be said that, were this view correct, we ought to read that men are made after the image of the beast, whereas what is really said is that they 'make' the image. But, according to the constant teaching of St. John, men who are made after the image of the beast, their will is active not passive in the matter. There is no ground for the idea that the image made to the beast we have an allusion to those statues of the Roman Emperors which some of the basest of them set up for worship; 'image' in its Scripture sense expresses something living. It would be far more natural to seek the 'image' in the Emperors themselves.

Ver. 15. In the words of this verse the second beast is still further characterized as the imitator of the image of the first beast. Here the second beast should both speak, and cause that as many as should not worship the image of the beast should be killed. These words are commonly understood to refer to the lying wonders of pagan priests in making pictures and statues appear to speak; to which many add the moving images and winking and speaking pictures so often employed for purposes of imposture by their far less excusable papal successors. But such pictures and images, however they might seem to move and speak, were never able to put to death. It seems better, therefore, to think first it may be of the persons in whom civil power was centred, of the possessors of the world power, of kings or emperors in any land, but especially in Rome, who demanded that Divine honours should be paid them, and who persecuted to the death such as refused the homage. These may be first thought of, but after them come all who, having any worldly power, are persuaded to use it against the saints of God. To them the second beast gives 'breath,' making them bring it about that they worship not the image of the first beast, and are not to the incarnate spirit of the world what believers are to their Lord, 'should be killed.'
Son freely receives what is given Him by the Father, the devil what is given him by God, the beast what is given him by the dragon, the adherents of the beast what is given them by the beast. The 'mark' itself is the treachery of that impressed by God as His seal upon His own (chap. vii. 2). It is made upon the 'right hand or upon the forehead,' the former being that part of the body upon which soldiers, the latter that upon which slaves, received their mark. The followers of the beast own the beast as their captain and serve it as its slaves. What the precise nature of the mark was we are not informed, although from the following verse it would appear to have been either the name of the beast, or the number by which that name might be expressed. From chap. xiv. 1 it would seem that the 'Father's name' was the mark imprinted upon the followers of the Lamb.

Ver. 13. The meaning of this verse can only be that the second beast aimed at denying a part in the intercourse of life, or the rights of citizenship, to every one who refused to acknowledge the supremacy of the first.

Having considered the particulars mentioned in these verses, we have now to ask what is denoted by this second beast, or third great enemy of the saints. In doing so it is necessary to call to mind the leading principle which seems to lie at the bottom of the apocalyptic conception of the Church's struggle. We have already had various illustrations of it, and more will meet us as we proceed. That principle is simply this, that the struggle of the Church is the continuation of the struggle of Christ Himself. The Church is one with her Lord, is appointed to carry on His work in the world, is exposed to the same trials, and is destined to achieve the same victory. The enemies who rise against her are therefore substantially the same as those with which Jesus had to contend. Keeping this in view, we ought to have little difficulty in determining the meaning of the second beast. It was with three great enemies that the contest of Jesus was carried on, and by them His sufferings and death were brought about. These were the devil, the power of the heathen world, and the spiritual wickedness of the Jews. The two former have already been set before us in the dragon and the first beast. The last mentioned is the second beast. It is not worldly wisdom, or learning, or science, or art; not increasing civilization, or the power of intellectual cultivation, even when most refined and spiritual. A fatal objection to all such views is that they not only draw no sufficient distinction between the first and the second beast, but that they fail to recognize the essentially religious character of the latter. Upon this point the indications of the passage are too numerous and precise to be mistaken. The second beast exercises its power not through the sword but through the word and signs. The lamb-like form of the horns reminds of Jesus the great Teacher and Prophet of His people. The speaking as a dragon takes us to the thought of those false teachers who come in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravening wolves (Matt. vii. 15). The 'great teachers' come by it are an obvious allusion to the words 'There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect' (Matt. xxiv. 24); while at the same time we are reminded by its whole appearance of that antichrist, whose coming "is according to the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders" (2 Thess. ii. 9). Add to all this that the second beast is expressly styled the 'false prophet' in other passages of this book (xvi. 13, xix. 20, xx. 10), and the conclusion appears to be incontrovertible, that it represents to us no mere secular or worldly, but a distinctly religious and antichristian, spirit. Further, this spirit is clearly in the first instance Jewish, for the second beast rises up out of the 'land,' not like the first out of the 'sea,' and the land is the emblem of Judaism, as the sea is of heathenism. More even may be said; for the action of the second beast corresponds precisely to that of the fanatical spirit of Judaism in the days of our Lord. It was 'the Jews' who stirred up the power of Rome against their true King;—it was they who 'exercised all the authority of the first beast before Him;' they who by their cry 'We have no king but Caesar' made an 'image to the beast;' and they who gave 'life unto the image of the beast,' that it should both speak and cause as many as would not worship it to be killed.' Circumstances such as these lead directly to the belief that the fundamental spirit of this second beast is that of a degenerate Judaism in its most bigoted, fanatical, and antichristian form,—that spirit which stirred up the Roman power against our Lord, which in after times was so often the means of unseathing the sword of the civil magistrate against Christians, and which, down to our own day, has been ever working as a spirit of enmity and persecution to all that claims to be the religion of Christ the immediate presence of the Divine.

At the same time we are not to imagine that this spirit of degenerate Judaism is to be found only in those who are Jews by birth. In the Fourth Gospel the spirit of 'the Jews' is looked upon as that which most truly and fully exhibits the irreligious spirit of the world. The same is the case here. The spirit and rule of the second beast are as wide as those of the first. 'The Jews' were men. Their nature was human. They exhibited the preference shown by human nature in every age for the seen above the unseen, for the outward and formal above the inward and spiritual. In this beast, therefore, although we have first the spirit displayed by them, we have also embodied that irreligious spirit which, especially in the Church, has no toleration for the unworldliness of the children of God. Tolerant of all else, it would here threaten and persecute and kill. The friend of the world is the enemy of God. Finally, the remark must be made, that this second beast is to be sought within rather than without the professing Christian Church.

Ver. 18. At this point the Seer pauses, and we meet those words which have been so great a puzzle to the Church of Christ in all ages of her history. Here is wisdom.—The test of wisdom is then set forth in the following clause: He that hath understanding, let him count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is six hundred sixty and six. 'He that hath understanding,' that is, the number of the name of the beast is one which, when transferred according to the fashion of the time into the letters designating them, will give the name of the beast. 'The number is six hundred sixty and six,' that is, it is a number which consists of
three numerals, the lowest 6; the second 6 multiplied by 10, or 60; the third 60 multiplied by 10, or 600. 'Let him count the number of the beast,' that is, let him weigh carefully the import of these three numerals.

To treat the point now before us with anything like the fulness which it deserves is unfortunately out of the question. The limits of this commentary forbid the attempt. Instead, therefore, of endeavouring either to examine the various interpretations that have been given of the verse, or to trace the history of the inquiry, we shall confine ourselves as much as possible to one interpretation which seems to have been the most weighty among the rest, and regarding which we refer to the number 666, six hundred and sixty and six.' To represent the words 'Neron Cesar.' The argument is that, when written in Hebrew characters, the names of these words stand in the following order: Neron KSR, and that, taken according to their numerical value in the Hebrew alphabet, they supply the following figures: 50 + 200 + 6 + 50 + 100 + 50 + 600, or in all 666. The conclusion is obvious, and the 'beast' alike of our present passage and of chap. xxi., can be no other than the Emperor Nero, the foulest monster that ever stained the page of history with deeds of cruelty and lust and blood. We believe that this solution is mistaken, and we offer the following considerations in connection with it.

(1) Every inquirer allows that the 'beast' spoken of is not the second but the first beast of the chapter. Sufficient attention, however, has not been paid to the fact that a distinction must be drawn between that beast in itself and in each of the various forms in which it was manifested under its successive 'heads' (comp. on ver. 2). Properly speaking, the beast itself is no one of these heads singly. It is the concentrated essence of them all (comp. on chap. xvii. 11).

Whatever of evil there is in each of them flows from it, and must be restored to it when we would form a true conception of what it is. We know it only fully when, gathering into itself every previous element of its demonic power, it is about to exert its last and fiercest paroxysm of rage before it goes 'into perdition' (chap. xviii. 8). By the confession even of those against whom we contend it is 'the eighth' mentioned in chap. xvii. 11; it is 'of the seven,' and yet it is so far to be distinguished from them. That this is the correct view of 'the beast' in the present chapter as well as in chap. xvii. is clear, not only from the fact that the beast is spoken of as distinct from any one head, and from the impossibility of interpreting chaps. xiii. and xvi. unless we suppose the beast of both chapters to be essentially the same, but also because in vers. 14-17 of this chapter we have the whole work of the second beast in its service, as well as its own work, set before us as fully and finally accomplished. 'The beast,' therefore, to which our attention is here called, cannot be Nero, for, even if we accept the supposition that the seven 'heads' of chap. xiii. 1 or the seven 'kings' of chap. xvi. 10 were personal kings and not, as we have already shown, kingdoms, it must be more than any separate individual of the series. (3) The inaccuracy of accepting the letter of the Hebrew instead of the Greek alphabet. The improbability that St. John had Hebrew letters in his mind is very great. He writes in Greek. On other occasions he employs the letter of the Greek alphabet in order to give, by means of letters, an expression to his thought (chaps. i. 8, xvi. 6, xvii. 13). When he uses the Hebrew he expressly notifies that he does so (chap. xi. 16; comp. John v. 2, xix. 13, 17, xx. 16). Few things are more certain than that the Christians of Asia Minor, for whom he wrote, had little or no acquaintance with Hebrew. It is urged indeed that the Seer has resorted to the Hebrew alphabet for the sake of more effectually concealing a name the disclosure of which might have been attended with danger. The assumption is wholly gratuitous. The obvious intention of the Seer is not so much to conceal as to reveal the name, although, in a manner that shall illustrate its solemn import. He is dealing, in short, not with a human puzzle but with a Divine mystery, the most essential conditions of which would have been destroyed had he here concealed himself about the half-concealed name of an individual. Nor, if his object be to avert danger from the Christian Church, is he consistent with himself. It will not be denied that, if the numbers before us point to Nero, the name of chap. xvii. 9, 18 point to Rome, and in that case a city, the naming of which must have been as dangerous as the naming of its Emperor, could not have been designated with greater clearness. (4) It is only by force that the letters of the Hebrew alphabet can be made to accomplish the end for which they are referred to. The names of Ewald and Renan stand at the very head of Semitic scholarship in Europe, yet neither Ewald nor Renan can be suspected for a moment of any leaning towards the traditions of the Church. Yet both of them have pronounced it almost, if not altogether, impossible to believe that the words Nero Cesar could in the first century have been spelled in the way demanded by the proposed solution. The former, accordingly, first inserts an additional letter in the KSR, then substitutes Rome for Nero, and lastly obtains the number 666 (of which we have still to speak) instead of 666 (Johann, Schrift, ii. p. 262). The latter, agreeing with Ewald as to the spelling but not as to the number represented, gives it as his explanation that the author of the Apocalypse has 'probably of design suppressed the additional letter in order that he may have a symmetrical cipher.' With that letter he would have had 676 (L'Antehr. p. 416). It is surely too much to expect that men shall readily receive an explanation so unexpected as this, and the KSR represents the only real and possible solution. (4) Another circumstance has yet to be noted which has been adduced by a well-known and influential writer of the day in the following words: - 'If any confirmation could possibly be

1 The Hebrew word for Cesar was spelled in the first century not by the letters KSR but by KSR.
wanting to this conclusion (that afforded by the reference to Nero Caesar), we find it in the curious fact recorded by Irenæus, that in some copies he found the reading 616. Now this change can hardly have been due to carelessness. But if the above solution be correct, this remarkable and seemingly gratuitous variation is at once explained and accounted for. A Jewish Christian, trying his Hebrew solution, which would (as he knew) defend the interpretation from dangerous Gentiles, may have been puzzled by the n in Nero Kesar. Although the name was so written in Hebrew, he knew that to Romans, and Gentiles generally, the name was always Nero Caesar, not Nero. But Nero Kesar in Hebrew, omitting the final n, gave 616, not 666; and he may have altered the reading because he imagined that, in an unimportant particular, it made the solution more suitable and easy’ (Farrar, The Early Days of Christianity, vol. ii. p. 295). At first sight the argument is plausible, but it breaks down on the fact that the ancient father to whom we owe our earliest information as to the reading 616 instead of 666 knew nothing of the proposed explanation. Although himself offering conjectures at the time as to the meaning of the mysterious symbols, he makes no allusion to either Nero Caesar or Nero Caesar; and, after mentioning one or two solutions, he concludes that St. John would have given the name had he thought it right that it should be uttered. It is a curious fact, illustrating the little importance to be attached to the argument under consideration, that the father to whom we refer preferred another rendering Teitan (T = 300, E = 5, I = 10, T = 300, A = 1, N = 50, in which he gets Teita, numbering 616, and a better repre- sentation than Teitan of the Emperor Titus by whom Jerusalem was overthrown. When we find therefore that, notwithstanding the desire to perpetuate the original meaning of the enigma which marked the early Church, this solution was not discovered, we have a proof that the discovery has been made by a false process, and is worthless. (5) We venture to ask whether in conducting this discussion sufficient attention has been paid to St. John’s use of the word ‘name,’ and to the precise manner in which he makes the statement of this verse. In all the writings of the Apostle the ‘name’ of any one is much more than a designation by which the person receiving it is identified. It marks the person in himself. It tells us not only who he is but what he is. It has a deep internal signification; and importance belongs to it, not because the name is first attached to a person and then interpreted, but because it has its meaning first, and has then been affixed, under the guidance of God, to the person whose character or work it afterwards expresses. Keeping this in view let us carefully note the manner in which the statement of this verse is made. It is not the name, it is the numbers that are emphatic—not the name deduced from the numbers, but the numbers deduced from the name. Upon these numbers we are mainly to fix our eye. But there must be a bond of connection with the name deeper and stronger than the bare fact that the numbers were yielded by it. Familiar as the writer shows himself to be with the method of transposing letters and numbers then in vogue, he must have known that many names would yield the number 666, probably quite as many as the long list which swells the history of the interpretation of this text. Of what use would it have been merely to call attention to this? The questions would instantly arise, Which is the true solution? Wherein is one name so given better than another? There must be some additional element in St. John’s thought. Let us endeavour to discover it by making the supposition that he had been dealing with the human name of the Redeemer, Jesus. He cannot fail to have known that the letters of that name in Greek give the number 888 (v = 10, α = 5, ε = 200, ς = 70, ν = 500, ι = 100, ζ = 600), but many other names must also have done so. What would lend peculiar importance to the fact that the correspondence existed in the name of Jesus? The combination of two things does it; first, the meaning of the figures; secondly, the meaning of the divinely-bestowed name. The two correspond; behold the expression of the Divine will! The figure 8 had a Divine meaning to the Jew. It was upon the 8th day that circumcision, the initiatory act, giving a new life, was performed. The 8th day was ‘the great day’ of the Feast of Tabernacles (John vii. 37). What in Matt. v. 10 is apparently an 8th Beatitude is really the beginning of a new cycle in which that character of the Christian which had been described in the seven previous Beatitudes is thought of as coming out in such a manner before the world that the world persecutes. Upon the 8th day our Lord rose from the grave, bringing His Church with Him to her true resurrection life. But the name ‘Jesus’ has also a Divine meaning (Matt. i. 21). In the very spirit of this passage St. John might have spoken of ‘the number of the name’ of Jesus ‘hundreds, and hundreds, and eight, and eight.’ As it is, he is occupied with one who, in his death, resurrection, and second coming, is the very counterpart of our Lord. He has a ‘name,’ a character and work, the opposite of Christ’s. That name may be translated into numbers yielding 666. Ominous numbers! falling short of the sacred 7 to the same extent as the eights went beyond it; associated too with so much that had been most godless and impious in Old Testament history. The nations of Canaan had been 6 in number (Deut. xxi. 17). The image set up by Nebuchadnezzar, and for refusing to worship which the three companions of Daniel were committed to the fiery furnace, had been sixty cubits high by six cubits broad. The weight of gold that came to Solomon every year, in token of the submission of the heathen nations around him, had been 666 talents (1 Kings x. 14 ; 2 Chron. ii. 13). On the sixth day of the week at the sixth hour, when Jesus hung upon the cross, the power of darkness culminated (Matt. xxvii. 45). What dread thoughts were connected with such sixes! The argument then is,—theses numbers correspond to the name of the beast when its meaning, otherwise known, is taken into account. Both tell the same tale; behold how God expresses Himself regarding it! Now for all this the words Nero Caesar would not have answered the apostle’s purpose, and could never have filled his mind with the awe that is upon him in this verse.
THE REVELATION. [CHAP. XIV. 1-5.

These considerations seem sufficient to show that the mere equivalence of value between the letters of Nero’s name (as of many other names of that and every following age) and the number 666 is no proof that the Roman tyrant is mysteriously indicated. When we add to this some of the other points previously spoken of, more especially that the beast is before us in its complete development, and that the homage it receives is paid to it as a beast that had died and risen from the dead (facta never asserted of Nero at that time), we are justified in concluding that the whole Nero theory will most probably prove but an illustration of the manner in which exegetical, not less than other, fancies have their periods of temporary revival as well as decay.

It is scarcely necessary to allude to an interpretation of an altogether different kind which has found favour with many, and which depends on the form rather than the numerical value of the figures. Written in letters rather than in words the figures 666 are the following χεβε’, the first the initial letter of the name of Christ, the last the first double letter of the Greek word for cross, in the middle the twisted ‘serpent.’ There is nothing inconsistent with the ideas of the time in what may appear to be only too fanciful to be true. It is a sufficient argument against it that the verse which we have to explain was addressed to the ear rather than the eye.

All other proposed solutions may be omitted. We have confined ourselves to that which is by far the most plausible, and the consequences of which, could it be established, would undoubtedly make this verse the keystone of apocalyptic interpretation. Our readers, we believe, will not ask more. It will be noticed, too, that we have indicated, in what has been said, the most important condition to be fulfilled by any solution which is to obtain general acceptance. The name of the beast represented by the figures must have itself a meaning expressive of the beast’s position or character or work. Only if this were the case could the coincidence of its name with its number be of consequence to those who were to learn from it.

CHAPTER XIV. 1-5.

The Lamb upon Mount Zion with His 144,000.

1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sang as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

1 saw 9 behold 8 the 4 standing
9 omit Father’s 4 add and the name of his Father 7 on
8 out of 4 a 6 standing the
9 sing 10 living creatures 13 one
18 omit 4 omit which 8 even they that had been purchased
19 omit 50 purchased 21 omit being 23 a
20 unto 24 lie 26 omit for 18 blemish
17 omit before the throne of God
CHAP. XIV. 6-20.] THE REVELATION.

CONTENTS. The three great enemies of the people of God have been set before us, and we might expect the last struggle to begin. So terrible, however, are the judgments about to fall that we must be specially prepared for them. This preparation is made by the visions of the present chapter.

Ver. 1. First the Lamb is seen standing on the mount Sion. It is the same Lamb that we have already met with at chap. v. 6.—the once crucified, but now risen and glorified, Lord. The 'mount Sion' is neither the literal Sion at Jerusalem, nor the Christian Church, but simply the most appropriate place for the people of God to occupy, the holy mount, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. The scene of preservation is not heaven but earth.—And with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads. These are the sealed of chap. vii., not one lost. True, they are not spoken of as the 'sealed.' In chap. vii. they were so described, for their preservation was there the prominent thought. Now that they have been preserved and admitted as priests within the veil, our attention may be directed to the contents of the seal. These are in part at least—it is not necessary to think wholly—the 'name' which belongs at once to the Father and to the Lamb, the name Lord. St. John, as his manner is, is loftier than St. Paul, who says, 'Ye are the Lord's' (Rom. xiv. 8).

Ver. 2. A voice is heard out of heaven. The description of it shows that it is a voice of mingled terror and sweetness.

Ver. 3. The song referred to is not said to be sung by the 144,000, and perhaps we ought to think simply of a great body of praise going up before the throne. And none could learn the song save the hundred and forty and four thousand, even they that had been purchased out of the earth. They are described as 'purchased out of the earth,' a designation which, like that of 'wise virgins' and of 'the elect,' must be accepted in a general sense, there being nothing to suggest the idea of Judaism alone. The word 'earth' rather leads us to the thought of our natural condition as sons of Adam (Gen. iii. 19; 1 Cor. xv. 47, 49).

Ver. 4, 5. These are they which were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. The description is in three clauses each beginning with the word 'These.'

1 They are virgins—'not all of them literally so—for the 144,000 represent the whole multitude of the redeemed. Nor on the other hand, only in the sense that they had kept themselves pure from idolatry, for the temptation to actual idolatry belongs only to particular ages of the Church. They were 'virgins' in the sense in which St. Paul speaks of the whole Church at Corinth (2 Cor. xi. 2). Even those who had entered into marriage, the closest of earthly ties, had learned to keep it in subordination to the will of Christ; 'those that had wives were as though they had none' (1 Cor. vii. 29).

2 These are they which follow the lamb whithersoever he goeth. As the first clause contained the negative, the second contains the positive, aspect of their life. The word for 'goeth' is important. It is not simply 'whithersoever he moveth about;' and still less can it be referred to the following of the Lamb to favoured localities in the heavenly mansions. The 144,000 are still on earth. The verb used is that by which Jesus in the Fourth Gospel so often denotes His 'going' to the Father, including both His death and His glorification. The 144,000 follow Him to the cross, the resurrection, and the ascension (comp. John xxi. 22). This is their character. The sense of the verb 'follow' is not that of present time merely, it is descriptive of a state.

3 These were purchased from among men, a first-fruits unto God and unto the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no lie: they are without blemish. The third characteristic of the 144,000 describes the glory of their position. For the force of the words 'from among men,' see on ver. 3. The term 'first-fruits' may seem to imply that the persons spoken of are a selection from the great body of the redeemed. Were it so, the term would be inappropriately used; for in the view of those who introduce the idea of selection, we are dealing with Christians at the end, not at the beginning, of the Church's history. Besides which, the term seems to correspond with that of 'the elect' in Matt. xxiv. 31, where all the elect must be meant. In Isa. l. 18, too, we must not look for a similar sense. The 144,000 are a 'first-fruits' in relation not to the remaining portion of believers but to all the creatures of God. —The 'lie' spoken of is not simply the opposite of veracity, but of truth of character and life as a whole (comp. Ps. cxvi. 11; John viii. 44; 1 John ii. 21; Rev. xxi. 27).—That they are 'without blemish' reminds us of Jesus Himself (1 Pet. i. 19). They are a faultless and acceptable sacrifice to God, because they are offered up in Him who 'did no sin,' and in whom the Father was always 'well pleased.'

CHAPTER XIV. 6-20.

Preparatory Visions (continued).

6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tribe, sitting on the four winds of the earth.
7 tongue, and people, saying with a loud* voice, Fear God, and
give glory to him; for the 7 hour of his judgment is come: and
worship him that * made heaven, and * earth, and the * sea, 11
and the 11 fountains of waters. And there followed another
angel,* saying, 9 Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, 14
because she made 15 all 16 nations 17 drink of the wine of the
wrath of her fornication. And the third angel followed
them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship 9 the
beast and his image, and receive 91 his 92 mark in 93 his forehead,
or in 94 his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath
of God, which is 98 poured out 9 without mixture into 97 the cup
of his indignation; 99 and he shall be tormented with 99 fire and
brimstone in the 4 presence of 90 the holy angels, and in the
11 presence of 90 the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment
ascendeth 91 up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day
nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever
receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the 4 patience of the
saints: here are 93 they that keep the commandments of God,
and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from 92 heaven
saying unto me,* Write, Blessed are the dead which die in
the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may
rest from their labours; and 99 their works do 99 follow them.97
And I looked,* and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud
one sat like unto the / Son of man, having on his head a
golden crown, and in his hand a sharp 66 sickle. And another
angel came out of 41 the temple, crying with a loud 49 voice to
him that sat on the cloud, thrust in 49 thy sickle, and reap: for
the time 44 is come for thee 44 to reap; for the 4 harvest of the
earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle
on the earth; and the earth was reaped. And another angel
came out of 46 the temple which is in heaven, he also having a
sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar,
which had 97 power over fire; 48 and cried 49 with a loud cry 49 to
him that had the sharp sickle, saying, 7 Thrust in 51 thy sharp
dickle, and gather the clusters of the 4 vine of the earth; for her
grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into
the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into
20 the great 7 wine-press of the wrath of God. And the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

63 bridles of the horses

64 as far as the wine of the wrath of her fornication. The proclamation is simply anticipatory of what is to be more fully described hereafter. Till we come, therefore, to that description (chap. xviii.) it may be well to defer inquiry into the meaning of the word 'Babylon.' In her ungodly influence Babylon is spoken of as making ‘all the nations to drink,’ etc. (comp. Jer. li. 7). A third angel follows.

Ver. 9. And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a great voice. It is curious to meet here again the ‘great voice’ which is met in connection with the first angel, but not with the second. The circumstance is perhaps to be accounted for by the tendency of St. John to return at the close of a series of events to the beginning. In the next series of three, extending from ver. 15 to ver. 20, the same structure is found, a ‘great voice’ being there attributed to the first and third angels, but not to the second.—If any man worshippeth the beast and his image, and receiveth a mark upon his forehead or on his hand. Such is the cry of the third angel as he proclaims judgment to all the followers of the beast. These we have already met at chap. xiii. 16. In the description the order of the two words ‘forehead’ and ‘hand’ is changed, but the construction of cases is the same.

Ver. 10. He also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, the poured out unmingled wine in the cup of his anger. The punishment of such is now described in four particulars, the number four being perhaps taken because it is the ungodly world with which we are dealing, and because it is a lex talionis that is illustrated. The first of the four particulars corresponds to ver. 8, and shows that we have before us essentially the same spirit as that there referred to. The wine is said (literally) to be ‘mingled unmingled,’ but there is no play upon the words, for, owing to the practice of the ancients to mingle water with wine, the verb to mingle had come to be used in the simple sense of pouring out. Enough that the wine of the wrath of God is now ‘unmingled’; the day of grace is past.—And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone before the angels and before the Lamb. The second of the four particulars presents us with the final punishment of hell (comp. chaps. xix. 20, xx. 10, xxi. 8; Gen. xiv. 24).

Ver. 11. And the smoke of their torment goeth up for ever and ever. The third of the four particulars of their miserable doom, which is unto ages of ages, that is, ‘for ever.’—And they have no rest day nor night who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. This is the fourth and last particular in the delineation of their misery, which is not only everlasting, but uninterrupted while it lasts. Can we fail to mark the contrast to the ‘no rest day nor night’ of the four living creatures in chap. iv. 8? In their ‘receiving'
the mark it is implied that there is voluntary action on the part of the followers of the beast.

The first three angels have now fulfilled their message and, before we come to the Judge Himself, there is a pause. Two sayings are introduced.

Ver. 12. Here is the patience of the saints, they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (comp. chap. xiii. 10). The first of the two sayings is an encouragement to the faithful afforded by the fact that God will execute His judgments upon the ungodly in the way which has been described (comp. chap. xiii. 10). We have in this a further proof that the whole proclamation of the three angels has been one of judgment, not of mercy, of judgment and mercy combined. The construction of the two clauses is important, as there can be no doubt that the second contains a fuller description of the 'saints' mentioned in the first (comp. chap. xii. 4).

Ver. 13. And I heard a voice out of heaven saying, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Those that 'die in the Lord' are obviously in contrast with the followers of the beast spoken of in ver. 11, and the verb used in the original, not 'fall asleep' but 'die,' seems to imply the thought of the troubles and persecutions in the midst of which they died. The verb is several times used of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, and the word in the Lord here added to it may be intended to denote that the death referred to was such a death as His. The expression therefore does not bear that sense of quiet falling asleep in Jesus which we generally associate in Him His people meet persecution and death; and that, although they are not all actually martyrs, they have the martyr spirit.—From henceforth. What is the time to which these words point? Is it the moment when the harvest of the earth is to be reaped? In that case we must connect them with 'Blessed,' while 'henceforth' is obviously connected with the verb 'die.' Yet we cannot speak of dying after the harvest. It seems better, therefore, to understand the words as referring to the beginning of the Christian age, and onward to the end (comp. Matt. xxvii. 64).

During all that time the 144,000 are being gathered in amidst the temptations of Babylon and the opposition of the beast. To the faithful during all that time, therefore, the consolation of these words is given; and their meaning is, that they who 'die in the Lord' are 'blessed,' not because at death they enter into the immediate possession of the heavenly reward (a point upon which no direct information is afforded), but because they are set free from the difficulties and trials and sorrows which, were they left here to continue the struggle, they would have to meet. Instead of being longer troubled they enter into rest (comp. 2 Thess. i. 7). Hence accordingly the following words.—Yes, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, for their works follow with them. Those who thus die are blessed because 'they rest from their labours;' they have that rest from toil and suffering which they cannot obtain here below. And how comes it that they thus rest? Because their 'works' (an entirely different word from 'labours') follow with them. Their Christian character and life, giving them a meanness for the rest, follow with them. They enter into heaven fitted for its joys.

Ver. 14. It has been already stated that the chapter now under consideration divides itself into seven parts, the first three introducing to us three angels (vers. 1-13), the last three doing the same (vers. 17-20). Vers. 14-16 thus constitute the fourth or leading passage of the seven. It is the centre of the whole chapter, and its very position thus prepares us for the transition that we make in it from angels to the Lord Himself. What is first seen is a white cloud, the cloud upon which Jesus is else where represented as coming in order to wind up the history of the world (Matt. xxiv. 30, xxvi. 64). Upon this cloud is seen one sitting like unto a Son of man, a description which immediately follows, to give the mind that it is the Lord (comp. chap. i. 13). Nor is it in any way inconsistent with this that He who sits upon the cloud receives a commission from an angel (ver. 14). That angel delivers a message from God (comp. Dan. vii. 13, 14). The 'Son of man' wears a crown of victory. He went out to conquer (chap. vi. 2): He now returns as a conqueror. The sickle is for reaping.

Ver. 15, 16. The fourth angel of the chapter now appears, and cries with a great voice to him that sat upon the cloud that the hour is come to reap. The message is from God, for the Son knows not the hour Himself (Mark xiii. 32; comp. Acts i. 7), and no sooner is the message heard than the cloud will receive its recipient and oblige: the earth was reaped. The angel it will be observed performs no part of the act of reaping. That act is performed wholly by Him that 'sat on the cloud.' At ver. 19 it will be different. The question is interesting and important, whether we are to understand by this harvest the ingathering of the righteous alone (thus separating it by a broad line of distinction from the vintage which immediately follows) or a general reaping of the wicked as well as of the good. The analogy of Scripture as well as the mode in which the passage before us is conceived point distinctly to the former view. The good are alone the true 'harvest.' The 'garner' is the garner. At John xiv. 3 Jesus comes for His own, while at Matt. xiii. 41 the angels gather in the wicked to their fate.

Ver. 17. In this verse the second of the second group of three angels appears. He also has a sharp sickle like that of the Person mentioned in ver. 14. But he is not on that account to be identified with Him—he only carries out His will. The sickle too is to be used for another purpose, there for reaping, here for gathering the vintage. Ver. 18. The third of the second group of three angels comes not merely from the temple, but out from the altar, the most sacred part of it—that altar over which the angel stands who presents the prayers of the saints to God, and who casts its fire upon the earth (chap. viii. 3-5). It is this fire, not fire in general, that is referred to when the angel is described as he that hath power over the fire. The fire is the judgments of God upon the earth.—The angel next cries to him that had the sharp sickle that he should gather the clusters of the vine of the earth. As in ver. 16 we were told only of the harvest of the good, so here we are told only of the vintage of the wicked. The figure is often used in the Old Testament (comp. Isa. xlix. 1-4; Joel iii. 13).

Ver. 19. The vintage is described. Not merely the grapes but the vine of the earth itself is
gathered, the vine being wholly rooted out according to the words of the Lord, 'Every plant which My Heavenly Father planted shall be rooted up' (Matt. xv. 13). After this the vine is cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

Ver. 20. And the winepress was trodden without the city. In the words 'without the city' we can hardly fail to see another instance of the lex talionis: our Lord had suffered 'without the gate.'—And blood came out of the winepress even unto the bridles of the horses, as far as a thousand and six hundred furlongs. The juice of the grape here passes into the reality, blood, which it was intended to represent (comp. Isa. lxiii. 1-3). It is difficult to say what may be the exact meaning of the first part of the description of the great sea of blood—that its depth was 'to the bridles of the horses.' There is nothing to suggest the idea that the horses represent the 'chiefs of the people.' Commentators generally abandon such an interpretation, but substitute none of their own, occupying themselves rather with the inquiry, whether these horses are those of the angels of chap. ix. 15 or those of the host that come up to the destruction of Jerusalem. May the words of Zech. xiv. 20 supply the needed explanation, 'In that day shall there be upon the bells (bridles) of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD?' The thought of the Seer may be that the blood could not be so deep as to touch these holy words. The extent of the sea of blood is less difficult to determine. We may at once dismiss the idea that it is taken from the superficial area of the Holy Land or of the old territories of the Pope, or that the expression denotes simply 'great extent.' We must start from the fact that we have to deal with a judgment by which the whole ungodly world is over-taken, and that four is the number of the world. This number is first squared for completeness, and then multiplied by 100, a number, as we have seen, belonging to the wicked, while 1000 belongs rather to the good. Thus we have $4 \times 4 \times 100$, representing the whole surface of the earth, wherever the ungodly are to be found.

CHAPTER XV. 1-8.

The Angels with the Bowls.

1 AND I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in the sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his mark, and over his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest. And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. And one of the four beasts gave unto the four and twenty elders living creatures.

1 omit the last. 2 add which are the last is finished. 4 omit and over his mark. 9 standing upon the glassy sea. 10 omit the righteous. 11 righteous acts. 12 saw behold. 13 omit. 14 and there came out from the temple. 15 clothed with a stone pure and lustrous. 16 omit girded.
the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God,
8 who liveth for ever and ever. And the temple was filled with
smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no
man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues
of the seven angels were fulfilled.

CONTENTS. This chapter is introductory (like
chaps. xii., xiii., and xiv.) to the final outpouring
of the Almighty’s wrath upon the enemies of His
Church. In chaps. xii. and xiii. we had these
enemies presented to us; in chap. xiv. we had
the assurance that, formidable as they were, they
should neither be able to hurt the righteous nor
to protect the wicked. In chap. xv. the last
ministers of the Almighty’s vengeance are intro-
duced, and we are invited to listen to the song
with which they are sent forth upon their mission.
The series of the Bowls opens with two visions,
the first in vers. 2-4, the second in vers. 5-8, of
this chapter. The Seals were introduced by word;
vision immediately connected with them: the
Trumpets were introduced by one vision (chap.
viii. 1-5). Two visions introduce the Bowls, and
thus again illustrate the climactic character of this
book.

Ver. 1. The angels spoken of have seven
plagues which are the last; and the reason is
assigned why they are so named, for in them is
finished the wrath of God. God’s last and most
terrible judgments are at hand.

Ver. 2. The next thing seen is a glassy sea
mingled with fire. There can be no reason to
doubt that this is the sea already spoken of at
chap. iv. 6. The difference is, that it is now
‘mingled with fire,’ the same fire as that of chap.
xiv. 18, the fire of judgment (comp. on chap.
v. 4.6).—Those that occupy this sea are next
described as they come victorious out of the
book and out of his image, and out of the
number of his name, words in which the remark-
able use of the preposition ‘out of’ is well worthy
of notice (comp. on John xvii. 15). In the
persons referred to we must include all Christians
of all times who have been victorious over the
three things mentioned. There is nothing to
suggest the thought of a mere selection from that
number.—For the harps of God which they hold
in their hands see chaps. v. 8, xiv. 2.

Ver. 3. Not only do they harp: they mingle
song with their harping. They sing the song of
Moses the servant of God and the song of the
Lamb, saying. The epithet ‘servant of God’
applied to Moses awakens the remembrance of all
that God did for Israel through Moses the great
representative of the Old Testament Dispensation.
The Lamb is not less clearly the sun and centre
of the New Testament Dispensation. Or the
matter may be otherwise looked at. Moses
delivered men from the first head of the beast, i.e.,
under him began that deliverance out of a perse-
ccuting world which is finished in Christ. The
song, therefore, includes everything that God had
done for His people alike in Old and New Testa-
ment times. How clearly it does appear that the
beast cannot be Nero! Only one generation, not
the whole Church, could sing of deliverance from
him. There is nothing to indicate that the song
(302,707),(871,834)

should be finished

is similar to that of Israel at the Red Sea,
Ex. xvi., or to that of Deut xxxii., yet in all
probability the former was in the Seer’s view.—In
the words of the song it seems only necessary to
notice that for the reading ‘king of saints’ of the
Authorised Version king of the nations is to be
substituted. The change is important, as throw-
ing light upon that aspect of the Almighty which
is here thought of. Not His love towards His
‘saints,’ but His terror towards His enemies is
celebrated. He beattles His people with salva-
tion, but He visits the ‘nations’ with His wrath.

Ver. 4. In this verse the song begun in ver. 3
is continued in the following. Who shall not fear,
O Lord, and glorify thy name, for thou only art holy
for all the nations shall come and worship before thee, for thy
righteous acts have been made manifest. The
‘righteous acts’ of God referred to are not such as
have been exhibited alike in the publication of
His Gospel and in the destruction of His enemies.
The whole context imperatively requires that we
shall understand them of the latter alone. If so,
we are guided to the true meaning of the word
‘worship’ in this verse, and we have at the same
time a striking illustration of the manner in which,
throughout the Apocalypse (and the Fourth
Gospel), we meet with a double worship, a
double worship, that of faith upon the one hand,
and of fear upon the other. It may be at once
allowed that there is no passage in the Apocalypse
which seems to speak so strongly of the conversion
of the world as that now under consideration. Yet the
world is a ‘worship’ of awe, of terror, and of trembling,
as well as a ‘worship’ of faith and love; and the
whole analogy of this book (as well as of the
Fourth Gospel, which in this respect most strikingly
resembles it) leads directly to the conclusion, that
the former alone is spoken of when the worship
of the ungodly is referred to. So in Phil. ii. 10
‘things under the earth’ bow the knee and
confess that Jesus is Lord. However, therefore,
we may be at times disposed to think that mention
is made in this book of the conversion of the
wicked, it will we believe always appear upon
more attentive consideration that nothing of the
kind is really spoken of. Yet we are not on this
account to conclude that the Apocalypse dooms to
everlasting ruin all but the selected number who
constitute in its pages the true Church of Christ.
Its language appears only to be founded on that
style of thought which meets us in the Old Testa-
mament when the Prophets speak of the enemies of
Israel. Israel shall conquer and overthrow, but
not necessarily destroy, them. Through their very
subjugation they may receive a blessing. Thus
may it be in the case before us. All that we urge
is, that in the words of this verse judgment alone
is in view. If judgment lead to penitence it is
well; but the eye of the Seer does not travel so
far into the future.
Chapter XVI. 1-21.

The Seven Bowls.

1 And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image. And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea. And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for he said, jeg of the earth, that thou hast made it, and they have shed the blood of righteous men and saints, and thou hast not avenged them, that they might have rest; even now art thou righteous, O Lord, and yet dost judge.

8 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great noise out of the temple of the habitation of God, and out of heaven, as the voice of many waters; and as the sound of mighty thunderings. And every mountain and island was moved out of their places.

11 And the tenth month, on the first day of the month, came the word of the Lord through his servant, Isaiah, saying, Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, and understand; be not afraid, neither be your loins weak:

14 Yet your eyes have seen the heavens opened, and the foundations of the earth, being established, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

16 For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.
they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments. And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory. And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds. And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them unto the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God.
because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.  

because great is the plague of it exceedingly

Contents. This chapter is occupied with the seven Bowls, and judgment assumes its last and highest form.

Ver. 1. The voice heard is that of God, for He alone was in the temple (chap. xv. 8); and it comes from the innermost shrine. Nothing of this kind had been said at the opening of the trumpets (chap. viii. 7); and the distinction is important, for it shows us that it is not now the people of God who continue the conflict, but God Himself who acts directly for them. He takes His own cause in hand. The earth is to be distinguished from the 'sea' (comp. ver. 3).

Ver. 2. The first angel poured out his bowl into the earth. The whole earth is thought of, and no more only a third part of it as at chap. viii. 7. And then call a solemn and grievous sore upon the man which had the mark of the beast and which worshipped his image. The idea of the plague is taken from that of Egypt in Ex. ix. 8-12, but it cannot be literally understood, for literal interpretation is wholly inapplicable to the sixth bowl, and all the bowls must be interpreted on the same principles.

Ver. 3. The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea. The whole sea, and not merely a third part of it as at chap. viii. 8, 9, is affected by this plague. The increased potency of the plague is also shown in the description given of the blood—not merely blood, but blood as of a dead man, thick, unnatural, offensive to the eye.—Every living soul, too, died, and not merely 'the third part' of the creatures that were in the sea. It can hardly be doubted that we have in this bowl a reference to one of the plagues of Egypt (Ex. vii. 19). But literal interpretation cannot be thought of.

Ver. 4. And the third poured out his bowl into the rivers and the fountains of the waters, and they became blood. Again we see the increased potency of the third bowl as compared with the third trumpet, chap. viii. 10, 11. All rivers, etc., are affected, and they become more than bitter, they become blood.

Ver. 5, 6. And I heard the angel of the waters saying, Thon art righteous, which art, and which wast, the Holy One. No episode of this kind had intervened at the close of the third trumpet. But at the highest stage of judgment it is fitting that even those who suffer from it should answer that it is right. The answer is given by the 'angel of the waters,' not the angel 'who was set over the waters,' and surely not the angel who now poured out his bowl upon the waters, but the waters themselves speaking by their angel, and responding to the fact that the judgment which they have incurred is just. The ascription of praise is to God as 'righteous,' and it will be observed that He is described in three particulars; first, 'which art,' secondly, 'which wast,' thirdly, 'the Holy One.' 'Which art to come,' can be no longer used, for God is come (comp. chap. xi. 17). The particular method of judgment is also commended. It is again the lex taliönis; those who had poured out blood shall drink blood. — They are worthy (comp. chap. iii. 4).

Ver. 7. Not only is an acknowledgment of the righteousness of God's judgment given by the 'waters;' the martyred saints also respond. The altar (not as in the Authorised Version 'another out of the altar') speaks. It is the altar of chap. vi. 9 beneath which is the blood, that is the lives, of the saints. They who have suffered own that the judgments of the Almighty upon those who persecuted them even unto death are true and righteous, conformable to the realities of things and to the demands of perfect righteousness.

Ver. 8. The fourth poured out his bowl upon the sun, and it was given unto him to scorch men with fire. We have not yet passed into a world different from that with which the previous bowls were connected. 'Men' are still plagued, though through the instrumentality of the sun which is used by the angel of judgment for this purpose, the 'fire' referred to being the scorching heat of that luminary. As compared with chap. ix. 12 there is again increased intensity of judgment, for the whole sun is affected, and not merely a third part of it; and its scorching heat, which had not there been spoken of, is now particularly noticed.

Ver. 9. And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God, which hath the power over these plagues, and they repented not to give him glory. The blaspheming is produced not by the last plague alone, but by the four that have been spoken of, — 'plagues' not plague.—The effect is worthy of notice. There is no repentance. Those visited are the followers of the beast. They have chosen their portion; they have hardened themselves; and they are made worse by judgment.

Ver. 10. The fifth poured out his bowl into the throne of the beast. With the fifth bowl we pass into a different region, that of the spiritual powers of darkness. This bowl attacks the very centre of the beast's authority, and the advance from the fifth trumpet is very perceptible. There the hosts of the bottomless pit come forth to plague men. Here the king of these hosts is himself plagued. The 'throne' of the beast is no particular city, but is a symbol of the beast's general power.—And his kingdom was darkened, and they gnawed their tongues for pain. The Egyptian plague of darkness is the foundation of the figure. The addition of the 'gnawing of the tongue for pain' is remarkable, for the pain could not proceed from the darkness. It could come from nothing but the effects of the previous plagues. Each successive woe is added to its predecessors without the latter being suppressed. If it be so, it becomes more impossible than ever to interpret any one of these plagues literally.

Ver. 11. And they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and they repented not out of their works. Compare on ver. 9.

Ver. 12. And the sixth poured out his bowl
upon the great river, the river Euphrates. The sixth trumpet had related to the river Euphrates, chap. ix. 14, and the principles of interpretation necessary there are also to be applied here. 'The Euphrates is the river of Babylonia, the seat of antichristian power, from which proceed assaults upon the people of God.—And the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings from the sunrising may be prepared. At the foundation of this figure of the drying up of the Euphrates may lie the drying up of the Jordan when Israel took possession of the promised land; but it is more probable that the Seer has in view that division of the earth's surface into two parts, of which Cyrus captured Babylon. When Cyrus is predicted as the destroyer of Babylon he is twice spoken of by Isaiah as from the East or the sunrising (Isa. xii. 2, xvi. 11). Cyrus was indeed generally thought of by the fathers as a type of Christ, and it may be observed that, when He is first alluded to, it is in the chapter immediately succeeding that in which Isaiah prophesies of the Baptist as preparing the way of the Lord (chap. xi. 3). The figure of drying up water is one often met with in the prophets, where it is used to express the steps by which God prepares the way for the deliverance of His people and the destruction of their enemies (Isa. xlv. 17, li. 10; Jer. l. 38; Zech. x. 11). In addition to this, the words, 'that the way may be prepared,' lead us directly to the thought of the preparing of the way of the Lord by the Baptist, and thus to a preparation of which the good, not the wicked, shall avail themselves. Further, this very expression, 'from the sunrising,' has already met us in chap. vii. 2, in connection with the angel who comes from that quarter with the seal of the living God to His land; and it is always necessary in the Apocalypse to interpret the same expression in the same way, we are once more led to the thought not of evil but of good. This view is confirmed by another remarkable fact, that in the prophets Christ Himself is sometimes designated by the word 'The East.' Thus in Zech. iii. 8, where we read in the Authorised Version 'Behold I will bring forth my servant the Branch,' the LXX. read 'my servant the East;' so also in Zech. vi. 12; while, in Jer. xxii. 5, 'I will raise unto David a righteous branch,' is in the LXX. 'a righteous East.' Once more, it is difficult to resist the impression that there is a contrast between these kings 'from the sunrising,' and those described in ver. 14 as 'the kings of the whole world,' who are evidently evil.

Putting these circumstances together we seem compelled to come to the conclusion that the persons described as 'kings from the sunrising' are the very opposite of what they are often interpreted to be. They are not 'the forces of rude and open evil which have been long restrained;still less are they the princes who would fain return with a Never return for the destruction of Rome. They are representatives of all Christ's faithful ones who are not only priests but kings unto God, and for whom the waters of the Euphrates are dried up that their march to the destruction of Babylon may be easy and triumphant. Christ's people are now gathered together as an army. But they shall not need to fight. We shall see that they do not fight (comp. chap. xx. 9). They shall rest in Christ. God shall fight His own battle. The war shall be that of the great day of God, the Almighty' (ver. 14).

Ver. 13. The dragon, the beast, and the false prophet are again before us. They are the three great enemies of the people of God who have already been described; although here we have for the first time the second part of chap. xiii. 11 spoken of as the 'false prophet,' a designation afterwards applied to it in chaps. xix. 20 and xx. 10. The point to be chiefly noticed is that all the great enemies of God's people are gathered together. All the demoniacal powers of the world in their united forces are on the stage. Three unclean spirits as it were frogs. An unclean spirit comes out of the mouth of each; and the spirits are as 'His unclean, boastful, noisy, offensive animals. There may perhaps be a reference to the frogs of Egypt. The land of Egypt had 'brought forth frogs in the chambers of their kings' (Ps. cv. 30)—so does this spiritual Egypt.

Ver. 14. For they are spirits of demons working signs. They thus show at once their hellish origin, and the power lent them in order that they may be the better enabled to effect their end. Which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them together to the war of the great day of God, the Almighty. We have now the purpose for which mention of these unclean spirits is introduced. It is that Satanic might and deception may be exerted to their utmost, so that the enemies of God from all parts of the world may be led to go up to the war in which they shall be destroyed. The representation may rest upon a very natural fact, when a lying spirit goes forth to persuade Ahab to rush upon his fate. These lying spirits in like manner persuade the kings of the whole godless world to rush upon the fate prepared for them in the last great judgment of God.

Ver. 15. The wonderful character of the great day of God, and of the issues that belong to it, leads to the interposition of this verse.—Behold, I come as a thief. The Lord Himself speaks, not the Seer in His name. The words are those of Matt. xxiv. 1, xxv. 1, Mark xiii. 34, Luke xii. 37, and they embrace the thought both of the suddenness of Christ's coming, and of the destruction which it brings with it to the wicked (comp. on chap. iii. 3). In the remaining words of the verse the Seer seems to take up the strain, as he pronounces blessedness upon him who is ready for the events of the day so rapidly approaching. Similar parenthetical occur at chaps. xiii. 9 and xiv. 12.

Ver. 16. And they gathered them together into the place which is called in the Hebrew tongue Har-Magedon. The 'they' spoken of in these words refers to neither God nor the angel, but to the unclean spirits of ver. 14. These spirits had gone forth to gather together all who had submitted themselves to the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. They now accomplish their mission, but the conflict does not yet take place. The spot where the hosts assemble is mentioned only by anticipation. The battle itself is that of chap. xix. 10–21.

By the mention made of the fact that the name of the place is in the Hebrew tongue Har-Magedon, we are called to think of the meaning of that compound term, and of the associations connected with it. There can be no doubt as to the composition of the word,—Har, a mountain, and Magedon, or Megiddon, or Megiddo, the
name of an extensive place in the north of Palestine which has been in all ages the battle-field of the Holy Land, and derived from the Hebrew verb signifying to destroy; so that, apart from any particular associations, the simple meaning of the word is ‘the mountain of destruction.’ In addition to this, we must have to recall to mind the two great slaughters at Megiddo mentioned in the Old Testament. The first is that celebrated in the Song of Deborah and Barak (Judg. v. 19), and since the battle is in Ps. lxxxiii. 9. The second is that in which King Josiah fell (2 Kings xxiii. 29), a fall which produced the striking lamentation described in 2 Chron. xxxv. 25, and which is afterwards referred to by the prophet Zechariah (chap. xii. 1). It is not easy to say which of these two slaughters is most probably present to the mind of St. John in the words before us. In one respect the first may seem most suitable, because there the enemies of Israel were completely overthrown. In another the second appears to be the more appropriate, owing not only to the fact that the mourning is recorded with so much pathos in 2 Chron., but that it becomes in Zechariah the type of mourning on that day when ‘the Lord will destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem’ (chap. xii. 9). There is no improbability in the supposition that both slaughters may be in the mind of the Seer; indeed it is at least evident that Megiddo was a name associated with the thought of the sudden and terrible defeat of the enemies of God. In this sense then the word Har-Magedon is to be understood. No particular place either in Palestine is pointed at; nor is any particular event referred to. The same, like Euphrates, is the expression of an idea,—the idea that swift and overwhelming destruction shall overtake all who gather themselves together against the Lord. In John iv. 3 we have a similar use of the name ‘Jehoshaphat.’ The meaning of Jehoshaphat is ‘God judges;’ and, when the heathen are summoned to that valley, they are really summoned to meet God in judgment. And the seventh poured out his bowl upon the air. The air is the dwelling-place of the powers of darkness, whose head is ‘the prince of the power of the air.’ And there came forth a great voice out of the temple, from the throne, saying, It is done. The voice is from God, and from His very throne. The words are, ‘It is done,’ i.e. all God’s purposes are accomplished: all the plagues are poured out: the end is reached.

Ver. 18. And there were lightnings and voices and thunders. What follows describing the end seems to be divided into seven particulars, of which this verse contains the first. The ‘lightnings,’ etc., are those which usually accompany the judgments of God. The earthquake spoken of in the second half of the verse is the second particular, and its terrors are magnified in language of much sublimity.

Ver. 19. And the great city was divided into three parts. In these words we have the third particular of the seven. The sentence of Dan. v. 25 may be in the Seer’s mind, ‘Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.’ If this reference be correct, it will confirm the view (1) that Cyrus is the type from which ‘the kings from the rising’ mentioned in ver. 12 is taken; and (a) that those kings are messengers of Christ, and deliverers of His Church as Cyrus was. The city is divided into ‘three parts,’ not so much from any thought of the three unclean spirits as from the idea of St. John that a whole consists of three parts (but comp. also Ezek. v. 1–5, 12). The meaning is that the city was broken up and overthrown. The question of the identification of this ‘great city’ is more difficult. It is commonly understood to be Babylon, the emblem and centre of the world power. But in chap. xi. 8 mention has already been made of Jerusalem as ‘the great city,’ and it is not easy to see how we can now interpret the name in a different manner. Besides this, Jerusalem was thought of in chap. xi. 8 as the city of ‘the Jews’ rather than as the metropolis of God’s kingdom,—the idea of the place where Jesus was crucified being afterwards extended by the mention of Sodom and Egypt (comp. on chaps. xi. 8 and xviii. 24). The ‘great city’ would therefore seem to be Jerusalem viewed in a less extensive sense than in chap. xi., as the principle and essence of what St. John in his Gospel calls ‘the world.’—The cities of the nations fall. This is the fourth particular of the seven. The reference may be to Mic. v. 11, 14. There, no doubt, is the cities of Israel in which, rather than in Himself, the people had trusted that God promises in mercy to take away. But what is a merciful chastisement to one to Israel is a judgment on ‘the nations for the destroying of their only refuge. Every city they had built for themselves ‘falls,’ and they are left houseless and defenceless.—And Babylon the great came up, etc. We have now the fifth particular of the seven. ‘Babylon the great’ is not essentially distinct from ‘the great city’ of the first clause of the verse, yet it is not exactly the same. We have already seen that the latter is degenerate Jerusalem viewed in a less extensive sense than in chap. xi. Now it is viewed in its widest meaning, as embracing not only the essence and principle of ‘the world’ once exhibited among ‘the Jews,’ but that principle as it appears in the Gentile not less than in the Jew. As in chap. xi. 8 ‘the great city’ expanded until it embraced Sodom and Egypt, so here in like manner it expands into ‘Babylon the great.’ As such it must drink of the cup of God’s anger blazing out in His wrath.

Ver. 20. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. The particular thus mentioned is the sixth, and the language used is even stronger than that of chap. vi. 14, ‘and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.’ The climax of judgment appears in the climax of description.

Ver. 21. And a great hail cometh down as of a talent in weight out of heaven upon men. The seventh particular, founded upon the thought of the plague of hail on Egypt. Each hailstone is magnified to an enormous extent. Each is a talent, or between 50 and 60 lbs., in weight. The stone descends upon ‘men,’ i.e. upon all the inhabitants of the ‘earth’ in its mystical sense, or upon all the ungodly. The seven particulars of judgment are ended, and we are invited to mark the effect.—And men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because great is the plague of it exceedingly. The ‘men’ spoken of are again the ungodly, nor is it possible to limit their number to that of those who survive the plague. The


THE REVELATION. [CHAP. XVII. 1-18.

writer simply looks away from the fact that those
struck with so great a plague die. He thinks
of them as still living, but unconverted. They
blaspheme; they are hardened; and, when all
that ought to convert men righteous, we have a
proof that the hour of final judgment is come.

CHAPTER XVII. 1-18.

The Vision of Babylon the Great.

1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me,

Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. And there is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and the name of the seven heads is ADONAI.
come; and when he cometh, he must continue a "short space."* CH. xii. 13.

11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth,* and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power* and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called,* and chosen, and faithful. And he saith unto me,

The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore,* and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will,* and to agree,* and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

* omit even he is himself also an eighth add he authority they also shall overcome add shall add utterly For God gave it into to do his mind and to come to one mind add to should be accomplished hath a kingdom.

CONTENTS. A new and remarkable part of the fourth great section of the Apocalypse here opens, but one full of melancholy. We cannot enlarge upon it now before we have determined the meaning of Babylon. Let it be enough to say that under the name of that city we shall find represented the degenerate Church of Christ. Notwithstanding all that has been done for her she forgets her Lord; and, in the character of a harlot selling herself to the world for hire, hastens to her fate. It may seem as if this were defeat for the cause of God. It is really victory. The true Church, the faithful remnant, is not defeated when it is constrained to leave the fold in which it has hitherto been nourished (comp. on John x.). The outward institution falls; but the voice is heard and obeyed, 'Come forth, My people, out of her' (comp. xviii. 4), and those who listen to that voice enter into rest.

Ver. 1. One of the seven angels that had the seven bowls speaks to the Seer, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the judgment of the great harlot that sitteth upon many waters. The judgment spoken of, as appears by the word used in the original, is judgment executed, not in process of execution. The harlot is obviously Babylon, but the name is a mystical one (ver. 5), and the Seer will afterwards more fully explain it. 'Many waters' are interpreted by the angel in ver. 15 as 'peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues,' and the fourfold division shows that we have a representation of the whole world. The figure is taken from Jer. ii. 13, where Babylon is addressed, 'O thou that dwellest upon many waters.'—'Sitting' is the emblem of authority and rule, accompanied by the thought of ease (comp. chap. xiv. 6).—The term 'harlot' points to the fact that this city seduced men from the true God to worldliness and sin (Isa. i. 21; Jer. ii. 20; Ezek. xvi. 15).

Ver. 2. With whom the kings of the earth committed fornication. 'Kings' are the representatives of all authority; and 'the earth' is the guilty world.—and they that dwell upon the earth were made drunken with the wine of her fornication. Not the kings only but all the inhabitants of the earth, all who belong to the world in its evil sense, have been betrayed by the harlot. The description is again unlimited.

Ver. 3. And he carried me away in spirit into a wilderness. The expression 'he carried me away in spirit' is found only here and at chap. xxi. 10, where the vision of the New Jerusalem is introduced. It denotes spiritual ecstasy, not bodily removal; but it may be intended to do this in a peculiarly expressive form.—In chap. xii. 6, 14 we have been told of 'the wilderness into which the woman there mentioned fled. Here we have no article, and we cannot therefore suppose that the wilderness now mentioned is the same. Attention is fixed simply on the fact that, amidst all Babylon's pomp and luxury, the place where she reigns is really desolate (1 Tim. v. 6).

It has indeed been conjectured that the fate prepared for Babylon, and expressed by a peculiar word in ver. 16 and in chap. xviii. 17, 19, is
already in the Seer's mind, and that the thought of that fate leads to the description now given of the place of her abode. But it is more natural to think that these other expressions are conformed to that before us. The dwelling-place of Babylon is always ideally desolate; the fact shall afterwards correspond to the idea. — A description of the beast upon which the harlot sat now follows. It is obviously that of chap. xiii. 1, 2, and this may be said to be admitted. The identity is established by the whole description, especially by the comparison of the two passages relating to the beast in chaps. xiii. and xvii. with that in which it is again mentioned in chap. xix. 19, 20. In these latter verses the beast is spoken of as "making war against Him that sat upon the horse," and as cast alive into the lake of fire "with the false prophet that wrought the signs in his sight." But the first of these traits belongs to the beast of this chapter (ver. 14), and the second,—its close connection with the false prophet,—to the beast of chap. xiii. (vers. 12, 13). In all three passages, therefore, we have the same beast. On the other hand, the differences are slight. In chap. xiii., the names Babylon and Babylon the Great are upon the heads of the beast: here the whole body is covered with them. But the former statement does not exclude the latter, and the names upon the heads only are mentioned in the one place because it is of the heads that the Seer is speaking; he sees them coming up from the sea. Now he sees the whole beast. If, also, the article before the word "names" is to be read, it carries us to the names of Babylon, Babylon the Great, and these can be no other than those of chap. xiii. 1. Again the "heads" of this verse are naturally mentioned before the "horns," whereas in chap. xiii. the order was reversed, because the horns appeared first as the beast ascended from the sea. Once more, the composite character of the beast of chap. xiii. 2 may equally belong to this beast, while the colour of the beast here may equally belong to the beast there. If the manner of the Apocalypse thus to fill out in one place the more imperfect description of the same object in another. At the same time it is not impossible that, while the beast itself is the same, some of the differences in the description may be intentional, to point out the effect of its alliance with the harlot. More especially may this be the case with regard to the greater extolation of the names of blasphemy. How strikingly, if the harlot be the degenerate Church, would this indicate the greater and more confident rage against the saints to which the world is prompted when it finds, as it has so often found, the Church upon its side! The attitude of the woman towards the beast, both in this verse and in ver. 7, ought to be marked. In the one she "sits" upon it; in the other it "carries," her: and the meaning is, not so much that her movements are facilitated by the beast, as that she is the beast's "director" and guide. Without her it would simply spend itself in ungovernable and often misdirected fury. The harlot holds the reins, and with skillful hand guides the beast to the accomplishment of its aims.

Ver. 4. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and gilded with gold and precious stones and pearls. In these words we have a general description of the woman's royal magnificence (comp. chap. xviii. 16). "Arrayed" is more than adorned. She has not merely ornaments of gold and precious stones and pearls, so numerous that she sparkles with them; they are thought of as a golden and costly gilding to her (comp. chap. ii. 17).

Ver. 5. And upon her forehead a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of the Harlots and of the Abominations of the earth. The word "mystery" may be understood either as a part of the name, or as a sea-intimation of the writer that the name is to be understood symbolically. The latter interpretation is to be preferred. It is hardly likely that the name should openly declare itself to be unreal. For such a use of the word "mystery," comp. the use of "spiritually" in chap. xi. 8. It is worthy of notice that the word "mystery" occurs only four times in the Apocalypse, three times in connection with the nature or the fate of Babylon (chaps. x. 7, xix. 5, 7), and once with the seven churches which represent the Church universal (chap. i. 20). The name of the harlot is thus limited to what follows. Some would even restrict it still further. According to their view, "Babylon the Great," was alone written upon the harlot's forehead, and the subsequent description is an explanation of the writer. The name has already met us in its shorter form in chaps. iv. 8, xvi. 19.

It is unnecessary, in illustration of this verse, to refer to the fact that in the pagan world harlots had their names attached to their foreheads. The usage of the Apocalypse is to speak thus of the adherents both of God and of Satan—of God, see chaps. ii. 17, vii. 3, xiv. 1; of Satan, chaps. xiii. 1, 16, xix. 20, etc. More particularly the name thus borne upon the forehead is a parody of the name borne upon the forehead of the high priest (comp. chap. ii. 17; Ex. xxvii. 36). It declares the person.

Ver. 6. The description of the ungodly fearlessness of the woman's spirit is continued. She drinks, and makes herself drunk with the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus (comp. chap. xviii. 24).—Having finished his description the Seer adds, And when I saw her I wondered with a great wonder. He is overwhelmed with astonishment at the spectacle, yet not so much probably at the royal magnificence of the description as that, being a woman, she should exhibit such tokens of a cruel and bloodthirsty spirit, denying the nature that properly belonged to her.

At this point it might have been well to inquire into the meaning of "Babylon" in these verses, but so much has still to be said of that city that it seems better to delay the inquiry until we have finished the exposition of the whole passage. Upon this point, therefore, we refer to what is said at the end of chap. xviii.

Ver. 7. The angel proceeds to explain what St. John had seen, taking the two parts of the vision in inverted order; first, the beast (vers. 8-14), and secondly, the woman (vers. 15-18).

Ver. 8. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not, and is about to ascend out of the abyss, and to go into perdition. Whatever may be the difficulty of interpreting these words, one thing is clear, that they contain no reference to Nero or any supposed rising of his from the grave. We saw that such an interpretation was wholly inapplicable to chap. xiii. It is equally inapplicable now. In the first place, let us mark carefully
the three members of this verse, 'was,' 'is not,' 'is about to ascend,' etc. They are the obvious counterpart of the three members of the doxology in chaps. i. 8 and iv. 8, which 'was,' 'and,' and 'is,' and 'is to come.' In the second place, we have to notice the words 'ascend' and 'go.' They are words almost consecrated in the Gospel of St. John to our Lord's resurrection and departure to the Father. In the third place, the word used for 'perdition' is important. It denotes the destruction prepared for the ungodly (comp. John iii. 16), a state in every particular the reverse of that heavenly and glorious life to which Jesus 'goes.' Keeping these things in view, there can be no doubt that in what is here said of the seven 'mountains' and of the seven 'kings,' there is a travesty of what is said elsewhere of our Lord; and this alone compels us to think of something wider and more conspicuous than any single Emperor of Rome. We learn both from the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse that St. John is accustomed to view evil in three great stages. First, it contends against Christ and His Church; secondly, it is conquered; lastly, it breaks out again before it experiences a complete destruction. Such a course of things is naturally what we have here, 'was,' representing the first period, 'is not' the second, and 'is about to ascend,' etc. the third. The evil of the world, beheld by the Seer as concentrating itself in the Roman Empire, is to him the particular form in which the beast which was in the presence of the Lord. Then, by the work of Jesus it was ideally destroyed (comp. Col. ii. 15). Lastly, it bursts forth again to be overwhelmed for ever. The representation is precisely parallel to that of chap. xiii. 15, a state in every particular of the verse is only necessary to call attention to the change of reading in the last clause, shall be present instead of 'yet is' of the Authorised Version. The three characteristics are the same as before, the third 'shall be present' corresponding to 'is about to ascend' of the first part of the verse. On the name written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, comp. chap. xiii. 8.

Ver. 9. This is the third of the three branches of this explanation. The explanation follows. The 'wisdom' spoken of is Divine spiritual insight, gained by an experimental knowledge of the ways of God. This circumstance alone might be enough to show that, even if Rome be present to the mind of the Seer as one illustration among many of the evil before his eyes, he cannot be thinking of Rome alone. In what he is about to say, he would tell us, the thought of the seven-hilled city may most readily occur to the superficial reader. But we are not to think of it. 'Wisdom' leads to a less literal, to a more spiritual interpretation (comp. chap. xiii. 18.—The seven heads are seven mountains upon which the woman sitteth. These words, it is easy to see, form the stronghold of those who think that in the 'woman' of this passage we are dealing with the city of Rome, and in the 'beast' with one of its Emperors, most probably Nero; yet it is impossible to adopt the interpretation, further at least than is involved in the admission that the thought of Rome may have been present to the mind of St. John as one, perhaps even as the most prominent, phase of a much wider truth. In the first place, the number 'seven' is not to be literally understood. There is indeed a peculiar propriety in interpreting it symbolically in the present instance, for the power described is the dark contrast of the Church, is the antichrist in opposition to the Christ. But the seven churches were not literally seven, they were a symbol of the universal Church. In like manner the seven mountains are not literally seven. They symbolize a seat of evil as wide as the good,—if in the one case the one Catholic Church, in the other the one Catholic synagogue of Satan. In the second place, starting with the fact that the first clause of ver. 10 ought to be translated not 'And there are' but 'and they are seven kings,' it will be at once perceived that we cannot literally interpret the seven 'heads' first of seven 'mountains' and then of seven 'kings.' In the third place, we are told in chap. xiii. 3 that one of the seven 'heads' was wounded to death, a description which cannot apply to a literal mountain. These 'seven mountains' then are not mountains. They are an Old Testament expression for powers (comp. Isa. ii. 2; Dan. ii. 35), and we have in them the first part of a double description of the same object, first 'mountains' and then 'kings.'

Ver. 10. And they are seven kings. The heads are seven kings (not personal kings, comp. on chap. xiii. 2) or powers, the world-power being thus again regarded in the sevenfoldness of its unity. Every attempt to understand by these 'kings' Roman Emperors or Procurators, or Roman forms of government of any kind, is shattered either on the facts of the case, or on the extreme improbability of supposing that a book like the Apocalypse would enter into minute details of the internal government of heathen nations, or on the words actually employed by the Seer (comp. on the word 'fallen'). Nor is there any real difficulty presented by the consideration that, if one of these 'kings' be not a person but the Roman power, then this power must be spoken of in a double character as one of the heads of the beast, and as the beast itself. There is nothing to prevent this; for, as the seven churches are one, so the seven heads are one, and each head is no more than a particular and necessarily limited manifestation of evil which is wider and deeper than itself. We have already seen too (on chap. xiii. 2) that in prophetic language 'kings' means kingdoms. The seven 'kings' mentioned here are therefore seven world-powers, Egypt, Nineveh, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, and a power which is to follow the Roman now beheld tottering to its fall. 'The five are fallen, the one is, the other is not yet come; and, when he cometh, he must continue a short while. The word 'fallen' is worthy of peculiar notice, for it does not signify mere passing away by such a peaceful death as befell some of those Roman Emperors who are often supposed to be referred to as the 'seven kings.' The word 'is used in the Septuagint constantly, and in Daniel, of the violent fall, the overthrow, either of kings or of kingdoms: it is a word belonging to domination, not to glory ruined, to empire superseded.' Thus Egypt, Nineveh, Babylon, Persia, and Greece had successively 'fallen,' having perished in the 'blood that they had spilt.' The sixth, described as 'the one,' is Rome: the seventh, spoken of as 'the other,' is not yet come.

Ver. 11. And the beast that was and is not is himself also an eighth, and is of the seven; and he goeth into perdition. What is here said
THE REVELATION. [CHAP. XVII. 1-18.

is said not of a new 'head,' but of the beast; and this beast is to be identified with that of ver. 8. With a slight exception the description of the beast given in the two passages is precisely the same, and that exception is easily explained. It consists in the omission from the latter of the two of the words, 'and is about to come up out of the abyss.' But these words are parallel to that part of the designation of our Lord in this book which speaks of Him as 'to come,' and which was omitted in chap. xi. 17, because at that point it was no longer salut to the Lord; now it comes. The omission of the clause in the present instance is to be similarly explained. The previous and preparatory manifestations of the beast are over. It now comes itself, that it may be ready for destruction when the Lord appears. The 'beast' here is, therefore, identical with that of ver. 8; that is, with the beast as it was thought of at a time prior to any mention, in ver. 9, of the subordinated forms of its manifestation. It is thus distinct from any one of its seven heads. No single head may fully represent it. Thus also we see why it is described in the apparently contradictory language of this verse. First, it is 'an eighth.' Not that it is numerically an eighth in the same line with the seven. Then it would be an eighth 'head'; but we are dealing with the beast itself, not with its heads, and it is spoken of as an eighth simply because it follows the seven, and because in its final condition all the malice and evil of its previous conditions are concentrated. At the same time it is possible that the Seer desires to bring out this fact in connection with the beast, that he may identify it with the 'Little Horn' of chap vii. 24. He has pictured the Lord with three out of ten horns which are plucked up by the roots, that is of the eighth, ninth, and tenth horns. It thus comes after seven, is numbered eight, and represents the ungodly world-power in its highest manifestation. We have already shown that, according to Jewish methods of conception, the number eight was peculiarly fitted to express such a thought (comp. on chap. xiii. 18). Secondly, the beast is said to be of the seven 'heads.' The meaning is not that it is one of the seven, when it had just been said that it was distinct from them. The preposition 'of' is to be understood in its common acceptation in St. John's writings, as denoting origin, and, with origin, identity of nature. The beast is the essence, the concentrated expression, of the seven, the embodiment of their spirit; and it was necessary to mention this, lest we should think that it belongs to a wholly different category. The 'Little Horn' in Daniel was still a horn, and the great antichristian power is of the same nature and essence as the seven antichristian powers that go before it. This 'eighth' world-power is not then wholly new. It is the old world-power concentrating in itself all the rage of the seven. Thirdly, the beast 'goeth into perdition' (comp. chap. xix. 20). Nothing is said of its continuing either a longer or a shorter space. Enough that to go into perdition is, at once its nature and its fate. Finally, it may be remarked that we seem to have nothing here of a personal antichrist, still less of a human king who has died and risen from the dead. We have simply the last and worst manifestation of the ungodly power of the world.

Ver. 12. The 'heads' have been explained; we come next to the horns. These horns are all connected with the seventh head; they are gathered together upon it, and are a substitute for it (see on chap. xiii. 1). They are now explained to be ten kings, i.e. not personal kings, but kingdoms, authorities, or powers of the world. They had not as yet received their kingdom, for the Seer has seen only the sixth head actually manifested. The historical applications of these 'ten kings' may be passed over without remark. The number is as usual symbolical, denoting all the antichristian powers of earth which were to arise after the sixth head had fallen, or the great Roman Empire been broken up. —They receive authority as kings one hour with the beast. The expression 'one hour' can hardly occasion difficulty, corresponding, as it obviously does, to the 'short while' of ver. 10. It is more difficult to see the meaning of the words 'with the beast.' These words appear to imply that the ten kings shall have their authority at the same time as the beast, while it would seem more likely that manifestation of the latter follows the appearance of the seventh head. The difficulty is to be resolved by remembering that each of the six powers that had been spoken of before the seventh arose has, no less than the seventh, really ruled 'with the beast.' Each of them had been a special manifestation of the beast. The preposition 'with' may imply more than contemporaneity. On this point its use in chap. xix. 20, to say that the other heads, of other powers, are not seen to be decisive. We there read not, 'and with him the false prophet' but 'and with-him-false-prophet' or, more idiomatically, 'the false-prophet-with-him,' while we learn from chap. xiii. 12 that the relation of the false prophet to the beast is that of subordination. Here, therefore, as well as there, such subordination, such ministering to the purpose of another, is implied in the preposition 'with.' But, although the first six heads ruled with the beast and the beast ruled in them, the beast survived them; and, when they have fallen, it makes yet another effort to accomplish its purpose previous to its own total overthrow. This it does by means of the ten horns (or the seventh head) which thus rule 'with' it. These, however, are the last through which the beast shall exercise its power. They complete the cycle of seven; and, when the Lord has borne with them till the hour of judgment strikes, He will 'slay them with the breath of His mouth, and bring them to nought by the manifestation of His coming' (2 Thess. ii. 8). The meaning of vers. 11 and 12 of this chapter, then, is simply this,—that, after the fall of the Roman power, there shall arise a number of powers, symbolically ten, exhibiting the same ungodly spirit as that which had marked Rome and the powers of the world that had preceded Rome. In them the beast shall concentrate all its rage; they shall be the last and readiest instruments of its will. But it shall be in vain. The beast and they have their 'hour.' They continue their 'short while,' and then they perish.

Ver. 13. These have one mind, and they give their power and authority unto the beast. So had it been with the second beast (chap. xiii. 12), and so with the harlot (chap. xvii. 3, 7). The brute power of the world could of itself effect nothing were it not served by the spiritual forces of the false prophet, and of the harlot, or of the kings who have listened to the harlot's witcheries.
Ver. 14. In this verse the war of the ten kings with the Lamb is described, but it is unnecessary to dwell upon it. It may be noticed that the statement of the last half of the verse is not that of the Authorised Version, that the Lamb shall overcome because they are with Him are called and chosen and faithful, but that they that are with Him, called, and chosen, and faithful, shall be partakers of the victory. —The Seer now returns to the woman who sits upon the beast.

Ver. 15. The fourfold designation of those who constitute the waters spoken of in this verse is a clear proof that the harlot exercises her sway over the whole world, in travesty of Him "who sitteth upon the flood," who "sitteth King for ever" (Ps. xxix. 10).

Ver. 16. And the ten horns which thou sawest and the beast. The ten horns and the beast are mentioned in combination because the latter is the essence of the former, and the former are the expression of the latter. —These shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her utterly with fire. What an unexpected result! The woman has been sitting on the beast, reckoning on it as her servant and ally, and guiding it in perfect harmony with its temper and designs. All this we see once the scene is changed. Defeat has taken place, and what is the effect? The bond which in prosperity had bound the wicked co-labourers together is dissolved, the partners in evil fall out, the one section turns round upon the other, and she who had found ready instruments in the beast and its heads for accomplishing the work to which she had spurned them on sees them, in the hour of common despair, fall upon herself and mercilessly destroy her.

The individual expressions do not call for much remark: (1) Desolate is the word corresponding to the "wilderness" of ver. 3. —She is to be made truly a wilderness; (2) Flesh is plural in the original, probably because of the many who perish, or of the many possessions that the harlot owns; (3) The thought of thus eating flesh is taken from the Old Testament; "when the wicked came upon me . . . to eat up my flesh" (Ps. xxviii. 4); "who also eat the flesh of my people" (Mic. iii. 3); (4) Shall burn her utterly with fire. The language is most probably taken from the Old Testament, in which to be so burned is the punishment of fornication on the part of a priest's daughter (Lev. xxi. 9). The whole is a picture of complete destruction.

To seek historical fulfilment of this in such events as Nero's burning Rome will appear to most men, in the simple statement of it, absurd. A great principle is proceeded upon, one often exemplified in the world,—that combinations of the wicked for a common crime soon break up, leaving the guilty associates to turn upon and destroy one another. But it is difficult not to think that there was especially one great drama present to the Seer's mind, and suggestive of this lesson—that drama which embodied in intensest action all the great forces that move the world—the drama of the life and death of Jesus. He thought of the alliance that had been made between the Jews and the Romans to crucify the Redeemer, an alliance so soon broken and followed by the destruction of Jerusalem. In that he beheld the type of similar alliances in future time.

Ver. 17. For God gave it into their hearts to do his mind, and to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom unto the beast. This 'giving' of authority to the beast we have already met with in ver. 13. And in ver. 12 it has been intimated that the ten kings held their authority from God. Whatever, therefore, they had done in persecuting the saints had been accomplishing God's purpose (comp. Acts ii. 23). Until the words of God should be accomplished; until all His purposes should be fulfilled.

Ver. 18. And the woman which thou sawest is the great city which hath a kingdom over the kings of the earth. That Rome may be here present to the mind of St. John it would be difficult to deny. We have seen that Rome may have been thought of in ver. 9. But that we are to confine ourselves to Rome, either Papal or pagan or both, or that we are even to think primarily of them, as is done by different classes of historical interpreters, can hardly be admitted. Rome may be one of the illustrations or exemplifications of what is alluded to, but the idea of the Seer is certainly wider than that of any single city or power of the world. We have yet to inquire what the 'city,' the 'Babylon,' so referred to, is. In the meantime it must be enough to say that to think of any literal city whatever is to disturb the harmony which ought to mark the interpretation of the whole passage. The city must be some faithless spiritual power which, under the last manifestation of the beast, enters into a league with the world, ministers to it, and lends its material forces an influence for evil which they would not otherwise possess.

Chapter XVIII. 1-24.

The Fall of Babylon.

1 And another angel came down from heaven, having great power; and he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and ainer of every beast and bird of every wing of the air. He cries with a mighty voice. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and a snare of every thief; the king of kings is fallen. And they which dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over him, and shall be exalted in heart, when this coming evil shall come upon him. And I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great power, and the earth was lighted with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon, the great city, is fallen, is fallen From heaven, having great power; and she is lighted with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and snare of every thief; the king of kings is fallen. And I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great power, and the earth was lighted with his glory.
and is become the habitation of demons, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. A Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: the merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. The merchants of all the seas waxed rich through the fruit of her, for her merchandise was sold in all nations.

8 a demons 8 unclean 8 hold
10 omit all nations have drunk 11 by 12 add all the nations are fallen
13 omit have 14 omit are 15 out of 16 the power of her luxury
17 add forth 18 that ye may have no communion with 19 add even
19 Render unto her 21 rendered 22 omit you
23 omit hath 24 luxuriously 25 mourning 26 add unto 27 not a
28 add omi 29 mighty 29 judged
31 omit have 32 weep and wail over her 33 omit and lament for her
34 omit shall 35 Woe, woe 36 the 37 omit the city, 38 omit the stone 40 omit of
41 and every vessel 42 incense 44 ointment 44 cattle
46 bodies 47 sumptuous 48 perished 49 men shall
16 and saying, Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, and cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

59 mourning 61 omit and 62 Woe, woe 63 the 64 she that 65 arrayed 66 gilded 67 stone, and pearl 68 is made desolate 69 pilot 60 and every one that saileth any whither 61 gain their living 62 as they looked upon 63 omit unto 64 the 65 and ye saints, and ye 66 add their 67 add ye 68 hath judged your judgment upon her 69 shall Babylon the great city be cast down 71 minstrels 72 omit of 73 omit be 74 add at all 75 sorcery 76 slaughtered

CONTENTS. The chapter before us is occupied with the fall of Babylon, and it naturally divides itself into three parts. The first contains the announcement of the city’s fall (vers. 1-3); the second is a powerful description of amazement and lamentation over her fate, proceeding from all who had been dependent upon her (vers. 4-20); the third points out the completeness and irremediableness of her ruin (vers. 21-24).

Ver. 1. Another angel appears having great authority; and the earth was lightened with his glory. These last words are in all probability taken from Ezek. xiii. 2, ‘and the earth shined with his glory.’ They illustrate the greatness of his mission, and the manner in which the whole earth shall be struck with its glorious accomplishment. As in chap. vii. 2 this angel has a closer than ordinary connection with the Lord Himself.

Ver. 2. He cried with a mighty voice. This is the only passage in the book in which a voice is spoken of as ‘mighty,’ the usual appellation being ‘great.’ In chap. xix. 6 we read of ‘mighty thunders,’ and it is impossible to doubt, therefore, that this voice is described in a similar way, not because all men are to hear it, but because it is to strike all with awe and terror (comp. ver. 8).—Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen. These words have already met us at chap. xiv. 8 (comp. Isa. xxi. 9), but the description is now enlarged, Old Testament passages such as Isa. xiii. 21, Jer. li. 37, supplying the particulars.
THE REVELATION.

Everything about the city is changed into a wild and hateful desert. The unclean beasts and birds themselves that are driven into her ruins regard them as a prison.

Ver. 3. The cause of the city's fall is again stated in the words of this verse.

Ver. 4. A new stage in the drama opens. Another voice out of heaven is heard, saying, 'Come forth out of her, my people, that ye may have no communion with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.' The voice is that of an angel, although, as coming out of heaven, we are to hear in it the voice of God or of Christ; and hence the use of the word 'My' before 'people.' It is a summons to God's people to depart out of Babylon, and there are many parallels both in the Old and in the New Testament; Gen. xix. 15-22; Num. xvi. 23-26; Isa. xlvi. 20, lii. 11; Jer. li. 6, 45; Matt. xxiv. 16.

Two reasons are assigned for this departure; first, that God's people may have no communion with the sins of Babylon, and secondly, that they may escape participation in her punishment. As to the former, it does not seem necessary to think that they were in danger of being betrayed into sin; were they not all sealed ones? But it was well for them to be delivered even from the very presence of sin, and from the judgments that follow it (comp. 2 Pet. ii. 7-9).

Ver. 5. So multiplied were her sins that they were heaped together as a mass reaching even unto heaven. The figure is taken from Jer. li. 9 (comp. Gen. xviii. 20).

Ver. 6. Beender unto her even as she rendered, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she filled full to her double. The same voice is continued, but is now addressed to the ministers of judgment, the kings and the beast, who have turned against the harlot (chap. xvii. 16). Judgment is administered according to the lex talionis; and the doubling seems to be founded on the law of Ex. xxiii. 4, 7, 9, and on the threatening of Jer. xvi. 18. Her sins have been so great that there has been a double mention of them (ver. 5), and the punishment shall be proportioned to the sin (comp. also Isa. xi. 2; Jer. xvii. 18).

Ver. 7. In this verse she lex talionis is still administered both in extent and in severity. The humiliation of Babylon shall be the counterpart of her glorying. For she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am not a widow, and shall in no wise see mourning. The spirit of her glorying is expressed in three clauses, of which the second is peculiarly worthy of our notice. Commentators who see in Babylon the world-city are compelled to think of the beast and of the kings associated with it as the husband by the loss of whom Babylon had been reduced to widowhood. Such an interpretation is impossible. That husband had not been lost; the kings were not dead, they had only turned against her; while the words imply that she really is a widow although she does not feel it. If so, her boast can only be that she does not need the Lord for her husband. She has found another husband and many lovers. That she says these things 'in her heart' can hardly be intended to exclude the idea of loud boastings. The words rather lead us to think of the deep-seated nature of that spirit of glorying by which she is possessed (comp. Isa. xvi. 7, 8).

Ver. 8. With suddenness and fearfulness her plagues shall come upon her. In one day her glory shall be turned to shame. In the midst of her feasting an unseen hand shall write upon the wall of her banqueting-room that she is weighed in the balances and is found wanting and that night she shall perish (comp. Isa. xlvii. 9), for mighty is the Lord God who judged her.

At this point three classes of persons are introduced to us, uttering their lamentations over the fall of Babylon—kings (vers. 9, 10); merchants (vers. 11-16); sailors (vers. 17-19). At ver. 20 there follows a general call to rejoice over what has happened to her. The whole is moulded upon the lamentation over Tyre in Ezek. xxvi., xxviii., and is of unequalled pathos.

Vers. 9, 10. In these verses we have the lamentation of the kings of the earth over the disaster which they have been instrumental in accomplishing. The deeds of the wicked, even when effecting the purposes of God, bring no joy to themselves. It is the righteous only who rejoice (ver. 20). Notice the threefold naming of the city, 'the great city,' 'Babylon,' 'the mighty city.'

Vers. 11-17a. These verses contain the lamentation of the merchants of the earth, as they mourn over the fate of a city which presented such a gorgeous picture of worldly riches and extravagance. The expression at the close of ver. 13, souls of men, is difficult to understand. A glance at the original is sufficient to show that it cannot be construed with that immediately preceding it, 'slaves,' or, as in the margin of the Revised Version, 'bodies.' The word translated 'souls' takes us rather to the thought of persons, as in Ezek. xxvii. 13; and the probabilities are then in favour of the idea that they are slaves. If this be correct we shall be obliged to reject the rendering given both by the Authorised and Revised Versions to the preceding substantive 'slaves,' and to translate it literally 'bodies.' Associated with horses and chariots it will then represent some other means by which burdens were conveyed, and will lead us to the thought of hired persons.

Vers. 17b-19. These verses contain the lamentation of the third group that bewails the fall of Babylon, consisting of sailors and of all who trade by sea.

Attention has been already called to the fact that the imagery of this chapter is largely drawn from Ezek. xxvi. and xxvii., i.e., from chapters describing the fall of Tyre. This, however, need occasion us no surprise, for in the Old Testament Tyre is viewed as if she were another Babylon (comp. Isa. xxiv. 10, 'The city of confusion,' i.e., Babylon, 'is broken down'). Again, it may seem at first sight as if the varied riches of this city can belong to nothing but a city in the ordinary sense of the word, and that they cannot be associated with any spiritual power. Yet it may be for these very riches that the disciples of Christ sacrifice their Lord, and they may obtain them as the reward of their faithlessness. They may act a part the reverse of that for which Moses is commended in Heb. xi., and may hire the treasures of Egypt to the reproach of Christ. They may
yields to the temptation which Christ resisted, when, as He was offered the kingdoms of the world and all their glory, He replied, 'Get thee behind me, Satan;' He withstood, suffered, and died. His degenerate followers may yield, accept, and live. But the price—this is worth considering.

Before passing from the lamentations before us, one interesting trait of the structural principles of the Apocalypse may be noticed. In ver. 9 'the kings of the earth shall weep;' in ver. 11 'the merchants of the earth weep;' in ver. 17 'the pilots, etc., stood afar off and cried.' From the future we pass to the present, from the present to the tense which expresses the taking up of their position in the most positive and determined manner. The sequence is probably to be explained by the circumstance that the destruction of the city is beheld as constantly drawing nearer. But its main interest consists in the illustration which it affords of the careful minuteness with which in the Apocalypse words, phrases, and constructions are selected, and of the depth of meaning which the writer, by each change of expression, intends to convey.

Ver. 20. The judgment of God upon the guilty city is supposed to have taken place. While it is a source of lamentation to the wicked, it is a joy to the righteous, and they are now summoned to experience that joy. — For God hath judged your judgments upon earth. The meaning is that that judgment on the wicked which the righteous have passed is regarded as executed as for them by God Himself.

Ver. 21. And a mighty angel took up a stone as of a great millstone, and cast it into the sea. A symbolic representation of the destruction of Babylon is to be given; and for this new vision a third angel appears, the first having appeared at chap. xvii. 1, the second at chap. xviii. 1. He is a 'mighty angel.' The third of this kind in the Apocalypse, the other two meeting us at chap. v. 2 and x. 1. This angel acts after the manner described in Jer. li. 65, 64, only that here, in order to bring out more impressively the nature of the judgment, the stone is heavy as 'a great millstone.' The destruction is sudden and complete. The city disappears like a stone cast into the sea (comp. Jer. li. 65, 64).

Vers. 22-24. The destruction spoken of is enlarged on in strains of touching eloquence, but it is unnecessary to dwell on the particulars. They include everything belonging either to the business or to the joy of life. It may only be observed that following the word for in ver. 23 we have a threefold description of the sins by which judgment had been brought upon the city.—The words of ver. 24. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth, are important as confirming the interpretation that we have been dealing all along, not with a single city, but with the representation of some universal ungodliness and opposition to Christ. Nor does the parallel lie so near as that contained in the words of our Lord addressed to the degenerate Jews, 'that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of Abel the righteous unto the blood of Zacharias the son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the sanctuary and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation' (Matt. xxiv. 35). The 'slaughtering' spoken of suggests the idea that like the slaughtered Lamb the children of God had been slain in sacrifice.

Before passing from this chapter we have to turn to the important inquiry, What does this woman, this Babylon, represent? Different answers have been given to this question, but the most widely accepted of which are, that she is either pagan Rome, or a great world-city of the last days (the metropolis of the world-power symbolized by the beast upon which she rides), or the Roman Church. That there is not a little in the description (more especially in chap. xvi. 9, 15, 18) to favour the idea of pagan Rome may be at once admitted. But the arguments against such an interpretation are decidedly preponderant. It supposes that the beast in its final form is controlled by the metropolis of the Roman Empire (chap. xvi. 3). This is so far from being the case that the Roman Empire is 'fallen' before the woman comes upon the stage. It has disappeared as completely as the other world-powers which had ruled before it. No doubt, the woman is mentioned at chap. xvi. 1, while it is only at ver. 10 that we read of the fall of the Roman power. But the beast upon which the judgment of God upon the guilty city is supposed to have taken place. While it is a source of lamentation to the wicked, it is a joy to the righteous, and they are now summoned to experience that joy. — For God hath judged your judgments upon earth.

Ver. 21. And a mighty angel took up a stone as of a great millstone, and cast it into the sea. A symbolic representation of the destruction of Babylon is to be given; and for this new vision a third angel appears, the first having appeared at chap. xvii. 1, the second at chap. xviii. 1. He is a 'mighty angel.' The third of this kind in the Apocalypse, the other two meeting us at chap. v. 2 and x. 1. This angel acts after the manner described in Jer. li. 65, 64, only that here, in order to bring out more impressively the nature of the judgment, the stone is heavy as 'a great millstone.' The destruction is sudden and complete. The city disappears like a stone cast into the sea (comp. Jer. li. 65, 64).

Vers. 22-24. The destruction spoken of is enlarged on in strains of touching eloquence, but it is unnecessary to dwell on the particulars. They include everything belonging either to the business or to the joy of life. It may only be observed that following the word for in ver. 23 we have a threefold description of the sins by which judgment had been brought upon the city.—The words of ver. 24. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth, are important as confirming the interpretation that we have been dealing all along, not with a single city, but with the representation of some universal ungodliness and opposition to Christ. Nor does the parallel lie so near as that contained in the words of our Lord addressed to the degenerate Jews, 'that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of Abel the righteous unto the blood of Zacharias the son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the sanctuary and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation' (Matt. xxiv. 35). The 'slaughtering' spoken of suggests the idea that like the slaughtered Lamb the children of God had been slain in sacrifice.

Before passing from this chapter we have to turn to the important inquiry, What does this woman, this Babylon, represent? Different answers have been given to this question, but the most widely accepted of which are, that she is either pagan Rome, or a great world-city of the last days (the metropolis of the world-power symbolized by the beast upon which she rides), or the Roman Church. That there is not a little in the description (more especially in chap. xvi. 9, 15, 18) to favour the idea of pagan Rome may be at once admitted. But the arguments against such an interpretation are decidedly preponderant. It supposes that the beast in its final form is controlled by the metropolis of the Roman Empire (chap. xvi. 3). This is so far from being the case that the Roman Empire is 'fallen' before the woman comes upon the stage. It has disappeared as completely as the other world-powers which had ruled before it. No doubt, the woman is mentioned at chap. xvi. 1, while it is only at ver. 10 that we read of the fall of the Roman power. But the beast upon which the judgment of God upon the guilty city is supposed to have taken place. While it is a source of lamentation to the wicked, it is a joy to the righteous, and they are now summoned to experience that joy. — For God hath judged your judgments upon earth.

Ver. 21. And a mighty angel took up a stone as of a great millstone, and cast it into the sea. A symbolic representation of the destruction of Babylon is to be given; and for this new vision a third angel appears, the first having appeared at chap. xvii. 1, the second at chap. xviii. 1. He is a 'mighty angel.' The third of this kind in the Apocalypse, the other two meeting us at chap. v. 2 and x. 1. This angel acts after the manner described in Jer. li. 65, 64, only that here, in order to bring out more impressively the nature of the judgment, the stone is heavy as 'a great millstone.' The destruction is sudden and complete. The city disappears like a stone cast into the sea (comp. Jer. li. 65, 64).

Vers. 22-24. The destruction spoken of is enlarged on in strains of touching eloquence, but it is unnecessary to dwell on the particulars. They include everything belonging either to the business or to the joy of life. It may only be observed that following the word for in ver. 23 we have a threefold description of the sins by which judgment had been brought upon the city.—The words of ver. 24. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth, are important as confirming the interpretation that we have been dealing all along, not with a single city, but with the representation of some universal ungodliness and opposition to Christ. Nor does the parallel lie so near as that contained in the words of our Lord addressed to the degenerate Jews, 'that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of Abel the righteous unto the blood of Zacharias the son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the sanctuary and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation' (Matt. xxiv. 35). The 'slaughtering' spoken of suggests the idea that like the slaughtered Lamb the children of God had been slain in sacrifice.

Before passing from this chapter we have to turn to the important inquiry, What does this woman, this Babylon, represent? Different answers have been given to this question, but the most widely accepted of which are, that she is either pagan Rome, or a great world-city of the last days (the metropolis of the world-power symbolized by the beast upon which she rides), or the Roman Church. That there is not a little in the description (more especially in chap. xvi. 9, 15, 18) to favour the idea of pagan Rome may be at once admitted. But the arguments against such an interpretation are decidedly preponderant. It supposes that the beast in its final form is controlled by the metropolis of the Roman Empire (chap. xvi. 3). This is so far from being the case that the Roman Empire is 'fallen' before the woman comes upon the stage. It has disappeared as completely as the other world-powers which had ruled before it. No doubt, the woman is mentioned at chap. xvi. 1, while it is only at ver. 10 that we read of the fall of the Roman power. But the beast upon which the judgment of God upon the guilty city is supposed to have taken place. While it is a source of lamentation to the wicked, it is a joy to the righteous, and they are now summoned to experience that joy. — For God hath judged your judgments upon earth.
to lose sight of the spirit in which he writes. If it be urged that it is the dominion, not the stone and lime, of the city that he has in view, the extent of this dominion is fatal to the explanation. No such rule has belonged to any city either of ancient or modern times. Or, if the reply again be that the city is not yet come, it is unnecessary to say more than that the existence of so great a city is as yet at least inconceivable, and that thus one of the most solemn and weighty parts of the Apocalypse has been for eighteen centuries without a meaning. In addition, the use of the word 'mystery' in chap. xvi. 5 is at variance with the supposition. That word points at once to some symbolical sense immediately suggested, and cannot be applied to what is merely of the earth earthly. This interpretation, like the former, must be set aside.

The idea that we have before us in the woman papsal Rome, either the Roman Church, or the papal spirit within that church, is of a different kind, and its fundamental principle may be accepted with little hesitation. The emblem employed leads directly to the idea of something connected with the Church. The woman is a 'harlot;' and, with almost unvarying uniformity, that appellation and the sin of whoredom are ascribed in the Old Testament not to heathen nations which had never enjoyed a special revelation of the Almighty or a special duty to those whom He had espoused to Himself, and who had proved faithless to their covenant relation to Him (Isa. i. 21; Jer. xii. 10, ii. 1, etc.). No more that passage can be adduced in which this observation seems at first sight inapplicable (Isa. xxiii. 15-17; Nah. iii. 4), and these exceptions may be more apparent than real. The mention of whoredom in what was obviously a symbolical sense immediately suggested, and with ears the sin of seduction from a state of former privilege in God.

Again, the harlot here is so distinctly contrasted with the 'woman' of chap. xii. and with the 'mother of the Lamb's wife' of chap. xiv. that it is difficult, if not impossible, to resist the conviction that there must be a much closer resemblance between them than exists between a woman and a city. Compared with the former she is a woman; she is in a wilderness (chaps. xii. 1, xvii. 3); she is a mother (chaps. xii. 5, xvii. 5). Compared with the latter she is introduced to us in almost precisely the same language (chaps. xvii. 4, xix. 9); her garments suggest ideas which, however specifically different, belong to the same region of thought (chaps. xvii. 4, xix. 8); she has the name of a city, 'Babylon,' while the bride is named 'New Jerusalem' (chaps. xvii. 5, xvi. 2); she persecutes, while the saints are persecuted (chaps. xii. 13, xvii. 6); she makes all the nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, while the faithful are nourished by their Lord (chaps. xiv. 8, xii. 14); she has a name of guilt upon her forehead, while the 144,000 have their Father's name written there (chaps. xvii. 5, xiv. 1). When we call to mind the large part played in the Apocalypse by the principle of contrast, it is hardly possible to resist the conviction that the conditions associated with 'Babylon' are best fulfilled if we behold in her a spiritual system opposed to and contrasted with the true Church of God.

We are led to this conclusion also by the fact that both Jerusalem and Babylon have the same designation, that of 'the great city,' given them. This epithet is applied in chap. xi. 8 to a city, which can be no other than Jerusalem (see note), and the same remark may be made of chaps. xi. 19 (see note). In six other passages the epithet is applied to Babylon (chaps. xiv. 8, xviii. 10, 16, 18, 19, 21). The necessary inference is that there must be a sense in which Jerusalem is Babylon and Babylon Jerusalem. If it be not so we shall have to contend, in the interpretation of the Apocalypse, with difficulties of a kind altogether different from those that generally meet us. Interpretation indeed will become impossible, because the same word, and the same phraseology, in the places of the book, will have to be applied to totally different objects. No doubt it may be urged that the two cities Jerusalem and Babylon have so little in common that it is unnatural to find in the latter a figure for the former. The objection is of little weight. In the first place, it may be observed that the description of the fall of Babylon in this chapter is in all probability taken as much from the prophecy of Hosea (chap. ii. 1-12) as from anything said expressly of the city in the Old Testament; and, as that prophecy applies to 'the house of Israel,' we have a proof that in the mind of the Apocalyptic Seer there was a sense in which the Babylon of this chapter and a particular city of Israel (and therefore also Babylon and Jerusalem) were closely associated with each other. Nor does it seem unworthy of notice that, at the moment when Hosea utters his summons his idea was thought of a change of name. Then said God, Call his name Loammi; for ye are not My people, and I will not be your God' (chap. i. 9). The change of name might easily be transferred from the people to the city represented them; and if so, no name would more naturally connect itself in the mind of St. John with the things spoken of in chap. ii. of Hosea than that of Babylon. In the second place, there is an aspect of Jerusalem which most closely resembles that of Babylon for the sake of which the latter city is here peculiarly referred to. We cannot read the Fourth Gospel without seeing that in the view of the Evangelist there was a second Jerusalem to be added to the Jerusalem of which there was nowhere mentioned any other than a 'city of God,' the centre of a Divine Theocracy, but a Jerusalem representing a degenerate Theocracy, out of which Christ's people must be called in order that they may form His faithful Israel, a part of His 'one flock' (see on John x. 1-10). At this point, then, it would seem that we are mainly to seek the ground of the comparison between Jerusalem and Babylon. In the latter city God's people spent seventy years of captivity; and, at the end of that time, they were summoned out of it. Many of them obeyed the summons. They returned to their own land to settle under their vines and fig-trees, to rebuild their city, and to enjoy the fulfilment of God's covenant promises. All this was repeated in the days of Christ. The leaders of the old Theocracy had become thieves and robbbers; they had taken possession of the fold that they might 'steal and kill and destroy;' it was necessary that Christ's sheep should listen to the Good Shepherd, and should leave the fold that they might find open pastures. Not only so. Repeated then, the same course of history shall be
once more repeated. There shall again be a coming out of Christ's sheep from the fold which has for a time preserved them; and that fold shall be handed over to destruction. The probability is that this thought is to be traced even at chap. xi. 8, where Jerusalem is 'spiritually' called Sodom and Egypt. Not simply because of its sins did it receive these names, but because Sodom and Egypt afforded striking illustrations of the manner in which God summons His people out from among the wicked, Lot out of Sodom (Gen. xix. 12, 16, 17; Luke xvii. 28-32), Israel out of Egypt (Hos. xi. 1; Matt. ii. 15). Babylon, however, afforded the most striking illustration of such thoughts, and its history is identified with the Jerusalem which we learn to know in the Fourth Gospel as the city of 'the Jews.' Out of that Jerusalem Christ's disciples are by His own lips exhorted to flee (Matt. xxiv. 13-20). The same command is given in the passage before us (chap. xviii. 4).

On these grounds it appears to us that there need be no hesitation in so far adopting the interpretation of those who understand by Babylon the Romish Church, as to see in it what is fundamentally and essentially correct. The 'great city' is the emblem of a degenerate church. As in chap. xii. we have, under the guise of a woman, that true Church of Christ which is the embodiment of all that is most holy and most divine; Babylon, however, is the harlot. The harlot, in this case, is the woman of the Apocalypse with regard to the Church of Christ; and the feeling that it is inconsistent with the promise of God's love toward the poor in spirit may have led many to reject who would otherwise have welcomed the view we have defended. But no such idea of change is necessary. Babylon is simply a second aspect of the Church. Just as there were two aspects of Jerusalem in the days of Christ, under the one of which that city was the centre of attraction both to God and Israel, under the other the metropolis of a degenerate Judaism, so there are two aspects of the Church of Christ, under the one of which we think of those within her are faithful to their Lord, under the other of the great body of merely nominal Christians who in words confess but in deeds deny Him. The Church in this latter aspect is before us under the term 'Babylon;' and it would appear to be the teaching of Scripture, as it is certainly that alike of Jewish and Christian history, that the longer the Church lasts as a great outward institution in the world the more does she tend to realize this picture. As her first love fails, she abandons the spirit for the letter, makes forms of one kind or another a substitute for love, allies herself with the world, and by adapting herself to it secures the ease and the wealth which the world will never bestow so heartily upon anything as upon a Church in which the Divine oracles are dumb.

Beyond this point it is not possible to accompany those who understand by Babylon the Romish Church. Deeply that Church has sinned. Not a few of the darkest traits of 'Babylon' apply to her with a closeness of application which may not unnaturally lead us to think that the picture of these chapters has been drawn from nothing so much as her. Her idolatries, her outward carnel splendour, her oppression and wickedness, her merciless cruelties with torture and intolerance—the dungeon and the stake, the tears and agonies and blood with which she has filled so many centuries—these and a thousand circumstances of a similar kind may well be our excuse if in 'Babylon' we read Christian Rome. Yet the interpretation is false. The harlot is wholly what she seems. Christian Rome has never been wholly what on one side of her character she was so largely. She has maintained the truth of Christ against idolatry and unchristian error, she has preferred poverty to splendour in a way that Protestantism has never done, she has nurtured the noblest types of devotion that the world has seen, and she has thrilled the waves of time as they passed over her with one constant litany of supplication and chant of praise. Above all, it has not been the chief characteristic of Rome to ally herself with kings. She has rather trampled kings beneath her feet; and, in the interests of the poor and the oppressed, has taught both proud barons and imperial tyrants to quail before her. For deeds like these her record is not with the beast but with the Lamb. Babylon cannot be Christian Rome; and in the name of a harlot, and a harlot, has been more injurious to the Protestant churches than the impression that she was so, and that they were free from participation in her guilt. Babylon embraces much more than Rome, and illustrations of what she is lie nearer our own door. Wherever professedly Christian men have thought the world's favour better than its reproach; wherever they have esteemed its honours a more desirable possession than its shame; wherever they have courted ease rather than welcomed suffering, have loved self-indulgence rather than self-sacrifice, and have substituted covetousness in grasping for generosity in distributing what they had,—there has been a part of the spirit of Babylon. In short, we have in the great harlot-city neither the Christian Church as a whole nor the Romish Church in particular, but all who anywhere within the Church profess to be Christ's 'little flock' and are not,—denying in their lives the main characteristic by which they ought to be distinguished,—that they 'follow' Christ.

It may be well to remark, in conclusion, that the view now taken relieves us of any difficulty in accounting for the lamentation in chap. xviii. of kings and merchants and shipmasters over the fall of Babylon, as if these persons had no interest in her fate. So far is this from being the case, that nothing has contributed more to deepen and strengthen the worldliness of the world than the faithlessness of those who ought to testify that the true inheritance of man is beyond the grave, and that the duty of all is to seek 'a better country, even an heavenly.' A mere worldly and utilitarian system of Ethics may be better trusted to correct the evils of a growing luxuriousness, than a system which teaches that we may serve both God and Mammon, and that it is possible to make the best of both worlds.
CHAPTER XIX. 1-10.

VICTORY AND REST.

1 Song of Triumph over the Fall of Babylon.

And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: for his judgments and his ways are true and righteous. And the great harlot, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and the blood of his servants at her hand, avenged the blood of his servants.

And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

CONTENTS. With the beginning of this chapter we enter upon the fifth great section of the Apocalypse, which extends to chap. xx. 6. The object of the section is to bring before us the triumph and rest of the faithful disciples of Jesus after their conflict is over. They have had to contend alike with the world and with the degenerate Church. They have been separated from both; and both have fallen. There is no more struggle for them now, except the final one yet to be described in chap. xx. 7-15. So far as they are concerned, however, that, as we shall see...
hereafter, can hardly be called a struggle, for their enemies shall no sooner be gathered together against them than they shall be completely and forever overwhelmed. The first notice of this happy state is presented in the song of thanksgiving sung by the heavenly hosts and by the redeemed from among men over the destruction of Babylon.

Ver. 1. The heavenly hosts are the first to sing. Their keynote is Hallelujah, a word meaning 'Praise the Lord,' and found in the New Testament only here and in vers. 3, 4, 6 of this chapter. So in one song of heaven which has no termination closes the Book of Psalms, that 'great book of the wars of the Lord,' when the wars have ceased for ever (comp. Neale and Liddell on Psalm cl.).

Ver. 2. The word true of this verse again expresses what is real—not merely that God has fulfilled His words, but that His judgments correspond to the reality and propriety of things.

For he hath judged the great harlot, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and he bath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. The judgment particularly in view is specified in these words. We may observe how strictly it corresponds to the prayer of chap. vi. 10, 'Judge, O Lord, and avenge.'

Ver. 3. And a second time they said, Hallelujah. The thought of a 'second' time has peculiar importance in the eyes of St. John (comp. John iv. 54). It confirms with a singular degree of emphasis the idea with which it is connected.

And her smoke went up for ever and ever. It went up as the smoke of Sodom (Gen. xix. 28). Before, in chap. xi. 8, 'the city that was spiritually Sodom and Egypt' was that where our Lord was crucified—Jerusalem. Here it is Babylon. The fate of the first city out of which God's people were called turns out to have been a prophecy of the fate of the last. Thus does God fulfill His word, and 'bind and blend in one the morning and the evening of His creation' (Dr. Pusey). But it was more tolerable for Sodom than it will be for Babylon; for (though indeed St. Peter says Sodom 'suffereth the vengeance of eternal fire,' yet) its fires were quenched in the waters of the Dead Sea. This fire goes up 'for ever and ever' (comp. Isa. lxvi. 24).

Ver. 4. The four and twenty elders and the four living creatures respond to the song of the heavenly host. The Elders we heard last at chap. xi. 16, at the moment when the seventh trumpet had sounded, and the 'great voices in heaven' had declared, 'The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.' One of the four living creatures we saw last at chap. xv. 7, when it gave to the seven angels their 'seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God.' With peculiar propriety, therefore, these beings first answer the hosts of heaven with their loud Amen, and then take up their song Hallelujah.

Ver. 5. A voice is next heard from the throne calling upon all God's people to give praise to Him. The voice is immediately answered.

Ver. 6. And I heard as it were a voice of a great multitude, and as a voice of many waters, and as a voice of mighty thunders, saying, Hallelujah, for the Lord hath taken to him his kingdom, and his glory, and his dominion, and they shall reign for ever and ever. The song is new, celebrating something greater and higher than the last, not merely judgment on foes, but the full taking possession of His kingdom by the Lord.

Ver. 7. Let us rejoice, and be exceedingly glad, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. Up to this time the actual marriage of the Redeemer to His people has not taken place. The two parties have only been betrothed to one another (comp. 4 Cor. xi. 2). At length the hour has come when the marriage shall be completed, the Lord Himself being manifested in glory and His bride along with Him.

Ver. 8. And it was given to her that she should array herself in fine linen bright and pure, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. The bride arrays herself in her garments of beauty, that she may go forth to meet the Bridegroom, may enter in with Him to the marriage ceremony, and may be united to Him for ever in the marriage bond. Her robes are of dazzling whiteness, free from every stain; nor are they an outward show; it is rightness, more than imputed, and her whole being is penetrated by it. She is in Christ; she is one with Him; His righteousness takes possession of her in such a manner that it becomes her own; it is a part of herself and of her life. St. John had no fear of saying that the redeemed shall be presented before God in 'righteous acts' of their own. He could not think of them except as at once justified and sanctified in Jesus.

Ver. 9. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they that are bidden unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. We are not distinctly informed who the person here spoken of is; but, inasmuch as we seem to be still dealing with the 'strong angel' of chap. xviii. 21, we are probably to think of him. After the marriage comes the marriage supper, the fulness of blessing to be enjoyed by the redeemed. It may be a question whether we are to distinguish between the bride herself and those who appear rather to be spoken of as guests at the marriage supper. But the analogy of Scripture, and especially of such passages as Matt. xxii. 2, xxvi. 29, leads to the conclusion that no such distinction can be drawn. Those who are faithful in the Lord are at once the Lamb's bride, and the Lamb's guests. Any difficulty of interpretation arises simply from the difficulty, so often met with, of representing under one figure the varied relations between the Lord and His people. By the Lamb's wife, too, we must surely understand the whole believing Church, and not any separate section of it distinguished from, and more highly favoured than, the rest. As there is one Bridegroom so there is one bride. If, therefore, according to the opinion of many, we are dealing here with the 144,000 of chap. xiv., an additional proof will be afforded that in that mystical number the whole company of believers was included.—And he said unto me, These are the true words of God. The word 'These' refers, not to all that has been revealed since chap. xvii. 1, but to the last revelations made; and they are 'true,' expressive of the great realities now taking place.

Ver. 10. And I fell down before his feet to worship him, fell overwhelmed with devotion and delight. And he saith unto me, See thou do it not; I am thy fellow servant and the fellow-servant of thy brethren that have the
THE REVELATION.

[Chap. XIX. 11–21.

CHAPTER XIX. 11–21.

VICTORY AND REST.

2. The Victory of the Word and the Overthrow of His Enemies.

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True. *Ch. iii. 14.

12 And in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew,* 2 Ch. i. 14, 15; Ps. xix. 13; 1 Cor. xii. 18; Rev. xii. 1.

13 but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.* And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his

1 add the 2 omit was 3 And his 4 are 5 diadems 6 hath 7 no one knoweth 8 And he is arrayed in a garment sprinkled with 9 pure 10 he himself 11 add as a shepherd 12 tend 13 sceptre 14 add of the wine 15 of the 16 birds 17 fly in mid-heaven 18 the great supper of God 19 and 20 Come, be gathered together 21 the false prophet with him
image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

They twain the even the sword that went that burneth rest birds
former are in the plural. The thought of the unity of the one compared with the inner dissensions of the other lies at the bottom of the change (comp. chap. xi. 8).

Ver. 20. The description given in this verse can leave no doubt that we have here the two enemies of chap. xiii., the beast and the lamb-like beast with the two horns.—The 'lake of fire' is again mentioned in chaps. xx. 10, 14, and xxi. 8.

Ver. 21. And the rest were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, even the sword that went out of his mouth, and all the birds were filled with their flesh. By 'the rest' here spoken of it seems probable that we are to understand all who have imbied the principles of Christ and the false prophet, as distinguished from these two great enemies of Christ himself.

In like manner we read in chap. xii. 17 of 'the rest' of the woman's seed as distinguished from the body of the professing Church. This 'rest' might have partaken of the sufferings of the Lamb, but they rejected the light because they loved the darkness; and the evil which they chose now brings with it swift and irresistible destruction.

CHAPTER XX. 1-6.

VICTORY AND REST.

3. The Judgment of Satan and the completed Triumph of the Righteous.

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled; and after this he must be loosed a little season.

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection:

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

CONTENTS. It is unnecessary to say anything of the difficulties attending the interpretation of the passage upon which we now enter, or to bespeak the indulgence of the reader. Let it be enough in the meantime to observe that the description of the Victory and Rest of the people of God is continued. The paragraph connects itself closely with chap. xix., and ought not to be separated from it.

Ver. 1. And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain upon his hand. We have here the second angel after the appearance of the Lord Himself at chap. xix. 11. This angel comes down
THE REVELATION.

'out of heaven,' commissioned therefore by God, and clothed with His power. He has the key of the 'abyss,' which can be no other than that of chaps. ix. 1, 2, xi. 7, and xvii. 8. It is the abode of Satan, the home and source of all evil. It is his key, and this key is in the hands of Christ (comp. chap. 1. 18). By Him it is entrusted to the angel for the execution of His purposes. At chap. ix. 2 the angel opened the abyss; here he locks it. In addition to the key the angel has a great chain upon his hand, i.e. hanging over his open hand and dropping down on either side. The chain is 'great' because of the end to which it is to be applied and its fitness to secure it.

Ver. 2. And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan. This dragon we have already met at chaps. xii. 3, 9, xiii. 2, 4, xvi. 13. He is the first of the three great enemies of the Church, who gives his authority to the beast, and is worshipped by the ungodly. The description corresponds to that at chap. xii. 9, the only difference being that now we read not that he is 'called' but that he is 'the devil.' Whether this change may be owing to the fact that by this time Satan has been made known in his actual working, whereas then he was only introduced to us, it may be difficult to say; it is of more importance to observe that the last mention of him identifies him with the first. And bound him a thousand years. The 'binding' is more than a mere limitation of Satan's power. It puts a stop to that special evil working of his which is in the Seer's eye. The meaning of the thousand years we shall consider later.

Ver. 3. And cast him into the abyss, i.e. into the place to which he naturally belongs. —And shut it. The angel closed the door of which he has the key, doubtless at the same time locking it, so that it should no longer continue the mischief he had done. —And sealed it over him, not only locking the door, but sealing it in order to make it doubly fast (Dan. vii. 17).

In each of the acts thus described, the laying hold of Satan, the binding him, the putting him into the abyss, the closing and sealing the abyss, we have a mocking caricature of what was done to Jesus in the last days of His passion (John xviii. 12; Matt. xxvi. 66, 67). —That he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be finished. The 'thousand years,' as shown by the use of the article, are the same as in ver. 2, and nothing more therefore need be said of them at present. But who are 'the nations'? They are mentioned again in ver. 8, as being in the 'four corners of the earth,' as being 'Gog and Magog.' One distinguished commentator (Black) regards them as 'the heathen nations still remaining on the earth, which are also supposed to remain there during the thousand years' kingdom, but at its most extreme and minutest points, so that the citizens of the Messianic kingdom do not come in contact with them, nor is their power disturbed by them.' Another (Alford) has the same general idea, but with this difference, that he considers them to be, during the thousand years, 'quiet and willing subjects of the kingdom,' who are again seduced by Satan in his last loose. A third (Düsterbeck) makes them simply the heathen. A fourth (Klinge) draws a distinction between them and those meant by the 'whole world' or the 'whole inhabited world' (chaps. iii. 10, xii. 9, xvi. 14). These latter expressions are referred to the civilized and cultured nations of antiquity, while the more distant and barbarous peoples, living as it were upon the confines of the globe, are comprehended under the former. Over the one 'the beast' had exercised his sway; over the other they alone were destroyed at chap. xix. 17-21. The other, 'the nations,' were not involved in that destruction, but were still left upon the earth. The distinction thus drawn between cultured and uncultured peoples seems, however, to be inconsistent with various direct statements of the Apocalypse. Thus at chap. iii. 10 not only is there nothing to suggest the thought of only cultured peoples, but the 'whole inhabited world' spoken of must be understood in a sense as belonging to the words 'them that dwell upon the earth' which immediately follow. At chap. xii. 9, where the rule of the dragon is described, it is impossible to limit the expression 'the whole inhabited world' in the manner proposed, for chap. xiii. 7 gives the beast, the vicegerent of Satan, universal power, and the influence of Babylon, with which that of the beast and therefore of Satan must be coextensive, extends to 'all the nations,' including the 'kings' and 'merchants' of the earth (chaps. xiv. 8, xvii. 3, 23).

Again, the words 'the nations' are used in a much wider sense than that of barbarous tribes in chap. xi. 24, where they have their part in history in chap. xii. 18, where they must refer to the wicked in general in contrast with the good; in chap. xvi. 19, where they have 'cities;' in chap. xiv. 15, where they embrace all the enemies of Christ; and in chap. xxi. 24, where they cannot be limited to one section only of the heathen. In short, there does not appear to be a single passage of the Apocalypse in which 'the whole inhabited world' means the polished, or 'the nations' the unpolished, or 'the world' the heathen. The only admissible interpretation, therefore, of the phrase 'the nations' is that which understands by it the unchristian godless world.

These nations Satan is to 'deceive' no more until the thousand years are finished. The word 'deceive' is again used in ver. 8, where we have a further description of that in which the deception consists. In the meantime it is enough to say that the word 'till' employed by the Seer takes us forward to the deception practised at the end of the thousand years as that which he has in view. What the dragon will then do he does not do till then. It is thus not a general but a particular deception that is contemplated. We are not necessarily to think of a cessation of Satan's misleading of the world; but the 'deceiving' which he does not practise till the thousand years are finished is definite and special. —After this he must be loosed a little time. The word 'must' expresses, as usual, conformity to the purposes of God, who will certainly carry out His own plan.

Ver. 4. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them. A new vision, or rather a further unfolding of that with which we have been occupied, is presented to us. We have first to ask what the 'thrones' are. Are they simply places of exalted dignity, or are they seats for judgment? The two ideas might be combined were it not that reigning, not judging, is the prominent idea both of this passage and of Dan. vii. 22 upon which the representation in all probability rests. The thrones before us are thrones of Kings (chap.
iii. 21). Those that 'sat upon them' are certainly neither angels nor God; nor are they the twenty-four Elders, for it is the invariable practice of the Seer to name the latter when he has them in view. They can be no other than all the faithful members of Christ's Church, or at least all of whom it is said in the last clause of the verse that they 'reigned' with Christ. And judgment was given unto them. These words cannot mean that the righteous were beheld seated as assessors with the Christ in judgment, for the word of the original used for judgment denotes the result and not the act of judging; and, so far as appears, there was this moment none before them to be judged. The use of the word 'given' leads to the thought of a judgment affecting themselves rather than others. If so, the most natural meaning will be that the result of judgment was in such a manner given them that they did not need to come into the judgment. As they had victory before they fought (1 John v. 4; 1 see also on ver. 9), so they were acquitted before they were tried.

And I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held. Neither was there any mark upon their forehead, nor upon their hand. What the Seer beheld was 'souls,' and the analogy of chap. vi. 9, a passage in many respects closely parallel to this, makes it clear that they were no more than 'souls.' They had not yet been clothed with their resurrection bodies. The word 'beheaded' is very remarkable; nor does it seem a sufficient explanation when it is said that beheading was a Roman punishment. It was certainly not in this way alone that the earliest witnesses of Jesus met at the hands of the Roman power their martyr's death. The word must always retain for the use of so singular a term. It would seem that the bodies of Jewish criminals were usually cast out into the valley of Hinnom, 'the beheaded or hanged in one spot, the stoned or burnt in another' (Gesenius' Lexicon, p. 573). May the Seer have in his mind the thought present to him in chap. xi. 8, 9, when he spoke of the dead bodies of the two witnesses as lying in the street of the great city and not suffered to be laid in a tomb? These were the 'beheaded.' The exposure to which they had been subjected, and the contumely with which they had been treated, are thought of more than the manner of their death. And who were they? Are they no others than those described in the next clause as 'not worshipping the beast,' etc., or are they martyrs in the more special sense of the term? The particular relative employed in the original for 'such as,' together with the grammatical construction, favours the former idea. In all the clauses of the verse only a single class is spoken of, that of Christ's faithful ones, and they are described first by their fate and next by their character (comp. chap. xiv. 12). If we suppose them to be martyrs in the literal sense we must think of that very small class which suffered by decapitation, excluding the much larger 'army of martyrs' who had fallen by other means. Besides which, we introduce a distinction between two classes of Christians that is foreign to the teaching of Christ both in the Apocalypse and elsewhere. God's people without exception are always with their Lord; the promise that they shall sit upon His throne is to every one that over-
Chap. XX. 7-10.] THE REVELATION.

thought of the condition to which that rising leads is more prominent than the act.

Ver. 6. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection. In chap. xix. 9 all believers were pronounced 'blessed,' and the word 'blessed' denotes the consecration that is given not to a few only but to all the saints of God (chaps. xviii. 20, xix. 8): besides which, we are immediately told, they 'shall be priests of God and of the Christ.' The whole description leads directly to the view that all Christians have part in the reign of the thousand years, whatever it may mean.—Over these the second death hath no power. We have spoken of the 'first resurrection' as a state, not an act. It is even more clear that the same thing must be said of the 'second death.' The Seer has indeed himself distinctly explained it when he says, in ver. 14, 'This is the second death, even the lake of fire' (comp. also chap. ii. 11). It is more than the death of the body, more even than the death of the body (could we suppose such a thing) twice repeated. It is the death of the whole man, body and soul together, the eternal punishment denounced by our Lord against those who refuse to imitate His example, and to imitate His Spirit (Matt. xxv. 46). As again bearing on our exposition of ver. 4, it may be well to notice that escaping the 'second death' is spoken of in chap. ii. 11 as the privilege not of those alone who are in a special sense martyrs, but of all believers.—But they shall be priests of God and of the Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. These words again mention privileges (1) that are common to all believers, and (2) that continue not for a thousand years merely, but for ever. All believers are 'priests' (chap. i. 6); all sit upon Christ's 'throne' (chap. iii. 21).

CHAPTER XX. 7-10.

The last Outbreak and Overthrow of Satan.

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be bound, and shall go out from the prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

contents. The happy pause described from chap. xix. 1 to chap. xx. 6 comes to an end, and we enter upon the sixth leading section of the book. The section extends from chap. xx. 7 to chap. xxii. 5, and its object is to show that, though opposed by so many adversaries and led through so many trials, the saints of God shall at the last be victorious. Their great enemy Satan is completely overthrown, and the new Jerusalem descends from heaven to be their abode of perpetual purity and peace and joy. The first paragraph of this section extends from ver. 7 to ver. 10 of the present chapter. It contains a new and final assault upon the saints; but the assault is at once and ignominiously defeated.

Ver. 7. And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison. The meaning of the first clause of this verse cannot be properly discussed until, in some closing remarks on the chapter, we resume consideration of the whole question of what we are to understand by 'the thousand years.' Meanwhile, therefore, it is enough to mark the fact that Satan is represented as loosed out of the prison to which he had been consigned in ver. 3, in order that he may practise that work of 'deception' on 'the nations' which had been alluded to in ver. 2.

Ver. 8. And shall come forth to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to the war. 'Gog and Magog' are in apposition with 'the nations,' so that the two names represent the same thing. There is thus a slight difference between the use of these terms here and in Ezekiel (chaps. xxxviii., xxxix.), where Gog is the prince of Magog, and Magog is the nation ruled by him. In the prophecy of Ezekiel the names are applied to a prince and a people coming from a distance,—apparently the North (chap. xxxix. 2)—fierce, rapacious, and cruel. It is not necessary to inquire what particular
people this "may be, although they are generally regarded as the nations north of the Caucasus. Enough that, wherever they dwell, they are the enemies of God, that they march against Israel after the latter has been established in its own land, and that they are overthrown with a swift and terrible and final destruction. They thus afford a suitable type for the last enemies of the Church, who hold back the winds until the servants of God are sealed, stand upon the four corners of the earth: and, as this is the only other passage where the word occurs in the Apocalypse, we must take it along with us in our effort to ascertain the meaning. Two things may be noticed in connection with it: (1) That the corners of the earth presuppose a centre from which they are distinct; (2) That, though thus distinct from the centre, the powers emanating from them influence the whole earth, and are not confined to the corners, for it is said in chap. vii. 1 that the angels held back not the winds of the corners but the winds of the earth, that no wind should blow on the earth nor on the sea nor on any tree. In precise accordance with this, it is stated here that when the nations came up from these four corners they 'went up over the breadth of the earth;' they covered it all. It is thus impossible to think of mere remote, barbarous, and unknown tribes in contrast with the civilised nations of the world. Nothing less can be in the writer's view than all the heathen, including nations the most cultured and the most civilised. Such too is the meaning of the words 'the nations' as used generally, but in this particular book. In short, we have before us a fresh illustration of the idea which seems to underlie the whole Apocalypse, that the history of Christ is repeated in the history of the Church. After the pause in John xiii.-xvi. there is a fresh and final outbreak of opposition to Jesus, in which the Roman power is peculiarly active. Now, after the passage of the thousand years, there is a fresh outbreak of opposition against the saints, in which the heathen play the prominent part. These 'nations' assemble under the leadership of Satan, of whom it is said that he comes forth out of his prison 'to deceive the nations, to gather them together to the war.' The deception is not the general deception practised by Satan over the hearts of men, and continued during the whole period of human history. It is one act of deception committed at the last, and consisting of the particular influence referred to.—The number of whom is as the sand of the sea. The common biblical expression for innumerable hosts.

Ver. 9. And they went up over the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about and the beloved city. The two appellations here used are evidently intended to express only two different aspects of the same thing, although we are probably to think of the camp not as within the city, but as round about it and defending it (comp. Ps. xxxiv. 7). 'The beloved city' can be no other than Jerusalem, and this is allowed by all commentators. But it is neither the new Jerusalem, which has not yet come down from heaven, nor the actual city of that name, which is supposed by many to play 'so glorious a part' in the latter days. It is in the nature of things impossible that such enormous hosts should encompass one small city. The whole, too, is a vision, and must be symbolically understood. As 'the nations' denote the enemies, 'the beloved city' denotes the people, of God; and surely not a select number, but all the 'saints;' all to whom the term 'Jerusalem' in its best sense may be properly applied. It was in a similar sense that in chap. xiv. 1 the 144,000 stood upon Mount Zion, and that in chap. xiv. 20 the slaughter took place 'without the city.'—And fire came down out of heaven and devoured them. The destruction is complete even without mention of a battle being fought (comp. 1 John v. 4). The imagery is taken from Ezek. xxxviii. 22, xxxix. 6, with allusion also to such a destruction as that of 2 Kings i. 10, 12, 14.

Ver. 10. And the devil that deceiveth them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet ; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. The last great enemy of the Church is now overcome and destroyed as the beast and the false prophet have already been (chap. xiv. 20). He is cast into the lake of fire, where all three are tormented for ever and ever. It is presupposed in this everlasting torment that they have made their final and unchangeable choice of evil. This is indicated in the words 'that deceiveth,' the present tense leading us to the thought of the essential characteristic, not the present action, of the great enemy of man.

CHAPTER XX. 11-15.

The Final Judgment.

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is 

1 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, a Mat. xxv. 31.

11 from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; a Ch. vi. 14.

12 and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is 

1 the great and the small standing before God.

12 the throne omit the
of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book were cast into the lake of fire.

And if any one was added even the lake of fire. Hades gave each one he was.
THE REVELATION.

the fact stated in the next verse, that both are cast into the lake of fire,—not simply brought to an end, but punished with the same punishment which had already been meted out to the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet.

Ver. 14. And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire. The first part of this verse has been spoken of. The second part explains that the second death is 'the lake of fire,' clearly showing that the second death is a state. It is the state of those who have chosen and confirmed to themselves the death which came upon man by sin, from which Christ redeems, but which becomes to those who willfully reject His redemption a still more fearful, even the second, death.

Ver. 15. And if any one was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire. Here then is the purpose, and the only one, for which 'the book of life' is spoken of as used at the judgment before us. It was searched in order that it might be seen if any one for whose name was not written in it; and he whose name could not be discovered in its pages was cast into the lake of fire. For a carefulness of expression very similar to that of these words see John x. 16 and note.

From all that has been said it will be apparent that the judgment now described is not a general judgment, but one on the wicked only. The first view is no doubt that which most naturally suggests itself on the reader of the passage; but until he examines more particularly the expressions that are employed, and calls to mind the whole style of thought exhibited in this book. But (1) The thought of a general judgment breaks the connection with the preceding verses, as a whole, is occupied with judgment upon the enemies of the Church. The interposition of a judgment, and consequent reward, of the righteous disturbs the even flow of the description: (2) It is very difficult to imagine that those who have already reigned with Christ in the thousand years, and to whom judgment either relating to themselves or over others has been 'given' (ver. 4), should now be placed on the judgment bar: (3) Add to all this the use and meaning in St. John's writings of such words as 'the dead,' 'judged,' 'the sea,' 'death,' and 'Hades,'—and it appears impossible to adopt any other conclusion than that in the vision now before us we have a judgment of the wicked, and not a general judgment.

THE REIGN OF THE THOUSAND YEARS.

We have now examined the various topics mentioned in the separate clauses of chap. xx. with the exception of 'the thousand years.' It is impossible, however, to pass from the chapter without devoting some attention to this point. No subject referred to in the New Testament has more agitated the Church throughout all her history. Upon none has greater diversity of opinion or greater keenness of feeling been displayed; and there is none on which, alike for our individual comfort and for the sake of our general estimate of Scripture, it is more desirable to gain, if possible, a clear and definite conception. The writer of this Commentary is more particularly desirous to offer a few considerations upon the point because, so long ago as August 1871, he was led to take a view of the thousand years which, as far as known to him, had not been previously suggested, and which seemed to remove in a manner consistent with fair interpretation the chief difficulties of the subject. So firmly was the most important conclusion then arrived at has been brought forward, though apparently as the result of his own independent investigations, by Kliefoth, in the second part of his Commentary on the Apocalypse, A.D. 1874. Kliefoth's interpretation of the passage as a whole is indeed entirely different from that adopted here, but upon the particular point of the thousand years he and the present writer are at one. Such a fact may help to propitiate the reader in favour of what has now to be said.

Before again suggesting the solution referred to, it will be well to devote a few sentences to two views, one or other of which is generally accepted as upon the whole the best explanation of the apostle's meaning. The first of these is that a lengthened period of prosperity and happiness for the Church of Christ on earth is to intervene between the close of the present Dispensation and the general Judgment. Almost everything indeed connected with this period is matter of dispute among those who accept the main idea,—its length, the proportion of believers who shall be partakers of its glory, the condition in which they are to live, the work in which they are to be engaged, the relation in which the exalted Redeemer is to stand to them. These differences of detail it is impossible to discuss as if they were so many separate theories, but the most important will be noticed as we proceed. The second explanation demanding notice is that which supposes the thousand years to be a figure for the whole Christian age from the First to the Second Coming of the Lord.

Turning to the first of these explanations, it would seem as if the difficulties surrounding it were nearly, if not wholly, insurmountable.

(1) If we interpret the thousand years literally, it will be a solitary example of a literal use of numbers in the Apocalypse, and this objection alone is fatal. If, on the other hand, we regard the thousand years as denoting an indefinite period, the difficulties of doing so are hardly less formidable. The numbers of the Apocalypse may be symbolical, but they are always definite in meaning. They express ideas it is true, but the ideas are distinct. They may belong to a region of thought different from that with which arithmetical numbers are concerned, but within that region we cannot change the numerical value of the numbers used without at the same time changing the thought. Thus the thousand years cannot mean two thousand or ten thousand or twenty thousand years, as the necessities of the case may demand. If they are a measure of time, the measure must be fixed, and we ought to be able to explain the principles leading us to attach to it a value different from that which it naturally possesses.

(2) It is impossible to form any reasonable conception of the condition of the saints during the thousand years. Multitudes of them must have risen from their graves through Him who is 'the first-fruits of them that sleep;' those who were alive at the beginning of the thousand years must have been 'changed.' This is admitted by such as hold the theory: Believers raised, however, are raised 'in glory,' and we have the absolutely inconceivable spectacle presented to us of glorified saints living in a world which has not yet received
its own glorification, and is thus completely unfitted for their residence. Nor is the difficulty lessened by adopting the supposition that only the Holy Land and Jerusalem shall be transfigured, for we cannot imagine one part of the earth transfigured without the rest, and the part chosen for this purpose is far too small to accommodate those who are supposed to occupy it. Still greater difficulties meet us when we think of the relations existing between the saints thus glorified and the 'nations.' It is not easy to gather together in a single sentence the various ideas upon this point of those who hold the view of which we speak; and it may be enough to say that 'the nations' are generally regarded as either subject to the saints, and ruled by them in peace, or as the objects of their missionary enterprise. They are thus either harmless innocents, the absence of Satan preventing all combination and organized manifestation of evil, or they are peculiarly accessible to the grandeur of the spectacle which they behold in the glorified Saviour and His people. It is needless to say that for all this, and much more of a similar kind, there is absolutely not the slightest foundation in the apostle's words. Indeed the total absence of any mention of relations between the saints and 'the nations' until we come to ver. 7 is one of the most remarkable characteristics of the vision. Evidently the Seer has no thought of any complex state of matters such as would spring out of the long dwelling together of these different classes. Or, if there is to be a fresh duration of existence, is there any special provision for 'the nations,' a Gospel preached under circumstances very different from what we have known, and constituting a new Dispensation, while yet there is the same judgment at the end, and the condition for entrance into happiness or woe continue as before?

(3) The great difficulty, however, presented by this view of the millennium arises from the teaching of Scripture elsewhere upon the points involved in it. If we suppose that the saints who are made partakers of millennial glory are a selected company, we introduce a distinction between different classes of believers unknown to the word of God, in which all believers enjoy the same privileges on earth, share the same hope, and are at length rewarded with the same inheritance. Even if we reject such distinctions, we are not entitled to separate between believers and unbelievers, for it cannot be denied that the New Testament always brings the Parousia and the general judgment into the closest possible connection. When Christ comes again, it is to perfect the happiness of all His saints, and to make all His enemies His footstool (Matt. xxv. 31-46; John v. 28, 29; Acts xii. 31; Rom. xi. 16; 1 Thess. iv. 17; 2 Thess. i. 5-7; 2 Pet. iii. 8-13). The teaching of the Apocalypse itself in other passages corresponds with this (chaps. iii. 20, 21, xi. 17, 18). The idea of masses of the nations continuing to be Christ's enemies for years or ages after He has come is not only entirely novel, but is at variance with everything we are taught by the other sacred writers upon the point.

The same remark may be made with regard to the two resurrections (in whatever particular form we imagine them to take place) which are separated from each other by a thousand years. We have already seen that the simple exegesis of the passage disproves this idea, and that the 'first resurrection' is a state, not an act. But, apart from this, the New Testament knows only of one, and that a general, resurrection (John v. 28, 29), and the passages usually quoted as containing partial indications of the opposite, such as 1 Cor. xv. 23, 24, 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17, to which we shall afterwards advert, fail to support the conclusion drawn from them. The resurrection of believers takes place at 'the last day' (John vi. 40).

Again, the idea that before the end the Church shall enjoy a long period of prosperity and rest on earth with Christ in her midst, is inconsistent with that teaching of Scripture which seems distinctly to imply that her history down to the close of her pilgrimage shall be one of trouble. That this is the meaning of Matt. xxiv. can hardly be disputed, and the argument from that chapter is the stronger because the discourse of Christ contained in it lies at the bottom of the Apocalypse, and the writer of the latter could not contradict the very authority upon which his delineation is grounded. Or, if it be said that Christ is only to come personally at the end of this thousand years, what can be the meaning of the exhortations addressed to us to wait and long for His Second Coming? We ought rather to wait and long for the millennial bliss.

The second interpretation of which it is necessary to say a few words is that which understands by the thousand years the whole Christian age from the First to the Second Coming of Christ. That there is an element of truth in this view we shall see by and by; but, looking at it in the form in which it is usually presented, it is not possible to accept it. The number one thousand is inappropriate to the purpose to which it is applied. The period in question has already been made known to us as three and a half years. To make it one thousand years now is to throw everything into confusion. Still further, the place of the book in which the vision is found is unsuitable to this view. No doubt the Seer is in the habit of recapitulating. But the thousand years' reign forms part of a series of visions designed to point out the nature of the Church's victory after her warfare is concluded. We cannot separate it from the visions of chap. xix., and these certainly belong to the end. Again, the 'reign' of one thousand years is obviously granted not to the generation of believers only who are alive at the coming of the Lord, but to all who have been faithful unto death; and none of these have lived through the whole Christian Dispensation. Once more, we cannot speak of Satan as bound and shut up in the abyss during the whole period of the Church's history. That there is a sense in which he is so as regards the righteous must be allowed, but his action upon the ungodly, upon 'the nations,' has never ceased. He has been their betrayer and destroyer in every age. When he was cast out of heaven he was 'cast down to the earth,' and there he persecuted the woman 'for a time, and times, and half a time' (chap. xii. 9, 14). Our Lord teaches us to pray, 'Deliver us from the evil one' (Matt. vi. 13). This view, too, equally with the last considered, perplexes our ideas as to what is to happen when the Christian Dispensation has run its course. At this point the thousand years expire; and, as they have been understood of time, it becomes necessary to allow some additional space of time for the closing war. We are thus brought into

fresh conflict with other statements of Scripture relating to the same subject. The second proposed solution is not more satisfactory than the first.

It was in these circumstances that the writer of this Commentary offered many years ago what seemed to him the true solution of the question of the millennial reign—*that the thousand years are not a period of time at all*. They represent that victory of the Lord over Satan which is shared by His people in Him, and they complete the picture of that glorious condition in which believers have all along really been, but which only now reaches its highest point, and is revealed as well as possessed. This reign is "the age of the Lord," when they believe, and entered into a Divine life, but one hid with Christ in God. At the manifestation of Christ at His Second Coming they also are "manifested with Him in glory." (Col. iii. 4.) Such is the leading thought.

That 'years' may be taken in this sense there can be no doubt. In Ezek. xxxix. 9 it is said that the inhabitants of the cities of Israel shall prevail against the enemies described, and "shall take fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the hand-staves, and the spears, and they shall burn them with fire seven years;—i.e., they shall utterly destroy them, not a vestige shall be left. Again, at the twelfth verse of the same chapter, when the prophet speaks of the burying of Gog and all his multitude, he says, 'And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them in the Mount of Olives, the expression marks only the thoroughness with which the land should be cleansed from every remnant of heathenish impurity. The use of 'years' in the passage before us seems to be exacted by the necessity of representing the extent of time occupied in the overthrow of the enemy (Luke x. 19); and He destroyed them, not a vestige shall be left. And it is confirmed by the prophetic expression of six hundred years' the time of the generation to whom the prophecies are applicable. The object of the prophecy before us is to show that there is another side to the picture, and that that side, long hidden, shall be at length revealed. Just as in the earthly life of Jesus there came a time when, His strength over, His glory shone forth in the presence of His disciples, and He spoke as one already glorified (John xvi.), so there comes a time when His people shall shine forth in the glory which they have received from Him. This is the reign of a thousand years.

It may be said that the words of ver. 7, which speak of the thousand years being 'finished,' together with the subsequent outbreak of the devil and the nations against the Church, are inconsistent with the view now taken. The difficulty thus suggested is specious, but by no means insuperable. Let us familiarize ourselves with the idea that the 'thousand years,' regarded simply as an expression, may denote completeness of thoroughness, either of defeat or victory. Above all let us place ourselves in the position of the See, and catch as far as possible the spirit in which He writes. We shall then have little difficulty in seeing that the loosing of Satan at the end of the thousand years is not to be understood literally. It is a mere incident necessary to give verisimilitude to the poetic delineation. The prophet has described Satan as completely subjugated; but the whole evil of the earth is once more to be presented to us gathered together against the saints. Satan, the head of its kingdom, the prince of this world, must be there that he may direct its energies and share its fate. For this purpose it is needful that he shall be spoken of as loosed. The loosening, then, is not chronological, not historical; it is only poetic, designed to give consistency to the prophet's vision.

Let us apply this principle to the passage...
The New Heavens and the New Earth; and the New Jerusalem.

1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people; and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

3 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the

1 and the sea was no more; 2 omit John; 3 out of heaven, from God; 4 the throne; 5 shall tabernacle; 6 peoples; 7 and he himself, even God-with-them, 8 omit with them, and be 9 every tear; 10 he 11 every; 12 and death shall be no more; 13 add shall there be; 14 mourning; 15 nor pain, any more; 16 omit for
5 former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that overcometh the crown; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth four-square, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire;
20 the third, a "chalcedony; the fourth, an "emerald; the fifth,
  sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the
  eighth, beryl; the ninth, a "topaz; the tenth, a "chryso-
  prusus; the eleventh, a "jacinth; the twelfth, an "amethyst.
21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate
  was of one /pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, /Mat. xiii. 46.
  as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein:
  for the /Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple
  of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the
  moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, /Isa. lx. 19.
24 and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them
  which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the
  kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. /Ps. lxxii. 10.
25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all day: for there
  shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and
  honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise
  enter into it any thing that /defileth, neither whatsover worketh a lie: but they which
  are written in the Lamb's book of life.

\[\text{In one sense old, they were devoted to a new purpose, enabled to express the mysteries of a new and higher state of being. The 'heavens,' the 'earth,' and the 'Jerusalem' here spoken of are in this sense 'new.' They are the 'new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness' (2 Pet. iii. 13). The meaning of the last clause of this verse is difficult to determine. But it seems clear that we are not to understand the words in their literal acceptation. We must seek the solution of the difficulty in that meaning of the word 'sea' which have found it necessary to apply in almost every passage of this book where we have met it. The 'sea' is not the ocean; it is the emblem of the ungodly. It connects itself with the thought of restlessness, disorder, and sin. These shall be excluded from the better and higher state of the redeemed in their abode of future blessedness.}

Ver. 2. The Apostle beholds the metropolis of the renovated world under the figure of that metropolis which was so intimately associated with the memories and aspirations of the people of God, a New Jerusalem. Her newness will be afterwards more particularly described, but even now we are told enough to convey to us a lofty idea of her grandeur and beauty. She comes down out of heaven, from God, and she is prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Is there not a reminiscence in the word 'prepared' of that great promise in John xiv. 3 which the apostle who saw this vision was to record? 'The Bridgroom is now the Husband' (comp. 'wife' in ver. 9).

Ver. 3. The Seer next hears a great voice out
THE REVELATION. [CHAP. XXI. 1-27.

of the throne.' The voice may not be actually that of God Himself, but it certainly expresses the Divine thoughts and purposes. Behold, the tabernacle of God is with man, and he shall tabernacle with them, and they shall be his peoples, and he himself, even God with them, shall be their God. The allusion is to the Tabernacle in the wilderness (not the temple), that sacred tent which was the dwelling-place of God in the midst of Israel. That Tabernacle is now 'with men,' no longer with a people separated from the rest of the world but with men at large, for all sin is banished; and they who are not upon the earth are without exception members of the Divine family. In the next words, especially when viewed in the light of what seems to be the correct translation, it is impossible to mistake the reference to John i. 14. 'The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us,' for it is in Christ Jesus that God dwells with man: 'in the Son only do we know the Father, the 'only God' (John v. 44). Hence it is said that 'He Himself,' even 'God with them' ('Immanuel, God with us'), shall be their God. He shall no longer be at a distance from them, nor they from Him. No boundary shall be placed around the mount: no cloud shall conceal His glory. As brother dwells with brother, so God in humanity dwells with His brethren in one blessed home of holiness and love. From all eternity the Word had been with God (John i. 1); now He is to be to all eternity with men, and men shall be a new Israel for the new Jerusalem (comp. 2 Cor. vi. 11-18 and Lev. xxvi. 12; Zech. viii. 8).

Ver. 4. All the most precious fruits of such a fellowship shall also be experienced. He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes. Not 'all tears' are spoken of, but 'every tear.' Each single tear they shed shall be wiped away, even before it falls. —And death shall be no more. It has been destroyed by Him who was dead, and is alive for evermore (chap. i. 18); and it can no longer disturb with its terrors, or its separations between the loving and the loved. —Neither shall there be mourning. The reference is not to mourning in general, but to waiting for the dead. —Nor crying, nor pain, any more. —'Crying' is the acute cry produced by any pain; 'pain' is the burden laid upon us by any woe, especially by such woes as are connected with the toils and sufferings of the present outward world. From all sorrow whether sharp or dull; from all burdens whether proceeding from the body or the mind, the dwellers in the New Jerusalem shall be for ever free. These trials belonged to the first things, to the old earth; and the old earth, the 'first things,' has passed away.

Ver. 5. What the Seer had before heard regarding the new creation had proceeded from a voice 'out of the throne' (ver. 3). Now God Himself, he that sitoth on the throne, speaks. For the first time in this book the direct voice of God is heard. Hitherto He has been veiled in His own unspeakable majesty and glory, watching indeed with the deepest interest the fortunes of His Church, overruling all things for her good, but Himself unseen, unheard. Now He breaks His silence; and, as One who dwells with men (ver. 4), directs their thoughts to the accomplishment of His own holy and gracious will. His words are, I will give unto my love a seat in my Father's house and in my Father's throne. This is the new blessed and everlasting world. "The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in the city; and there shall be no more night; there shall not be any more death nor mourning nor crying nor pain any more; for the former things are passed away." In the words of the verse it is new, but in the sense of the thoughts it is the same as ever was the old world of sin, trouble, and death. Of that world the last is hereby morally spoken. The words are not spoken of the things that are to be, but of the things that are. They were spoken of in the preceding verses, and as the words now uttered are properly a parenthesis indicating the deep interest of the Almighty in His people, there is no sufficient cause to bring in the interpolation of any third party. God Himself says to His servant 'Write,' and Himself assures him not only that His words are 'faithful,' but that they are 'true.' The new heavens and the new earth are the end towards which God has been always working. The whole history of the world, with its opposition to the truth and with the judgments that have overtaken it; the whole history of the Church, with her struggles and victories, has not been accidental. It has been the carrying out of God's 'bright designs' from the moment when He expressed Himself in the works and in the creatures of His hands.

Ver. 6. The voice: God is continued, as He says, They, i.e. the words of ver. 5, are come to pass. The future for which the saints of God have longed, and of which the prophets spoke, has come. All expectations are fulfilled. All hopes are realized; the end to which all things pointed is reached. Hence, accordingly, the close connexion of the next words with these, I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. God is all. Everything is forever One; the first cause, the last end, of all things. He must finish that new creation for the coming of which the sins and sorrows of the world have been only the preparatory trials. —I will give unto my love a seat in my Father's house and in my Father's throne. These words are neither a noun nor a promise to labouring and heavy-laden ones in search of rest, and they find their parallel in the words of John iv. 14 rather than of John vii. 37. Those spoken of as already drunk of the living water, and been refreshed by it. Not the longing after salvation, but the longing for a continued and ever deepening participation in its blessings, is expressed by the word 'abide.' The reference is not to their first life in Christ; they draw from Him continually those ever fresh supplies of grace by which they are sustained in spiritual life and joy.

Ver. 7. He that overcometh is the same as he that is 'abideth,' and is only viewed in another aspect of his glorious position. In reference to Jesus He is always thirsty; in reference to the world and the devil he is always a conqueror. By the use of the word 'overcometh,' the last part of the Apocalypse is bound closely to its first (comp. the promises in chaps. ii. iii.). —The promise is, I will be his God, and he shall be my son. God will be his God, his Father: he will be God's son, enjoying the spirit of adoption by which we cry, Abba, Father, and living in that love and confidence which mark a son in a loving father's house and presence.

Ver. 8. The happiness of the saints of God has been described. In contrast with this the word before us presents us with the fate of the ungodly, who are classified first in general terms, and then by the particular sins which they commit. The 'fearful' are mentioned first as occupying a position the reverse of them that 'overcome;' they have shrunk from the struggle; they have
yielded to the foe instead of conquering him.
Upon the description of the other classes it is
unnecessary to dwell. They are such as have
changed the darkness rather than the light, as
have loved the lie rather than the truth (John
viii. 44); as have deliberately resisted and cast
aside the grace that might have been theirs,—
their part can be only in the second death.
Ver. 9. At chap. xxvi. 1. one of the angels that
had the seven bowls had come to the Seer and
shown him the great harlot that sitteth upon
many waters, the mystic Babylon. In like
manner one of the same group of angels, but
more fully described one of the seven who had
the seven bowls, who were laden with the seven
last plagues, now shows him the city that was in
every respect the contrast of Babylon, not Babylon
but the New Jerusalem, not a harlot but the
bride of the Lamb's wife. The fuller description
of the angel brings out more completely the fact
that the last plagues were over, and that nothing
remained to be exhibited to the Seer but the glory
of the redeemed in heaven. The combination of
the term 'bride' and 'Lamb's wife' is remark-
able. The Church is not only espoused but
married to her Lord, yet she remains for ever in
a virgin purity.
Ver. 10. The Seer is carried in the spirit, for
this purpose, to a great and high mountain.
The object is that he may command a more unin-
terrupted view of the holy city as she descends in
all her glory from heaven to earth. It was from
the top of an 'overlooking high mountain' that
Satan showed our Lord all the kingdoms of the
world and the glory of them, and for a similar
purpose, that he may see more clearly the grandeur
of the spectacle before his eyes, is St. John
cleared to the height. Compare 1 Pet. x. 2, Isa. ii. 2, and Heb. xii. 23 makes it
probable that the city was situated upon the
'mountain,' and we are therefore to understand
this word not in the sense of a solitary peak but,
as often in the Gospels, in the sense of a range of
mountains where from peak to peak the view is
less hampered than in the plain. The harlot in
chap. xxvi. was a city, Babylon; the Lamb's wife
is a city, New Jerusalem.
Ver. 11. The description of the city begins,
and first she is spoken of as having the glory of
God. This light lightens her both within and
without. From the subsequent description it
appears that the idea of the Holy of Holies is in
the Seer's mind, and we cannot therefore be wrong
in thinking that the 'glory' which he has in view
is that of the Shechinah. By it He now lightens the whole of
that glorious abode in which His people dwell
with Him.—Her light was like unto a stone
most precious, as it were a jasper stone, clear
as crystal. The word of the original translated
'light' is rather light-bearer or light-giver, and
it refers to the light which the city sheds every-
where around her like the sun or the stars of
heaven. It is light of crystalline clearness and
purity (comp. chap. iv. 3).
Ver. 12. Having a wall great and high,
having twelve gates. The walls of ancient
cities were for protection against enemies, and of
such protection there was no need here. But so
important in this respect were walls, that they
were again stated in the ancient mind with every-
thing that in a city was brave or bold (comp.
Psa. xciii.). Hence the New Jerusalem has not
only a wall, but a wall 'great and high.'—It has
also twelve gates, and at the gates twelve
angels. The word translated 'gate' is not so
much the gate itself as the porch or portal with
which it was connected (comp. Matt. xxvi. 71).
It includes the gate-tower under which the
traveller passes at this day into many an Eastern
city. These gates were twelve in number, dis-
posed like the gates of the encampment of Israel
around the Tabernacle. The angel at each gate
in all probability marks the heavenly protection
which is extended by the Almighty to his people
gentile as well as Jew: and, if so, we have an
argument powerfully corroborative of what has
been said of the 144,000 sealed 'out of every tribe
of the children of Israel' in chap. vii. The figure
itself is from Ezek. xlviii. 31.
Ver. 13. The distribution of the gates follows
in this verse.
Ver. 14. From the gates we are next taken to
the foundations. And the wall of the city had
twelve foundations (comp. Heb. xi. 10). We
are not to think of foundations buried in the
earth, but of great and massive stones rising above
the soil as a pediment sustaining the whole
structure. At the same time we have not before
us twelve great foundation-stones going round the
city in one line, but twelve courses of stones, 'each
course encompassing the city, and constituting
one foundation' (see ver. 15).—And on them
twelve names of the twelve apostles of the
Lamb. There was one name doubtless on each
foundation, but the main point of the figure is that
the city rested on the twelve Apostles of our Lord.
1 Cor. iii. 11 is presupposed. The twelve
Apostles are 'Apostles of the Lamb,' placed by
Him in their several positions, and fulfilling in Him their
several functions. It ought to be unnecessary to
say a single word in refutation of the idea that St.
John would not thus have referred to himself as
an Apostle had he really been the author of this
book. He is not thinking of himself. He is lost
in the magnitude and glory of the apostolic office.
Nor is the idea in the least degree better founded
that it is St. John's intention, out of hatred to St.
Paul, to exclude him from the apostolic office.
The whole passage is symbolical; the Jewish
imagery could not have admitted thirteen instead
of twelve foundations, and St. Paul is no more
excluded from the number of Apostles than are
Gentile Christians from the happiness of the city.
Ver. 15. The city is to be measured, in order
that its noble and fair proportions may be seen.
The angel measures it with a golden reed, the
metal of the reed corresponding in dignity and
value to the city itself, which is of 'pure gold'
(vers. 18). A measuring reed, though not of gold,
is used in Ezek. xl. 3.
Ver. 16. The city itself is first measured. It
lieth four square, . . . the length and the
breadth and the height of it are equal. It was
thus a perfect cube, and, remembering the
general imagery of this book, there can be no
doubt that the Seer has the Holy of Holies of the
Tabernacle in his eye. That part of the Taber-
nacle was a cube. — The symbolism which marks the general shape marks also the details, each dimension measuring 12,000 furlongs, 12 the number of the people of God multiplied by 1000 the heavenly number. It is indeed often supposed that the 12,000 furlongs spoken of are the measure of the four sides of the city taken together, in which case each side will measure only 3000 furlongs. But were this view correct, it would be difficult to account for the insertion of the next clause, And the length thereof is as great as the breadth. That clause would then anticipate the last clause of the verse, whereas it seems to assign a reason why the breadth alone was actually measured. Nor is it of the smallest moment to reduce the enormous dimensions spoken of. No reduction brings them within the bounds of verisimilitude, and no effort in that direction is required. The idea is alone to be thought of.

Ver. 17. The wall is next measured, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is of an angel. It is hardly possible to think that we have here the actual height of the wall; it would be when compared with the height of the city that the combination would be unnatural and grotesque. St. John, too, could then hardly have called the wall "great and high" (ver. 12). The supposition, moreover, that the wall is kept low in order that the glorious light of the city may stream out over it, is inconsistent with the general imagery (comp. also on ver. 18). The wall is a part of the city as strictly as the foundations are, and itself, like them, radiant with the light which shines forth from the city as a whole. It seems better, therefore, to think here of the breadth of the wall. Its length and height had been measured, and its thinness added to complete the description of its strength. The last clause of the verse has occasioned considerable difficulty. The meaning seems to be, that a human standard of measurement was used; and it was well to note this. The New Jerusalem is not framed according to angelic ideas or for angelic purposes. It is to be the dwelling-place of men; and even, therefore, when an angel measures it, he measures it "according to the measure of a man."

Ver. 18. The measuring has been completed. We have next the materials of which the city was composed. Those of the wall are first mentioned. Some of the wall are first mentioned. And the building of the wall was jasper. We have been already told in ver. 11 that the light shining from the city was like that of a jasper stone. The wall, which was of jasper, must have shone with a like crystalline clearness,—a distinct proof of the falseness of the idea which makes the wall low in order that it may not obstruct the light of the city. — And the city was pure gold, the most precious metal known, but in this case transfigured and glorified, for it was like unto pure glass.

Ver. 19, 20. The materials of the twelve courses of stones which formed the basement of the city are next mentioned (comp. on ver. 14). They are not merely beautified with precious stones. The words garnished with all manner of precious stones might suggest such an idea, but the words that follow immediately correct it. Each course was composed of the particular jewel named. — The first foundation was jasper, the clear brilliant stone already mentioned in connection with the "light of the city" in ver. 11, and with the "building of the wall" in ver. 18. The second was sapphire, a stone of a clear sky-blue colour. The third was chalcedony, by which is generally understood a greenish blue emerald. The fourth was emerald, of a green colour peculiarly pleasing to the eye (comp. chap. iv. 3). The fifth was sardonyx, a form of onyx stone, and of a paleish-white. The sixth was sardius, a red stone (comp. chap. iv. 3). The seventh was chrysolite, a stone highly esteemed among the ancients, of a colour that was golden yellow. The eighth was beryl, a green-coloured stone. The ninth was topaz, a stone the leading colour of which was green, but modified by yellow. The tenth was chrysoprase, a stone of greenish hue. The eleventh was jadith, a stone of a yellow amber colour. The twelfth was amethyst, a violet blue stone. Some uncertainty attaches to the identification of each of these stones, but to the interpreter who would catch the idea of the Seer this uncertainty is of little moment. Two things are especially noteworthy in regard to them when they are taken as a whole. (1) All are precious, fully representing the splendour of the celestial city. (2) All are different from each other, though they blend into a harmonious unity. The glorious light of the Divine presence streams through many colours, and each course of precious stones gains beneath the common light which all give forth its own individual excellence and beauty.

Ver. 21. Having described the foundations, the Apostle now passes to the gates and street of the city. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; and every several gate was one pearl. No attempt is made to attain verisimilitude. It is enough that the figure helps to bring out the surpassing splendour. And the street of the city was pure gold, as it were the clear glass. We are probably not to think of only one street, for a city so large, and with so many gates, must have had many streets. But it is unnecessary to dwell upon them all. Each is of the same material as the rest, and all are of gold, but, as in ver. 18, of gold transfigured and glorified.

Ver. 22. The glory of the city is illustrated by other facts. And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. What a revelation do these words present of the local giving place to the universal, the outward to the inward, the material to the spiritual! There could indeed be no spot more holy than another where all was holy, none purer than another where all was pure. God Himself and the Lamb in whom He is revealed to men sanctified every spot of ground within the city by their immediate presence. The inhabitants dwell as if continually in the temple praising God."

Ver. 23. As the city was independent of the outward and ordinary means of grace, so also it was independent of the outward influences which nature supplies for the help of man. It had no need of the sun neither of the moon to shine upon it. In our present condition all nature is sacramental to the believing eye or ear. All tells of the supernatural behind nature. But now the shadows flee away, and God and the Lamb, revealing God lighten the city with their immediate light. The glory of God spoken of is again the Shechinah, the visible symbol of His presence. The Lamb is the lamp of God. It may seem as if mention of the "lamp" detracted
from the loftiness of the imagery; but, when there is neither sun nor moon, we naturally think of the lamp which men use at night. May there not also be an allusion to the lamps of the Golden Candlestick of the Sanctuary?

Ver. 24. The description of the glory of the New Jerusalem is continued in figures taken from the prophets of the Old Testament (comp. Isa. lx. 2, 3). And the nations shall walk by the light of it. We are not required invariably to understand the heathen by the word ‘nations,’ or the faithful of the Old Covenant by the word ‘people.’ It appears from John xiv. 50–52 (see note there) that there is a sense in which the theocratic people are a ‘nation,’ and the heathen gathered into the flock of Christ a part of His ‘people.’ In ver. 3 of this very chapter, too, we have read of a time when God shall dwell with men, and they shall be ‘His peoples.’ The two terms ‘nation’ and ‘people’ may, therefore, be applied to the same persons viewed in different aspects. The ‘peoples’ of ver. 3 are the ‘nations’ of this verse and of chap. xxii. 2; and the choice of the different expressions is probably determined by the consideration that in the one God is thought of as ‘tabernacling’ in the midst of His people, in the other as being His people’s ‘light’ (comp. note on chap. i. 20, where we have a remarkable parallel both in thought and structure). The ‘nations’ are not converted heathen alone, but all who, whether Jew or Gentile, walk in the light. And the kings of the earth bring their glory into it. Not the masses of the nations only, but their highest representatives and dignitaries submit themselves with all that they have to the sway of Him who now rules in righteousness, the universal King.

Ver. 25. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day; for there shall be no night there. The design of the words is to set forth the perfect peace and security of the inhabitants of the heavenly city. How often had the gates of an ancient city to be closed, always by night, often by day! How often had measures of precaution to be taken against apprehended danger! Here there is no danger, no apprehension, no enemy to approach the gate, but happiness perfect and for ever undisturbed. The explanation of the last clause of the verse, beginning as it does with the word ‘for,’ has afforded some cause of perplexity to interpreters. Yet the explanation generally given is satisfactory. In Isa. lx. 1 the prophet, speaking of the future city of God, had said, ‘Thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night.’ St. John is referring to that passage, but he could not adopt it as it stood, and he would explain why he stopped short at the word ‘day’ of the prophet. He could not bring the thought of ‘night’ into connection with the New Jerusalem, for there was ‘no night there.’ There may have been something more in his thoughts. We know from John xiii. 30 the symbolical meaning which he attached to the word ‘night.’ ‘It was night’ when Judas went out upon his errand of treachery and crime. The first clause of the verse contains the emblem of security and peace. The second assigns the reason why these shall continue undisturbed. There shall be no night there, no darkness either physical or moral, neither man nor devil that shun the light.

Ver. 26. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. Such shall be the use made of the open gates. The nations shall stream into the city with their gifts, to lay their best upon its altars, and to enjoy in turn its rest and peace and security and light. The New Jerusalem receives freely, and possesses for ever, the glory and honour of the kings of the earth. She receives without seeking it; all that Babylon had become a harlot to obtain, and could not keep.

Ver. 27. For these purposes alone shall the open gates be used. There shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie. There is indeed now nothing unclean; there is no wilful sinner of any kind to enter. All the enemies of God have been overcome; all sin has been banished for ever.—But they only which are written in the Lamb’s book of life. Such alone are found upon the earth; and, as we lift our eyes to the city, we behold them flocking in from the East and from the West, from the North and from the South, their toilsome pilgrimage closed, their hard struggle ended, their glory come.

CHAPTER XXII. 1–5.

The New Jerusalem (continued).

And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear, as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street thereof, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the d Jer. viii. 33.
nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be written in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

15 anything cursed 13 and 14 do him service 16 omitted 17 light of lamp 18 shall be night no more 19 shall give

CONTENTS. These verses bring to a close the description of the New Jerusalem, and it is unfortunate that, in our Authorised Version, they should have been separated as they are from the parts of the same description contained in chap. xxi. The verses are framed with an obvious reference to the Paradise of Gen. ii.

Ver. 1. And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. No scenery is complete without water; and more especially to the Jew, accustomed to a burning climate and a thirsty land, water was the constant symbol of all that was refreshing and quickening to men. The joy of the holy city could not, therefore, be perfect without it. 'There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High' (Ps. xcv. 1; comp. also Ezek. xlvii. 1-12). The river here spoken of corresponds to that of Gen. ii. 10, but it is a still brighter stream. It comes 'out of the throne of God and of the Lamb,' out of the highest and most blessed of all sources, God Himself, our God, revealed to us in His Son in whom He is well pleased. The waters are those of peace and spiritual life: Jerusalem's 'peace is like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream' (Isa. lxvi. 12). Not only so; the waters are 'bright as crystal,' of sparkling purity and clearness.

Ver. 2. In the midst of the street thereof. These words are best connected with the words immediately preceding, and they thus describe the course of the river. We are again, as in chap. xxi. 21, to understand the word 'street' generically, so that the picture presented to us is that of a clear stream flowing down the middle of each street of the city, bordered with trees on either side. Yet these trees are one tree.—And on either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve harvests of fruits, yielding her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. The idea of the 'tree of life' is no doubt taken from Gen. ii. 9. It grows on either side of the river, nourished by its waters and shading its banks. Interpreters differ as to the meaning of the second clause of the verse, some preferring the rendering given above, others that of the Authorised Version, 'twelve manner of fruits.' A good sense may be obtained from the latter interpretation, which will point us to the variety, ever new, of the enjoyments provided for the inhabitants of the city. But the former interpretation appears to be preferable. It is almost demanded by the third clause of the verse, 'yielding her fruit every month,' which carries our thoughts much more to the same fruit produced every month than to twelve successive varieties of fruit. Besides this, the general idea of the passage is rather that of continuous nourishment than of variety of blessings. Finally, the thought has direct reference to that upon which the believer lives, and this is always one and the same: 'Christ' liveth in us (comp. chap. ii. 7). It is unnecessary to say that the number twelve is not to be understood literally. The supply of fruit, at once for the nourishment and the delection of the saints, never fails.—In the last clause of the verse it is not implied that any inhabitants of the new earth stand in need of healing. For the same reason it is impossible to think that 'the nations' here spoken of have yet to be converted. They have already entered that better world to which the old world has given place. That they are 'healed' can signify no more than this, that they are kept in constant soundness of health by what is there administered to them. As we must persevere throughout eternity in faith, so also shall we persevere in health (comp. on John xx. 31). 'The nations' we have already seen to be full partakers of all the blessings of the city (chap. xxi. 24). They include Jewish as well as Gentile Christians, and the importance of both classes, not the inferiority of either, is the leading thought.

Ver. 3. And there shall be no more anything accursed, anything upon which the curse of the Almighty rests, and fit only to be cast out of His presence.—And the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it. What throne is this? The three clauses that follow appear to show that it is the throne of God in the innermost recess of His sanctuary. The 'throne' therefore is not concealed. The redeemed have constant access to it.—And his servants shall do him service. They shall perform their priestly functions for ever in His presence.

Ver. 4. And they shall see his face. It had been said to Moses by the Almighty, 'Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see Me, and live' (Ex. xxxiii. 20). But the blessing denied to the great leader of the hosts of Israel is granted to those who are taken up into the Mount with God. He is revealed to them in the Son, and they shall 'see Him even as He is' (1 John iii. 2). The beatific vision of the pure in heart is that 'they shall see God' (Matt. v. 8).—And his name shall be on their foreheads. The name referred to is that of God and of the Lamb. As the high priest of old wore upon his forehead a plate of gold with the name of Jehovah inscribed upon it, so the redeemed, now all high
priests in the sanctuary, shall wear the same name upon their foreheads. Nothing is said of the golden plate. The name is written upon the forehead itself.

Ver. 5. And there shall be night no more. We have already had a similar statement in chap. xxi. 25, but it is now repeated in a different connection and with a different purpose. Then it was to indicate that the gates of the city shall be continually open, so that the redeemed may continually enter with their gifts in order to magnify its King. Now it is to show that, having entered, they shall suffer no interruption in their joyful service, and shall need no nightly rest to recruit the weary frame for the service of the following day. They shall be always strong and vigorous for the service of their Lord. — And they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun, for the Lord God shall give them light. Did they need light of lamp or sun, it would show that they were still amidst the changes of this fleeting scene, for the lamp wastes as it burns, and the sun hastens daily to its setting. But He who is without variableness or shadow cast by turning is now their light, and that light never fades. As their frame never wearies for service, so the conditions necessary for the accomplishment of that service never fail.—And they shall reign for ever and ever. The transition is sudden, almost startling, for we have been reading only of 'service.' Yet it is eminently characteristic of St. John, who constantly delights at the close of a passage to return to its earlier steps, and to close as he had begun. He has reached the consummation of the happiness of the saints of God, and of what can it remind him but of his very earliest words, words too the echo of which has run through the whole of the Apocalypse, 'And he made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto His God and Father' (chap. i. 6)? It is true that the redeemed are priests, but they are more than priests. He with whom they are one is a priest after the order of Melchizedek, both priest and king. In like manner they are both priests and kings; they 'sit down with their Lord in His throne, even as He also overcame, and sat down with His Father in His throne' (chap. iii. 21). They share the Divine authority over all things around them, and their authority is without interruption and without end. They reign 'for ever and ever.'

---

CHAPTER XXII. 6-21.

The Epilogue.

6 And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true:

and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel
to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be 6 Ch. i. 1.
7 done. 6 Beloved, I come quickly: 'blessed is he that keepeth 6 Ch. i. 3.
8 the sayings of the prophecy of this book. And I John saw 6 Ch. i. 4.
these things, and heard them. 6 And when I had heard and

seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel 6 Ch. i. 17.
9 which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God. And he saith unto me, 'Seal 6 Ch. i. 19;

Dan. xii. 4.

not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time

is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and
he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is
righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let
him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work

shall be. 6 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and

end.

---

1 words and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets.
2 shortly come to pass
3 And I John am he that heard and saw these things
4 I heard and saw
5 And he saith omitt for
6 a fellow-servant with thee
7 And he saith
8 add up
9 do unrighteousness that
10 do righteousness And
11 add the
THE REVELATION.

14 the end, the first and the last." Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. Chap. xi. 22. 

15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. 

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hath ear, let him hear what he saith to his servants. He which testifieth these things saith, "Surely I come quickly. Amen." Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

CONTENTS. The Apocalypse began with a Prologue. As in the case of the Fourth Gospel, it now ends with a corresponding Epilogue, in which the great importance of all the revelations contained is again set before us, and we are urged anew to the acceptance of the blessings and an avoidance of the plagues of which it speaks. At the same time various particulars of the Prologue are taken up, and the whole book is presented to us in its compact unity.

Ver. 6. And he said unto me, These words are faithful and true (comp. on chap. xxi. 5). There is no ground to think that we have here a recapitulation by St. John himself of the things that had been spoken to him. We hear rather the words of the angel who has been throughout the whole book the medium by which the revelations contained in it have been communicated. Nor are we to confine the words to which reference is made to those connected with the vision of the New Jerusalem. They refer, as appears especially from ver. 7, to all the visions of the book. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly come to pass. It is doubtful whether by the expression "the spirits of the prophets" we are to understand the spirits of the prophets themselves, which belong to God and which He uses for His own purposes, or the Spirit of God, that Spirit by which of old "men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. i. 21). The latter appears to be the true interpretation, for it directs us more immediately to that Divine inspiration to which it is the object of the Seer to trace all the revelations which he had enjoyed, and it connects us more closely with that Prologue of the book which is at present in his mind. In chap. i. 4 we have read of the "seven Spirits which are before His throne," that is, of the one Spirit of God in the completeness and manifoldness of His gifts. Here, in like manner, we are led to think of the varied gifts of prophetic power with which God had been pleased to endow the commissioned servants of His will. The things revealed in this instance were those already spoken of in chap. i. 1, where the same words are employed to describe them. It is curious to find the word "servants" in this verse, when in chap. i. 1 we had only one servant spoken of. Yet we cannot suppose that under the plural form are included those Christians for whose behoof the revelations had been given. It can only include those to whom they had been made. Perhaps the explanation may be that, as "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (chap. xix. 10), St. John here unites with himself the prophets of God in all past ages. All of them, though in divers portions and by
divers manners' (Heb. i. 1), had had one revelation to proclaim; and, although that revelation had now reached a fulness which it had not previously attained, the last stage in the unfolding of God's will was only the completing of what had gone before.

Ver. 7. And behold, I come quickly. The Lord Himself is introduced as the speaker, as He at once summarises the contents of the book, and presents to His Church that theme which was her encouragement and hope amidst all her troubles. The words are not to be regarded as those of the angel. They are rather a parenthesis on the part of St. John himself, as he lovingly recalls the thought that was to him the chief spring of all life and joy.—Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book. After the parenthesis the words of the angel are resumed. It is true, that at the time when they were uttered the book had not been written. But the command had been given that it should be written (chap. i. 10), and the task might easily be viewed as already accomplished. The book indeed was but a transcript of the eternal verities which had been written in the counsels of God from before the foundation of the world (comp. on chap. xxi. 5). The word 'keepeth' is a favourite one with the Apostle. It is not enough to hear or to enjoy. The Son 'keepeth' the Father's commandments, and it is the test of the love of believers. 'If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments' (John xiv. 15).

Ver. 8. And I, John, am he that heard and saw these things. Once more, as at chap. i. 1, 4, the Seer names himself, thus again binding together the opening and closing paragraphs of his book,—a clear proof that by the words 'these things' we are to understand the contents of the whole book and not merely of its latest section. On the importance of seeing and hearing, comp. i John i. 1, 2—And when I heard and saw I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Once before, at chap. xix. 10, he had done the same thing, and had been corrected for it. We need not wonder that he should do it again; nor is it necessary to think that, having just heard the words 'Behold, I come quickly,' he may have been doubtful whether the angel before him was the Lord Himself or not. Such had been the glory of the revelations that a mistake of this kind might easily be made more than once. But, whenever made, it was needful that it should be pointed out.

Ver. 9. The angel forbids the worship that would have been paid him, and adds, I am a fellow-servant with thee, and with thy brethren the prophets, and with them which keep the words of this book: worship God. Before God alone must all His creatures bow. All are only His 'servants,' and it is their duty to encourage one another in their mutual service. It is needless to say that distinctions of office are not here denied; but there is something deeper than office in which Christians are one.

Ver. 10. And he saith unto me, Seal not up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. At chap. i. 19 St. John had been commanded to 'write;' now he is commanded to proclaim what he had written. The Apocalypse was not to be a sealed and hidden book like that of Daniel (chaps. viii. 26, xii. 4). It was to be opened for the instruction and the guidance of the Church. There was not a moment to be lost. The Lord was at hand. Let all who believed that truth prepare themselves for His coming.

Ver. 11. He that is righteous, let him do righteousness still: and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still: he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still: and he that is holy, let him be made holy still. It is not possible to separate these words from the last clause of ver. 10 or from ver. 12. But the question still remains, In what sense are they to be understood? Are they a warning to the wicked as well as the good, so that the former may repent while there is time? They can hardly be looked at in this light. There is no appearance of an exhortation to the wicked to repent either in the passage before us or in any other part of the Apocalypse; and in ver. 12 'reward only, not punishment, is spoken of. The Apocalypse is a book for the Church, although indirectly it appeals to the world. Or, do the words contain the truth that the mystery of God's dealings is finished, and that nothing more will be done by Him to lead men to change their state? This we must take to be the meaning, a meaning applicable not simply to the few moments immediately preceding the Lord's coming, but to the whole Christian era. The words contain that solemn lesson often taught in Scripture, but nowhere so impressively as in the writings of St. John, that the revelation of Christ is the final test of the character, and the final arbiter of the fate, of man. It is not a light which appeals to the spark of light in the breast of every one. Will one listen to the appeal; will he follow that voice of his nature which bids him bring his light to the Light,—then his little spark will be kindled into a bright, ever-enduring flame. Will he close himself against the light, will he, because he loves the darkness, refuse to admit the light,—then his darkness shall continue and deepen, and the little spark that might have been fanned into ever-increasing brightness will expire. Under the influences of the Gospel of Christ we make out our own destinies; we sow the harvest that we shall eventually reap. Such is the great moral spectacle upon which, as he surveys the history of man, the eye of St. John always rests. It is this that lends to the world its solemnity, and to the revelation that is in Christ Jesus its unspeakable importance. We need not remain unrighteous and filthy; we may not remain righteous and holy; but, whatever the changes that we experience, this is true, that we are fixing our own character and conducting every day we live, and that, if judgment overtakes us at the last, the result will be traceable to no arbitrary decree, but to the manner in which, as moral beings, we met the conditions of that moral system in the midst of which we have been placed.

Ver. 12. In conformity with the general tenor of the Apocalypse, this verse is to be regarded as addressed only to the righteous. The word 'reward' in it is not to be understood in a neutral sense, but as indicating what it naturally means. Every man whose word is pleasing to the Lord shall receive the welcome and the blessing which the faithful Lord is ready to bestow.

Ver. 13. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. These words confirm the statement made in the
previous verse (comp. chap. xxi. 6). They take us back also to chap. i. 8.

Ver. 14. Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city. The thought of the blessed reward that had been spoken of fills the mind of Him who is to bestow it, and He accordingly continues in this verse the same and the next following verse to enlarge upon it. Those who are to enjoy that reward are evidently conceived of as one class, the Church of Christ as a whole, not two classes, Jewish and Gentile Christians. All have ‘washed their robes,’ and in that respect they are one. In the two last clauses of the verse their blessedness is presented under two points of view—first, they have ‘a right to it,’ literally, they have authority over ‘the tree of life,’ so that they may eat continually of its fruit; secondly, they ‘enter in by the gates into the city.’ This last we might have expected to be mentioned first, for the tree of life grows within the city. But the first is the most important, and therefore receives the place of prominence. It is also possible that, as it is ‘the right’ to the tree of life that is spoken of, the eating of the tree may be separately viewed. The order may be—first, the right; secondly, the entering; thirdly, the eating.

Ver. 15. Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. These words appear to be added, not so much for the sake of warning us what shall be the fate of the sinful classes mentioned, as for the sake of enhancing by contrast that description of the blessedness of the righteous which had been given in the previous verse. The latter are within the city, protected for ever from the effects of the class now described, the very mention of which awakens pain and horror in the mind. The word ‘dogs’ is a general appellative applicable to all these classes, and is to be explained by remembering the light in which such animals were regarded by the Jews (Ps. xxi. 16, 20; comp. Matt. vii. 6; Phil. iii. 2). This general appellative is then subdivided (comp. chap. xxi. 8).

Ver. 16. I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things for the churches. The closing message of the book begins with these words, and it comes from Him who only here, and in His words to Saul (Acts ix. 5), calls Himself by the name ‘Jesus.’ The word, therefore, must be understood in its most emphatic sense, the Saviour, He who saves His people from their sins and leads them to triumph to the promised rest. In the words employed by Him He first confirms what had been said in chap. i. 1, and then points out the persons to whom as well as those for whose behoof the testimony had been given. ‘I have sent,’ it is stated, ‘unto you.’ The persons thus referred to seem to be the ‘angels’ of the churches, not special office-bearers of any kind, but the churches in their action, in their presentation of themselves to the world in life and action. It is indeed possible that, as in ver. 6 of this chapter we found the Seer comings before us as the representative of all those there called God’s ‘servants,’ so here we may have the plural ‘you’ because he is again regarded in the same light. The other explanation, however, is simpler, and finds some confirmation in the connection between so many different parts of the Prologue and the Epilogue. While thus testified to the churches in action, the things contained in this book are testified ‘for the churches,’ i.e. for the seven churches mentioned in chap. i., but considered as a representation and embodiment of the whole Church.—In the first words of this verse the Lord had described Himself as Jesus. The words which follow, I am the root and the off spring of David, the bright, the morning star, enlarge this description, and that in the manner of those double pictures which are so common in the writings of St. John. The first picture is taken from the circle of Jewish associations, the second from the field of the east. The ‘root of David, we are not to understand that root out of which David sprang as if, when taken along with the following words, we had here a declaration that Jesus was both the ‘Lord’ and the ‘Son’ of David (comp. Matt. xxii. 45). The ‘root of David’ is rather the shoot which proceeds from David after he and his house have fallen, and it only expresses in a figure what is more plainly stated in the use of the word ‘offspring.’ But not only so, Jesus is also ‘the bright, the morning star,’ the most brilliant star in the firmament of heaven, now the harbinger of that day the light of which never dims. This is the Gentle, perhaps more properly the general, portion of the figure. David’s was a local name: the eyes of all nations are fixed with interest and delight upon the morning star (comp. chaps. v. 5, ii. 28).

Ver. 17. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hath an ear hear. Cometh. And let him that is athirst come. He that will, let him take the water of life freely. It is not easy to determine exactly the bearing of the different clauses of this verse, and much diversity of opinion prevails upon the point. The clause now regarded either as a continuation of the words of Jesus in ver. 16, or as the answer of the Church and the believing soul. Neither view is consistent with them as a whole. On the one hand, there is something unnatural in putting into the mouth of the Lord Himself those two cries addressed to Him to ‘come’ which are contained in the first two clauses. No other instance of the kind occurs in the Apocalypse, frequently as His Coming is there spoken of. On the other hand, it is equally unnatural to look upon the last two clauses as a response of the Church to the Lord; while, if her mind is at the moment as full as we know it to be of the Coming of Jesus, it is not easy to comprehend how she could pass so rapidly to a meaning of the word ‘come’ different from that which occupied all her thoughts. In these circumstances we venture to suggest that we may have here an interchange of thought and feeling between Jesus and His Church. He is coming: the Church is waiting in joyful assurance that He is at hand. Both the Lord and His Church are at a moment of highest rapture. What more natural than that at such a moment they should exchange their sentiments in the blessed fellowship of a common joy? If this be allowed, the first two clauses will be the answer of the Church to Him who has just described Himself by the glorious titles of ver. 16. The Spirit working in the Church, and teaching her to long and cry for that Coming with which all her hopes are associated, together with the Church herself, no sooner think of the testimony of Christ as ended than they can restrain themselves no
THE REVELATION.

Ver. 20. He which testifieth these things saith Yeas: I come quickly. Amen: Come, Lord Jesus. The structure of this verse resembles what we have already found to be that of ver. 17, an exchange of sentiment between the Lord and the believer. Jesus Himself speaks first, testifying to that great truth of His Coming which has been the main theme of the whole revelation of this book; and adding, as suited the moment at which we have arrived, that He comes 'quickly.' To this the believer or the Church answers 'Amen,' and then adds, 'Come, Lord Jesus.' The Coming of Christ has been the source of her hope, the spring of her joy, throughout all her troubles. When she hears that it is at hand, what can she do but lift up her head and cry 'Come'?

Nothing now remains but that the Apostle, as he had begun at chap. i. 4 in epistolary form, should in like manner close. He does it with a benediction which ought to read differently from that of the Authorised Version, The grace of the Lord Jesus be with the saints. The words are in striking harmony with what we have found to be the tone and character of the whole book. It was especially intended to describe the fortunes of 'the saints': it was written for their sakes, to encourage and strengthen them; it has now reached a point at which we behold nothing but saints in the new heavens and new earth; and its closing salutation is to them. — Amen, so let it be.
T. and T. Clark's Publications.

In Three Volumes, Imperial 8vo, Price 24s. each,

VOLUME III. In the Press,

ENCYCLOPAEDIA
OR
DICTIONARY
OF
BIBLICAL, HISTORICAL, DOCTRINAL, AND
PRACTICAL THEOLOGY.

BASED ON THE REAL-ENCYCLOPÄDIE OF HERZOG, PLITT, AND HAUCK.

EDITED BY

PHILIP SCHAFF, D.D., LL.D.,
PROFESSOR IN THE UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, NEW YORK.

"As a comprehensive work of reference, within a moderate compass, we know nothing at all equal to it in the large department which it deals with."—Church Bells.

"The work will remain as a wonderful monument of industry, learning, and skill. It will be indispensable to the student of specifically Protestant theology; nor, indeed, do we think that any scholar, whatever be his especial line of thought or study, would find it superfluous on his shelves."—Literary Churchman.

"We commend this work with a touch of enthusiasm, for we have often wanted such ourselves. It embraces in its range of writers all the leading authors of Europe on ecclesiastical questions. A student may deny himself many other volumes to secure this, for it is certain to take a prominent and permanent place in our literature."—Evangelical Magazine.

"Dr. Schaff's name is a guarantee for valuable and thorough work. His new Encyclopaedia (based on Herzog) will be one of the most useful works of the day. It will prove a standard authority on all religious knowledge. No man in the country is so well fitted to perfect such a work as this distinguished and exact scholar."—Howard Crosby, D.D., LL.D., ex-Chancellor of the University, New York.

"This work will prove of great service to many; it supplies a distinct want in our theological literature, and it is sure to meet with welcome from readers who wish a popular book of reference on points of historical, biographical, and theological interest. Many of the articles give facts which may be sought far and wide, and in vain in our encyclopedias."—Scotsman.

"Those who possess the latest edition of Herzog will still find this work by no means superfluous. Strange to say, the condensing process seems to have improved the original articles. . . . We hope that no minister's library will long remain without a copy of this work."—Daily Review.

"For fulness, comprehensiveness, and accuracy, it will take the first place among Biblical Encyclopedias."—Wm. M. Taylor, D.D.
T. and T. Clark's Publications.

In Twenty Handsome 8vo Volumes, Subscription Price £5, 5s.,

MEYER'S


'Meyer has been long and well known to scholars as one of the very ablest of the German expositors of the New Testament. We are not sure whether we ought not to say that he is unrivalled as an interpreter of the grammatical and historical meaning of the sacred writers. The Publishers have now rendered another reasonable and important service to English students in producing this translation.'—Guardian.

Each Volume will be sold separately at 10s. 6d. to Non-Subscribers.

CRITICAL AND EXEGETICAL

COMMENTARY ON THE NEW TESTAMENT.

By Dr. H. A. W. MEYER,
OBERCONSISTORIALRATH, HANNOVER.

The portion contributed by Dr. Meyer has been placed under the editorial care of Rev. Dr. Dickson, Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow; Rev. Dr. Crombie, Professor of Biblical Criticism, St. Mary's College, St. Andrews; and Rev. Dr. Stewart, Professor of Biblical Criticism, University of Glasgow.

1st Year—Romans, Two Volumes.
Galatians, One Volume.

2d Year—St. John's Gospel, Vol. II.
Philippians and Colossians, One Volume.
Corinthians, Vol. I.

St. Matthew's Gospel, Two Volumes.
Corinthians, Vol. II.

Ephesians and Philemon, One Volume.
Thessalonians. (Dr. Lüsemann.)

5th Year—Timothy and Titus. (Dr. Huther.)
Peter and Jude. (Dr. Huther.)
Hebrews. (Dr. Lüsemann.)
James and John. (Dr. Huther.)

The series, as written by Meyer himself, is completed by the publication of Ephesians with Philemon in one volume. But to this the Publishers have thought it right to add Thessalonians and Hebrews, by Dr. Lüsemann, and the Pastoral and Catholic Epistles, by Dr. Huther. So far, however, of the Subscribers have expressed a desire to have Dr. Bütterstock's Commentary on Revelation included, that it has been resolved in the meantime not to undertake it.

'I need hardly add that the last edition of the accurate, perspicuous, and learned commentary of Dr. Meyer has been most carefully consulted throughout; and I must again, as in the preface to the Galatians, avow my great obligations to the surnames and scholarship of the learned editor.'—Bishop Elliott in Preface to his 'Commentary on Ephesians.'

'The ablest grammatical exegete of the age.'—Philip Schaff, D.D.

'In accuracy of scholarship and freedom from prejudice, he is equalled by few.'—Literary Churchman.

'We have only to repeat that it remains, of its own kind, the very best Commentary of the New Testament which we possess.'—Church Bella.

'No exegetical work is on the whole more valuable, or stands in higher public esteem. As a critic he is candid and cautious; exact to minutiae in philology; a master of the grammatical and historical method of interpretation.'—Princeton Review.
T. and T. Clark's Publications.

In Two Volumes, 8vo (1600 pages), price 28s.

THE DOCTRINE OF SACRED SCRIPTURE,
A CRITICAL, HISTORICAL, AND DOGOMATIC INQUIRY INTO THE ORIGIN
AND NATURE OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

BY GEORGE T. LADD, D.D.,
PROFESSOR OF MENTAL AND MORAL PHILOSOPHY, YALE COLLEGE.

CONTENTS.

VOLUME I.

PART I.—Introduction.—Chap. I. The Nature of Old Testament Scripture as
determined by the Teaching of Christ. II. The Nature of New Testament
Scripture as determined by the Promises of Christ. III. The Claims of the
Old Testament in general, and of Messiahism in particular. IV. The Claims of
Propheticism and of the Hokmah. V. The Claims for the Old Testament by the
Writers of the New. VI. The Claims for the New Testament by its own
Writers.

PART II.—Chap. I. Introductory. II. The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture as related
to the Scientific Contents of the Bible. III. The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture
as related to the Miraculous Contents of the Bible. IV. The Doctrine of
Sacred Scripture as related to the Historical Contents of the Bible. V. The
Doctrine of Sacred Scripture as related to the Predictive Contents of the Bible.
VI. The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture as dependent upon the Ethico-Religious
Contents of the Bible. VII. The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture as related to the
Authorship and Composition of the Biblical Books. VIII. The Doctrine of
Sacred Scripture as related to the Language and Style of the Biblical Books.
IX. The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture as related to the History of the Canon.
X. The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture as related to the Text of the Bible.
XI. Inductive Theory of Sacred Scripture.

VOLUME II.

PART III.—Chap. I. Introductory—The Nature of the Testimony of the Church in
History to the Bible. II. The Period preceding the Christian Era—The
Doctrine of the Old Testament Apocrypha, of the Talmud, Philo, and Josephus.
III. The Period of the Early Christian Church (down to about 250 A.D.). IV.
The Second Period of the Church (from 250 to Augustine and Jerome). V. The
Period from Augustine and Jerome to the Reformation. VI. The Doctrine of
Sacred Scripture in the Period of the Reformation. VII. The Period from the
Beginning of the Post-Reformation Era to the Present Time.

PART IV.—Chap. I. Introductory—The Relations of the Dogmatic and Synthetic
Statement of the Doctrine to the Induction Theory. II. The Bible and the
Personality of God. III. Revelation: its Possibility, Nature, Stages, Criteria,
etc. IV. The Spirit and the Bible. V. Man as the Subject of Revelation and
Inspiration (Psychological). VI. The Media of Revelation. VII. Inspiration.
VIII. The Bible and the Church. IX. The Bible and the Word of God (dis-
tinguished in idea and extent). X. The Authority of the Bible. XI. The
Bible as Translated and Interpreted. XII. The Bible as a Means of Grace.
XIII. The Bible and the Individual Man. XIV. The Bible and the Race.

This elaborate work embodies the studies and labour of several years, and has
been looked forward to, with interest, by biblical scholars on account of the author's
known competence for his difficult task. It need hardly be said that the subject
is one which at present stirs theological thought throughout English-speaking
Christendom.
T. and T. Clark's Publications.

In Three Volumes, 8vo, price 31s. 6d.,

(Volume I. now ready. Volume II. shortly.)

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

BY DR. BERNHARD WEISS,

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY, BERLIN.

'The authority of John's Gospel is vindicated with great fulness and success. Altogether the book seems destined to hold a very distinguished, if not absolutely unique, place in the criticism of the New Testament. Its fearless search after truth, its independence of spirit, its extent of research, its thoughtful and discriminating tone, must secure for it a very high reputation.'—Congregationalist.

'If the work in its completeness fulfill the promise of this instalment, it will be an exposition of the divine character and mission of our Lord more thorough and penetrating and conclusive than any that we yet possess.'—British Quarterly Review.

'Able and learned volumes. . . . A careful perusal of these books will amply repay the reader. They are replete with original matter, and are evidently the result of painstaking conscientiousness on the part of the author.'—Rock.

'A valuable treatise. . . . A thoroughly exhaustive work; a work in which learning of the most severe type, combined with a perfect knowledge of the languages drawn upon, for the elucidation of his purpose, are apparent in every page.'—Bell's Weekly Messenger.

'From the thoroughness of the discussion and clearness of the writer, we anticipate a very valuable addition to the Great Biography.'—Freeman.

By the same Author.

In Two Volumes, 8vo, price 21s.,

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

'We can bear grateful testimony to the vigour, freshness, and richly suggestive power.'—Baptist Magazine.

'Further references to this work, so far from diminishing the high estimate we have previously expressed, have induced us to value it still more. The issue of the second and concluding volume gives aid to this enhanced appreciation.'—Theological Library.

'Written throughout with freshness, vigour, and perfect command of the material, . . . This is a field which Weiss has made his own. His work far excels the numerous works of his predecessors in thoroughness and completeness.'—Methodist Recorder.

'The work which this volume completes is one of no ordinary strength and acumen. It is an exposition of the books of the New Testament arranged scientifically, that is, according to the authorship and development. It is the ripe fruit of many years of New Testament exegesis and theological study, . . . The book is in every way a notable one.'—British Quarterly Review.

'A work so thorough as this, and which so fully recognises the historical character of the science of Biblical Theology, was well worth translating.'—Academy.

'Able contributions to theological literature.'—Scotsman.
T. and T. Clark's Publications.

PROFESSOR GODET'S WORKS.

In Three Volumes, 8vo, price 31s. 6d.,
A COMMENTARY ON
THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN.
BY F. GODET, D.D.,
PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY, NEUCHATEL.

"This work forms one of the battle-fields of modern inquiry, and is itself so rich in
spiritual truth that it is impossible to examine it too closely; and we welcome this treatise
from the pen of Dr. Godet. We have no more competent exegete, and this new volume
shows all the learning and vivacity for which the Author is distinguished."—Freeman.

In Two Volumes, 8vo, price 21s.,
THE GOSPEL OF ST. LUKE.

"Marked by clearness and good sense, it will be found to possess value and interest as
one of the most recent and copious works specially designed to illustrate this Gospel."—
Guardian.

In Two Volumes, 8vo, price 21s.,
ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

"We have looked through it with great care, and have been charmed not less by the
clearness and fervour of its evangelical principles than by the carefulness of its exegesis,
its fine touches of spiritual intuition, and its appositeness of historical illustration."—
Baptist Magazine.

In crown 8vo, Second Edition, price 6s.,
DEFENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.
TRANSLATED BY THE
HON. AND REV. CANON LYTTELTON, M.A.,
RECTO OF HAGLEY.

"This volume is not unworthy of the great reputation which Professor Godet enjoys.
It shows the same breadth of reading and extent of learning as his previous works, and
the same power of eloquent utterance."—Church Bells.

"Professor Godet is at once so devoutly evangelical in his spirit and so profoundly
intelligent in his apprehension of truth, that we shall all welcome these contributions to
the study of much debated subjects with the utmost satisfaction."—Christian World.

In demy 8vo, Fourth Edition, price 10s. 6d.,
MODERN DOUBT AND CHRISTIAN BELIEF.
A Series of Apologetic Lectures addressed to Earnest Seekers after Truth.

BY THEODORE CHRISTLIEB, D.D.,
UNIVERSITY PREACHER AND PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY AT BONN.
Translated, with the Author's sanction, chiefly by the Rev. H. U. WEITRECHT,
Ph.D., and Edited by the Rev. T. L. KINGSBURY, M.A.

"We recommend the volume as one of the most valuable and important among recent
contributions to our apologetic literature. ... We are heartily thankful both to the
learned Author and to his translators."—Guardian.

"We express our unfeigned admiration of the ability displayed in this work, and of
the spirit of deep piety which pervades it; and whilst we commend it to the careful
perusal of our readers, we heartily rejoice that in those days of reproach and blasphemy
so able a champion has come forward to contend earnestly for the faith which was once
delivered to the saints."—Christian Observer.
T. and T. Clark's Publications.

In Three Volumes, 8vo, price 31s. 6d.,

CHRISTIAN ETHICS.

BY DR. H. MARTENSEN,
BISHOP OF SEELAND.

Translated from the Author's German Edition.

VOLUME I.—GENERAL ETHICS.

II.—INDIVIDUAL ETHICS.

III.—SOCIAL ETHICS.

'As man is a member of two societies, a temporal and a spiritual, it is clear that his ethical development can only go on when these two are treated side by side. This Bishop Martensen has done with rare skill. We do not know where the conflicting claims of Church and State are more equitably adjusted. . . . We can read these volumes through with undiluting interest.'—Literary World.

'It is no ordinary book, and we commend it to the study of all who are interested in Christian Ethics, as one of the most able treatises on the subject which has ever appeared.'—Watchman.

'Dr. Martensen has allowed himself the liberty of speaking from the heart to the heart. His work will be found as useful to non-theological as to professionally theological readers. They will find very much in it to instruct and to stimulate.'—Nonconformist.

By the same Author.

In One Volume, 8vo, price 10s. 6d.,

CHRISTIAN DOGMATICS.

COMPENDIUM OF THE DOCTRINES OF CHRISTIANITY.

'To students this volume will be helpful and welcome.'—Freeman.

'We feel much indebted to Messrs. Clark for their introduction of this important compendium of orthodox theology from the pen of the learned Danish Bishop. . . . Every reader must rise from his perusal stronger, calmer, and more hopeful, not only for the fortunes of Christianity, but of dogmatic theology.'—Quarterly Review.

'Such a book is a library in itself, and a monument of pious labour in the cause of true religion.'—Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette.

In Three Volumes, 8vo, price 31s. 6d.,

A HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES.

BY THE LATE DR. K. R. HAGENBACH.

Translated from the Fifth and Last German Edition, with

Additions from other Sources.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY THE VERY REV. DEAN PLUMPTRE.

'This scholarly and elaborate history.'—Dickinson's Theological Quarterly.

'A comprehensive survey.'—John Bull.

'There is no work which deals with this subject in a manner so scientific and so thorough as Hagenbach's. Moreover, there is no edition of this work, either in German or in English, which approaches the present as to completeness and accuracy.'—Church Bell.

'No work will be more welcome or useful than the present one. We have a whole system of theology from the hand of the greatest living theologian of Germany.'—Methodist Recorder.
T. and T. Clark's Publications.

Just published, Second Edition, in One Volume, 8vo, price 12s.,

**FINAL CAUSES.**

By PAUL JANET, Member of the Institute, Paris.

Translated from the latest French Edition by William Affleck, B.D.


'This very learned, accurate, and, within its prescribed limits, exhaustive work . . .

The book as a whole abounds in matter of the highest interest, and is a model of learning and judicious treatment.'—Guardian.

'Illustrated and defended with an ability and learning which must command the reader's admiration.'—Dublin Review.

'A great contribution to the literature of this subject. M. Janet has mastered the conditions of the problem, is at home in the literature of science and philosophy, and has that faculty of felicitous expression which makes French books of the highest class such delightful reading; . . . in clearness, vigour, and depth it has been seldom equalled, and more seldom excelled, in philosophical literature.'—Spectator.

'A wealth of scientific knowledge and a logical acumen which will win the admiration of every reader.'—Church Quarterly Review.

---

Just published, in demy 8vo, price 10s. 6d.,

**THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF MAN**

(Seventh Series of Cunningham Lectures.)

By JOHN LAIDLAW, D.D.,

Professor of Systematic Theology, New College, Edinburgh.

'An important and valuable contribution to the discussion of the anthroposology of the sacred writings, perhaps the most considerable that has appeared in our own language.'—Literary Churchman.

'The work is a thoughtful contribution to a subject which must always have deep interest for the devout student of the Bible.'—British Quarterly Review.

'Dr. Laidlaw's work is scholarly, able, interesting, and valuable . . . Thoughtful and devout minds will find much to stimulate, and not a little to assist, their meditations in this learned and, let us add, charmingly printed volume.'—Record.

'On the whole, we take this to be the most sensible and reasonable statement of the Biblical psychology of man we have met.'—Expositor.

'The book will give ample material for thought to the reflective reader; and it holds a position, as far as we know, which is unique.'—Church Bells.

'The Notes to the Lectures, which occupy not less than 180 pages, are exceedingly valuable. The style of the lecturer is clear and animated; the critical and analytical judgment predominates.'—English Independent.
T. and T. Clark's Publications.

Just published, Second Edition, demy 8vo, 10s. 6d.,

THE HUMILIATION OF CHRIST,
IN ITS PHYSICAL, ETHICAL, AND
OFFICIAL ASPECTS.

By A. B. BRUCE, D.D.,
PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY, FREE CHURCH COLLEGE, GLASGOW.

'Dr. Bruce's style is uniformly clear and vigorous, and this book of his, as a whole, has the rare advantage of being at once stimulating and satisfying to the mind in a high degree.'—British and Foreign Evangelical Review.

'This work stands forth at once as an original, thoughtful, thorough piece of work in the branch of scientific theology, such as we do not often meet in our language. . . . It is really a work of exceptional value; and no one can read it without perceptible gain in theological knowledge.'—English Churchman.

'We have not for a long time met with a work so fresh and suggestive as this of Professor Bruce. . . . We do not know where to look at our English Universities for a treatise so calm, logical, and scholarly.'—English Independent.

By the same Author.

Just published, Third Edition, demy 8vo, 10s. 6d.,

THE TRAINING OF THE TWELVE;
OR,

Exposition of Passages in the Gospels
exhibiting the Twelve Disciples of Jesus under Discipline
for the Apostleship.

'Here we have a really great book on an important, large, and attractive subject—a book full of loving, wholesome, profound thoughts about the fundamentals of Christian faith and practice.'—British and Foreign Evangelical Review.

'It is some five or six years since this work first made its appearance, and now that a second edition has been called for, the Author has taken the opportunity to make some alterations which are likely to render it still more acceptable. Substantially, however, the book remains the same; and the hearty commendation with which we noted its first issue applies to it at least as much now.'—Rock.

'The value, the beauty of this volume is that it is a unique contribution to, because a loving and cultured study of, the life of Christ, in the relation of the Master of the Twelve.'—Edinburgh Daily Review.