

individuals also. As to what person is meant the matter is equally indefinite, except that it is some Christian woman who had been *elected* or chosen by the Lord the same as the ones to whom the epistle is written. (See the word explained at chapter 1: 1.) We know that ancient Babylon was completely destroyed never to be rebuilt, according to both prophecy and history, hence the term is used figuratively and that also is subject to some uncertainty. *Marcus my son* refers to John Mark, and Peter calls him his son because he had converted him, hence he was his "son in the faith" as Paul called the evangelist (1 Timothy 1: 2).

Verse 14. *Kiss of charity* or love refers to the salutation of the kiss as was customary in old times. The custom as it is related to Christians is explained at 1 Corinthians 16: 20. The peace that Peter wishes for the brethren is on condition that they *are in Christ Jesus*. That is equivalent to the peace that is "first pure" set forth in James 3: 17.

2 Peter 1

Verse 1. Peter designates himself both as a *servant* and an *apostle* but mentions the servant first. The epistle is addressed to the same kind of people as his first one only it is stated differently. The first calls them the "elect" or chosen of God which was according to His prearranged plan. This epistle is addressed to those of *like precious faith* with the apostle. This faith was *obtained* (not born with them at infancy), but the means of obtaining it is clearly stated to have been the *righteousness of God*. Romans 1: 16, 17 states that this righteousness is revealed in the Gospel. Hence the conclusion is clear that men receive faith through the Gospel, which agrees with Romans 10: 17 which declares that faith comes by hearing the word of God. Note that our verse includes the righteousness of our Savior Jesus Christ.

Verse 2. This virtually repeats the thoughts of the preceding verse. The favor of God is to come through knowledge of God, and the preceding paragraph shows that such knowledge is to be obtained through the word of God in the Gospel.

Verse 3. Inasmuch as salvation is the subject under consideration, the phrase *his divine power* refers to the Gospel for Romans 1: 16 declares that

it is the *power of God unto salvation*. Our verse states that this power (which is the Gospel) hath given *all things that pertain unto life and godliness*. The negative thought would be therefore that any doctrine or practice that is not authorized by the Gospel does not have anything to do with life and godliness. The terrible conclusion that is unavoidable is that when men practice anything in their religious life that is not authorized by the Gospel, they are guilty of that which will result in death to them because it is classed with ungodliness. The offering of these life-giving items is done through knowledge of the Lord since he is the one who has made the call herein mentioned. *Glory* means honor and dignity and *virtue* means excellence or a condition of completeness. The word *to* is from DIA and its leading meaning is "by means of." The statement about the call should then be worded as follows: "Knowledge of him who hath called us by his glory and virtue." Such a rendering is also in line with the connection which shows that the Gospel, in which these qualities are contained, is the means by which men are called into the service of Christ.

Verse 4. *Whereby* means that by the kind of life that is designated in the preceding verse, we may claim the *exceeding great and precious promises*. The things promised are *great* because no one but the Lord can grant such favors, and they are *precious* because all the wealth of the universe could not purchase them. The antecedent of *these* is the *glory* and *virtue* mentioned in the preceding verse. In addition to enjoying the precious promises offered in the Gospel, we may become partakers of the *divine nature*. Divine means godlike and nature refers to the qualities that distinguish that which is godlike from that which is not. The man who attains this personality through the Gospel is that much like God. The *corruption that is in the world* is brought about *through lust* of sinful men. When one obeys the Gospel he escapes from that corruption in the sense that he has been cleansed therefrom by the "divine power." He is then prepared to proceed with the kind of life that such a person is expected to follow in his service for Christ.

Verse 5. *And beside this*. It is not enough to obey the commands that cause one to become a Christian, but he must add to his faith the practices

and qualities that are to be named in this and other verses following. *Diligence* is from *SPOUDE* and the definition of Thayer is, "earnestness, diligence." He explains the word as follows: "Universally earnestness in accomplishing, promoting, or striving after anything." A brief and workable definition of the word would be "thoughtful activity." Peter directs that it be used in the work of adding these necessary things to one's faith. *Virtue* is the same term that is used in verse 3. The outstanding word in the definition is "excellence," which means the quality of excelling or going beyond one's present attainments. A Christian should never be satisfied with his present growth, but should be determined to increase more and more. *Knowledge*. The general meaning of this word is "information" and the particular kind of information that is meant in any case must be determined by the connection. Colossians 2: 3 states that all treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid (contained) in the Lord. Then the verses in the beginning of our chapter clearly show that such knowledge is to be learned through the Gospel. Thus the instruction of the apostle is for the Christian to study the Gospel (the New Testament) and add such knowledge to the faith he had that caused him to become a servant of Christ.

Verse 6. The lexicon defines the Greek word for *temperance* with the single word "self-control." A practical illustration of the subject is shown in James 3: 2, 3. In general the word means for Christians to use moderation in the various things of life. Of course the word applies only to things that are not wrong in themselves, but wrong only when carried to excess. Therefore it has no place in the subject of intoxicating liquor as a beverage, for that is wrong regardless of the degree of indulgence. *Patience*. The leading idea of this word may be stated by the words "constancy" and "endurance." The first term denotes a steadiness of one's activities for the Lord and the second means that he will continue it to the end. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2: 10). *Godliness* is from *EUSEBEIA* which Thayer defines as follows: "Reverence, respect; piety towards God, godliness." The word not only requires that a man will live as he should, but that his motive for such a life will be his respect for God.

Verse 7. The two words *brotherly kindness* come from the one Greek word *PHILADELPHIA*. Thayer's definition of the word is, "The love of brothers (or sisters), brotherly love: in the New Testament the love which Christians cherish for each other as brethren." The disciples of Christ should feel a nearness for each other that is stronger even than their love for flesh-and-blood relatives. *Charity* is from *AGAPE* which is one of the Greek words translated "love" in the New Testament. The principal meaning of the word in the present passage is to have a sincere interest in the welfare of others. The subject of love is often misunderstood by students of the Bible, due partly to the circumstance that the word comes from different Greek originals which have different meanings. There is a complete page devoted to the subject made up from the authoritative quotations from the lexicons of Thayer and Strong. The comments are at Matthew 5: 43 which I urge the readers to see and study carefully; they are in the first volume of the New Testament Commentary.

Verse 8. *In you and abound*. Thayer defines the original for the last word, "To superabound; to exist in abundance; to increase, be augmented." It is one of the outstanding principles of the teaching in the Bible that the life of a servant of God should be one of growth. Hence the Christian should determine to make these "seven graces" increase in his life as the days go by. If he will do so it will assure him that he will be neither *barren nor unfruitful*. These words have about the same meaning and are used together as a matter of emphasis. The first specifically means "idle or inactive," and that condition would necessarily result in absence of fruit-bearing. The particular kind of fruit just here being considered is worded *knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*. If a tree fails to bear fruit it may be attributed to a lack of moisture and other ingredients necessary to produce fruit, or to the failure of the plant to absorb those materials that are near it. Likewise if a disciple is inactive in the matter of acquiring the knowledge of Christ that is within his reach in the Gospel (verses 2, 3), it can only result in a life that bears no fruit unto God. Such a state is dangerous for Jesus declares that all such trees will be hewn down and cast into the fire (Matthew 7: 19).

Verse 9. *Blind*. Not "stone-blind" for

then he could not see at all whereas this person can see a little. The idea is as if a smoke was raised making the vision dim. *Cannot see afar off* all comes from MUOPAZO which Thayer defines, "To see dimly, see only what is near," and the Englishman's Greek New Testament renders it "short sighted." We have all seen persons who were afflicted with this defect regarding their bodily eyes and can have only pity for them. But in the case of those who are spiritually "near sighted" there is not much reason for pity, since it is a defect that they can help if they will. *Hath forgotten*. Not that his memory has become a blank, for that would be impossible as long as he maintains his faculties at all. The meaning is that he ceases to hold in grateful remembrance the glorious time when he was washed from his sins by the blood of Christ in baptism.

Verse 10. *Wherefore the rather* denotes that the disciple should not make the mistake just described, but instead he should do the following. Again the apostle advises the use of *diligence* which is explained at verse 5. By using this "thoughtful activity" the disciple may accomplish a very desirable result which certainly every person would welcome. *Calling and election*. When a man hears the Gospel and obeys it he is called into the service, and by a proper walk in life he will be "elected" or chosen of God as one of His own. It is up to the disciple to make that relationship with God permanent or sure. Such a thing is possible else the apostle would not exhort the brethren to do so. He explains how it is done, namely, *if ye do these things* which means the duties outlined in the preceding verses, and if they do he says *ye shall never fall*. While this language gives a disciple an assurance of salvation that no man can take from him, yet the condition on which the assurance is given just as clearly shows that it is possible for a man to fall even after having been "purged from his old sins." This is disproof of the Calvinistic heresy that says "once in grace, always in grace." If that notion were taught in the word of God, then a Christian could do nothing that would cause him to fall. Neither could he do anything to assure himself of final salvation were he one of the "non-elect."

Verse 11. An *abundant entrance* is a phrase of emphasis, meaning that the disciple who is faithful till death will receive all of the glory accompanying

the entrance into the delightful place. *Everlasting kingdom* does not mean the church on earth, for one has to be in that institution first before he can begin to plan for this kingdom. It means the kingdom after Christ has delivered it up to God. (1 Corinthians 15: 24).

Verse 12. *Put you always in remembrance*. Much of the writing and preaching of the New Testament times was done on the principle stated in this phrase. (See chapter 3: 1.) The human mind is inclined to forget what it has learned; that is, in the sense of the word as explained at verse 9. Paul has such a thought in mind in Hebrews 2: 1. Therefore the teachers of the present day find it necessary to repeat the same warnings and exhortations over and over again. It is not necessarily for the purpose of imparting new information, but in order to jog the memory on information already made known. Peter implies that if he should fail to do this reminding of his brethren he would be guilty of *negligence*. Let elders and evangelists and all other public workers take a lesson from this and not become impatient in their labors with indifferent disciples. *Present truth* means the information that they had received up to the present time. The New Testament had not been completed and additional inspired truth was to come as the time went by, but these disciples were pretty well fixed in their belief of the truth already received. Hence another phase of the duty of a teacher is indicated by this. He should constantly exhort his brethren who may actually be somewhat faithful, lest they should later become unmindful and fall into a state of carelessness concerning their duty.

Verse 13. *Think it meet* or suitable to continue the reminding. *Stir you up* means to rouse them to further activities by approaching them and appealing to their memory. *In this tabernacle* means as long as he is in the flesh. Paul refers to the mortal body as a tabernacle in 2 Corinthians 5: 1-6. The word is from SKENOS and Thayer defines it, "A tabernacle, a tent," and he explains that it is "used figuratively of the human body, in which the soul dwells as in a tent, and which is taken down at death." This is another suggestion of the temporary nature of our stay upon this earth, and of the folly of men in acting as if they expected to live on the earth for ever.

Verse 14. *Shortly I must put off*, etc. Peter means he was to die before long; it is stated in Smith's Bible Dictionary that Peter wrote this epistle near the close of his life. *As our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me*. This evidently refers to the conversation recorded in John 21: 18, 19 in which Jesus predicts that Peter would die a violent death at the hands of his enemies. No definite date is given for the tragic event, only he was told that it would happen *when thou shalt be old*. At the time of this epistle Peter was an old man and hence he could say knowingly that this death was near, based on the prediction of Christ.

Verse 15. *After my decease*. There is an interesting item in this phrase. The last word is from EXODUS which Thayer defines, "Exit, i. e. departure; departure from life, decease." We know by the connection that Peter is writing about his death but calls it by a word that means "departure" or going out. The meaning of this word is what gives the second book of the Bible its name, because the "going out" of the children of Israel from Egypt is the main event of that book. But the passage is fatal to the doctrine of soulsleepers and other materialists. They teach that nothing leaves the body at death; that all there is of man goes to the grave at that time. The statement of Peter about his death belies the heresy for we know that his body did not depart when he died. *Have these things always in remembrance*. By putting the teaching in writing with assurances of its truthfulness, the brethren would have the reminder before them even after the soul of Peter had "put off its tabernacle" and had made its exit from this world.

Verse 16. *Cunningly devised fables*. Certain speculators among the Jews joined with others in those days in delivering myths (here translated *fables*) to listeners, and many of them were so tricky in their wording that the uninformed were deceived. The apostles found it necessary to give warnings against heeding such speeches (1 Timothy 1: 4; 4: 7; 2 Timothy 4: 4; Titus 1: 14). Peter declares that he was not depending on such stories in his revealing of the things concerning Christ. What a man sees is a matter of positive knowledge and does not require any ingenious wording to make the report acceptable. *We* is literal and means actually that more than one were witnesses, not

just the "editorial I" as is sometimes used for the sake of modesty. If one inspired witness makes a declaration it is as true as if a hundred would say it, yet if more than one witness the same thing it will be strengthened on the basis of corroboration. *Power and coming*. The last word is elsewhere defined "presence," and since we know Peter has direct reference to the scenes of the transfiguration, the word is used in that sense and applies especially to the *majesty* (greatness) of Christ. However, the very visible demonstration of His greatness of which Peter and others were witnesses, would give evidence of the reasonableness of the predictions of the second coming of Christ to earth.

Verse 17. *He received* means Christ when he received *honor and glory* in the mount of transfiguration (Matthew 17: 1-5). *Such a voice* refers to the voice of God that was heard by Peter, James and John who were taken by Christ up into the mount. The *honor and glory* consisted in the acknowledgement of Christ as the Son of God, and also the announcement that the Father was *well pleased* in his Son.

Verse 18. This is called the *holy mount* because of the sacred things that transpired there, not that any physical change was made in the spot. The first definition of the word for *holy* is, "worthy of veneration" or great respect. Certainly a place where such an awe-inspiring scene took place as the transfiguration is worthy of the most profound respect and in that sense it was holy.

Verse 19. *More sure* is from the one Greek word BEBEIOS which Thayer defines, "Stable, fast, firm; sure, trusty." The word *more* is unnecessary because no comparison is being made, but only some additional information that corroborates the report that Peter just made of his own personal knowledge; nothing could be surer than it. No particular prediction is cited but the fact of there having been such statements made by the prophets of old time is the point Peter is making. The apostle advises his readers to take heed unto those prophecies. He compares them to a light penetrating the *dark place* meaning the (then) future. *Until the day dawn* means the day of the fulfillment of those prophecies, at which the *day star* (morning star) who is Christ (Revelation 22: 16) will *arise in your hearts*. The study of the many prophecies of Christ

in the Old Testament (too numerous to cite here), will bring one up to the fuller report in the history as given in the New Testament, and it will be like the morning star that announces to the world that a new day has dawned. In the words of the wise king of Israel, such a procedure of the study will be like the "shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4: 18).

Verse 20. *Knowing this first* is Peter's introduction to a further explanation of why the "word of prophecy" is to be considered "sure" as stated in the preceding verse. *No prophecy of the scripture*. The last word means the Old Testament because the New Testament had not been completed when Peter was writing, and besides it would not make a prophecy of the kingdom of Christ since that institution already existed while the New Testament was in the making. *Private interpretation*. The Romish church leaders make much of this phrase because they think it supports their heresy about reading the Bible. The pressure of popular sentiment has induced that institution to relax its restrictions against the reading of the Holy Book by the masses. They are now given certain limited privileges of reading it, but they are forbidden to "interpret" it on the strength of the mentioned phrase. The first definition of the original for *interpretation* is, "A loosening, unloosing," and for that of *private* it is, "Pertaining to one's self, one's own." Hence it is clear that Peter is not writing about anyone's interpreting the scripture in the sense of explaining it. He is considering the prophecies in the Old Testament and says that they were not just something that the prophets thought about. It was not their own personal production or something that was their own "brain child." A similar use of language is in John 11: 51 where Caiaphas is making a prediction. The writer explains that Caiaphas did not say it "of himself," but spoke with the inspiration possessed by the high priests.

Verse 21. The thoughts of the preceding verse are continued. *Will of man* is used in the sense of "private interpretation," meaning that the prophecies were not the production of mere human beings. Instead, they spoke as by inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

2 Peter 2

Verse 1. All good things can be abused and that which is true will always have pretenders or imitators. In old times the Lord had faithful prophets and many people learned to love them for their work's sake. Profiting by the respect that was rightly had for the true prophets, others attempted to put over some unrighteous schemes in the name of prophecy. Among the people of Israel were many false prophets and the number of instances is too great to enumerate, but the one in 1 Kings 18 is a noted case. Likewise in the time of the New Testament Peter says there will be false teachers (one name for prophets). *Damnable heresies* means false doctrines that will condemn all who accept them. The apostle specifies one of the false doctrines namely, a denial of the divinity of the Lord notwithstanding that He has bought them with his own blood. *Privily* means secretly; false prophets or teachers are not usually open with their wicked works for fear of being exposed by someone who knows the truth. (John 3: 19-21.) *Swift destruction* means the condemnation that God will bring on these false teachers; it will be swift in that it will be sure and the Lord will not hesitate to inflict the punishment when the time comes.

Verse 2. The leading thought in *pernicious* is something that is destruction of the truth. That definition is confirmed by the rest of the verse, for it says the way of truth shall be evil spoken of by the ones who follow the false teachers.

Verse 3. *Through covetousness* indicates the motive of the false teachers. *Feigned words* means those so formed as to deceive the hearer. *Make merchandise* denotes that they were so successful in imposing their false theories on the people that they could make a gain off of them. There are so many things that could be conducted on this principle that it would be useless to try specifying. We understand that many people are conscientious regarding the propagation of religious principles. If they can be made believe that people are working in the interest of truth, they will be willing to give liberal support to a man engaged in it. *Whose judgement now of a long time*. God has always condemned the false teacher and evil worker. *Lingereth not*. The leading definition of the first word is "to be

idle." The passage means that the judgement or condemnation of such characters is of long standing, but that God has not changed his mind about it nor even tempered His wrath against them. Thayer explains the definition as follows: "Whose punishment has long been impending and will shortly fall." However, the word "shortly" must be understood in a comparative sense, because the apostle proceeds at once to illustrate his declaration by referring to the unjust to be reserved unto the day of judgement to be punished.

Verse 4. *For if.* This phrase will be taken up with comments when we get to verse 9. *God spared not the angels that sinned.* We occasionally meet people who are troubled over the idea of angels sinning since they are in heaven. They are overlooking the truth that neither angels nor man have reached the judgement day, and until that time both classes are capable of sinning. Were that not the case there would not now be such a creature as "the devil," for he was once in heaven and was thrust out because of his pride (1 Timothy 3: 6; Luke 10: 18). But after the judgement no more changes will take place either for better or for worse. (See Revelation 22: 10, 11.) That means after that all wicked men and angels will be in the place of everlasting punishment where they can never reform, and the righteous men and angels will be in heaven where they can never sin because the divine decree is that the righteous shall "be righteous still." The English word "hell" in the King James Version comes from three different Greek words that have different meanings. In our present passage it comes from TARTAROS which means that part of the intermediate state where the wicked go at death. This whole subject of "hell" is explained in detail at Matthew 5: 30, in the first volume of the New Testament Commentary. *Into chains of darkness* is figurative and refers to the regions of the wicked dead, because that place was thought of as one of midnight darkness. *Reserved unto judgement.* These fallen angels have no prospect of deliverance but must await the final judgement day. The only relief that any of them ever had was when some of them were released temporarily to enter into men in the time of Christ and the apostles. See the long note on this at Matthew 8: 28-31 in the first

volume of the New Testament Commentary.

Verse 5. *Spared not the old world* refers to the people that were living in the days of Noah, because the last word is from KOSMOS which is defined "the inhabitants of the earth." They were wicked and God did not spare them from the flood; Noah was spared because he was a man of faith. *Noah the eighth.* This could not mean that Noah was number eight in the genealogy for he was tenth. The lexicons and various translations prefer to word this place, "Noah and seven others." He is called a *preacher of righteousness* because he preached what was right and what pertained to the needs of the day. The people were wicked and living after their evil imaginations, and the situation required teaching directing them to reform. *World of the ungodly* is the same as *old world* in the beginning of the verse.

Verse 6. The history of Sodom and Gomorrah is in Genesis 19. *Into ashes* states the result of the *overthrow* which was sent on them in the *condemnation* from God. *An example.* The punishment of evildoers is not only for their own sakes, but also that the example may be a lesson for warning to others. (See 1 Timothy 5: 20.)

Verse 7. *Just Lot.* This statement is made by an inspired writer and must be accepted as true. Much criticism has been made of Lot because of the choice he made in the time of Abraham. The criticism is unjust because it is contrary to the facts of the circumstance. The reader may see a full explanation of this subject at Genesis 13: 9-12, in Volume 1 of Bible Commentary. *Vered with the filthy conversation* (conduct) *of the wicked.* This has special reference to their gross immorality, for the account that is given in Genesis 19: 4-11 shows them to have been worse than dumb beasts.

Verse 8. This is the same as the preceding verse.

Verse 9. This verse resumes the thought that was introduced at verse 4, but was interrupted with a list of facts set forth as a basis for the present passage. The argument is that *if* God was able and also disposed to do all the things referred to, He is able and determined also to do the following. *Deliver the godly out of temptation.* God does not promise

to work a miracle to keep the trials from coming, but if a disciple is faithful He will care for him and help him overcome them (1 Corinthians 10: 13). *Reserve the unjust* indicates that the punishment of the unjust is to be at a future time. This spoils a wishful-thinking notion that "a man will get all of his 'hell' in this life." Wicked men as well as wicked angels will not be given their final sentence until the judgement at the last day.

Verse 10. *Chiefly* has no reference to the kind of punishment that is to be meted out to these sinners for all will receive the same doom. In Matthew 25: 31-46 we see that those whose only sin mentioned is a failure to relieve the needy, will receive the same punishment that was "prepared for the devil and his angels." The word *chiefly* means that Peter is making particular mention of these characters. *Walk after the flesh*. The connection shows they were living after the lowest desires similar to the Sodomites. *Despise government* means they belittled the laws that would curb their immoral lives. *Presumptuous* and *self-willed* mean virtually the same, referring to people who are determined to have their own way, regardless of whether it is right or wrong. *Speak evil of dignities*. The last word means any thing or any being that is glorious, but the connection shows Peter is writing of angels because of their dignity and glory.

Verse 11. The angels of whom the mentioned "presumptuous" persons are not afraid to speak evil, show more courtesy toward their inferior accusers than the accusers show to them. *Power* and *might* have virtually the same degree of importance in the lexicon definition, hence their use is for the sake of emphasis. *Bring not railing accusation* which means blasphemous charges. A specific instance of this kind of angelic mildness is shown in Jude 6.

Verse 12. *These* refers to the ungodly people described in verse 10. The Englishman's Greek New Testament translates the next four words, "as natural irrational animals," and it is these creatures that Peter says were *made to be taken and destroyed*. He compares the wicked men to these in that they act as if they were as irrational as they. He is expressing the situation as one that is surprisingly foolish, that human beings would behave no better than creatures that

were not intended to be any more important than to be taken and slain. But the comparison is just, since they *speack evil of the things that they understand not*. Certainly men who thus speak do not show much better intellect than the brute beasts. *Utterly perish in their own corruption*. This is said as a contrast to the case of the dumb animals. They are taken by others and slain, while these will be self-destroyed; perish in their *own* corruption.

Verse 13. *Reward of unrighteousness* means they will be treated as an unrighteous man should be treated; they will "reap what they have sowed." *Pleasure to riot in the day time*. It is wrong to riot at any time, but the usual practice is to use the night for it. "For they that be drunken are drunken in the night" (1 Thessalonians 5: 7). But these characters are brazen and take pleasure in flaunting their evil conduct at a time when everyone can see it. *Spots and blemishes*. Paul says the church was desired to be without spot (Ephesians 5: 27), but the conduct of these wicked men puts a terrible blemish on the institution. *Sporting themselves* is defined by Thayer, "To live in luxury," and it was done *while they feast with you*. This has reference to the love feasts that the Christians conducted in the early times. Such feasts were intended only as an expression of good will and were put on for the special benefit of the poorer Christians. But they were often abused as most good things may be, and evil persons attended the assemblies merely to indulge themselves in the good things provided by the brethren for the help of the poor. (See Jude 12.)

Verse 14. *Adultery* is from a Greek word that is defined by Thayer, "An adulteress." He explains about eyes being full of her as follows: "Eyes always on the watch for an adulteress, or from which adulterous desire beams forth." *That cannot cease from sin*. We know the Lord will not condemn a man for something he actually cannot avoid, hence we must look for the meaning of this phrase. In Thayer's definition of the Greek (the words in italics), he says, "Not quieted, that cannot be quieted," and he explains it as follows: "Eyes not quieted with sin, i. e. which they commit with adulterous look." Hence it does not mean these men cannot cease looking at an adulteress (for they could), but they cannot satisfy themselves just by looking;

they will desire to obtain gratification. Doubtless that is why Jesus said "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5: 28). *Beguiling unstable souls*. These men looking round for an adulteress may not find one with such intentions, but if they are *unstable* (not firm in character), these evil men may entice them into sin. *Covetous practices*. In addition to being immoral they are grasping and try to take undue advantage of the free provisions that were intended as an expression of brotherly fellowship. *Cursed children*. The first word is an adjective and describes *children* which means a certain class of individuals. These people are under the curse of the Lord because He has pronounced condemnation upon all such characters who do not repent before death.

Verse 15. *Forsaken the right way* indicates these men had once been righteous, but had *gone astray* which means to step aside from the pathway of righteousness. *Bosor* is the same as Beor, the father of Balaam. Balaam pretended that all the wealth of Balak could not entice him to come to him, but he finally yielded and went in the direction of sin (Numbers 22-24).

Verse 16. This verse continues the case begun in the preceding one, and the record is included in the chapters in Numbers cited. The point is that the false prophet was rebuked even though no other was at hand through whom God could speak. Yet since He was able to give speech to the dumb brute to chastise the prophet, it is made sure that the Lord will be able to give wicked men their proper punishment when the time comes for the judgement of evildoers.

Verse 17. *Wells without water* are places that are supposed to furnish water but have gone dry. *Clouds carried with a tempest* are those without much moisture and hence are so light they are driven about with the wind. Both figures are used to illustrate men who make the pretense of service for the Lord but who are empty of real worth. *Mist of darkness is reserved*. Since these pretenders are like a mist without rainfall, they deserve to go into another form of mist or gloom, and that is eternal darkness which is being reserved for them.

Verse 18. The principal subject of this verse is the influence these evil men have over those who would de-

sire to be good if left alone. They accomplish their wicked designs by means of *great swelling words of vanity*. This means they use deceptive language that causes others to expect certain enjoyments. They make their contact with the victims at the point of *wantonness* (impure desires) and *lusts of the flesh*, that being the place in the nature of a human being where he is the most apt to be influenced. These wicked pretenders are so successful that they *allure* (draw aside) those who were *clean escaped* from a life of error. Some translations render this as if the victims were only in the process of being brought out of error, but the word for *clean* is defined by Thayer, "Truly, in reality, in point of fact." This definition agrees also with the reasoning in verses 20-22 below.

Verse 19. A man cannot truly impart something to another he does not have himself, especially when it concerns moral or spiritual principles. These evil workers held out the prospect of a life free from the restraints of law. Yet while emphasizing the good fortune of being "free men," they were themselves a group of slaves. Not to temporal or literal masters it is true, but to the harsh master of sin. Peter proves his assertion by the self-evident truth that if a man is overcome by any person or thing he is the slave of that thing; Paul teaches the same in Romans 6: 16.

Verse 20. The words *latter end* are from a Greek word that is defined "last state" in the lexicon. It does not mean that he has come to the end of his opportunity; that there is nothing he can do about it. The only point the apostle is making at this place in the man's life, is a comparison between his state at the two periods of his experience. They are the one where he escaped from error and the one after he went back to it; of the two the second is worse.

Verse 21. *For it had been better*, etc. It is sometimes argued from this verse that it would be wise not to become a Christian in the first place, then one can avoid what Peter says is the worse of two states. The apostle had no such idea in mind when he wrote this passage, and the theory does him an injustice. Besides, the one who makes such a proposition assumes that only two states are possible and everyone must take one or the other of them. Such is not true for it is not necessary to decide on either, namely,

either remain unconverted or go back into sin afterward. The thing he can do and should do is to know and enter *the way of righteousness*, then remain in it. The reason a backslider is in worse state than the alien sinner, is that his heart has been hardened by the experience and will be less favorable to the truth.

Verse 22. The proverb about the dog is in Proverbs 26: 11, but I have no information about the one concerning the sow. The two proverbs are stated only as an illustration of what men did, not that they had to do. If we apply the reasoning and my comments of the preceding verse to this one, it will say that the sick dog did not have to retain the objectionable matter in his stomach, nor did he have to return to it afterward. Likewise, it was proper to wash the sow after her mire and then for her to stay away from the place of filth. It is not so strange that dumb animals would act as here described, but men may be expected not to imitate them. If they do they will duplicate the saying in verse 12 where men are shown to act like the "brute beasts that were made to be taken and destroyed," and certainly no person would wish to place himself in that class.

2 Peter 3

Verse 1. In calling this his *second epistle* which he says he writes *unto you*, it shows that the persons he addresses in 1 Peter 1: 1 and 2 Peter 1: 1 are the same brethren though he designates them in different language. He is still calling attention to the motive in each epistle, namely, to stir up their memory. *Pure minds* denotes that their minds were sincerely interested in the truth.

Verse 2. The *holy prophets* refers to those of the Old Testament times and the *apostles* pertain to the New. The truthfulness of each is the same, because the former "spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost or Spirit (chapter 1: 21), and the latter spoke "as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2: 4). The particular things in their sayings being considered were predictions of complainers that were to show up. Peter wishes his brethren not to be confused and hence he is reminding them about it.

Verse 3. *Knowing this first*. They had first-hand information because it came from inspired prophets and apostles. *Last days*. Some of the things to

which Peter refers were being said at the time he was writing, for in verse 5 he speaks in the present tense when he says "are ignorant." Therefore the last days is a general reference to the Christian Dispensation. *Scoffers* means men who mock or make light of things they do not like but cannot refute. Robinson says the word was "spoken of impostors, false prophets, deceivers." The motive of these objectors is revealed by the words *walking after their own lusts*. It is a common practice of men who do not wish to be disturbed in their sinful ways, to make light of any authorities that threaten their punishment. They would naturally take that attitude toward the second coming of Christ, because it was predicted that He would judge the world when he comes (Matthew 25: 31-46; Acts 17: 31).

Verse 4. *Promise* is from a word that is somewhat general and includes the idea of "announcement." It is that feature of the term that was worrying the scoffers, because it was announced that when Jesus comes he will condemn the wicked. *Where is the promise*. What has become of this promise that was predicted? *The fathers* comes from a word with so various a meaning that the connection will need be considered in each passage. One of the definitions of Thayer is, "The founder of a race or tribe, progenitor of a people, forefather." This is the sense Peter uses and hence it refers to the patriarchs in the beginning, because he mentions the flood as coming after these fathers *fell asleep*. The scoffers asserted that since that happened there have been no interruptions into the course of things that were arranged in the creation. Their point is to pooh-pooh such "pessimism" as that any change will ever take place.

Verse 5. *Willingly are ignorant* because it is recorded in the Scriptures, and these scoffers could have known about it had they wanted to know the truth. It was *by the word of God* that the "heavens and earth" were created (Genesis 1: 1), and by which also the *earth* and *water* were separated from each other (Genesis 1: 9, 10).

Verse 6. *World* is from *kosmos*, which means the inhabitants of the earth, and that is the world that perished in the flood. The account of the flood is in the book that the scoffers did not deny being true, but their interest in lustful practices had kept them from learning about it.

Verse 7. *Heavens and earth* are the same that are in verse 5 which were created *by the word of God*. After the people living on the earth were destroyed by the flood (except Noah and family), it left the heavens and earth still in existence and again was covered with inhabitants. The *same word* that created them is keeping them *in store*, being reserved against (until) the destruction by fire. That will be done on the same day that the ungodly men will be judged and sent into perdition. The earth will be permitted to remain until the day of judgment because man is to live on it that long.

Verse 8. Having made his exposure of the scoffers and their wilful ignorance, the apostle devotes the rest of the epistle to the good brethren. They have been advised against being misled by the false statements of the scoffers, yet they doubtless wished sincerely to have information concerning the seeming delay of the second coming of Christ. Peter will take up that matter and explain it for the sake of them and other readers of the epistle. *One day is with the Lord as a thousand years*. It should be noted the apostle does not say a day is as long as a thousand years with us for that would not be true. When the earth revolves once man has been given a day. It must make such a revolution 365 times to give him one year and that must be multiplied a thousand times to amount to the period of the italicized statement. But with the Lord no such measurements are necessary for He inhabits eternity (or time, which is the same), and as there is no limit or end to it, He can prolong the earth's existence through hundreds of such revolutions as easily as through one. To man it seems like a drawn-out delay and hence the apostle gives the explanation herein.

Verse 9. To be *slack* means to delay or be slow in doing something that has been promised or predicted. *As some men count slackness*. What would be regarded as tardiness by men does not apply to the Lord. That is, the seeming delay in bringing the earth to an end is not due to that cause as the scoffers implied. It is rather due to the *longsuffering* or patience that He is manifesting toward humanity. *Not willing that any should perish*. This statement is another proof that no chance of being saved will be given after the earth is destroyed. If men are delivered from their sins at all, it

must be before the end of the world or before their death. In contrast with *perish* the apostle sets the phrase *come to repentance*, which shows that all who do not repent will perish. Jesus taught the same truth in person as recorded in Luke 13: 3, 5. But the longsuffering of God is not endless; it was not in the days of Noah (Genesis 6: 3; 1 Peter 3: 20). When God in his infinite wisdom decides that His longsuffering has served its full purpose He will bring about the end.

Verse 10. The Lord is nowhere compared to *a thief*, but the time of His coming is where the likeness is. That is because a thief makes no announcement of his approach but comes in by surprise, usually selecting the time of night for the event. There are three *heavens* spoken of in the Bible, the third one being the dwelling place of God (2 Corinthians 12: 1-4), and of course that will never pass away. The other two are in the material universe, comprising the region of the atmosphere for the first and that of the planets for the second. These shall pass away *with a great noise*. The italicized words come from one Greek word which Strong defines, "Whizzingly, i. e., with a crash." The original for *elements* is defined by Thayer as follows: "The elements from which all things have come, the material causes of the universe." These materials will become liquefied by the intense heat that the Creator will send upon them. The *earth* is a part of the same material universe mentioned in the quoted definition, but it is given special mention because it is where man lives at the present, thus giving him serious warning of the fateful event.

Verse 11. *All these things*. The things of the material universe named in the preceding verse are all to be *dissolved* or melt. That will be the end of man's existence on the earth and hence the end of his opportunity to prepare for the judgment. Such is the reason for the exhortation to be *holy* (righteous) in *conversation* (conduct) by living according to *godliness*; live as God has directed us to live.

Verse 12. *Hasting* means "to desire earnestly" for the *coming of the day of God*. And this notwithstanding the day will bring the dissolving of this earth on which we have lived and enjoyed the blessings of God. But this seeming contradiction in our attitude will be explained in the next verse.

Verse 13. The promise referred to is in Matthew 5: 5 where the meek are promised to inherit the earth. The future state of the saved will be spiritual, hence the only way man can be given a foresight of it is by likening it to what he understands and enjoys while living in a material home. The present abode is on the earth with its two heavens, the atmosphere and starry region. Genesis 1: 14-16 says the planets were made to give light upon the earth, hence it is proper to mention those heavens in connection with the earth when referring to the home of mankind. But while the form of language is based upon man's present abode, in reality his eternal home will be spiritual and one wherein shall dwell righteousness.

Verse 14. With such a prospect as this it should be an incentive for us to live in view of it. To do so we should be diligent (thoughtfully active) and maintain ourselves in the peace that is according to the wisdom from above (James 3: 17). Since that wisdom is pure (unmixed) it will make those *without spot* who follow it.

Verse 15. *Longsuffering is salvation* is the same as mentioned in verse 9, hence Christians should not fret over the seeming delay of His coming. Peter says that Paul wrote to these people on the same matters as the present epistle. Peter wrote both of his epistles to the same brethren for he calls this one the second one he had written to them (verse 1). In the first epistle he mentions brethren in Galatia and Asia, and we know that Paul wrote to brethren in those same regions (Galatians and Ephesians). Peter says that Paul wrote *according to the wisdom given unto him*. This refers to his inspiration for he tells us himself that his preaching was "In demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Corinthians 2: 4).

Verse 16. Peter here makes a more general reference to the epistles of Paul, and says that in all of them he speaks of the same things that the present letter treats. This shows that Peter was familiar with the Pauline writings and that he had great respect for them. Since both apostles wrote about so many items that pertain to the kingdom of God, it would be unnecessary to try pointing out which Peter means by *these things*. All of the words *hard to be understood* are from the one Greek word *DUSNOETOS*, which Thayer defines with the same four words.

Robinson defines it, "difficult of perception." We should note it does not say that it is impossible to understand them, hence the expression does not contradict the general idea of the simplicity of the Gospel. Moreover, it merely says there are *some things* like this, which would not be surprising in documents that have to do with performances of both God and man and of both bad men and Satan. Besides, the only ones who had any serious trouble were those who were *unlearned* (uninformed) and *unstable* (unsettled in their convictions). But even these are not to be excused for they could do better, since they *wrest* (twist) the scriptures which means to force them out of their obvious meaning. And since they wilfully misuse the sacred writings Peter says it will be *unto their own destruction*.

Verse 17. The foregoing remarks are said for the warning of the better class of disciples to whom Peter is sending this epistle. They should beware and not be led astray by designing false teachers who are "walking after their own lusts." No person can be on both sides of a subject at the same time, hence in order to be steadfast in the faith one must turn away from such evil characters.

Verse 18. *Grow in grace* means to grow (or increase) in the favor of the Lord. Note that this exhortation is coupled with the *knowledge* of Him. Hence our favor with the Lord will increase as our knowledge of Him increases, which we may obtain only by becoming familiar with the Gospel. *To him be glory* means that all honor and dignity should be ascribed to the Lord, and that such respect will be due Him for ever. *Amen* is ascribed as an expression of emphasis; its uses and meaning are explained in the comments at Romans 16: 24 in first volume of the New Testament Commentary.

1 John 1

Verse 1. This verse is equivalent to the first verse of John's account of the Gospel. When the words *the beginning* are used as an abstract term, that is one without any qualifying context, they always have the same meaning. The popular notion is that they mean "the beginning of time." That is wrong because time (which merely means duration) had no beginning and of course will have no end. The means by which we measure time, such as the movements of the earth and other